

GALERIE THADDAEUS ROPAC

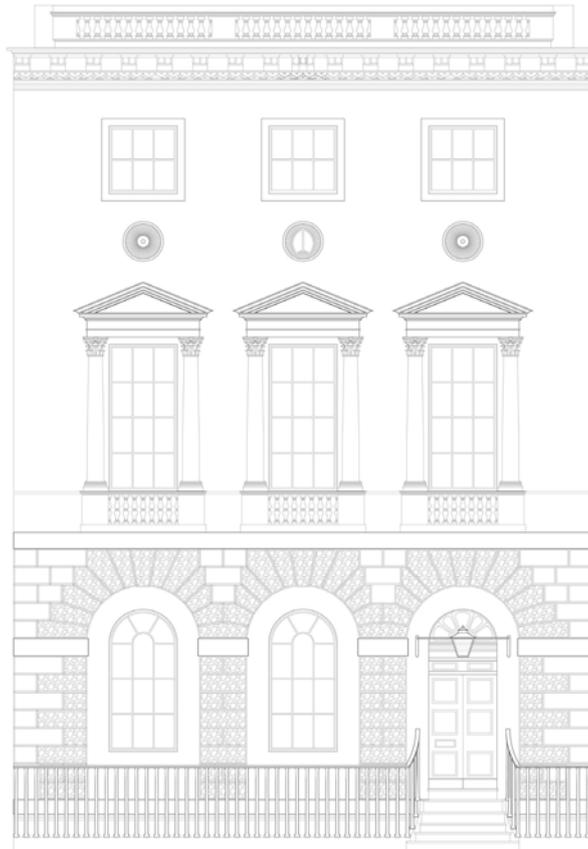
LONDON PARIS SALZBURG

PRESS RELEASE

GALERIE THADDAEUS ROPAC LONDON

28 APRIL - 29 JULY 2017

GALERIE THADDAEUS ROPAC
37 DOVER STREET
W1S 4NJ



Ely House, Dover Street, London

Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac London opened to the public on Friday 28 April 2017. The new, London gallery is located at 37 Dover Street in Mayfair. The historical mansion is spread over five floors and over 1,500 m² (16,000 ft²), benefiting from four distinct gallery spaces. The gallery opens with a series of four, separate exhibitions across the ground and first floor galleries.

Gilbert & George *Drinking Pieces & Video Sculpture* is presented in the ground floor *Ely Gallery*, featuring a group of *Drinking Pieces* and three *Video Sculptures* from 1972-73.

The first-floor *Library Gallery* showcases a selection of sculpture and painting from the **Marzona Collection**, which has recently been acquired by Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac. The exhibition features major works by **Carl Andre**, **Dan Flavin**, **Donald Judd**, **Sol LeWitt**, **Lee Lozano**, **Robert Ryman**, **Fred Sandback**, **Richard Serra** and **Richard Tuttle**.

In the first-floor *Chapel Gallery*, a group of early drawings by **Joseph Beuys** shown alongside the important sculpture *Back Rest for a fine-limbed person (hare-type) of the 20th Century AD, (1972- 1982)* focuses on his remarkable investigation and representation of the human body.

The exhibition *New Performance and Sculpture* is dedicated to new works developed by the British artist **Oliver Beer**. A new, in-situ addition to his *Resonance Project* greets visitors to the *Berkeley Gallery*, on the ground floor, throughout the first two months of the exhibition.



Installation view *Minimal Art from the Marzona Collection*
from left to right: Donald Judd, *Untitled*, 1989; Lee Lozano, *Split (For D.L., Who Likes Yellow)*;
Carl Andre, *Tenth Copper Cardinal*, 1973
Photo: Steve White

