

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

April 3, 2014

PRESS RELEASE

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

456 NORTH CAMDEN DRIVE
BEVERLY HILLS CA 90210
HOURS:

T. 310.271.9400
F. 310.271.9420
Tue–Sat 10:00am–6:00pm



THOMAS RUFF: *Photograms and Negatives*

Saturday, April 19–Saturday, May 31, 2014

Opening reception: Saturday, April 19th, from 6:00 to 8:00 pm

When you make photograms, without the use of a camera, you can indeed call that abstract photography, as the lens and the corresponding registration medium are lacking. No longer do you have pictures of reality or objects; you only have their shadows. It is a bit like Plato's cave, where one could only imagine reality; the objects themselves were not visible.

—Thomas Ruff

Gagosian Beverly Hills is pleased to present an exhibition of recent work by Thomas Ruff.

Thomas Ruff is acknowledged as a leading innovator in the generation of German artists that propelled photography into mainstream art. For more than two decades, he has pushed the limits of the photographic medium, harnessing technologies both old and new—including night vision, hand-tinting, and stereoscopy. Open and explorative, he has produced new takes on conventions in architectural, astrological, pornographic, and portrait photography. In his new work, he engages with the photogram, the cameraless technique advanced by Man Ray, László Moholy-Nagy, and others in the early twentieth century.

Traditionally, photograms are made by placing objects onto photosensitive paper and exposing the paper to light, thereby recording the silhouettes of the objects. Captivated by this method but seeking to work beyond its limitations, Ruff collaborated with a 3-D imaging expert to design a virtual darkroom that would enable him to experiment with an infinite range of forms. Un beholden to objects present, like the scissors, ribbons, and paperclips of Moholy-Nagy's photograms, he is able to specify the size, material, color, and transparency of new digital matter. This collection of invented forms, together with simulated paper surface and fully adjustable light conditions, comprises a digital darkroom environment in which Ruff can access boundless possibilities and ultimate control. The final chromogenic prints describe an enigmatic photographic world of nebulous shadows, spheres, zigzags, and hard edges against richly colored backgrounds, a mesmerizing visual frontier of his own making.

(Continue to page 2)

Negatives are a direct result of Ruff's photogram process, during which he has constantly explored the dynamics of positive and negative imagery. The white and slate-blue images are inverted versions of early-twentieth-century nude studies. Reversing the negative's role as a means to an end—the master image from which the print is created—Ruff digitally transforms sepia-toned albumen prints into dramatically contrasting negative portraits, imbuing the posing nude subjects with sculptural dimensionality and white marble skin tones. Exploring historic techniques with a consistently inventive approach, Ruff continues to expand the subjects, possibilities, and appearance of photographs.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue including a conversation between Thomas Ruff, Wenzel S. Spingler, and Valeria Liebermann.

Thomas Ruff was born in 1958 in Zell am Harmersbach, Germany. He studied at the Staatlichen Kunstakademie Düsseldorf beginning in 1977, and was a professor there from 2000 to 2006. Public collections include Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Tate Gallery, London; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; and Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin. Recent solo exhibitions include Moderna Museet, Stockholm (2007); Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna (2009); Museum für Neue Kunst, Freiburg, Germany (2009); Castello di Rivoli, Turin (2009); "MCA DNA: Thomas Ruff," Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (2011); Centro de Arte Contemporáneo de Málaga, Spain (2011); "Thomas Ruff: Works 1979–2011," Haus der Kunst, Munich (2012); and Sala Alcalá 31, Madrid (2013).

Ruff lives and works in Düsseldorf, Germany.

For further information please contact Alexandra Magnuson at alex@gagosian.com or at +1.310.271.9400. All images are subject to copyright. Gallery approval must be granted prior to reproduction.

Press Enquiries
Blue Medium, Inc.
T. +1.212.675.1800
www.bluemedium.com

Contact: Deirdre Maher
E. deirdre@bluemedium.com

Contact: Andy Ptaschinski
E. andy@bluemedium.com

Please join the conversation with Gagosian Gallery on Twitter (@GagosianLA), Facebook (@GagosianGallery), Google+ (@Gagosian Gallery), Instagram (@gagosiangallery), and Tumblr (@GagosianGallery) via the hashtag #ThomasRuff.

Image, *r.phg.06*, 2014, chromogenic print, 94 1/2 x 72 7/8 inches (240 x 185 cm), edition of 4

Gagosian Gallery was established in 1980 by Larry Gagosian.