

For immediate release

FRANZ WEST

November 6 – December 13, 2014

Opening reception: Thursday, November 6, 6 – 8 PM

Press walkthrough with David Zwirner and Alexandra Whitney, Director of Research & Exhibitions: Friday, November 7, 10 AM



Untitled (10 Sculptures), 1987/1997
Papier-mâché, plaster, polyester, gauze, and paint
Dimensions variable

David Zwirner is pleased to present an exhibition of works from the 1990s by Austrian artist **Franz West** (1947-2012) at its 537 West 20th Street location.

During this significant decade, the artist's career was solidified through important international exhibitions, and his work moved in innovative new stylistic directions. The gallery will present a number of key sculptures, collages, and installations from from this period in an effort to contextualize the evolution of West's singular practice.

Emerging in the early 1970s, West developed a unique aesthetic that engaged equally high and low reference points and often privileged social interaction as an intrinsic component of his work. By playfully manipulating everyday materials and imagery in novel ways, he created objects that serve to redefine art as a social experience, calling attention to the way in which art is presented to the public, and how viewers interact with works of art and with each other.

The 1990s proved critical in the development of the idiosyncratic style for which West is still known today. Key innovations from this period—which included the addition of exuberant color to his papier-mâché forms, the incorporation of furniture both as art object and as social incubator, and the inclusion of work by other artists in his own installations—resulted in dynamic, frequently interactive installations that helped to redefine the possibilities of sculpture and the ways in which art is experienced.

The exhibition will include a number of important works from this time, beginning with several white painted aluminum sculptures from West's solo presentation at the Austrian pavilion at the 44th *Venice Biennale* in 1990—evolving out of a body of work that began in the 1970s, these *Paßstücke* (or *Adaptives*) were created to be interacted with physically by the viewer. The exhibition will also present a group of the artist's large-scale, anthropomorphic *Lemurenköpfe* (*Lemure Heads*), which playfully meld sculptural figuration and abstraction and which were first shown at *documenta IX*, Kassel (1992). Also

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on view will be a significant body of work from the artist's 1997 exhibitions at FRAC Champagne-Ardenne, Reims (*Franz West: Recyclages*) and The Museum of Modern Art (*Projects 61: Franz West*), which dynamically incorporated multi-part, colorful sculptures and collages; and works from West's 2000 solo presentation at the Renaissance Society, Chicago (*Franz West: Pre-Semblance and the Everyday*), which signaled a shift in his practice towards larger-scale constructions. The exhibition will moreover bring together a number of key works from the five solo shows of West's work held at David Zwirner during the 1990s, beginning with *Franz West: Investigations of American Art* (1993), the gallery's inaugural exhibition.

A program of the artist's films from the decade, made in collaboration with Austrian filmmaker Bernhard Riff, will additionally be on view.

A fully illustrated publication, forthcoming by David Zwirner Books, will feature essays by noted West scholars Eva Badura-Triska and Veit Loers.

Franz West (1947 – 2012) began exhibiting his work in the 1970s and began to gain international recognition in the 1980s, with significant shows at such venues as the Neue Galerie am Landesmuseum Joanneum, Graz (1986); Wiener Secession, Vienna (1986); Skulptur. Projekte in Münster (1987); Kunsthalle Bern, Switzerland; Kunsthalle Portikus, Frankfurt (both 1988); Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld; and the Institute for Contemporary Art, P.S. 1, Long Island City, New York (both 1989).

In the 1990s, the artist's work was presented at the Austrian Pavilion of the *44th Venice Biennale* (1990); *documenta IX*, Kassel (1992); The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Dia Center for the Arts, New York (both 1994); Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh (*Carnegie International*, 1995); Villa Arson, Nice (1995-96); and the Städtisches Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach (1996). A major, mid-career retrospective (*Franz West, Proforma*) was organized by the Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Vienna in 1996 (it traveled to the Kunsthalle Basel; Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller, Otterlo; Nárondi galerie Praze/Sbirka moderniho umeni Veltrzni palác, Prague; Muzeum Sztuki w Lodzi, Lodz); and solo exhibitions were held at the Kunstverein Hamburg (1996); FRAC Champagne-Ardenne, Reims; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Fundação de Serralves, Porto (all 1997). West participated in *documenta X*, Kassel; and the Rooseum, Centre for Contemporary Art, Malmö, presented a solo exhibition of his work in 1999. The artist's work was featured at The Renaissance Society, Chicago (2000), and Museum für Neue Kunst, ZKM Karlsruhe and the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid presented the traveling survey *Franz West: In & Out* (2000-2001).

Further exhibitions were held at the Museum für angewandte Kunst (MAK), Vienna and MassMocA, North Adams, Massachusetts (2001-2002); Deichtorhallen, Hamburg (2001-2002); Musée d'Art Contemporain, Marseille (2002); Whitechapel Art Gallery, London; Kunsthaus Bregenz (both 2003); and the Vancouver Art Gallery, British Columbia (2005). In 2008-2009, The Baltimore Museum of Art organized a retrospective which traveled to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (*Franz West, To Build a House You Start with the Roof: Work, 1972-2008*); and in 2013, a significant posthumous overview of the artist's work was presented at the Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, Vienna.

For all press inquiries and to RSVP to the November 7 press walkthrough, contact

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