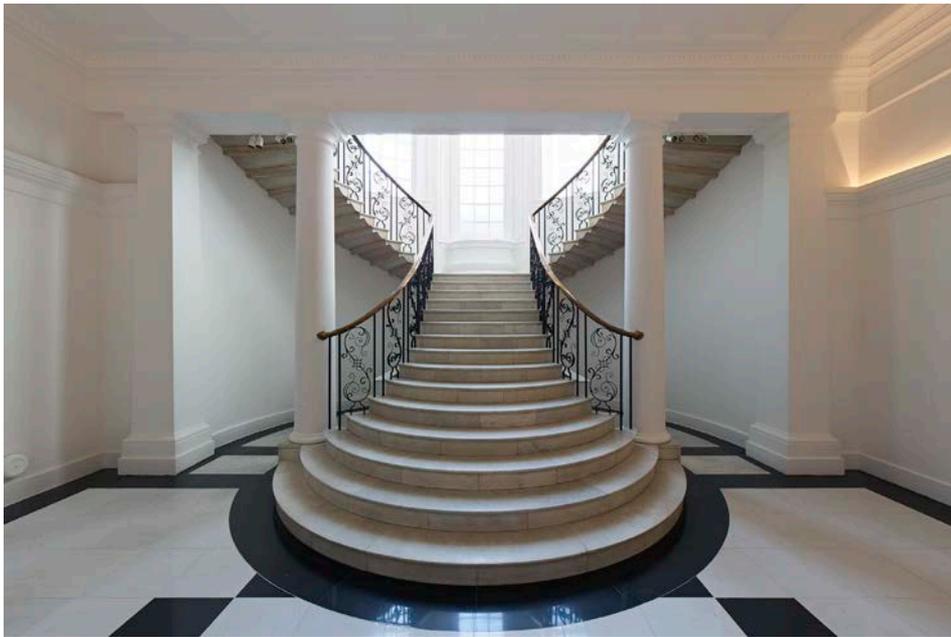
This inaugural programme highlights the axis between modernist art in both an American and European context from the 1960s to the 1980s. The tendency towards sculptural concerns in minimal art, as presented in the **Marzona Collection**, is both reflected and rejected in the dialogue with **Gilbert & George's** *Drinking Pieces & Video Sculpture (1972-1973)* and **Joseph Beuys's** sculpture *Backrest for a fine-limbed person (hare-type) of the 20th Century AD (1972-1982)*.

Perpetuating the gallery's tradition, it also reflects the ambition for the London space to present both exhibitions by established and emerging artists with survey shows from estates they represent as well as carefully curated, historical exhibitions.

Polly Robinson Gaer is the Executive Director of the London gallery.

ELY HOUSE

Considered one of the finest eighteenth-century mansions in London, Ely House was built in 1772 by Sir Robert Taylor. 37 Dover Street was named Ely House when it was commissioned by Bishop Edmond Keene of Ely to be his London residence. It remained an episcopal home until the early twentieth century when, in 1909, it was extensively remodelled for its use as the Albemarle Club by the respected Arts & Crafts architectural firm Smith and Brewer.



Ely House, London, 2017
Photo: Joseph Asghar

The Albemarle Club was a meeting place for the women's suffrage movement and the first private member's club to accept female members. Originally located in 13 Albermarle Street, it was forced to relocate to Ely House in Dover Street following the notorious scandal there involving Oscar Wilde and the Marquess of Queensberry. The building was a hub for the avant-garde, artists and intellectuals until the American Red Cross moved in during the Second World War.

New York-based, German architect Annabelle Selldorf, Principal of Selldorf Architects, has sensitively renovated the listed building on behalf of Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac. Annabelle Selldorf states: 'Ely House is a famous landmark and I believe that Thaddaeus Ropac's exhibitions of contemporary art will bring a new energy to these venerable halls. The elegant historical vocabulary is restored and where there are - few - contemporary interventions they are executed with distinct clarity and with restraint.'

The ground floor includes an additional exhibition space in the adjunct building, which gives a 60m (200ft) long view stretching from the gallery entrance to Berkeley Street. A semi-circular marble staircase leads up to the first floor, which includes an intimate drawing room as well as Ely House's historic library, transformed into an almost 6m (20ft) high ceiling exhibition space. Decorative mouldings and later alterations to the inner building structure were carefully discovered and restored corresponding to the historical architecture and to improve circulation. Through deliberate interventions wall space was maximised and the original central cupola has been uncovered, revealing its filigree ironwork. Annabelle Selldorf adds: 'Our work here is more about the sum of many seemingly minor interventions making for a simple and clear experience rather than any bold moves to differentiate old from new. I believe that art and architecture come together here in unique harmony.'

