

# HAUSER & WIRTH

Press Release

## Roni Horn

Hauser & Wirth New York, 22nd Street  
27 April – 29 July 2017  
Opening reception: Thursday 27 April, 6 – 8 pm



**New York...** Beginning 27 April 2017, Hauser & Wirth is pleased to present the US debut of four new bodies of work by acclaimed American artist Roni Horn. The exhibition features the photographic opus 'The Selected Gifts, (1974 – 2015)', a collection of 67 photographs documenting the history of gifts the artist received over a period of 41 years. Also on view are two new bodies of works on paper, *The Dog's Chorus* (2016) – shown here for the first time – and *Th Rose Prblm* (2015), as well as the new glass sculptures 'Water Double, v. 1' and 'Water Double, v. 3' (both 2013 – 2015). Although materially divergent, these works all derive from longstanding questions and themes that have propelled Horn's practice and her ongoing poetic study of the protean nature of identity, meaning, and perception.

A fossilized dinosaur egg, leather gloves, two copies of Djuna Barnes' 'The Book of Repulsive Women', and a handmade olive tree are but a few of the objects that appear in 'The Selected Gifts, (1974 – 2015)' – the majority of which are reproduced at actual size. Photographed with a deceptively affectless approach that belies sentimental value, Horn's collected treasures float against pristine white backdrops in the artist's signature serial style. Together, the sundry gifts tell a story of the self as mediated through both objects and others – what the

## HAUSER & WIRTH

artist calls 'a vicarious self-portrait.' Horn explains, 'It is a reflection through the warped optic of others that shows a level of accuracy beyond that of any mirror. A portrait I could not have imagined without the unwitting aid of friends, acquaintances, and knowing strangers.' Embedded in 'The Selected Gifts, (1974 – 2015)' is not only the passage of time – the earliest gift harks back to 1974 – but also the implication of collaboration, albeit unknowing, between recipient and gift giver – the identities of which remain a mystery to viewers. Horn's process of sifting through and selecting from her unruly collection of objects further shapes her self-portrait. Laced with humor, 'The Selected Gifts, (1974 – 2015)' elicits questions about the contingent nature of meaning and identity, a theme situated at the very core of Horn's art. A chimerical portrayal emerges as the installation unfolds; the myriad objects coalesce into a kaleidoscopic account of the self. 'The Selected Gifts, (1974 – 2015)' builds upon earlier works by Horn that utilize similar conceptual approaches, including 'My Gifts, A Selection (1960-2015)', a chapbook that itemizes gifts the artist received over a span of 55 years, and '67 Postcards, A Selection', a text from 2011 that describes and transcribes all 67 postcard images and captions. The latter is a direct predecessor to 'The Selected Gifts, (1974 – 2015)' and has recently been expanded into a limited-edition artist book, '82 Postcards', co-published by Hauser & Wirth Publishers and Steidl.



