

For immediate release

THOMAS RUFF

press++

March 31 – April 30, 2016

Opening reception: Thursday, March 31, 6 – 8 PM

Press preview with the artist: 10 AM



press++00.53, 2015
Chromogenic print
79 1/2 x 72 7/8 inches (202 x 185 cm)

David Zwirner is pleased to present *press++*, a new series of works by Thomas Ruff on view at 533 West 19th Street in New York.

Working in distinct series since the late 1970s, Ruff has approached different genres of photography, including portraiture, architecture, astronomy, the nude, surveillance footage, reportage, and photograms. Using a wide range of technological approaches, and often pushing the limits of photographic representation in the process, he has reinvented historical conventions and expectations of the medium.

Shown here for the first time, *press++* features large-scale photographs of archival media clippings from American newspapers that relate to the theme of space exploration. Ruff scanned the front and back of the original documents, which he has been collecting over several years, and combined the two sides in Adobe Photoshop. Interested equally in the subject matter (and any touch-ups) on the front of the paper and the words, stamps, signatures, and smudges on the back, he thus created seamless montages of image and text, in the process compromising the integrity of the former as well as adding relevant context. The overlap causes each side to lose its intended information and merge into a new image altogether. As such, the often disrespectful treatment of press pictures by newspaper editors becomes obvious, as text, cropping, and retouching can all fundamentally change the original document.

press++ continues Ruff's long-standing interest in the deconstruction of the image and the new structures of photography following digital technology. It relates to earlier series by the artist including *Newspaper Photographs* (1990-1991), in which images were sourced from analog newspaper prints, and *jpegs* (2004-2007), where he used digitally disseminated photographs. The new works further recall the emergence of photomontage in Germany in the 1920s, where it was employed by Dada artists as a potent and subversive political tool. Ruff's digital composites, however, are not concerned with the often fragmented and surrealistic effects produced by these art historical precedents, but with the treatment of the photographic image when it is redistributed and re-archived. As layers of information coexist seamlessly, the idea of a source becomes increasingly obsolescent and the image acquires even greater agency. The information of the press image is lost in favor of an image of its own artistic value.

Born in 1958 in Zell am Harmersbach, Germany, **Thomas Ruff** attended the Staatlichen Kunstakademie in Düsseldorf from 1977 to 1985. Since 2000, his work has been represented by David Zwirner and *press++* marks his eighth solo exhibition at the gallery. Previous solo shows in New York include *photograms and ma.r.s.* (2013), *Thomas Ruff* (2010 and 2007), *New Work* (2005 and 2003), *l.m.v.d.r.* (2001), and *nudes* (2000).

Opening in April 2016, the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto will present *Object Relations*, a major solo exhibition of Ruff's work featuring over thirty large-scale photographs from his ongoing series, organized in collaboration with the 2016 Scotiabank CONTACT Photography Festival. Other upcoming solo shows of the artist's work will be hosted by The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo (August – November 2016) and the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Japan (December 2016 – March 2017).

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Ruff's work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at prominent venues internationally. In 2014, *Thomas Ruff: Lichten* was presented at Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (S.M.A.K.) in Ghent. Consisting of five series by the artist spanning the 1970s to the present day, the exhibition traveled to Kunsthalle Düsseldorf. In 2012, a large-scale, comprehensive survey was presented at Haus der Kunst in Munich. Other recent solo exhibitions include those organized by LWL-Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte, Münster; Centro de Arte Contemporáneo de Málaga, Spain (both 2011); Castello di Rivoli - Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Turin, Italy; Museum für Neue Kunst, Freiburg, Germany; Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna (all 2009); Múcsarnok Kunsthalle, Budapest (2008); Moderna Museet, Stockholm; and Sprengel Museum Hannover, Germany (both 2007).

Work by the artist is held in museum collections worldwide, including the Art Institute of Chicago; Dallas Museum of Art; Essl Museum, Klosterneuburg, Austria; Hamburger Bahnhof - Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; National Museum of Photography, Copenhagen; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; and Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (S.M.A.K.), Ghent. He lives and works in Düsseldorf.