

CHRISTIE'S

Thomas Schütte: Recasting the female nude

Art critic Adrian Searle discusses the bronze figure of a crouching woman by 'one of the most important sculptors today'

'For me, Thomas Schütte is one of the most important sculptors today,' says art critic Adrian Searle, introducing the artist's monumental *Bronzefrau Nr. 13* (2003), from his iconic series of 18 *Frauen* (*Women*).

Schütte studied at the Düsseldorf Academy under the celebrated painter Gerhard Richter. Starting out 'somewhere between a conceptualist and a painter', for Searle, he is an artist whose varied practice comfortably merits the term 'multidisciplinary'.

Bronzefrau Nr. 13 depicts a crouching woman on a vast steel plinth, her figure powerfully contorted. '[Schütte] is not following a realist path at all,' Searle continues. 'He's letting the form take him where it will and playing with differences: the texture of the hair against the delicacy of a shoulder blade, a breast or a clavicle.'

Commenting on *Frauen*, Schütte has said, 'Avoiding certain fixed positions is important to me — avoiding being too classical or too predictable'. As Searle circles the sculpture, a sense of fluidity becomes apparent in the sculpture: a 'fantastic curve' runs along the spine to shoulder blades that become 'like wings' — these angular elements finding their foil in 'lovely hollows in the leg'.



Thomas Schütte (b. 1954), *Bronzefrau Nr. 13*. Bronze figure on steel table, 70 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 98 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 49 $\frac{1}{4}$ in (180 x 250 x 125 cm). Estimate: £1,200,000-1,800,000. This lot is offered in Post-War & Contemporary Art Evening Auction on 6 October 2016 at Christie's in London, King Street

‘Schütte wants to give us the thing itself, and a sketch at the same time,’ Searle continues. ‘That liveliness of execution and the differences through the figure that keep our eye moving — keep us moving — is extremely sensual.’ The resulting figure is ‘somehow alive’ — its maker an ‘incredibly important and difficult artist’ who, as the best do, ‘goes his own way’.

3 October 2016