

CENTURY PICTURES

1329 WILLOUGHBY AVE, NEW YORK, NY 11237

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

The Subjecters

Thomas Hirschhorn

April 26–June 8, 2019

Opening Reception: Friday, April 26, 6–9pm

Thomas Hirschhorn is known for sprawling installations created from the ubiquitous detritus of our rampant consumerist society. Coalescing from ordinary materials—collaged paper, left over pieces of wood, tape, plastic bottles, and crumpled tin foil—maximalist environments emerge that subsume the viewer. Critiques of consumption, the fashion industry, nationalism and the military–industrial complex are recurrent themes in his work.

With *Philosophical Galaxy*, we are reminded of the thinkers who have sought to make sense of our natural world. Hirschhorn's focus has long been occupied with Spinoza amongst other philosophers, creating kiosks, monuments, and even cars that celebrate them. In 2009, *Philosophical Galaxy* was exhibited during the Bijlmer Spinoza-Festival, a collaboration between the artist and Art Historian Marcus Steinweg. In choosing Bijlmer, an underserved neighborhood southeast of Amsterdam, and the philosopher, who was born into a family of Jewish emigrants fleeing persecution in Portugal; Hirschhorn's festival was a work in progress for and with a "non-exclusive audience." The impetus was to reacquaint visitors with a range of philosophical ideas, spurring further reflection. The galaxy represents subjects who influenced Spinoza's ideas, and contains planetary connections to those who were in turn influenced by or whose work was in opposition to Spinoza himself. Notions of Universality, co-existence, collaboration, and precarity all orbit around the piece.

In *Clous-Mannequins (Rangée)*, we are turned from matters of the mind to those of human suffering. Hirschhorn has used mannequins for years, regarding them as objects that are "inclusive and non-intimidating, unpretentious and democratic, non-hierarchical and simple." Echoing artists and movements from the 1920's such as the Surrealists and Dada, which struggled with the effects of a mechanized war on the human body, Hirschhorn incorporates mannequins to "stand for what I cannot give a name but for what I can give form." To Hirschhorn, the mannequins were deemed *Subjecters*. The *Subjecters* are envisioned by the artist as placeholders, ordinary and inanimate, enduring in place of another. In this case, they are tortured on every inch of their surface by screws or nails driven into them. Their collective pain

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is not difficult to empathize with. We can all imagine situations where blame is assigned for crimes not committed, punishments endured for imaginary grievances, and consequences or indignities suffered undeservedly. And though the Subjecters series as a whole utilizes both male and female mannequins, the gender of the mannequins on view highlight the fact that it is often the female of our species which bears the brunt of society's punishments. The Subjecters belie a democratization of risk and misfortune whose myth is necessary for the fabric of society to remain intact.

Thomas Hirschhorn, born 1957 in Bern, Switzerland, lives and works in Paris. He has been awarded prizes such as the Prix Meret Oppenheim (2018), the Kurt Schwitters Prize (2011), and the Joseph Beuys Prize for Research (2004), among others. His work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Kunsthall Aarhus; South London Gallery; Museum Ludwig, Cologne; the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston; and the Art Institute of Chicago. Hirschhorn's works belong in the collections of the Tate, London, and Museum of Modern Art, New York, and have been included in various international exhibitions such as the Swiss Pavilion of the 2011 Venice Biennale; Documenta 11 in Kassel, Germany; and the 2012 La Triennale at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris. From June–September of this year, he is producing "Robert Walser-Sculpture," a project continuing his 'Presence and Production' series, open to the public daily, in Biel/Bienne, Switzerland. More information can be found at:

<https://www.robertwalser-sculpture.com/home/>. Hirschhorn is represented by Gladstone Gallery.

Century Pictures is located at 1329 Willoughby Avenue in Bushwick, Brooklyn. The gallery is open Thursday–Saturday, 11am–6pm. For more information please visit our website at www.century-pictures.com. The gallery can be reached by phone at (212) 334-7866 or by email at info@century-pictures.com.