

Study from the Human Body



Francis Bacon and Henry Moore

Stephan Balkenhol, Huma Bhabha, Tom Friedman, Kendell Geers, Paul McDevitt, Yoshitomo Nara, Catherine Opie, Yinka Shonibare MBE, David Shrigley, Jiro Takamatsu, Kehinde Wiley

14 March – 26 April 2014
Private View Thursday 13 March, 6-8pm

(Pictured: 'Life Model' by David Shrigley at Cornerhouse Gallery, Manchester, UK. Photography Jan Dixon and Emily Dixon.)

Stephen Friedman Gallery is pleased to present 'Study from the Human Body', a group exhibition that pivots around two legendary twentieth century artists: Francis Bacon and Henry Moore. The show captures the complex discourse on the human form by aligning the timeless influence of these two masters with a diverse group of international contemporary artists working today.

'Study from the Human Body' takes its title from a major painting by Francis Bacon which conveys a naked man in motion rendered in characteristic brush strokes of pink, purple and white. This powerful contemplation of the human form is evident in previously unseen paintings by Yoshitomo Nara, Kehinde Wiley and Jiro Takamatsu. Nara's 'Julien' is an intimate full-scale portrait of a young boy, painted in gentle swathes of grey. In contrast, a dramatic new painting by Kehinde Wiley depicts a reclining semi-naked male figure mimicking the pose of a dying Thomas Chatterton in Henry Wallis' famous portrait of 1856. Catherine Opie's, 'Divinity Fudge' hangs next to 'Vaginal Davis' which both form part of the 'Portrait' photographic series, formed from 1993 to 1997 while she was exploring the representation of the figure in gender politics and the sado-masochistic leather subculture in California.

Complementing the paintings is a group of figurative sculptures by Stephan Balkenhol, Huma Bhabha, Tom Friedman, Kendell Geers, Henry Moore and Yinka Shonibare, MBE. Bhabha's 'Chain of Missing Links' is a towering human totem created with multifarious media including weeds, a skull, clay and Styrofoam. Its neo-primitive form draws a link to Geers' sculptures from the series 'Flesh of the Spirit', a commentary on the fetishisation of African objects. Hand-modelled and cast in bronze they resonate with Henry Moore's delicate 'Working Model for Reclining Figure' which elegantly recalls the British master's key principle of 'truth to materials'. This honest approach to art making is strongly evident in a new column sculpture by Stephan Balkenhol whose human form is hand-carved out of a solid block of wawa wood. Alongside the Henry Moore sculpture, a tightly curated selection of Paul McDevitt's 'Notes to Self' integrate elements of his renowned biomorphic shapes.

Tom Friedman and Yinka Shonibare, MBE both present playful and anthropomorphic sculptures. A humorous self portrait, Friedman's 'Being' is a larger-than-life pre-historic man fashioned out of painted Styrofoam balls. Shonibare's 'Fire' is a Victorian figure of ambiguous race clothed in exuberant wax batik. In place of a head, an ornately carved glass lamp glows symbolically and flickers in reference to the element, fire.

In one gallery, David Shrigley's 2013 Turner Prize installation 'Life Model' is presented in London for the first time: a three metre high sculpture of a naked and comically disproportioned male model is set within a traditional life drawing classroom. Standing still on a plinth, his beady eyes occasionally blink and periodically he urinates into a tin bucket near his feet. Here, the concept of a traditional life drawing class is reimagined as the public is invited to participate in an ongoing 'study' of the human body over the course of the show.

A meeting of tradition and innovation, connoisseurship and humour, 'Study from the Human Body' is a comprehensive exploration of the impact of Francis Bacon and Henry Moore on contemporary figurative art.

With thanks to Slade School of Fine Art, UCL.

Gallery hours are: Tuesday to Friday, 10am - 6pm and Saturday, 11am - 5pm

Forthcoming exhibition: 'Ged Quinn', 2 May – 7 June 2014.