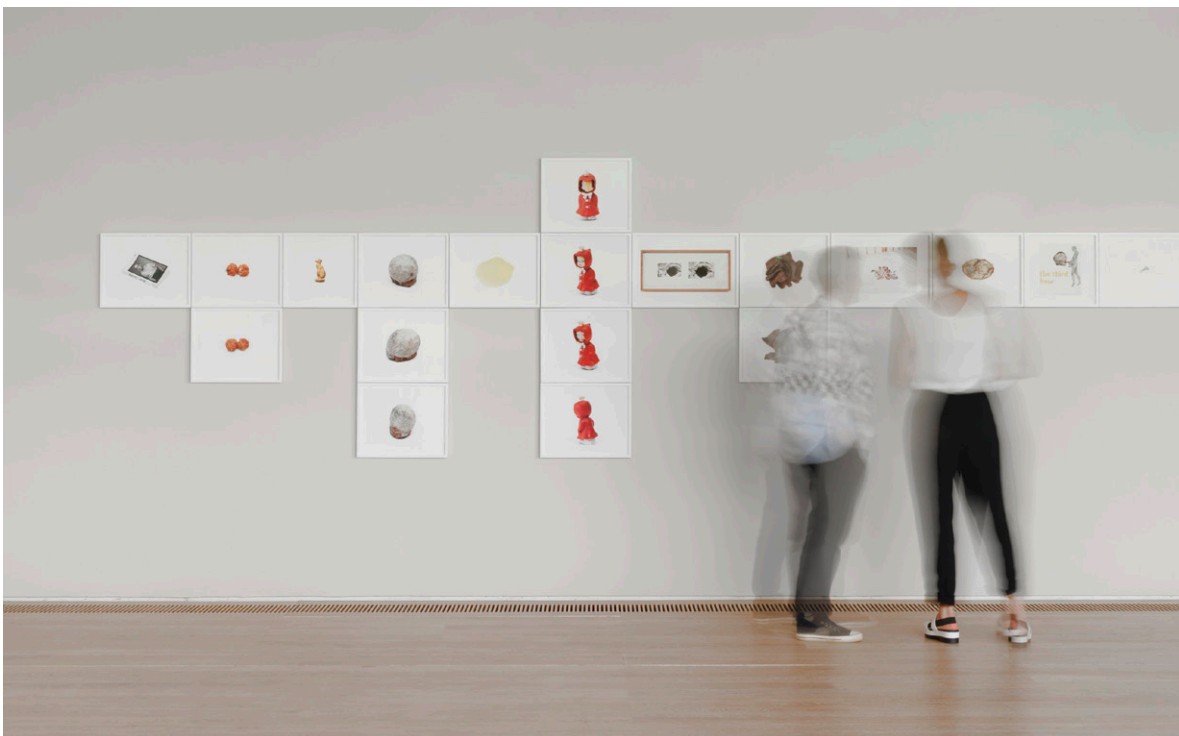
Unfolding over adjacent gallery spaces, two new major series of drawings similarly weigh humor with larger questions about the fluidity of meaning and identity. The Dog's Chorus and Th Rose Prblm expand upon the intricate, labor-intensive approach to drawing that Horn has developed since the early 1980s. Beginning with an arguably destructive act, Horn utilizes a Stanley knife to slice up an original drawing (in an act that is itself a form of line making). Horn then reassembles the fragments into something new, creating pulsating grounds that appear tangled. These craggy-edged works are their own islands of incident, where highly tessellated surfaces testify to a meticulous process of creation. Literature has long been a central element in Horn's oeuvre, where the words of such figures as Emily Dickinson become the artist's materials. In The Dog's Chorus, lines from Shakespeare's 'Julius Caesar' merge with common everyday idioms – trite, hackneyed turns of phrase familiar from daily life – and are rendered here in rich colors. In bringing together these 'high' and 'low' forms of language, the artist playfully dislodges texts from their traditional cultural dwelling places, deconstructing and reconstructing language and meaning just as she does physical materials. Her strategically scattered words disintegrate into an almost pixilated chaos, appearing as a quasi-stream of consciousness.

Following a similar approach for Th Rose Prblm, Horn cuts together two well-worn phrases: 'Rose is a rose is a

## HAUSER & WIRTH

rose' or 'a rose is a rose is a rose', with 'come up smelling like roses' or 'coming up smelling like a rose'. Horn further sharpens her conceptual approach to language here, splicing these expressions together in all their possible iterations. Employing what she calls 'downright dumb humor,' this series also makes sense from nonsense. As Horn explains, 'I was interested in the idea of rearranging these phrases into all the possible outcomes. I see it as a metaphor for identity. There are 48 drawings and I'm thinking of it as one work. So cumulatively the shades of meaning obtain a complexity and range that stand in for the mutable, changeable nature of identity.' The complex, maze-like compositions set Horn's surfaces into motion.

The Hauser & Wirth exhibition offers visitors vivid access to Horn's extraordinary process, a method of drawing that she has described as 'a kind of breathing activity on a daily level'. For Horn, drawing is 'the form I feel closest to. It may be my true native language.' Realized through an active act of excavation, Horn's drawings suggest enormous attention and time – and thus demand the same from viewers. The notion of doubling, important across her oeuvre, is also at play here in a temporal sense: 'Each drawing is at once itself and the trace of itself,' she notes. Past and present oscillate as trace and presence, and the artist's nearly sculptural approach speaks to her interest in the metaphysics of experience.