ABOUT THE GALLERY



Installation view: *Oliver Beer, Composition for London, 2016*
Photo: Steve White

Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac specialises in international, contemporary art. From its origin in Salzburg, the gallery now holds five distinctive venues, two of which are located in the Paris region. Since 1983, Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac has established itself in Salzburg located at the Villa Kast, a 19th century townhouse in the Mirabell Garden and the historical centre. In March 2010, the gallery opened Salzburg Halle, an additional exhibition space spreading over 2,500 m² (27,000 ft²) within an industrial building close to the city centre.

In 1990, Thaddaeus Ropac opened his primary Paris space in the Marais. Today, the gallery space spans four floors and includes an extensive Drawings Department. In October 2012, an ambitious project was completed in Paris Pantin. The redevelopment of an early, 20th century ironworks factory into an art space covers an area of 5,000 m² (54,000 ft²) and several buildings and allows for an unprecedented display of large-scale works. Its location in the North East of Paris, in the neighbourhood of the Philharmonie, has opened new opportunities for the gallery, now fostering interactions and collaborations with the cultural community. This venue also hosts satellite events including talks, screenings, concerts and performances.

The gallery represents around 60 artists and shows at all major, international art fairs. Active in both the primary and secondary markets, the gallery's role extends to curatorial work, where it acts as consultant to major museums and public institutions as well as advisor to private and corporate collections. The gallery runs its own publishing house, producing catalogues and books to accompany exhibitions, inviting prominent international art historians, curators and writers such as Sir Norman Rosenthal and Orhan Pamuk to contribute.

ABOUT SELLDORF ARCHITECTS

Selldorf Architects is a 65-person architectural design practice founded by Annabelle Selldorf in New York City in 1988. The firm creates public and private spaces that manifest a clear and modern sensibility to enduring impact. By giving form to the needs and desires of clients and communities alike, the architectural solutions that emerge transcend purpose to poetic resolution. At every scale and for every condition, Selldorf Architects designs for the individual experience. As a result, its work is brought to life - and made complete - by those who use it.

Selldorf Architect's clients include cultural and educational institutions such as the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, the Clark Art Institute, LUMA Arles, Brown University, New York University, Stanze del Vetro, Neue Galerie and Frick Collection, New York. In addition, Selldorf Architects has designed numerous commercial galleries in New York and Europe as well as exhibitions for the Whitney Museum, Frieze Masters and the Venice Art Biennale amongst others.

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OPENING HOURS
TUESDAY – SATURDAY 10 AM – 6 PM

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GALERIE THADDAEUS ROPAC

LONDON PARIS SALZBURG

PRESS RELEASE

GILBERT & GEORGE

DRINKING PIECES & VIDEO SCULPTURE

28 APRIL - 29 JULY 2017

GALERIE THADDAEUS ROPAC
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GILBERT & GEORGE

Smashed (Detail), 1972, 10 gelatin silver prints, 190 x 132 cm (74,8 x 52 in)

Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London · Paris · Salzburg

© Gilbert & George

Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac presents Gilbert & George: *Drinking Pieces & Video Sculpture 1972-73* as part of the inaugural programme for the new London Gallery at Ely House, 37 Dover Street. This exhibition, installed in the ground floor gallery at Ely House, provides a unique and timely opportunity to review the importance and resonance of Gilbert & George's early art.

After selling their first work of art in 1970, Gilbert & George celebrated by getting drunk at Balls Brothers Wine Bar in Bethnal Green, London, and recorded their experience in a series of black and white pictures. In this series, referred to as *Drinking Pieces*, the distorted and blurred images evoke a feeling of inebriation. As Gilbert & George state: 'Artist's would get smashed at night, but in the morning they would go to their studio and make a perfect minimal sculpture. They were alcoholics but their art was dead sober. We did the *Drinking Sculptures* as a reflection of life'. This highly original approach epitomises how Gilbert & George expand the notion of object-making to encompass the variety of their living experience. With titles that reflect their moods, such as *Swaying*, *Falling*, *Toy Wine* and *The Glass*, the fragmented scenes are installed directly onto the wall in groupings and patterns, a precursor to the distinctive e grid-format that has since become their recognisable style.

