

THOMAS GRÜNFELD



Margaret

Massimo De Carlo is pleased to present *Margaret*, a new exhibition by the German artist Thomas Grünfeld.

The dynamic world of Thomas Grünfeld expresses itself through mixed media, which include sculpture, taxidermy, photography, felt-collages and installations. The artist aims to generate mixed feelings in the viewer, by playing with the subtle boundary that divides what appears recognisable and what is artificial. *Margaret* presents Grünfeld's renowned body of work, such as his strange taxidermy figures, the uncanny objects of the upholstery series and the metaphysical Eye Paintings.

For *Margaret* the gallery is transformed into an eerie mock-up of domestic ambiance. The first room will be filled by Thomas Grünfeld's signature mustard colour series of *Polsters* (Upholstery Objects) – that he first made for a show at Massimo De Carlo in Milan in 1988: half design objects, half cushions, these works trick the viewer into thinking they are functional, shifting between familiar and unfamiliar, usable and unusable.

The yellow mustard shade of the foam sculptures that, as Grünfeld puts it “is something you would associate with a granny's house but at the same time now it could be fashionable” – enhances the surreal Twin Peaks atmosphere of the room (*Margaret* is the name of the iconic “Log-Lady”) and hints to British interior design as it includes in each cushion a “fireplace”. The unsettling environment is heightened by the piles of wooden logs that lay in these fireplaces: the absence of a real fireplace and the inserting of the logs in a semi domestic setting plays with the notion of simple and complex, absurd and logical, realistic and fictional.

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Intricately sewn together taxidermy animal hybrids that the artist has long called *misfits*, are scattered around the various rooms of the exhibition, giving the viewer the evil eye and guarding the pieces in the show. These strange pets, which originate in part from Thomas Grünfeld's interest in German folkloristic tradition, seem to be there to remind us that the artist's practice, although it appears rational at first glance, is completely rooted in the irrational and in the exploration of absurdity.

The exhibition is structured as a progressive detour into the realm of the artificial, where the viewer's perception of reality is challenged and mystified. In the basement, the sleek oval shaped Egg Paintings, a homage to Lucio Fontana, paired with the optical and visual challenge (as if they are watching you) of the "Eyes" enhance the aura of a surreal daze around Grünfeld's practice. Walking around *Margaret* makes you feel like you have found yourself in someone's house when they are not home: familiar and unfamiliar, subdued and exciting, reassuring and unnerving.

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Thomas Grünfeld was born in 1956 in Leverkusen, Germany. He currently lives and works in Cologne, Germany. Thomas Grünfeld solo exhibitions include: *1&5*, Kunstmuseum, Stuttgart, Germany (2015); *Homey, Opere 1986 - 2013*, Museo d'Arte Contemporanea - Villa Croce, Genova, Italy (2014); *Thomas Grünfeld- Homey: works from 1981 to 2013*, Museum Morsbroich, Leverkusen, Germany (2013). Group exhibitions include, among others: *Dead Animals*, Brown University, Providence, RI, USA (2016); *Still Life Remix*, curated by Ilaria Bonacossa, Antinori Art Project, San Casciano Val di Pesa, Florence, Italy (2015); *Curiosity: Art & The Pleasures of Knowing*, Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin, Ireland/ de Appel, Amsterdam, The Netherlands (2013); *Two Collectors: Thomas Olbricht and Harald Falckenberg*, Deichtorhallen, Hamburg, Germany (2013); *Tier-Perspektiven*, Georg Kolbe Museum, Berlin (2009). *OUTLOOK*, curated by Christos Joachimides, Benaki Museum, Athens, Greece (2003) *The Big Bang*, Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, North Adams, MA, USA (2000).

Since 2004 Thomas Grünfeld holds a professorship for sculpture at the Kunstakademie in Düsseldorf.

Hard Facts:

Massimo De Carlo, London
55 South Audley Street
London W1K 2QH
From April 12th, 2016 until May 28th
Open Tuesday to Saturday, 10:00am – 6.00pm
Opening: Monday 11th of April 2016

For further information and materials:

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