

## GAGOSIAN GALLERY

August 14, 2015

### **PRESS RELEASE**

GAGOSIAN GALLERY  
976 MADISON AVENUE  
NEW YORK NY 10075  
HOURS:  
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Tue–Sat 10:00am–6:00pm



## **FRANZ WEST: *Möbelskulpturen/Furniture Works***

Friday, September 11–Saturday, November 7, 2015

Opening reception: Friday, September 11th, from 6:00 to 8:00pm

*...this is the art of today, lying down on the bed looking up into space. It doesn't matter what the art looks like but how it's used. The important thing is to find a place for art, not a description.*

—Franz West

In collaboration with the Franz West Privatstiftung, Gagosian New York is pleased to present *Möbelskulpturen/Furniture Works* by Franz West.

During his lifetime, West reimagined the viewing of art as an interactive rather than passive experience. The sensuous and highly distinctive art that he produced over the course of forty years transformed galleries and public spaces into engaging aesthetic environments. Rejecting the notion that sculpture should be seen but not touched, in the mid-1970s he created the first *Passstücke/Adaptives*, “ergonomically inclined” objects made from plaster, wire, and other materials. Viewers could pick up and handle them, observing how the body adapted to the portable sculptures. Soon West looked to even more utilitarian forms, further bridging the gap between art and life.

Parodying the bourgeois tradition of Austrian furniture design, in the early 1980s West began to produce “everyday adaptives”—schematic chairs, divans, tables, and lamps with welded steel-rebar armatures—either as stand-alone domestic items or components of larger sculptural installations. In 1992, he began creating large-scale furniture-installation works with the divans including *Auditorium*, a meeting place and open-air cinema at Documenta IX; *Test* (1994) at MOCA, Los Angeles, where they were arranged in rows at the entrance to the museum; and *Rest* (1995), a seating scheme for the rooftop of Dia Center for the Arts in Chelsea, New York.

The individual furniture works in the current exhibition include divans, chaise longues and poufs upholstered in plain raw linen; *Artist's Chairs*, elegantly minimal dining chairs whose seats and backs are made from canvas lacquered in monochrome hues (literally paintings to be sat on); a square table with steel legs encased in cardboard tubing; a mobile tubular steel bookshelf; and *Sinnlos*, a metal coat rack of sinuous pink squiggles, inspired by fellow Austrian Ludwig Wittgenstein's perception of life and death as “a senseless loop.” Transcending the entrenched status of art as object for pure contemplation, West designed these furniture works as constituents of sculpture that are as elemental as they are convivial.

Since 2014, the Franz West Privatstiftung has produced selected furniture works made by West during his lifetime in annually limited, certified and numbered editions. The works continue to be handcrafted by West's staff at his Vienna studio.

(Continue to page 2)

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West's furniture-installation works are included in the permanent collections of museums including Museum of Modern Art, New York; Hirschhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; MAXXI, Rome; Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien; and Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst, Ghent, Belgium.

**Franz West** was born in 1947 in Vienna, where he died in 2012. Public collections include Museum of Modern Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Philadelphia Museum of Art; Hirschhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Museum Ludwig, Cologne; Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien; Museum für angewandte Kunst, Vienna; and Kunsthau Bregenz, Austria. Solo exhibitions include "We'll Not Carry Coals," Kunsthau Bregenz, Austria (2003); "Recent Sculptures," Lincoln Center, New York (2004); "Franz West," Vancouver Art Gallery (2005); "Sit on My Chair, Lay on My Bed," Museum für angewandte Kunst, Vienna (2008); "To Build A House You Start with the Roof: Work, 1972–2008," Baltimore Museum of Art (2008–09, traveled to Los Angeles County Museum of Art); "Franz West: Autotheater," Museum Ludwig, Cologne (2010, traveled to MADRE, Naples; and Universalmuseum, Graz); "Franz West: Where is My Eight?," Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt (2013, traveled to Hepworth Wakefield, West Yorkshire, England); and "Franz West: Les Pommes d'Adam," Hall Art Foundation at MASS MoCA, North Adams, MA (2014).

For further information please contact the gallery at [newyork@gagosian.com](mailto:newyork@gagosian.com) or at +1.212.744.2313. All images are subject to copyright. Gallery approval must be granted prior to reproduction.

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Image: *Artist's Chairs*, produced by the Franz West Privatstiftung, Vienna. Photo by Marina Faust.

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*Gagosian Gallery was established in 1980 by Larry Gagosian.*

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