First presented in four separate exhibitions in Europe and in the United States between 1972 and 1973, the *Drinking Pieces* have a distinctly English air of melancholy, reflecting and rejecting much of the social and political turmoil that was unfolding in Britain at that time: growing unemployment, general strikes, 'black-outs' and intense sectarian violence in Northern Ireland. Breaking away from Minimal Art's deliberate lack of expressive content and rigid sense of form, the *Drinking Pieces* are a testament to Gilbert & George's highly original art making that makes them amongst the most influential artists of our time.

The three *Video Sculptures* included in this exhibition (*A Portrait of the Artists as Young Men*, *In the Bush*, and *Gordon's Makes Us Drunk*) show the artists smoking, walking, and drinking to the sound of thunder, birdsong, Edward Elgar's orchestral piece *Pomp and Circumstance* and Edvard Grieg's idyllic *Morning*. The juxtaposition of the titles evokes youthful energy with the impassive, slow, stately rhythm making the works both alluring and provocative. Video Art was still a relatively new artistic medium in the early 1970s, so the choice to experiment with video reflects Gilbert & George's ambition to make their practice as 'living sculptures' accessible to a larger audience. Installed in front of the fire-place, two stern-looking, wooden, green chairs and a table from *Morning Light on Art For All* add to the unique atmosphere.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Although they rarely travel far from their home in London's East End, their art relentlessly engages with the world beyond this microcosm. In Gilbert & George's words: 'Whatever happens here is happening everywhere else five years later'. Now in their 70s, they have continued to unsettle their audiences with their lifelike art, adhering to their credo of 'Art for All', tackling the subjects of sex, money, violence, religion and social class in a captivating and direct way.

Gilbert (born in the Dolomites, Italy in 1943) and George (born in Devon, England in 1942) met in the sculpture department at St Martin's School of Art in London in 1967. For their end-of-year exhibition, the *Snow Show*, Gilbert & George created their first work as a joint effort, a far cry from the formalist criteria of the art taught at the time. Their first break-through came with *Singing Sculpture* in 1969, when they covered themselves in multi-coloured metalise powders and sang the old music-hall classic *Underneath the Arches*, in various locations around London. In the 1980s, their iconography became more complex, drawing upon symbolism and allegory to explore themes of eroticism, religion, and politics. During a career that has spanned 50 years, Gilbert & George have worked together as one artist and enjoyed significant international recognition, creating thousands of works of art. They have won several awards, including the Carnegie International (1985) and the Turner Prize (1986). They represented the Great Britain at the 51st International Venice Biennale in 2005. Their extensive number of solo exhibitions includes The Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven (1980), Centre Pompidou, Paris 1981, Guggenheim Museum, New York (1985), Central House of the Artists in Moscow, Russia (1990), National Gallery, Beijing (1993), Shanghai Art Museum (1993), Sezon Museum, Tokyo (1997), Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (1998), Serpentine Gallery, London (2002), Tate Modern, London, Haus der Kunst, Munich (both 2007), Brooklyn Museum of Art, New York (2008), MONA Tasmania (2015). They have been honoured with many distinctions, including the title of Honorary Professor of Philosophy at London Metropolitan University.

The artworks in this exhibition were originally presented in a series of exhibitions in Europe and in the US between 1972 and 1973, *Three Sculptures on Video Tape*, Gerry Schum Video Gallery, Düsseldorf (1972), *Any Port in a Storm*, Sonnabend Gallery, Paris (1973), *New Decorative Works*, Sperone Gallery, Turin (1973), and *Modern Rubbish*, Sonnabend Gallery, New York (1973).

GALERIE THADDAEUS ROPAC

LONDON PARIS SALZBURG

PRESS RELEASE

JOSEPH BEUYS

SCULPTURE AND EARLY DRAWINGS

28 APRIL - 29 JULY 2017

GALERIE THADDAEUS ROPAC
37 DOVER STREET
W1S 4NJ



JOSEPH BEUYS

Zwei Frauen, 1955, Pencil, watercolour, gouache and iron chloride on paper, 21 x 29,5 cm (37,01 x 17,72 x 1,97 in)

Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London · Paris · Salzburg

© Joseph Beuys Estate/ DACS, London, 2017. Photo: Ulrich Ghezzi

Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac opens in London with an exhibition of Joseph Beuys, bringing together a series of early drawings alongside an important sculpture and highlighting Thaddaeus Ropac's long-standing relationship with the artist's oeuvre. The exhibition focuses on the role of the figure in his early works on paper and sculptural practice.

