

**PRESS RELEASE**

**THOMAS RUFF**

**Tuesday 28 October 2003, 7.00 p.m. Galleria Lia Rumma Naples, Via Vannella Gaetani, 12**

Tel.+39.081.7643619, Fax +39.081.7644213

Gallery opening hours: from Wednesday to Friday, from 4.30 to 7.30

**Thursday 30 October 2003, 7.00 p.m. Galleria Lia Rumma Milan, Via Solferino, 44**

Tel.+39.02.29000101, Fax +39.02.29003805

Gallery opening hours: from Tuesday to Saturday, from 11.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. and from 3.00 p.m. to 7.00 p.m.

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The Lia Rumma Gallery opens its new season of shows with two exhibitions devoted to the work of Thomas Ruff. The inauguration in Naples will be followed very shortly by the opening of the exhibition in our Milan gallery. For the first time the German artist will present a new cycle of works about the Naples fish market, designed by Luigi Cosenza in 1929, as well as works taken from the series of *Nudes* and *Abstracts*.

Born in Zell am Harmersbach in 1958, Ruff is the leading figure of the group of artists who studied at the Düsseldorf academy under Bernd and Hilla Becher.

Starting from the assumption that photography can only capture the surface of things, “the authenticity of pre-established and manipulated reality”, Ruff focuses entirely on the creation of the image, as in the famous series of *Portraits* and *Constellations*, and on the subsequent manipulation of that image during printing, as in *Abstracts*, or in the more recent and controversial works of the cycle of *Nudes*. Departing from the teachings of his mentors, Ruff prefers the seductive quality of colour to the dryness and strong chiaroscuro of black and white, a factor that marks a radical change from the tradition of documentary photography.

In *Abstracts*, Ruff begins to show an interest in the poetics of digital technology. The images are created using splashes of colour which transcend the traditional role of photography, freeing it from its connection to reality.

In *Nudes* the artist takes pornographic images downloaded at a low resolution from the internet, enlarges and transforms them during printing so that they have a pictorial quality; this operation frequently deprives the images of their naturally aggressive energy.

For the fish market – a splendid example of rationalist architecture, built in the eastern part of Naples, close to the port - Thomas Ruff presents photographs in various formats which depict the exterior of the building, or views of the interior. In several of his works, the artist employs digital technology to create a hybrid image of the market as it appears today and images of the building in its original form and in a primitive urban context, using a sophisticated series of cross-references between past and present.

In his latest work, Ruff returns to dwell on a classic theme of “objective” photography, namely architecture; the artist began to examine this theme from the end of the 1980s by photographing anonymous buildings on the outskirts of Düsseldorf. The images have few signs of human presence and are full of precise details.

Thomas Ruff has exhibited his works widely, including the Tate Liverpool (2003), the Contemporary Fine Arts of Berlin (2002), M.O.M.A. in New York (1999), the Center for Contemporary Art in Malmö, Sweden (1996), the National Museum of Contemporary Art in Seoul (1995) and the Venice Biennale (1995).

With this exhibition the gallery consolidates its relationship with Thomas Ruff whose works (taken from the series *Portraits* and *Constellations*) were first presented in the Lia Rumma gallery in Naples in 1991. The artist will be present in the gallery for the inauguration.

The heirs of the Costanza family are warmly thanked for the invaluable help given to Thomas Ruff in his search for archive material.