For further details please contact Mary Tagg on +44 (0) 20 7494 1434, mary@stephenfriedman.com

STEPHEN FRIEDMAN GALLERY

Francis Bacon (1909-1992) has been the subject of three Tate retrospectives; 'Francis Bacon', Tate Britain, London; travelled to Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid, Space and Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (2008); 'Francis Bacon in St Ives: Experiment and Transition 1957-62', Tate St Ives, Cornwall, UK (2007) and Tate Gallery, London (1999). Further notable solo exhibitions include; 'Vis à Vis, Bacon and Picasso', Kunstmuseum, Lucerne, Switzerland (2007) and 'Francis Bacon, The Violence of the Real', K20 Kunstsammlung, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Dusseldorf, Germany (2006).

Stephan Balkenhol (b.1957) lives and works in Karlsruhe, Germany and Meisenthal, France. Notable solo exhibitions include; Stephen Friedman Gallery, London (2013) and 'Unlimited Bodies - Corps Sans Limite', Palais d'Iéna, Paris (2012). Recent group exhibitions include; 'Lost in LA', Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery, Los Angeles (2013-2012); 'Art is beautiful but hard work too', Kunstbau, Munich, Germany (2012-2013); 'Unlimited Bodies', Palais Diena, Paris (2012); and 'Invisibleness is Visibleness', Museum of Contemporary Art Taipei, Taipei (2011).

Huma Bhabha (b.1962) lives and works in New York. Recent solo exhibitions include; 'Unnatural Histories', MoMA PS1, New York (2012 - 2013); Aspen Art Museum, Colorado, USA (2011); 'Statuesque', City Hall Park, New York, curated by the Public Art Fund (2010). Recent group exhibitions include; 'Land Marks', The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (2013); 'To Hope, To Tremble, To Live: Modern and Contemporary Works from the David Roberts Collection', The Hepworth- Wakefield, Yorkshire, UK (2012-2013); 'Contemporary Galleries: 1980 - Now', MOMA, New York (2011); Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2010); and 'After-Nature', The New Museum, New York (2008).

Tom Friedman (b.1965) lives and works in Massachusetts, USA. Recent solo exhibitions include; 'Tom Friedman', Stephen Friedman Gallery, London (2012); and 'Up in the Air', Magasin 3, Stockholm Konsthalle, Stockholm (2010). Notable group exhibitions include; 'Seismic Shifts', The National Academy Museum, New York (2013); and 'Invisible Art: About the Unseen, 1957 - 2012', The Hayward Gallery, London (2012).

Kendell Geers (b. May 1968) lives and works in Brussels. Recent solo exhibitions include; 'Kendell Geers 1988-2012', Haus der Kunst, Munich, Germany (2013); and 'Irrespektiv', MART, Turin, Italy (2009) touring to Musée d'Art Contemporain de Lyon, France (2008). Notable group exhibitions include; 'Artificial Amsterdam', de Appel Arts Centre, Amsterdam, The Netherlands (2013); 'Mexico: Expected/Unexpected', Katzen Arts Centre, Washington D.C., USA (2012); 'Wall Rockets: Contemporary Artists and Ed Ruscha', The FLAG Art Foundation, New York (2008).

Paul McDevitt (b.1972) lives and works in Berlin. Recent solo exhibitions include; 'A Life Without Shame', Sommer & Kohl, Berlin, Germany (2013); 'Running on Woollen Legs' Stephen Friedman Gallery, London (2011) and 'Herbei win Licht' (co-curated by Paul McDevitt and Declan Clarke), Lismore Castle Arts, St Carthage Hall, Ireland. Group exhibitions include; 'Summer in the City', Martin Asbaek Gallery, Copenhagen, Denmark (2013) and 'About Stupidity', The Petach Tikva Art Museum, Petach Tikva, Israel (2013). Later this year he will be included in a group exhibition 'Body & Void', Henry Moore Foundation, Leeds, UK.

