

Zurich, 9 October 2018

Press Release

Sweet Nothings. Print series by Thomas Schütte

14 November 2018 – 27 January 2019

Opening: Tuesday 13 November 2018, doors open 6 p.m., introduction 6.30 p.m.

Thomas Schütte (born 1954 in Oldenburg) is a leading contemporary artist. Arguably the most important German sculptor of our time, he is known in Switzerland mainly for his bronze figures and ceramics. In this latest exhibition, Graphische Sammlung ETH Zürich puts the focus on his works on paper, presenting them to a wider Swiss audience for the very first time. Schütte's prints form an integral part of his oeuvre, as evidenced by the stunning technical and thematic range of his many diverse series and portfolios. The exhibition presents an overview from the past thirty years featuring not only his famous images of women and flowers, but also highlighting some lesser-known aspects of this German artist's work.

Thomas Schütte is not only the foremost German sculptor of our day, but is also a genuine draughtsman. It was a visit to Documenta 5 (1972) at the age of eighteen that prompted him to start drawing. One year later, he enrolled at the Kunstakademie in Düsseldorf. With his strongly idiosyncratic approach and his technical virtuosity, Schütte has crafted a masterly range of prints alongside his sculptures and drawings. Since 2001, he has been working with Till Verclas to produce series and cycles of prints. Together with this renowned printer and his Hamburg studio, he has created works of astonishing beauty and quiet lyricism, at times full of intimacy, at others staring into the existential abyss. Carefully selected examples of his remarkably compact output, including works from major private collections, can be found in the exhibition.

Graphische Sammlung ETH Zürich holds two particularly important works by Thomas Schütte: copies of his famous and exquisitely designed book editions – *Volume II. The Big Nix* (2005) and *Sweet Nothings* (2008). Inspired by the classic painters' books that emerged in France in the early twentieth century, the artist has pursued this genre for several years. When not actually publishing the books himself, he has them produced with painstaking typographical and printerly care on hand-made paper in small editions. In the tradition of these *livres de peintre*, the artist's books by Thomas Schütte also include original prints as well as texts. However, the prints are neither pure illustrations nor free interpretations of any literary predecessor. Instead, the artist provides the text himself – either in the form of a short story in the appendix or in the form of diary-style notations.

This is why the finely crafted books by Thomas Schütte are at the very heart of this presentation. Alongside these are selected cycles of prints covering not only an astonishing

range of themes but also a broad spectrum of the artist's technical repertoire within this particular medium. On the one hand, this indicates his general tendency, very much in the spirit of the reformist movements of the 1960s and 1970s, to abandon the old, familiar, and now jaded visual syntax. On the other hand, such an exquisite printed œuvre melds with the almost dreamlike quality that highlights the artist's peerless sophistication in the handling of classic printing techniques, which he interprets in a way that opens up vibrant new developments. This singular mastery is now displayed in a panoramic overview of the past thirty years that has been missing so far in Switzerland.

Practical Information

Curator	Alexandra Barcal, Graphische Sammlung ETH Zürich
Events	During the exhibition, there will be guided tours and two evening events . For details, see: https://gs.ethz.ch/agenda/
Opening hours	Daily, 10 a.m. – 4.45 p.m. Closed: 17, 30 November 2018 and 2 December 2018 and throughout the holiday period from 22 December 2018 to 2 January 2019.
Entrance	free
Press contact	Julia Burckhardt, Graphische Sammlung ETH Zürich Tel +41 44 632 40 46 presse@gs.ethz.ch
Website	www.gs.ethz.ch