

Thomas Demand: The Stutter of History

Released July 7, 2022

Exhibition Period:

2022.7.8–2022.9.4

Exhibition Location:

UCCA Edge
2F, No. 88 Xizang Bei Lu
Jing'an District, Shanghai
China

Media Contact:

Laura Xue
Media Relations Manager
+86 21 6628 6861
+86 15010858162
bingyan.xue@ucca.org.cn

Press material available at
ucca.org.cn/en/press

Career-wide survey of Thomas Demand's architectonic photographic work presents disquieting, seemingly banal facsimiles of historical scenes, and the strange gap between the world we inhabit and the images we consume.

SHANGHAI, China — From July 8 to September 4, UCCA Edge presents “Thomas Demand: The Stutter of History,” a career-wide survey of Thomas Demand's (b. 1964, Munich, lives and works in Berlin and Los Angeles) sculptural and photographic work that captures the uncanny intersections of history, images, and architectonic forms. Showing over 70 photographs, films, and wallpapers that span the arc of Demand's career, this exhibition, his first comprehensive survey in China, will focus on four important areas of the artist's work: large-scale photographs that depict seemingly banal but historically significant scenarios reconstructed based on news or other source images; the personal “Dailies” constructed from images taken with his phone; photographic studies of paper models by architects and a fashion designer in the “Model Studies” series; and the artist's moving image work. “Thomas Demand: The Stutter of History” is curated by Douglas Fogle for the non-profit organization the Foundation for the Exhibition of Photography (FEP, Minneapolis/Paris/Lausanne), and is organized at UCCA Edge by Ara Qiu, Mason Zha, Zhang Yao, and Lin Luqi. UCCA Edge thanks audiences for their understanding regarding the impact that recent pandemic-related restrictions have had on the exhibition's originally planned opening date and duration. We are also grateful for the cooperation of museum visitors as we follow recommended pandemic prevention measures to ensure a safe viewing experience for all.

For Demand, “The Stutter of History” lies in the gap between existing images that depict the world around us, the 1:1 paper models he meticulously builds to reconstruct the spaces within these images, the photographs he takes of these models, the subsequent destruction of the models, and the para-photographic forms that then relaunch into the world. In the first section, the “uncanny histories” of Demand's large-scale photographs depict scenarios from the margins of historical events, moments, and developments throughout the twentieth century. These include the *Gangway* (2001) that Pope John Paul II

descended on his visit to unified Berlin; the *Bathroom* (1997) where Uwe Barschel, Minister-President of a German state, was found dead under dubious circumstances in 1987; and polling centers for the contentious 2000 United States presidential election (*Poll*, 2001). A selection of works also confront images associated with the Nazi regime and other traumas in German history, such as *Room* (1994), the shambolic site of a failed attempt to assassinate Hitler in 1944; German film director Leni Riefenstahl's monumental *Archive* (1995); the *Diving Board* (1994) that evokes the controversial 1936 Berlin Olympics and the diving sequence in Riefenstahl's Nazi-commissioned documentary of the games; and the ransacked *Office* (1995) of the former East German secret police. Closer to the present day, the five works in the "Refuge" series (2021) re-create the bleak, generic, and paranoia-inducing Russian hotel room presumably occupied by the fugitive American national security whistleblower Edward Snowden. Together, they highlight the banality of a state of emergency in the contemporary world of technological surveillance.

As a counterpoint to the public and monumental, the "Dailies" series (2008-2020), shown on the third floor, is the result of Demand's shift towards the personal and quotidian as the images that circulate on social media have come into their own as a distinct genre. Sized and framed in a manner similar to traditional photographs, the "Dailies" are photographs of paper models Demand reconstructed based on personal photographs taken with his iPhone on walks through his neighborhood and during his travels. These photographs depict the ordinary, sometimes humorous, and often overlooked moments that populate everyday life—a pile of unopened mail, a poster with tear-off tabs on a telephone pole, plastic cups stuck in a chain link fence. Presented on their own terms without further elaboration, they also pose as openings to stories that remain to be written.

Turning outwards and departing from sculptural reconstructions of images, Demand enters into a dialogue with models from other creative professions in his "Model Studies," connecting them to his own practice through an approach that is more utopian than utilitarian. He first began the series while in residence at the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles in 2011. The photographs on display here make fragmented and abstract studies of well-worn paper models from the architecture studio SANAA, as well as the radical paper dress patterns of fashion

designer Azzedine Alaïa, offering an alternative dimension to the use and haptic materiality of models, and the world that has been built based on them.

Finally, the exhibition investigates Demand's commitment to the moving image in his explorations of stop-motion filmmaking, as demonstrated in the work *Pacific Sun* (2012). Housed in a cinema-like intervention specially built in the fourth floor gallery, this epic, absurd stop-motion animation film is reconstructed from two minutes of security footage from the cruise ship Pacific Sun as it was hit by gigantic waves during a tropical storm off the coast of New Zealand. Demand's fastidious paper re-creation of the cruise ship—without its human populace—and choreography of its frenzied moments of uncontrolled chaos culminate in climatic absurdity, a state that is central to the gulf between the disquieting, utopian potential of his paper models and the mass consumption of their photographic doppelgängers.

