

# Stephen Friedman Gallery

## Stephan Balkenhol

**Devoid of expression or emotion, Stephan Balkenhol's distinctive and timeless works are sculpted by his own hand, carved from a singular block of wood without the use of machinery.**

Stephan Balkenhol was born in 1957 in Fritzlar, Germany. He lives and works in Kassel, Germany.

Balkenhol studied at the University of Fine Arts of Hamburg from 1976-82. His focus on the human form and his intention to reintroduce figuration into contemporary art was a divergent response to the abstract, minimalist and conceptual approaches of the school during the 1970s.

Balkenhol's anonymous figures are painted in simple colour combinations that appear timeless yet familiar, both living and inanimate. They retain the grooves, cracks, chips and fissures that represent the sculpting process, demonstrating the artist's raw and spontaneous treatment of the material. Balkenhol's practice advances the longstanding tradition of woodcarving in Germany, inviting comparisons to expressionist sculptors such as Ernst Ludwig Kirchner and Ernst Barlach.

Balkenhol has completed a significant number of public commissions throughout his career, with installations in front of the Blackfriars Bridge in London, at the entrance of the Hamburg Zoo, Germany; at the Städtisches Kunstinstitut in Frankfurt, Germany; in Le Havre, France; and in Kassel and Leipzig, Germany.

A solo exhibition of recent sculptures by Balkenhol opened at Stephen Friedman Gallery in January 2023. Other notable solo presentations include: 'Stephan Balkenhol: Window in Time', Museum Wiesbaden, Wiesbaden, Germany (2023 - 2024); 'Stephan Balkenhol', Lehmbrock Museum, Duisburg, Germany (2020-2021); 'Stephan Balkenhol', Museum Jorn, Silkeborg, Denmark (2020); 'Le Prévu et l'Imprévu', Palais d'Iéna, Paris, France (2020); 'Stephan Balkenhol', Museum of Sepulchral Culture, Kassel, Germany (2019); 'Stephan Balkenhol', Kunsthalle Emden, Emden, Germany (2018); '30 Years Stephan Balkenhol', Deweer Gallery, Brussels, Belgium (2017); 'Stephan Balkenhol', Moscow Museum of Modern Art, Palais Gogolevski, Moscow, Russia (2016); 'Stephan Balkenhol and Philippe Cognée', Fondation Fernet-Branca, Saint-Louis, France (2016, two-person); 'New Sculptures', Akinci, Amsterdam, Netherlands (2015); 'Stephan Balkenhol' Landes Museum, Linz, Austria (2015-2014); 'Stephan Balkenhol', Kunstmuseum Ravensburg, Ravensburg, Germany (2014); 'Stephan Balkenhol', 'Unlimited Bodies - Corps Sans Limite,' Palais d'Iéna, Paris, France (2012); 'Stephan Balkenhol,' Musée de Grenoble, Grenoble, France (2010); 'Stephan Balkenhol,' Deichtorhallen, Hamburg, Germany (2008-2009); 'Stephan Balkenhol,' Staatliche Kunsthalle, Baden-Baden, Germany (2006); 'Stephan Balkenhol,' National Museum of Contemporary Art, Osaka, Japan (2005); 'Stephan Balkenhol,' Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Tel Aviv, Israel (2005); Sprengel Museum, Hannover, Germany (2003); Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington DC, USA (1995); The Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, Ireland (1991).

Balkenhol's works are included in prominent collections internationally, including the Musée des Beaux Arts de Montréal, Quebec, Canada; Smithsonian Institution, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C., USA; Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois, USA; Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice, Italy; Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, Germany; Kunstmuseum Bonn, Bonn, Germany; Musée de Grenoble, Grenoble, France and National Museum of Art, Osaka, Japan.