From very early on in his career, Joseph Beuys drew prolifically and spontaneously. Drawing was his principal means of expression. In 1984, he told curator Bernice Rose: 'Drawing is the first visible form in my works... the changing point from the invisible powers to the visible thing.' He drew with the wrist, producing light lines that are tense yet delicate. The subjects of the drawings cannot always be read at first glance, with the images seeming to emerge almost accidentally or intuitively. In the watercolour *Untitled* (1955) a female silhouette appears from a subdued swatch of colour, while an animal form hides in the undulating lines of *Schwan* (Swan) (ca. 1954). Forms and images also come to life thanks to language. Joseph Beuys often uses evocative titles such as *Sternbild des Bären / junger Elch rechts über dem Haus des alten Müllers* (*Constellation of the bears / young Elk right over the old Miller's House*) (undated) that shed light on his compositions.

The iconography of his drawings varies from female nudes and landscapes to more conceptual, diagram-like shapes, as seen in *Rebus* (1958) and *Untitled* (1972). The exhibition centres on the body, both formally and conceptually. Images of animals prevail as well as combinations of the female figure and animal motifs *Frau/Tierschadel* (*Woman/Animal Skull*) (1956-57). These depictions can be read as allegories of the unity of humanity and nature.

Joseph Beuys also employed unorthodox materials in his works on paper such as fat, beeswax, chalk and margarine. In the 1960s, he made a series of drawings with *Braunkreuz*, which translates from the German as 'brown cross', a medium that the artist invented by mixing industrial paint and hare's blood. For Joseph Beuys, *Braunkreuz* symbolises earth as a protective medium. The artist's use of organic substances demonstrates the centrality of the body in his oeuvre; it also gives a material feel to the drawings, linking them to his sculptural modes of expression. Bernice Rose stresses how 'drawing was a structural and conceptual necessity for Joseph Beuys not merely a means to create illusion'. She explains: 'many drawings of the 1960s were conceived as concrete or emotional parallels to sculptures and later to actions.'



JOSEPH BEUYS

Backrest for a fine-limbed person (hare-type) of the 20th Century AD, 1972-1982,
Backrest Iron Cast, 94 x 45 x 15 cm (37,01 x 17,72 x 5,91 in), Vitrine 183,5 x 155 x 64,5 cm (72,24 x 61,02 x 25,39 in)
Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London · Paris · Salzburg
© Joseph Beuys Estate/ DACS, London, 2017. Photo: Steve White

The sculpture *Backrest for a fine-limbed person (hare-type) of the 20th Century AD* (1972-1982) converses with the surrounding drawings. Cast in iron from an original plaster form lined with felt that belonged to the daughter of Joseph Beuys's neighbour, the artist Gotthard Graubner, this object's original function was as a therapeutic backrest used to support an injured body. By reproducing the backrest in iron, Joseph Beuys rendered it shell-like and strong, enhancing its protective resonance. Art Historian Karin Adelsbach speaks of 'the zoomorphic and anthropomorphic' quality of the sculpture, hinted at in the title.

Part of Joseph Beuys's drive to heal society involved encouraging a connection with our primitive, animalistic nature. In his work the animal figure embodies a lost state of human innocence and the hare is a prevailing symbol. He saw in the hare's behaviour potential models for human conduct, in particular agility and energy as the conditions for social creativity. With *Backrest for a fine-limbed person (hare-type) of the 20th Century AD*, Joseph Beuys addresses individual and universal suffering, as well as the role of art as a means of healing. As Bernice Rose explains: 'Beuys wounded in the World War II and living in a divided Germany, had come to see human experience as it is reflected through the body's drives and sensations, its pleasure and pain. The metaphor of the wounded body is at the heart of his work, a motif woven throughout as both its source and essence.'

