

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**Juan Muñoz**  
***Sculptures***  
**May 3-June 9, 2012**

Skarstedt Gallery is pleased to announce the exhibition *Sculptures* by Juan Muñoz, which will open May 3<sup>rd</sup> and be on view through June 9<sup>th</sup>. This exhibition is comprised of a selection of the artist's iconic sculptures from the 1980's and 1990's.

Juan Muñoz belongs to a generation of artists that dominate contemporary figurative sculpture and installation. The artist regarded himself a "storyteller," making his sculpture a means by which to tell his stories. Muñoz treated each installation as unique believing a different context gave the works new power and meaning. His reoccurring characters, the dwarfs, the Chinese figures, the people on the balconies perform as actors rather than individual sculptures. One of his main concerns throughout his career has been the interplay between the figure and the surrounding architecture. His work, and in particular his large-scale installations, explores just that.

*Many Times* is a work that evolves out of Muñoz's "conversation pieces." Similar figures were first seen in the Palacio de Velazquez in Madrid, for the centerpiece installation, *Square (Madrid)*, as part of an exhibition Muñoz staged there in 1996. These almost life-size, foot-less figures stand on their cut-off trousers interacting with one another in varied postures of gesticulation and conversation. Despite their uniformity in clothing and facial expression, signifying the stereotypical Western view of different ethnic groups, in this case the Chinese, Muñoz is able to create an ongoing and ever-fluctuating narrative simply through the body language of his figures and in turn their own juxtaposition in space.

Muñoz was a master at breathing new life into old and stereotyped motifs exemplified in such works as the solitary *Krefeld Dwarf*. The simple human presence of a lone dwarf is rejuvenated and despite his small stature, he stands alone with such gravitas, reminiscent of the dwarfs in *Las Meninas* by Velazquez, one of Muñoz's heroes. Informed by Velazquez's work, Muñoz referenced the important role of the dwarf in the Spanish court of the time: "The dwarf was the only person that could criticize the court, because of his physical distortion, he was allowed to distort or exaggerate reality."

Juan Muñoz was born in Madrid in 1953. His work has been exhibited extensively throughout the United States and Europe. Recent solo exhibitions of his work include those at the Museo Nacional de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, in 2009; Guggenheim Bilbao in 2008; Tate Modern, London, in 2008; the Hirshhorn Museum, Washington D.C., in 2001; the Turbine Hall at Tate Modern in 2001; and the Dia Center for the Arts, New York, in 1999. He participated in the Venice Biennale in 1986, 1993, and 1997 and in Documenta IX in 1992 and Documenta XI in 2002. In 2000, he was presented with the Premio Nacional de Artes Plásticas, Spain's most prestigious art award.

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