Nowhere is this interest more palpable than in Horn's iconic cast glass sculptures. The exhibition at Hauser & Wirth concludes with two of the largest Horn has ever produced: 'Water Double, v. 1' and 'Water Double, v. 3'. While these hulking cylinders appear to be adamantly solid forms, they are actually in imperceptible motion: Glass is neither liquid nor solid, but an amorphous liquid solid that exists between those two states of matter, with atoms moving too slowly for its condition of constant change to be visible. By virtue of this extraordinary duality, glass is an ideal medium for Horn's exploration of the shifting grounds of meaning and identity. Each of her two new sculptures on view is comprised of two parts that are separated yet palpably connected, proffering us an invitation to contemplate easy, accepted notions of 'likeness' and 'difference'. Reflecting the changing natural light, these works partner with the weather and the constant cycles of time that we measure in days; they mirror our mercurial and unsteady standards of perception. Horn's enigmatic and insistently present forms are each

# HAUSER & WIRTH

topped with an oculus. These translucent and highly reflective 'pools' of glass act as receptacles for reflections, accumulating snippets of their surroundings in an array of fragments that recall the splintered surfaces of Horn's drawings. Elegant and deceptively simple, Horn's forms are in fact extraordinarily ambitious feats of production that upon completion remain open-ended and defy straightforward experience. As ever with Horn, what you see is not necessarily what you get.

## About the Artist

Roni Horn was born in 1955 and lives and works in New York NY. Recent solo exhibitions include 'Roni Horn', Fondation Beyeler, Riehen/Basel, Switzerland (2016); 'Roni Horn', de Pont Museum, Tilburg, Netherlands (2016); 'Roni Horn. Butterfly to Oblivion', Fondation Vincent van Gogh, Arles, France (2015); 'Roni Horn. Butterfly Doubt', Hauser & Wirth London (2015); 'Roni Horn. "Everything was sleeping as if the universe were a mistake"', Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona, Spain (2014); Caixa Forum, Madrid, Spain (2014); Hauser & Wirth New York, 18th Street (2013); 'Photographien / Photographic Works', Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg, Germany (2011); and 'Well and Truly', Kunsthaus Bregenz, Austria (2010). In November 2009, Horn's comprehensive survey exhibition 'Roni Horn aka Roni Horn' opened at Tate Modern and traveled to Collection Lambert in Avignon, France (2009); Whitney Museum of American Art, New York NY (2009); and The Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston MA (2010).

Horn's works are featured in numerous major international institutions and collections including the Guggenheim Museum, New York NY; Museum of Modern Art, New York NY; The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago IL; Tate Modern, London, England; Kunsthalle Hamburg, Hamburg, Germany; Kunsthaus Zürich, Switzerland; and Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France.

In January 2013, Horn was awarded the Joan Miró Prize and JRP Ringier also published the first major publication to focus solely on Horn's extensive drawing practice. In March 2017 the Glenstone Museum, Potomac MA opened a major survey exhibition of the work of Roni Horn, selected by the artist herself. The exhibition remains on view until January 2018.

**Roni Horn at Hauser & Wirth New York, 22nd Street, will be on view through 28 July 2017.**

## Press Contacts:

Andrea Schwan  
info@andreaschwan.com  
+1 917 371 5023

Annie Rudnick  
annie@hauserwirth.com  
+1 212 476 9432

## Hauser & Wirth

32 East 69th Street  
New York NY 10021

548 West 22nd Street  
New York NY 10011

Gallery hours:  
Tuesday to Saturday, 10 am – 6 pm

[www.hauserwirth.info](http://www.hauserwirth.info)  
[@hauserwirth](https://twitter.com/hauserwirth)

**Celebrating 25 Years of Hauser & Wirth**  
**Discover more at [hauserwirth.art](http://hauserwirth.art)**

**#25YearsofHauserWirth**

## Copyright and Courtesy Credits:

All images:  
© Roni Horn  
Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth

Water Double, v. 1  
2013 – 2015  
Solid cast glass with as-cast surfaces with oculus  
Height: 132.1 cm / 52 in  
Diameter: 134 – 142 cm / 53 – 56 in (tapered)  
each, two parts  
Photo: Ron Amstutz

The Selected Gifts, (1974 – 2015) (detail)  
2015 – 2016  
Ink jet prints on Hahnemuehle paper, 67 parts  
13 x 13 in (18 images); 13 x 14 in (3 images); 13 x 16  
in (32 images); 13 x 18 (9 images); 13 x 19 (6 images)  
Photo: Stefan Altenburger Photography Zürich

The Dog's Chorus  
Let Slip a Bat Out of Hell  
2016  
Watercolor, pen and ink, gum arabic on watercolor  
paper, tape  
Left drawing:  
81.3 x 54.3 x 4.1 cm / 32 x 21 3/8 x 1 5/8 in  
Centre drawing:  
78.7 x 59.1 x 4.1 cm / 31 x 23 1/4 x 1 5/8 in  
Right drawing:  
83.2 x 53.7 x 4.1 cm / 32 3/4 x 21 1/8 x 1 5/8 in  
Photo: Ron Amstutz