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Joseph Beuys (1921-1986) established himself as a major artist in post-war Germany. He explored numerous fields of human culture and its environment and greatly expanded the boundaries of art by enriching his practice with humanism, anthroposophy and philosophy. His work, protean and of a great conceptual rigour, is considered as a 'Gesamtkunstwerk' and characterised by the use of recurrent mediums such as felt and fat together with numerous types of organic substances such as honey, seeds or margarine. The large range of highly symbolic mediums is closely connected to his almost shamanic practice, which has been widely expressed by the art of performance and his pedagogic actions. Extremely charismatic, Joseph Beuys revolutionised the Western artistic practice of art and initiated numerous fascinating debates that are still relevant today.

GALERIE THADDAEUS ROPAC

LONDON PARIS SALZBURG

PRESS RELEASE

OLIVER BEER

NEW PERFORMANCE & SCULPTURE

28 APRIL - 29 JULY 2017

GALERIE THADDAEUS ROPAC
37 DOVER STREET
W1S 4NJ



OLIVER BEER

Performing *Composition for London*, 2017

Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London/Paris/Salzburg

© Oliver Beer. Photo: Mark Blower

Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac presents Oliver Beer, *New Performance and Sculpture*, as part of its inaugural programme for the new London gallery at Ely House. Oliver Beer has been in residence during the renovations of this historic mansion, developing different manipulations of sound and architectural harmonics within the space.

Oliver Beer trained in musical composition in London before studying Fine Art at the Ruskin, Oxford University and Theory of Cinema at the Sorbonne, Paris. His musical background is reflected in a distinct sensitivity to sound and in an interest in the overlap between sound, space and architecture, which he expresses through performance, film and sculpture. For his ongoing *Resonance Project* (2007-) Oliver Beer has developed a vocal technique through which he stimulates the empty spaces in any building to resound according to their resonant frequencies, creating an extraordinary force of vibration and revealing the 'voice' of the building.

Oliver Beer employs this technique with classically trained singers to transform buildings – from the staircases of MoMA PS1 to an Ottoman hammam – into musical instruments, much in the same way that a wine glass can be made to sing with the tip of a finger. He then composes polyphonic music for these newly audible ‘architectural instruments’, which he weaves into immersive live performances. Performed live every day throughout the first two months of the exhibition, visitors will be able to experience the culmination of Oliver Beer’s site-specific experiments with his new *Resonance Project* performance, *Composition for London*, in which classically-trained singers are placed strategically around the grand staircase and instructed to sing specific notes at precise pitches. Working without the aid of speakers or electronic amplification the singers will stimulate the space’s natural frequencies and tease out its intrinsic notes, unchanged since the building’s construction in 1776.

In the large gallery space, *Devils*, a major new acoustic installation work based on Oliver Beer’s recent research at the Watermill Centre, NY, uses a feedback loop technique developed by the artist to reveal the inherent musical notes of various ancient and modern vessels, both sacred and commonplace. The empty space within each vessel has its own unchanging musical note at which it resonates. Oliver Beer has chosen these objects because their resonant frequencies harmonise with each other in augmented fourths. This musical interval, dubbed *Diabolus in Musica* in the middle ages, is a dissonant combination of notes which was believed by the Catholic Church to be the musical incarnation of the devil; their use by composers was said to be a crime worthy of excommunication. In the midst of these sound works sits an up-turned grand piano, a memento from Oliver Beer’s work *Making and Breaking Tristan* – which he also recently performed at Centre Pompidou. To create the performance, Oliver Beer cuts away the strings of a grand piano, note by note in a specific order, to first build and then gradually eliminate Wagner’s notorious ‘Tristan Chord’ – the famously unstable sound that embodies the origins of modernism in music. Once cut, the strings are collected, tied up in felt from the piano and hung like a wreath on the gallery wall.

