

BERGGRUEN

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TOM OTTERNESS

September 1 – October 1, 2022

Berggruen Gallery is proud to present *Tom Otterness*, an exhibition of sculptures by renowned New York based artist, Tom Otterness. This show marks Otterness's fifth solo exhibition with the gallery and will be on view September 1 through October 1, 2022. The gallery will host a reception for the artist on Thursday, September 8, 2022, from 5:00 to 7:00pm.

Tom Otterness, an iconic American sculptor, is celebrated for his bronze figures that animate public spaces throughout the world. His career began in 1978, when he became a member of Collaborative Projects, a pioneering community of independent artists in New York City, and he has since focused much of his work on site-specific projects. Otterness's public works are highly recognizable and widely appreciated, such as his popular 2004 multi figure sculptural installation *Life Underground* for New York Metropolitan Transportation at the 14th Street Union Square subway station. Otterness's spirited creatures generate moments of pause in busy urban life, allowing each passersby experiences of levity and satire while going about their daily lives. Otterness employs the lost-wax process to create his cast metal figures, ranging from palm-sized to monumental. His characters relay witty commentary and discerning truths on social matters, human emotions, and fabled idioms. This exhibition presents a survey of Otterness's sculptures from 1999 to 2022, including personified animals and humanoid figures, some of which simply serve to lighten the viewer's mood with a smile, while others tackle themes of economic disparity and political injustice.

Otterness transforms bronze into comical themes and whimsical remarks on commonplace fables using his creatures as the characters—capybaras, armadillos, and cows, to name a few. The artist's nearly life-sized bronze sculpture, *Cash Cow*, humorously addresses American capitalism and economics. His capybara duo plays with constructed gender identities and societal norms through their clothing and accessories—*Female Capybara* wears a pearl necklace and high heels, while *Male Capybara* wears a top hat and suit.

Otterness's figures explore a spectrum of sentiments. *Sad Sphere* depicts a sorrowful or overwhelmed figure hunched over with his head held defeatedly between his hands. In *Youth and Age*, Otterness juxtaposes the tensions and relationships between young and old, placing the overinflated confidence of adolescence—*Youth*—opposing the diminutive stature of an elderly figure—*Age*. Overshadowed by the physical dominance of *Youth*, *Age* is bent over his cane, but simultaneously, *Youth* appears to crouch down to hear the wisdom of *Age*. This work is but one example of how Otterness uniquely comments on the human condition with specificity and wit.

Long has John Berggruen Gallery worked with and admired the art of Tom Otterness, first presenting a solo exhibition in 1987. Now, almost two decades after his last solo show with the gallery, John Berggruen is excited to work with Otterness and celebrate their enduring friendship once again.

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Otterness's sculpture has been exhibited widely both nationally and internationally. He has had numerous solo museum exhibitions and public installations, including, *Making Hay*, Crystal Bridges Museum of Art, Bentonville, Arkansas; *Tom Otterness in Grand Rapids: The Gardens to The Grand*, Grand Rapids, Michigan; and *Tom Otterness on Broadway*, from Columbus Circle to 168th Street in New York City, New York; organized by the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation. His work can be seen in many public collections such as the Guggenheim Museum, New York, the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco; and The Miyagi Museum of Art in Sendai, Japan. He lives and works in New York.

Tom Otterness September 1- October 1, 2022. On view at 10 Hawthorne Street, San Francisco, CA 94105. Images and preview are available upon request. For all inquiries, please contact the gallery by phone (415) 781-4629 or by email info@berggruen.com.

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