

HAUSER & WIRTH

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Press Release

Ron Mueck

Hauser & Wirth London, Savile Row
19 April – 26 May 2012
Opening: Wednesday 18 April 6 – 8 pm

Hauser & Wirth is proud to present Ron Mueck's debut exhibition with the gallery and his first major solo presentation in London for over a decade. The works shown in this exhibition highlight Mueck's unique form of realism and his poignant use of scale and placement. Using contemporary subjects, Mueck explores timeless themes depicted throughout traditional art history, encouraging the viewer to identify with the human condition.

Mueck's sculptures link reality to the world of folklore, myth and magic. 'Woman with Sticks', a sturdy, middle-aged woman struggling to contain an unwieldy bundle of sticks nearly twice her size, suggests a woman tackling the near-impossible tasks set in fairytales and legends. Completely naked, this woman represents the 'eternal feminine', a topic that fascinated artists such as Cezanne and Gauguin. Where these artists focussed on the idyllic model, Mueck uses hair, skin and a physical build far from the norms of classical beauty. This woman is active, not contemplative; vigorous and energetic, not delicate and demure.



The recent work 'Youth' is a boy wearing low-slung jeans and a blood-stained white T-shirt. With a look of incredulity reminiscent of Saint Thomas demanding to inspect the wounds of Christ, he pulls up his shirt to reveal an open stab wound in his side. 'Youth' is a portrait of the thoughtlessness of childhood; of a person not yet grown up who comes face to face with the incomprehensibility of mortality.

Mueck's 'Drift' is a small-scale sculpture of a lightly tanned man sporting tropical swim shorts and dark sunglasses, lying on a lilo with his arms outstretched. Instead of floating in a swimming pool, 'Drift' is installed high on the gallery wall, seeming to disappear off into the distance. Held up only by a puff of air and a sheet of plastic, the precariousness of 'Drift' provokes questions of the brevity of life. Like many of Mueck's works, both 'Youth' and 'Drift' tap into powerful and universal emotional states, enabling the viewers to create their own narratives.

Suspended in the centre of the gallery is 'Still Life', a dead chicken, stripped of its feathers, hung by its bound feet and enlarged to human size. Mueck's title directly references the genre of still life, a subject that has given rise to a variety of artistic explorations of the bounty of nature and its consumption. But always in these works, and in Mueck's 'Still Life', the fear of death acts as a balance to the fecundity of life.

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Ron Mueck was born in 1958 in Melbourne, Australia. He lives and works in London. In February 2013, Mueck will present a solo exhibition at Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, Paris, France. Mueck's recent solo shows include the travelling exhibition 'Ron Mueck', which received over 400,000 visitors at its most recent venue in Mexico City (2011); and travelled to Museo de Arte Contemporaneo de Monterrey, Monterrey, Mexico (2011); National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia (2010); Gallery of Modern Art, Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, Australia (2010); Christchurch Art Gallery, Christchurch, New Zealand (2010). Other solo presentations include 'Ron Mueck' at 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art-Kanazawa, Kanazawa, Japan (2008); 'Ron Mueck' at the Royal Scottish Academy for the Edinburgh Festival, National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh, Scotland (2007); and 'Ron Mueck: Making Sculpture at the National Gallery', National Gallery, London, England (2002).

Mueck's work is held in several major international collections, including the Tate Collection, London, England; Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Dusseldorf, Germany; Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Fort Worth TX; and the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington DC.



Forthcoming exhibitions:

Bharti Kher

'The hot winds that blow from the West'

6 March – 14 April 2012

Hauser & Wirth New York

Isa Genzken

April – 19 May 2012

Hauser & Wirth Zürich

Andy Hope 1930

'Medley Tour London by Andy Hope 1930'

19 April – 26 May 2012

Hauser & Wirth London, Savile Row

'The Historical Box. Curated by Mara McCarthy'

22 May – 28 July 2012

Hauser & Wirth London, Piccadilly

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Woman with sticks

2008

Mixed media

187 x 230 x 86 cm / 73 5/8 x 90 1/2 x 33 7/8 in

Photo: Mike Bruce

Drift

2009

Mixed media

118 x 96 x 21 cm / 46 1/2 x 37 3/4 x 8 1/4 in

Photo: John Spiller

Still Life

2009

Mixed media

215 x 89 x 50 cm / 84 5/8 x 35 x 19 5/8 in

Photo: John Spiller