

Press release

Thomas Schütte

28.04.-07.06.2017

Opening: Thursday, April 27, 2017, 6-9 pm

carlier | gebauer is pleased to present a recent selection of works from German artist Thomas Schütte. Approaching his practice as a “seismograph” of the world around him, Schütte deals in ambiguity and paradox. His sculptures, architectural models, watercolors, and photographs, which have transformed in scale and medium over the last 40 years, repeatedly return to certain motifs. Within this realm, there is one concept that is invariably applied to Schütte’s work regardless of subject matter or material: his sharp observation and interpretation of the *human condition*.

For this exhibition of work created over the last six years, Schütte revisits familiar themes, including human countenances, groupings of figures, and architectural studies. Unrestricted by medium or dimensions, his pieces are rendered in steel, Murano glass, bronze, and ceramic, in forms ranging from small tabletop models to woodcuts to looming sculptures. In this selection, Schütte directs his attention towards the otherness of the face and the body: whether as authoritative grotesques or modernist abstractions, he navigates reductions in form to achieve studies that are fragmented, silent and singular, even when presented in groups. What ultimately remains is the essence of the figure as a reflection of some perceived characteristic only the artist is privy to. There is always a touch of tenderness in the grotesque, strength in the vulnerable, and humor in the monstrous. What is startling, and at the same time reassuring, is that the work doesn’t mirror life in the black and white terms of contemporary pop culture imagery. Rather, Schütte’s work strikes a harmonious balance between the nuances of our precarious reality and the figures that he has shaped as a reflection of our existence within it.

Looking back to the first work he exhibited with carlier | gebauer in 1995 – one of the first of the now famed *United Enemies* – one of Thomas Schütte’s greatest achievements over the course of his career is his creation of dialogues through an exploration of authenticity in form. Weaving together motifs to shrewdly articulate the contradictions of human existence, his figurative works, architectural models, and abstractions are monumental reflections on authority, politics, individuality, identity, and – ultimately – humankind.

Thomas Schütte (b. 1954, Oldenburg) lives and works in Düsseldorf. He will be part of the 5th edition of *Skulptur Projekte Münster 2017*. His work has been the subject of extensive solo exhibitions internationally, including Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Serpentine Gallery, London; Museum Folkwang, Essen; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; Haus der Kunst, Munich; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; and DIA Center for the Arts, New York. He has participated in *bb4 - 4th berlin biennial for contemporary art*; *51st Venice Biennale*; *documenta X*, Kassel; *documenta IX*, Kassel; and *documenta VIII*, Kassel, as well as group exhibitions at *Deichtorhallen*, Hamburg; *Museum der Moderne Salzburg*; *Deutsche Guggenheim*, Berlin; *LACMA*, Los Angeles; *Haus der Kunst*, Munich; *Stedelijk Museum*, Amsterdam; *MCA*, Chicago; and *Centre Pompidou*, Paris, among many others.