Henry Moore (1898-1986). Major solo exhibitions include; 'Henry Moore Outside', Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands (2013); 'Francis Bacon/Henry Moore', The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, UK (2013); 'Bronze', Royal Academy of Arts, London (2012); 'Advancing Abstraction in Modern Sculpture' The Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, USA (2010); 'Henry Moore', Tate Britain, London (2010) and 'Henry Moore: Natural Forms', Tate Liverpool, Liverpool, UK (2006).

Yoshitomo Nara (b. 1959) lives and works in Tokyo. Major recent solo exhibitions include; 'A Bit Like You and Me', Yokohama Museum of Art, Yokohama, Japan; traveling to Contemporary Art Museum, Kumamoto, Japan (2012-2013) and 'Nobody's Fool', Asia Society Museum, New York (2010). Recent group shows include; 'Damage Control: Art and Destruction Since 1950', Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C (2013) and 'Print/Out: Multiplied Art in the Information Era, 1990 - 2010', Museum of Modern Art, New York (2012).

Catherine Opie (b.1961) lives and works in Los Angeles, USA. Recent solo exhibitions include; 'Catherine Opie', Regen Projects, Los Angeles, USA (2013); 'Twelve Miles to the Horizon', Long Beach Museum of Art, Los Angeles, California, USA (2013); 'Catherine Opie', Stephen Friedman Gallery, London (2011); 'Empty and Full', The Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, USA (2011); 'Figure and Landscape', Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, USA (2010). Notable group exhibitions include; 'Women, War, and Industry', The San Diego Museum of Art, San Diego, USA (2013-2014) and 'Hide/Seek: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture', The Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, USA (2011-2012).

Yinka Shonibare, MBE (b. 1962) lives and works in London. Recent solo exhibitions include; 'Yinka Shonibare MBE: Magic Ladders', The Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia, USA (2014); 'Yinka Shonibare MBE', Royal Museums Greenwich, London (2013-2014); 'FABRIC-ATION' Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wakefield, UK (2013); 'Yinka Shonibare, MBE', Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney (2008); touring to Brooklyn Museum, New York, and National Museum of African Art Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C, USA (2009). Later this year his first permanent public commission will be unveiled at Howick Place, Victoria, London (2014).

David Shrigley (b.1968) lives and works in Glasgow, Scotland. David Shrigley is the winner of the Fourth Plinth Commission in London for 2016 and he was a Turner Prize nominee in 2013. Notable solo exhibitions include; 'David Shrigley', Pinakothek, Munich, Germany (2014); 'Turner Prize', Derry-Londonderry, UK (2013); 'How Are You Feeling?', Cornerhouse, Manchester, UK (2012-2013); 'Arms Fayre', Stephen Friedman Gallery, London (2012); and 'Brain Activity', Hayward Gallery, London; touring to Yerba Buena Centre for the Arts, San Francisco, USA (2012). Upcoming exhibitions include; David Shrigley at Sketch, London (2014) and at the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia (2014-2015).

Jiro Takamatsu (1936 -1998). Notable solo exhibitions include; 'Jiro Takamatsu', Stephen Friedman Gallery, London (2013); 'Shadow Paintings', McCaffrey Fine Art, New York (2010); 'Jiro Takamatsu - Universe of His Thoughts', Fuchu Art Museum, Tokyo; touring to Kitakyushu Municipal Museum of Art, Fukuoka, Japan (2004). Recent group exhibitions include; 'The 70s in Japan', 1968-1982 The Museum of Modern Art, Saitama, Japan (2013); and 'Shadows: Works from the National Museums of Art', The National Art Centre, Tokyo, (2010).

Kehinde Wiley (b. 1977) lives and works in New York and Beijing, China. He will be the subject of a major solo exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum of Art, New York in 2015. Wiley has been subject of five touring 'World Stage' solo exhibitions, most recently at Stephen Friedman Gallery, London (2013). A notable group exhibition includes 'Masculine / Masculine. The Nude Man in Art from 1800 to the Present Day', Musée d'Orsay, Paris (2013).