

G A G O S I A N G A L L E R Y

22 May 2013

PRESS RELEASE

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

VIA FRANCESCO CRISPI 16

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00187 ROME

GALLERY HOURS:

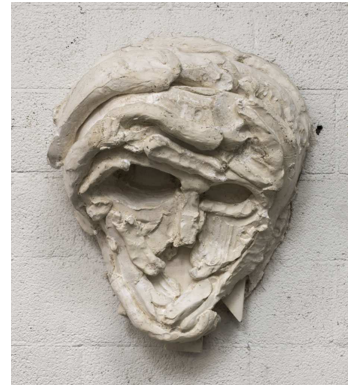
appointment

SUMMER OPENING HOURS (from 10 June): Mon-Fri: 10.30am-7:00pm and by appointment

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F. +39.06.4201.4765

Tue-Sat: 10:30am-7:00pm and by



THOMAS HOUSEAGO: *Roman Figures*

Tuesday, 4 June-Friday, 26 July 2013

Opening reception: Tuesday, June 4th, from 6:00 to 8:00pm

I am fascinated by the act—whatever form it takes—of making art. And in a broad sense, by how an artist responds to the world and the action that occurs from that interaction...I wanted to get rid of the readymade and figure out what I looked like and how I reacted to the world.

—Thomas Houseago

Gagosian Gallery is pleased to present "Roman Figures," an exhibition of new sculpture by Thomas Houseago.

Engaging in a continuous dialogue with the past, Houseago retraces the history of figurative sculpture through the conditions of his own time. Drawing upon mythology, African tribal art, cartoon imagery, Italian Mannerism, science fiction, and robots, he wrests new vitality from the classical figure. Houseago's giants have iron rebar skeletons and are made from plaster, hemp, and wood. Rough from jigsaw cuts and incorporating drawn parts, these visceral figures are distinctly postmodern in that they retrofit ancient and modern art history to the terms of popular culture and the traumatic realities of everyday life.

"Roman Figures" presents the large-scale sculpture *Reclining Figure (For Rome)* together with seven sculpted masks and *Untitled (Walking Boy on Plinth)* (all works 2013). The *Roman Masks* build upon the Western modernist fascination with spiritually charged tribal objects from Africa and the South Pacific. Crafted from clay, cast into plaster and hemp, and reinforced with iron armatures, the linear yet

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highly expressive skull-like reliefs, in which sculptural mass is imbued with the momentous quality of painting, provide startling new interpretations of the transhistorical, transcultural genre of *vanitas* or mortuary art.

Reclining Figure (For Rome) is cast in plaster and hemp from a clay form, and supported by a framework of partially exposed rebar. The headless body rests prone on a plywood plinth, its surface roughly smeared by hand, recalling the fragmented yet revered relics of antiquity where the majesty of sculptural form has been subjected to the vicissitudes of time's passage.

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Thomas Houseago was born in 1972 in Leeds, England. He studied at the Central Saint Martins College of Art, London and De Ateliers, Amsterdam. Recent exhibitions include the "The Artist's Museum," MOCA, Los Angeles (2010); "What Went Down," Modern Art Oxford (2010, traveled to Ashmolean Museum, Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach, and Centre International d'Art et du Paysage de l'Ile de Vassivière, through 2011); "The Beat of the Show," Inverlieth House, Edinburgh (2011); "The World Belongs to You," Palazzo Grassi, Venice (2011); and "Where the Wild Things Are" and "Thomas Houseago: Hermaphrodite," Sainsbury Centre for the Visual Arts, Norwich (2012). His work was included in the 2010 Whitney Biennial. In January 2013, the Dijon Art Center Le Consortium installed a selection of Houseago's sculptures around the streets of Aix-en-Provence, France. A major solo exhibition, "As I Went Out One Morning," is on view through November 11 at Storm King Art Center in Mountainville, New York, and "Thomas Houseago: Striding Figure/Standing Figure" will be on view at Galleria Borghese, Rome from May 26 through July 7, 2013.

Houseago lives and works in Los Angeles.

Press Enquiries

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Gagosian Gallery was established in 1980 by Larry Gagosian.