Apart from individual artworks, exhibition design is an integral part of Demand's conceptual approach to artistic production and his long-standing interest in architecture. With his architectural use of textiles, wallpapers, and temporary structures, Demand creates an immersive environment for the spectator, in which image and world collide.

Support and Sponsorship

This presentation is sponsored by Prada. UCCA thanks Kvadrat for their special support and Dulux for exclusive wall solutions support. Gratitude to the members of UCCA Foundation Council, International Circle, and Young Associates, as well as Lead Partner Aranya, Lead Art Book Partner DIOR, Presenting Partners Bloomberg, Voyage Group, Yinyi Biotech, and Supporting Partners Active House, Barco, BenQ, Clivet, Dulux, and Genelec. City Window Outdoor Media Platform also provided support for this exhibition.

Exhibition Catalogue

Accompanying the exhibition, the English-language catalogue *The Stutter of History* has been produced in collaboration between the artist, art director Naomi Mizusaki, and Demand's longtime publisher MACK. The catalogue contains a curatorial introduction by Douglas Fogle, an essay by the art historian Margaret Iversen, and an original prose fiction piece by the Scottish author Ali

Smith, inspired by one of the artist's photographs.

Public Programs

During the exhibition period of "Thomas Demand: The Stutter of History," UCCA Edge will present a series of enriching public programs every weekend, including four inspiring exhibition tours led by special guests, eight conversations and workshops on topics closely related to or inspired by the work of Thomas Demand, and panels with artists and scholars. As scheduling and event venues may be subject to change, please follow UCCA Edge on our official website, WeChat account, and other social media platforms for more details and potential updates. All events are free to the public, and require advanced registration.

About the Artist

Thomas Demand (b. 1964, Munich, lives and works in Berlin) attended both the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich and the Düsseldorf Art Academy from 1987 to 1992 before receiving a master's degree in fine arts from Goldsmiths' College in London in 1993. Demand has shown his work at major museums and galleries worldwide. His solo projects include exhibitions at Centro Botin, Santander (2021); Garage, Moscow (2021); M Museum, Leuven (2020); Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth (2016); Los Angeles County Museum of Art (2014, 2015); DHC Art Center, Montréal (2013); National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne (2012); the Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo (2012); Kaldor Public Arts Project #25, Sydney (2012); Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam (2010); Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin (2009); Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, Vienna (2009); Fondazione Prada, Venice (2007); the Serpentine Gallery, London (2006); the Museum of Modern Art, New York (2005); the Kunsthaus Bregenz (2004); and a survey at Fondation Cartier, Paris (2001). He also represented Germany at the 26th Sao Paulo Biennale (2004). His widely acclaimed exhibition "The Boat is Leaking. The Captain Lied.," a collaboration with the filmmaker Alexander Kluge and the stage and costume designer Anna Viebrock, was on view at Fondazione Prada in Venice in 2017. His work has been included in four iterations of the Venice Architecture Biennale and was recently featured at the 2nd Chicago Architecture Biennale. Demand has curated several shows, including "L'Image Volée" at Fondazione Prada (Milan, 2016); "Model Studies" (Graham Foundation, Chicago, 2013); "La carte d'après nature" (Nouveau Musée National de Monaco, Monaco, 2010); and a contribution to the 13th Venice Architecture Biennale, "Common Ground" (2012). His work is represented in numerous museum

collections including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Centre Pompidou, Paris; and Tate Modern, London.

About UCCA Edge

Opened in May 2021, UCCA Edge occupies 5,500 square meters over three levels of the new EDGE tower in Shanghai's Jing'an District. Designed by New York-based architects SO – IL, the museum includes 1700 square meters of gallery space as well as a wraparound outdoor terrace and public spaces including a lobby and auditorium. As an integral part of the UCCA constellation, UCCA Edge mounts exhibitions of leading Chinese and international artists, some developed exclusively for the Shanghai audience, some touring from other UCCA locations. In 2021, UCCA Edge featured an opening show reflecting on the globalization of the Chinese art world through the prism of Shanghai, curated by UCCA Director Philip Tinari, a solo show of new paintings and archival materials by renowned artist Liu Xiaodong, and an Andy Warhol retrospective presented in collaboration with The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh. It also hosts a bistro, NEW WAVE by DA VITTORIO, developed by the Michelin-starred team of DA VITTORIO SHANGHAI, and an outpost of UCCA Store. Situated just north of People's Square and Suzhou Creek, and directly above the Qufu Lu station of the Shanghai Metro in a bustling revitalized neighborhood, UCCA Edge will quickly become an essential destination and an integral part of Shanghai's vibrant cultural fabric.

www.ucca.org.cn/en