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San Francisco's stellar John Berggruen Gallery reopens

The Human Form: inaugural show features 20th century masters from Matisse to Hopper



MEME XLII, 2009, by Antony Gormley | Image: Berggruen Gallery

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JANUARY 09 2017 / CHRISTINA OHLY EVANS

San Francisco's preeminent gallery dedicated to 20th century art, the Berggruen Gallery, is set to reopen in a historic space on Hawthorne Street with a new exhibition entitled *The Human Form* (from January 13). Spanning the early 20th century to the present, the show features works (from \$100,000-\$1m) by artists including Picasso, Matisse and Hopper, as well as contemporary works by George Condo, Kiki Smith and Antony Gormley, in media ranging from gouache studies to sculpture.



Abstracted Figures, 2011, by George Condo Image: Berggruen Gallery

Standouts are Edward Hopper's *Two Comedians* – an exquisitely spare painting from 1966 – and two of Picasso's explorations of the female figure that also show the shifts in his use of materials and processes. The first of these, *Nu jaune* (1907), is a proto-cubist watercolour, gouache and ink representation that is possibly a study for *Les Femmes d'Alger*, while *La femme qui pleure* (*The Weeping Woman*) from 1937 references the artist's lover, Dora Maar, and is considered one of his greatest printmaking achievements with its subtle combinations of etching, dry point and aquatint. Another highlight will be Henri Matisse's *Grand nu assis* – a bronze sculpture from 1922-1929 that was cast in 1952 – depicting a woman in gentle repose.

More recent works include *Portrait of Dacdjo Ndie Joseph* (2015) by Kehinde Wiley, an oil on canvas work that pays homage to the old masters juxtaposed with colourful pop culture references; George Condo's *Abstracted Figures*, an acrylic, charcoal and pastel on linen; and cast iron statues by Antony Gormley including *MEME XLII* from 2009, and *Submit IV* from 2011.

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Nu jaune, 1907, by Pablo Picasso | Image: Berggruen Gallery

“Since the opening of our gallery 47 years ago, we have been deeply committed to the arts community here,” says John Berggruen. “This relocation is an expression of our mission and our founding vision: to serve as advocates for the arts, artists and collectors – focusing on the icons of the 20th century and today’s generation of artists.” Credited with helping to launch the careers of seminal West Coast artists including Ed Ruscha and Mark Tansey, and creating a market for Bay Area Figurative school artists, including Richard Diebenkorn and Nathan Oliveira, Berggruen continues to bring stellar artistic programming to San Francisco.

Evans, Christina Ohly. “San Francisco’s stellar John Berggruen Gallery reopens.” *Financial Times*, January 9, 2017.