

# HAUSER & WIRTH

## Press Release

Media Contact: Andrea Schwan  
Andrea Schwan Inc., +1 917 371 5023  
info@andreaschwan.com

## Thomas Houseago's 'Moun Room' To Go On View In New York City

**'Thomas Houseago. Moun Room'**  
**10 November 2014 – 17 January 2015**  
**Hauser & Wirth, 18th Street, New York**  
**Opening reception: Monday 10 November, 6 – 8 pm**

**New York...** Hauser & Wirth is pleased to present 'Thomas Houseago. Moun Room', an immersive environment that represents a departure for the artist. Houseago is most widely identified with monumental sculptures of the human body, figures admired for their brute physicality and potent tactility. Drawing upon and deftly subverting classical sources, the artist creates forms that hover between power and vulnerability, old and new worlds. But with 'Moun Room', Houseago reverses his



standard subject-object relationship and, for the first time, places the viewer in the role of primary figure and active participant. 'Moun Room' invites us to move through space and among complex screens of the artist's carefully layered and pierced materials, rather than to circle an opaque form. It calls upon us to explore its softly glowing channels and unravel the processes by which Houseago has assembled and reassembled physical space in an effort to chart fresh emotional territory.

'Thomas Houseago. Moun Room' will be on view from 10 November 2014 through 17 January 2015 at Hauser & Wirth's downtown gallery at 511 West 18th Street.

### About 'Moun Room'

Measuring approximately 37 feet by 45 feet wide, and 12 feet tall, 'Moun Room' is comprised of three chambers contained within one another. The spaces Houseago has conceived with 'Moun Room' – extending both within and outside the structure's physical walls – invite meditation upon movement and codes of behavior in response to architecture. The artist has described this work as 'a visual maze with a spiritual dimension'.

32 EAST 69TH STREET NEW YORK NY 10021  
TELEPHONE +1 212 794 4970 FACSIMILE +1 212 794 4971

511 WEST 18TH STREET NEW YORK, NY 10011  
TELEPHONE +1 212 790 3900 FACSIMILE +1 212 790 3901

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Hewing to traditions of low-grade sculptural construction, the walls of 'Moun Room' are built from individual panels made of TUF-CAL plaster and are linked together through the use of iron re-bar. The architectural ribbing of the backsides of these panels reveals that the structure's internal 'bones' are akin to the ribs of the human body. But Houseago has reversed expected anatomy so that what is normally concealed and protected is externally exposed. Similarly, the soft, smooth skin of his structure's pearlescent walls can only be experienced from within 'Moun Room'. Playing with notions of negative and positive, solid and void, geometric shapes are cut from the panel walls and constructed in bas-relief, mimicking the lunar phase of the moon. This circular motif, evocative here of mystical celestial medallions, has periodically recurred throughout Houseago's oeuvre. In 'Moun Room' he has created apertures of varying sizes, some large enough to walk through and others like small portholes, and uses them to engage the viewer in exploration and play. He bisects and reframes the viewer's understanding of movement and space as the body moves around and through the work, peers out from within it, and experiences plays of light.

In many ways, Houseago's 'Moun Room' is a series of cracks, fractures, and planes. Its nuanced surfaces of delicate angles and accentuations have ruptured from the act of casting plaster over clay. The subtle differences among each panel and chamber evoke a sense of rhythm and movement. The method by which Houseago achieves these visual effects has evolved over a period of nearly ten years, derived from the artist's deep commitment to process and materials. Working with the simplicity and rawness of plaster or clay, Houseago's overall body of work has long emphasized the performative act of sculpture manifested into a literal process of looking, thinking, and perceiving.

'I've always dreamed of building an environment for showing my sculptures', Houseago has said. 'I loved the idea of the museum... but wanted to reclaim it as an artistic domain'. In this sense, 'Moun Room' has come to assume the notion of a maison cubiste – a room of repose whose making has tuned his emotional compass toward a new direction and broader possibilities.

### About the Artist

Thomas Houseago was born in Leeds, England, and currently lives and works in Los Angeles CA. He studied in Europe at the Central Saint Martins College of Art, London and at De Ateliers, Amsterdam. His work has been featured in major solo exhibitions worldwide including: Gemeentemuseum den Haag, The Hague, Netherlands (2014); 'As I Went Out One Morning', Storm King Art Center, Mountainville NY (2013); 'What Went Down', The Centre International d'Art et du Paysage de l'Île de Vassivière, Vassivière, France (2011), realized in cooperation with Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach, Germany (2011) and Modern Art Oxford, Oxford, England (2010); and 'Striding Figure/Standing Figure' at the Galleria Borghese, Rome, Italy (2013). His work has also been shown in important intentional group shows, which include: Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago IL (2014); Le Consortium, Provence, France (2013); Palazzo Grassi, Venice, Italy (2011); Whitney Museum of American Art, New York NY (2010); and the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), Los Angeles CA (2010).

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Moun Room (detail)  
2013 – 2014  
Tuf-Cal, hemp, iron rebar  
1098.6 x 1388.1 x 365.8 cm / 432 1/2 x  
546 1/2 x 144 in

© Thomas Houseago  
Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth  
Photo: Fredrik Nilsen

**Press Contact:**  
Andrea Schwan, Andrea Swan Inc.  
info@andreaschwan.com  
+1 917 371 5023

[www.hauserwirth.info](http://www.hauserwirth.info)

