

SKARSTEDT

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APPROACHING THE FIGURE

Featuring: George Condo, Willem de Kooning, Eric Fischl, Mark Grotjahn, KAWS, Jeff Koons, Joan Miró, Thomas Schütte, Rosemarie Trockel, Rebecca Warren

JANUARY 16 – FEBRUARY 17, 2018, 20 East 79th Street, New York



Skarstedt Gallery is pleased to present the exhibition, *Approaching The Figure*, a group show featuring work by George Condo, Willem de Kooning, Eric Fischl, Mark Grotjahn, KAWS, Jeff Koons, Joan Miró, Thomas Schütte, Rosemarie Trockel, and Rebecca Warren at Skarstedt Upper East Side, 20 East 79th Street, New York, NY 10075. This curation of contemporary and modern masters explores the nature of figuration, and examines how artists employ this historical genre. *Approaching The Figure* embraces both scale and spectacle, juxtaposing the various sculptures in ways that reveal moments of beauty, drama, humor, and humility.

Bear and Policeman from 1988, one of the notorious works from Koons' provocative *Banality* series is simultaneously innocent and menacing. Cast in polychrome wood, this 7foot looming sculpture beckons the viewer to reconcile between a fanciful response, and one of disquiet and unease. Reminiscent of the charming and ornate knick-knacks from the 18th century, here Koons challenges preconceived notions for the high and low in a subverted conceptual, and provocative manner. Manipulating the scale of the figures by enlarging the furry bear and dwarfing the policemen, *Bear and Policeman* conveys a poignant metaphor of art and power, whereby the morality of those involved is continuously tested.

Eric Fischl, known for his masterful figurative paintings, imbues his sculptures with the same piercing sensitivity and raw human emotion. In *Ten Breaths: Tumbling Woman II*, a bronze sculpture from 2007, we see the female nude frozen mid-fall; its composition rendered all the more poignant for its visceral narrative. It is challenging to separate this sculpture from the dramatic controversy it spawned back in 2002, when Fischl was called upon to un-install a similar piece from Rockefeller Center. Claimed to have caused outrage due to the



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unhealed wounds of 9/11, the *Tumbling Woman* sculpture was what Fischl says, his sincere way of bringing people closer to this fragile moment in history and commemorating those who jumped to their death during the terrorist attack. Inspired by sculptors such as Rodin and Giacometti, Fischl strives to capture certain postures of the body, which manifest the “epic struggle between internal forces reacting to external forces.” (Eric Fischl in conversation with Ealan Wingate, ‘Eric Fischl Sculpture’, Exhibition Catalogue, New York, Gagosian Gallery, 1998)

Never publicly displayed before, stands *BFF*, a new life-size bronze figure by KAWS. The artist’s iconic cast of characters draws us in with their cartoon-y aesthetic and witty disposition. Often with X’d-out eyes, and brightly colored noses, KAWS’ sculptures reflect on the range of human emotions via his signature visual language. Cast in bronze, with painted facial features, *BFF* adds a notably urban and street perspective to the discourse surrounding sculpture, one that historically was reserved to the highest of levels of academia and practice.

Diversely ranging from the abstracted to the more clearly recognizable forms, *Approaching The Figure*, inspires viewers to investigate our interactions with the figure; dissecting the artist’s original intent, and thereby reflecting on the space in which the sculptures occupy – both within the contemporary art world, and everyday life.

About Skarstedt

Skarstedt (20 E. 79th Street, New York, NY) was founded in 1994 by Per Skarstedt to mount historical exhibitions by Contemporary European and American artists. The New York gallery's program focuses on concepts such as representation, authorship, identity, and sexual politics across a wide-range of media. Skarstedt's unique relationship with artists allows it to present museum-quality exhibitions both on the primary and secondary markets, creating a dialogue between the generations.

Located at 8 Bennet Street, Skarstedt’s London gallery is situated in the historic district of St James’s, on the corner of Arlington Street and Bennet Street, both named after Henry Bennet, Earl of Arlington. Known as ‘ministerial street’ in the 17th and 18th centuries, the street was previously home to Prime Minister, Sir Robert Walpole and his son Horace Walpole, an esteemed collector and connoisseur. Measuring 5,000 square feet, with the main exhibition space at ground floor level, the three interconnected galleries enable Skarstedt to continue its program, of historically-researched and museum-quality exhibitions.

The gallery works with the following artists and artists’ estates: Francis Bacon, Georg Baselitz, Jean-Michel Basquiat, George Condo, Willem de Kooning, Eric Fischl, Peter Fischli & David Weiss, Lucio Fontana, Keith Haring, Jenny Holzer, Mike Kelley, Martin Kippenberger, Yves Klein, Jeff Koons, Barbara Kruger, Juan Muñoz, Cady Noland, Albert Oehlen, Richard Prince, David Salle, Thomas Schütte, Cindy Sherman, Rosemarie Trockel, Cy Twombly, Andy Warhol and Christopher Wool.

Image Details: Jeff Koons, *Bear and Policeman*, 1988, polychromed wood, 85 x 43 x 36 inches (215.9 x 109.2 x 91.4 cm) © Jeff Koons