Nearby, Oliver Beer has infiltrated the architecture of Ely house by transforming a window pane into a lead-crystal ear trumpet that amplifies and filters the sounds from the outside world. On the walls throughout the space hang Oliver Beer’s *Two-Dimensional Sculptures*. To make these works Oliver Beer slices through physical objects such as musical instruments, cameras, shotguns and coloured pencils, often imbued with personal history, with surgical precision. He then immerses them in white gessoed plaques with only the cut surface of the object visible. The objects thus lose all their volume and become two-dimensional images of themselves, granting them a new meaning and dimension as if frozen in time and space. Creating two-dimensional images from three-dimensional forms, the works blur the boundaries between painting, drawing and sculpture. Oliver Beer says: ‘Sound penetrates matter indiscriminately, and permeates the structures of our bodies and the objects that surround us. These sculptures are a way of hearing with our eyes – or seeing with our ears – an attempt to recompose volumes on a single pictorial plane.’

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Oliver Beer was born in 1985 in the United Kingdom. Within and alongside his work with sound, he creates subtle and diverse sculptural, installation and film projects whose provenance sometimes seems biographical; but in which his play with universal – often intimate – concerns draws on shared emotions and perceptions. Oliver Beer has notably been exhibited at MoMA PS1, New York, Centre Pompidou, Paris, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, MAC Lyon, Fondation Hermès, Paris, Tokyo, Seoul, the Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris and the Istanbul Biennale in 2015. He has held residencies with the Fondation Hermès, the Villa Arson and the Watermill Center, New York and is the winner of several awards including the Daiwa Anglo- Japanese Foundation Art Prize (2015). His work is in many private and public collections including the Pompidou Centre, MAC Lyon, FRAC île de France, Kramlich Collection, National Museum of Art, Osaka, and MONA Tasmania. From March to June 2017, Oliver Beer will have a concurrent survey show at Ikon Gallery in Birmingham.

GALERIE THADDAEUS ROPAC

LONDON PARIS SALZBURG

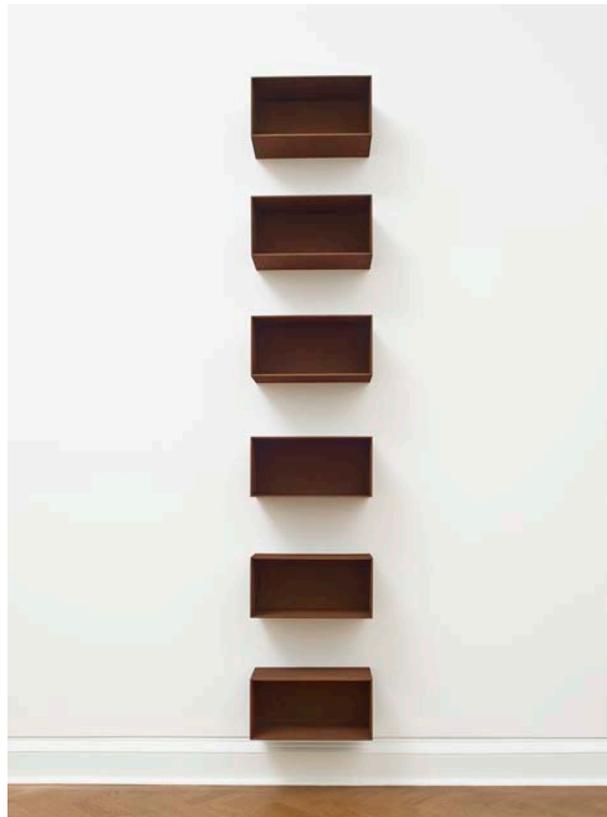
PRESS RELEASE

MINIMAL ART FROM THE MARZONA COLLECTION

CARL ANDRE · DAN FLAVIN · DONALD JUDD · SOL LEWITT · LEE LOZANO
ROBERT RYMAN · FRED SANDBANK · RICHARD SERRA · RICHARD TUTTLE

28 APRIL - 29 JULY 2017

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DONALD JUDD

Untitled, 1989, Cor-ten Steel, 6 parts A through F, Installed 300 x 50 x 25cm (118,1 x 19,7 x 9.8 in)

Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London · Paris · Salzburg

© Judd Foundation/Ars, NY and DACS, London 2017. Photo: Steve White

Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac London presents an exhibition of Conceptual and Minimal Art from the Marzona Collection. Works by the major representatives of these movements - **Carl Andre, Dan Flavin, Donald Judd, Lee Lozano, Sol LeWitt, Robert Ryman, Fred Sandback, Richard Serra** and **Richard Tuttle** are taking centre stage in the *Library Gallery* at Ely House.

