

PRESS RELEASE



Katharina Fritsch, *Ei / Egg*, 2017, Plastic, paint
135 x 80 x 80 cm © Katharina Fritsch
Courtesy Matthew Marks Gallery

Katharina Fritsch **Opening June 2021** **Curated by Jessica Morgan**

The German sculptor Katharina Fritsch has made a significant contribution to visual art since the early 1980s. With distinctive cast forms painted in vivid colors, she has developed a specific sculptural lexicon encompassing a typology of everyday objects, animals, and humans, as well as installations based in the mythological and surreal. A master in the deployment of scale, Fritsch is known for installing her work in ways that demand our attention, typically leaving the sense of a resonant interior image or uncanny gestalt that is hard to dismiss or forget.

Fritsch's exhibition at the George Economou Collection is the artist's first solo show in Greece, a country whose own rich history of figurative sculpture, mythology, and storytelling resonates with her work and adds a new layer to its reception. Fritsch has chosen to show recent pieces alongside some of her earliest productions made during and soon after her studies at the Düsseldorf Art Academy in the early 1980s. Across the three floors of the space in Athens, the artist has orchestrated a carefully calibrated visitor experience. The artist has said, "I never see an exhibition as simply a sequence of works but always as one large picture." Each work included here has been selected for this total environment.

On the ground floor are three works—*Ei / Egg*, *Laterne / Lantern*, and *Schädel / Skull*—made to be exhibited together in 2017. Fritsch is known for grouping her works in relationships of concepts, colors, and forms that in effect establish their own environment of association. In this case, works that are deceptively simple in origin—a natural form, a somewhat historical-looking light fixture, and the familiar symbol of mortality—complicate one another, creating shifts in their more familiar meanings while bringing into play entirely new ones.

On the second floor Fritsch explores a nautical theme, capitalizing on the rich seafaring history of the Greek people and her own fascination with the stories, dreams, and creatures of the watery depths. Fritsch's bright orange *Oktopus / Octopus* (2008) lies like a specimen on a white tripod table, but despite being out of its habitat, the mythical-yet-real creature still clasps in a raised tentacle the body of a black-clad diver. The animal's legendary

intelligence and chameleon-like capacity to adapt to the color of its surroundings—a facility so refined it could, like *Ei / Egg*, form a perfect 50/50 split as it moves through the environment—suggests that Fritsch’s octopus, not human life, is the true victor of the sea. This impression is corroborated by the adjacent oversize enlargement of a nineteenth-century engraving depicting a diver finding the corpse of a female passenger in the wreck of a steamship. While one of the woman’s hands is draped gracefully on the floor, the surprised diver’s hands are raised in shock, creating a wave of gesture and action across the sexually charged image.

Fritsch has taken this exhibition as an opportunity to explore her ongoing interest in twilight—in the ambiguous, in the changeable and unstable moods, visions, and mental states that come with the moment of the day becoming night. Among her influences are the work of Giorgio de Chirico (born, not coincidentally perhaps, in Volos, Greece, in 1888). De Chirico’s dramatically isolated landscapes of forms are reflected in Fritsch’s display on the third floor, where each individual object takes on the attributes of a sign. Fritsch has said, “I think in pictures.” Her exhibition for the Economou Collection brings together images in which feelings, memories, stories, and experiences go beyond the subjective to produce an abundance of shared associations and interpretations.

The exhibition is curated by Jessica Morgan in close collaboration with the artist and Skarlet Smatana, Director of the George Economou Collection. A publication with essays by Morgan and Jacqueline Burckhardt will accompany the exhibition.

The exhibition will be on view from June 2021 at the George Economou Collection, 80 Kifissias Ave, 15125 Marousi, Athens, Greece. Our opening hours are Monday to Friday from 10 am to 6 pm. For further information or images, please contact Caroline May at +30 210 8090566 or caroline@artesia.gr

Notes to Editor

Jessica Morgan is currently Nathalie de Gunzburg Director of the Dia Art Foundation, which she joined as Director in January 2015. At Dia, Morgan is responsible for all parts of the institution’s program, including its pioneering Land art projects, site-specific commissions, and collections, exhibitions, and events across its constellation of sites. In 2018, Morgan announced a comprehensive, multi-year campaign that includes the upgrade, revitalization, and ongoing stewardship of Dia’s key spaces and artist sites.

Prior to assuming her position at Dia, Morgan was The Daskalopoulos Curator, International Art, at Tate Modern in London from 2010 to 2014, and Curator at Tate from 2002 to 2010. In addition to her work on exhibitions, Morgan played a key role in the growth of Tate’s collection—driving the development of the museum’s holdings of mid-century and emerging art from North America, the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia. Morgan was previously Chief Curator at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, and a curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago.

Morgan organized the 2020 Verbier Art Summit and served as the artistic director of the 10th Gwangju Biennale in 2014. She has published extensively in *Artforum* and *Parkett* as well as other journals and scholarly publications.

The George Economou Collection

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