

## *The BFG*

kaufmann repetto is pleased to present *The BFG*, a group exhibition comprised of works by Robert Breer, Franco Mazzucchelli, Shimabuku, and Franz Erhard Walther. The exhibition is titled after Roald Dahl's 1982 novel of the same name, an acronym for 'The Big Friendly Giant'. The artists within the exhibition work in ways that distort and contradict conventions of the monumental, be it through sheer physicality or by evoking a sense of wonder through shifts in everyday perspectives and phenomena.

Rather than imposing a static, monolithic presence, the works on view deny durability and identification with a concrete form and position. Instead, these works relate to the environment as they adapt to it, instilling a sense of familiarity that transforms the viewer's relationship with the site itself.

The works on view within *The BFG* subvert authoritarian themes of control and conditioning by offering viewers opportunities of engagement and participation, whereby an awareness of not fitting in serves as reminder to appreciate, embrace and consider even the most improbable of everyday encounters.

Robert Breer (b. 1926, Detroit, MI - 2011, Tucson, AZ) was an experimental filmmaker and artist who worked in a multidisciplinary manner utilizing painting, sculpture, and installation-based practices. Both his films and his sculptures disrupted the concepts of linear narratives in art-making and ideas about figure-ground relationships. His mechanized *Floats* are considered to have tested these conventions of fixed sculptural works and their relationships to the laws of space. Breer was interested in the ways in which these works behaved independently to outside control; when prohibited of navigating in one direction, the works redirect themselves in the opposite. Retrospectives and solo exhibitions of Breer's works have been held at the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead; CAPC, Bordeaux; and Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris; among others. A *Float* by Robert Breer is currently installed within MoMA's sculpture garden.

Franco Mazzucchelli (b. 1939, Milan, IT) lives and works in Milan. Since the 1970's, Mazzucchelli has been creating inflatable sculptures, like the one on view, typically with the intentions to place and abandon the works in public, outdoor environments. These unannounced works would shift the familiarities with the given site by various passersby; often calling to attention and into action the intervention of various societal roles - the police may destroy the piece, while children may play upon it; others may take them away, stray from their typical paths in avoidance of the strange and potentially threatening object, while others may simply marvel it. What typically remains thereafter, in the sculpture's absence, are photographs and videos captured by the artist, serving as evidence of the altered, inhabited environment, as it once was and as it is now. Mazzucchelli's works have been included in historical exhibitions including the 15th Milan Triennale (1973), the 37th Venice Biennale (1976) and the 11th Rome Quadrennial (1986). Earlier this year (2018), the Museo del Novecento, Milan, presented an exhibition of Mazzucchelli's works conceived between the mid 1960's and the end of the 1970's. Mazzucchelli was professor of Techniques of Sculpture at the Brera Academy of Fine Arts in Milan.

Shimabuku (b. 1969, Kobe, Japan) lives and works in Okinawa. His works frequently engage nature in an often-humorous yet poetic allusion to and projection of the wonder and potential in what surrounds us. In his work on view, *Something that Floats / Something that Sinks*, fruits and vegetables encircle each other, in a pas de deux of sorts, demonstrating an odd natural phenomenon of the differential densities in similar bodies. Solo exhibitions of Shimabuku's work have been held at Kunsthalle Bern, CH; Kunstverein

Lübeck, DE; Whitechapel Gallery, London; CAPC Musée d'art Contemporain de Bordeaux, FR; The National Museum of Art, Osaka; and Vancouver Contemporary Art Gallery; among others. Recently his work has been included within the 57th Venice Biennial (2017) and the Okayama Art Summit curated by Liam Gillick (2016). His work is a part of numerous public collections, such as the Louis Vuitton Foundation, Paris; FRAC Ile de France, Paris; FRAC Corse, Corte, France; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Nouveau Musée National de Monaco, Monaco; and Kunstmuseum Bern, Switzerland. (2017) and the Okayama Art Summit curated by Liam Gillick (2016). His work is a part of numerous public collections, such as the Louis Vuitton Foundation, Paris; FRAC Ile de France, Paris; FRAC Corse, Corte, France; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Nouveau Musée National de Monaco, Monaco; and Kunstmuseum Bern, Switzerland.

Franz Erhard Walther (b. 1939, Fulda, DE) lives and works in Fulda. His canvas-based works that incorporate the activation by the viewer's own perceptions and physical body were devised as a means to "leave art history and discover new materials". These works are presented in two modes, *Lagerform/Storage Situations* or *Handlungsform/Action Situations*. In *Storage Situations*, the work is packed away, embodying the shape of its potential, while viewers are encouraged to formulate their ideas about the piece through looking and envisioning the possibilities of its form. In *Action Situations*, the works exist as fragments until the viewer's own body is incorporated. When the artwork is completed via the involvement of the human figure, it remains in a fragmentary form for the viewer experiencing the artwork, as the image of the work's completeness can only be conceived via imagination. Major solo exhibitions and retrospectives of Walther's work have been held at Dia Art Foundation, Dia:Beacon, New York; Hamburger Kunsthalle; Fundación Jumex Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City; Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Geneva; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte, Reina Sofia, Madrid; The Power Plant, Toronto; MUDAM, Luxembourg; Wiels Contemporary Art Centre, Brussels; CAPC Musée d'Art Contemporain de Bordeaux, FR; Städel Museum, Frankfurt am Main; Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven; and the The Museum of Modern Art, New York; among many others. His works have been included in numerous biennials and institutional exhibitions such as the 57th Venice Biennale, Arsenale; Manifesta 11, Zürich; La Biennale di Venezia, When Attitudes Become Form: Bern 1969/Venice 2013, Fondazione Prada, Venice; 30th Bienal de Sao Paulo; and Documenta 5, 6, 7, and 8, Kassel; among many others. From 1971 through 2005 he held a chair at the Hochschule für Bildende Künste Hamburg (class for sculpture).