At a time when Abstract Expressionism prevailed and was identified as American-abstract art, artists with a different vision adopted a less painterly and subjective approach. These 'Minimal' artists attempted to remove expressive, narrative or symbolic interpretations for the viewer to concentrate on the qualities of form, colour, space and materials. To draw the viewer into a direct relationship with the artwork they created their own pictorial language, often based on the use of simple geometric forms and employed industrial materials.

Richard Serra favoured the pliant quality of lead. *Untitled* (1968) consists of a rectangle plate of lead fastened by a cable at the centre and placed on the floor. The tightening of the wire pulls up the soft and heavy skin of the material, creating a visible tension, allowing for the viewer to witness the artwork's gravity, weight and balance. **Donald Judd** used Cor-ten steel, a metal originally developed to build America's railways. The exhibition features one of his first Cor-ten steel *Stacks* from 1989, composed of six identical units hung on a wall in a vertical line. Art historian Alistair Rider explains how the work questions the viewer's perception of sculpture: 'How we see and make sense of space and volume is fundamental to Donald Judd's art. The self-evidence and simplicity of an ordinary, rectangular box, made from a standard industrial material, is exposed as endlessly complicated once we try to catalogue how it appears to us as a three-dimensional object'. While Donald Judd devised the stack as one of his signature forms, **Sol LeWitt** favoured the basic and combinative nature of modular cubes, stating: '[The cube] is best used as a basic unit for any more elaborate function, the grammatical device from which the work may proceed.' **Robert Ryman** adopted the square as his preferred shape for its neutrality – it was a way to avoid emphasising a horizontal or vertical direction within his paintings.

Central to Minimal Art theory is the idea that art should not refer to anything other than itself. Materials and colours are the artwork's reality and not a means to express. Artists called attention to the ways in which the artworks had an impact on the surrounding space and how, in turn, were affected by it. Material had a structural role for artists such as **Carl Andre**, who stated in 1966: 'I use the material as the cut in space.' In *Untitled (Small Gray Corner Piece)* (1968) **Fred Sandback** stretched lengths of metal wire to outline the corner, revealing both the framed and surrounding space. **Lee Lozano** aimed at subverting colour as the conveyer of emotion by making what she termed 'energy paintings'. In *Split (for D.L. Who likes yellow)* (1967) variations of golden shades give the impression that the painting's surface is moving. In the meantime, several artists thought about the notion of material more broadly, for example **Dan Flavin** who used light as matter, or **Richard Tuttle** who composed with shadow. The Dan Flavin light work featured in the exhibition is part of a group of duo-toned pieces that he conceived in 1964. *Untitled* (1964-74) consists of a horizontal, pink, fluorescent tube with a shorter red lamp on top. The pink and red blend to create a distinctive glow that colours and illuminates the surrounding space. When lit, Dan Flavin's works are neither exclusively objects nor entirely optical phenomena, they engage by the immersive effect of light and colour.

Not only does the exhibition give an understanding of the radical approach of these 'minimal' artists, it is also an exhibition about the art of collecting. Each work in the exhibition is linked to the prominent and pioneering collector **Egidio Marzona**, revealing his audacious taste and life-long commitment to these artists. Egidio Marzona, born in 1944 in Bielefeld, Germany, has built one of the most significant collections of Arte Povera, Conceptual, Minimal and Land Art of its kind. He began collecting art in the mid-1960s against a backdrop of vigorous political protest. He engaged with the theories and manifestos of conceptual and minimal artists whilst building close relationships with them and collecting their work widely. He has conceived of collecting as encyclopaedic, applying what he likes to term 'a mosaic approach': 'my creative part is to create a kind of *picture of time*. I began to intensely look for and buy the missing links or pieces', he said.

The Marzona Collection was shown in a museum context in Vienna at the Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig in 1995, then during the 2001 Venice Biennale at Villa Manin (as well as in the Kunsthalle Bielefeld) and has been on long-term loan to the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.

An exhibition catalogue with an essay by Art Historian Alistair Rider accompanies this exhibition.