Thomas Ruff | Paris Photo

At this year's edition of Paris Photo, celebrating the 200th anniversary of photography, Thomas Ruff will take over the 36-metre-long entrance wall of the Grand Palais, with works spanning more than four decades of the artist's practice.

The bicentenary of photography coincides with a moment in which the very nature of the photographic image is being fundamentally challenged. The proliferation of images through increasingly sophisticated possibilities of digital manipulation, has profoundly challenged photography's historical relationship to authenticity and truth. At a time when the distinction between photographic documentation and constructed imagery is becoming unstable, photography has emerged as one of the most compelling and critically relevant artistic media.

These questions, however, are far from new to Thomas Ruff's practice. For more than four decades, Ruff has investigated the conditions under which photographic images are produced and perceived. Rather than approaching photography primarily as a means of representing the visible world, he has consistently turned his attention to the medium itself—its technological foundations, its visual conventions, its historical development and its influence on our understanding of reality. In doing so, Ruff has played a pioneering role in expanding the conceptual and aesthetic possibilities of photography.

A major figure of the Düsseldorf School, Ruff has developed a distinctive conceptual approach through his use of existing imagery and engagement with technological processes. Throughout his career, he has explored what might be described as the "grammar of photography." At the heart of his complex œuvre lies a fundamental reconsideration of what constitutes a photograph. His wide-ranging body of work encompasses analogue portraits, appropriated images sourced from the internet, digitally transformed archival material and computer-generated photograms. Across these different series, photography emerges not as a fixed medium but as an evolving system of visual representation.

Ruff's work examines photography's historical, aesthetic and psychosocial dimensions, creating new visual experiences in the process. For the artist, photography is a technology capable of altering consciousness: the images we produce through it are akin to symptoms, revealing more about us than we could ever imagine.

Presented as part of the Prismes projects in the Main Sector, the installation is realized in collaboration with five galleries: Galleria Lia Rumma, Sprüth Magers, David Zwirner, Konrad Fischer Galerie, Mai 36 Galerie.

LIA RUMMA



e.l. - n°09, 2024
Inkjet print on canvas
Edition of 4, 1 AP

LIA RUMMA



flower.s_04, 2019
Chromogenic print
Edition of 6, 2 AP

LIA RUMMA



flower.s_10, 2019
Chromogenic print
Edition of 6, 2 AP

LIA RUMMA



flower.s_14, 2019
Chromogenic print
Edition of 6, 2 AP

LIA RUMMA



jpeg ibo2, 2007
Chromogenic print with Diasec
Edition of 3, 1 AP

LIA RUMMA



Nacht 2 II, 1995
Chromogenic print
Edition of 6, 3 AP

LIA RUMMA



Nacht 3 II, 1995
Chromogenic print
Edition of 6, 3 AP

LIA RUMMA



Nacht 10 II, 1995
Chromogenic print
Edition of 6, 3 AP

LIA RUMMA



Nacht 21 II, 1995
Chromogenic print
Edition of 6, 3 AP

LIA RUMMA



neg◊lesecq_03, 2016
Chromogenic print
Edition of 8, 3 AP

LIA RUMMA



neg◊lesecq_07, 2016
Chromogenic print
Edition of 8, 3 AP

LIA RUMMA



neg◊lesecq_11, 2016
Chromogenic print
Edition of 8, 3 AP

LIA RUMMA



neg◊lesecq_14, 2016
Chromogenic print
Edition of 8, 3 AP

LIA RUMMA



neg◊lesecq_15, 2016
Chromogenic print
Edition of 8, 3 AP

LIA RUMMA



neg◊lesecq_20, 2016
Chromogenic print
Edition of 8, 3 AP

LIA RUMMA



nudes c004, 2012
Chromogenic print with Diasec
Edition of 5, 2 AP

LIA RUMMA



phg.04_I, 2013
Chromogenic print with Diasec
Edition of 4, 1 AP

LIA RUMMA



Porträt (A. Zeitler) , 1998
Chromogenic print with Diasec
Edition of 4, 1 AP

LIA RUMMA



Star 16h 56m / -40°, 2020
Inkjet print with Diasec
Edition of 2, 1 AP

LIA RUMMA



tableau chinois_18 I, 2021
Chromogenic print with Diasec
Edition of 4, 1 AP

LIA RUMMA



tripe_03 Mysore. Landscape with leafless tree and tank., 2018
Chromogenic print
Edition of 6, 2 AP



tripe_09 Amerapoora. My-au-dyk kyoung., 2018
Chromogenic print
Edition of 6, 2 AP



tripe_14 Namculdroog. Droog and tank., 2018
Chromogenic print
Edition of 6, 2 AP



untitled#09, 2022
Chromogenic print with Diasec
Edition of 5, 2 AP

LIA RUMMA



untitled#20, 2022
Chromogenic print with Diasec
Edition of 5, 2 AP

LIA RUMMA

Thomas Ruff (b. 1958) first gained international recognition in the late 1980s as a leading figure of the Düsseldorf School, a group of photographers trained under Bernd and Hilla Becher who redefined the possibilities of photography through a conceptual and experimental approach. Ruff soon distinguished himself by radically departing from the Bechers' documentary style, developing a body of work that investigates the very structure and language of photography. Using strategies such as digital and manual image manipulation, large-scale printing, and the appropriation of found images, he has systematically explored genres including portraiture, the nude, landscape, and architectural photography. Working in distinct series, Ruff examines how photographic meaning is shaped by technology and perception. His sustained inquiry into what he calls the "grammar of photography" has made him one of the most influential artists of his generation, inspiring younger photographers and expanding the medium's conceptual reach. Recent solo exhibitions include: Malkastenforum, Düsseldorf (2024); MAMC+, Saint-Étienne (2022); National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Taichung (2021). Other major presentations have been held at K20 – Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf (2020–21); Whitechapel Gallery, London (2017); The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo (2016); Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto (2016); Haus der Kunst, Munich (2012) and Castello di Rivoli, Turin (2009). Thomas Ruff's works are part of major museum collections worldwide, including The Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Art Institute of Chicago; Nationalgalerie, Berlin; and Moderna Museet, Stockholm. He lives and works in Düsseldorf.