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R & Company Presents

Thaddeus Wolfe: New Work

September 8 – October 29, 2015

Opening Reception:
Tuesday, September 8, 6-8 pm

R & Company is thrilled to announce the opening of *Thaddeus Wolfe: New Work*, the gallery's first solo exhibition of work by the exceptional emerging glass artist. The exhibition will feature a collection of over twenty never-before-seen works, including pendants, wall-hung illuminated sculptures, and vessels. *Thaddeus Wolfe: New Work* opens on September 8th from 6-8 pm. The artist will be present for the opening.

Wolfe's work has garnered attention for the extraordinary colors, textures and forms he brings out through his process of creating blown glass casts of styrofoam assemblages. For

each piece, Wolfe blows a bubble composed of several layers of colored and clear glass into a plaster and silica mold. When the glass has cooled in the mold, over the course of some days, Wolfe breaks the mold away to reveal the piece. The next step is to refine the glass through the cold-working process—planning, grinding and polishing the exterior colors and surfaces. The removal of exterior colors, which Wolfe has termed “unsurfacing,” reveals the complex layers of the pieces and creates a visual complexity that suggests a three-dimensional painting.

Wolfe has found inspiration in the Brooklyn neighborhoods where he lives and works. In his artist statement, he writes, “For some time, I have been interested in the organic deterioration of urban surfaces in my surroundings. The area around me is a mixture of old industrial spaces and residential buildings and contains a crumbling infrastructure full of graffiti, trash and interesting weeds, interspersed with, and contrasting to, some pristine new development. The walk between my studio and my house is full of this sort of visual input, which can appear quite ugly without careful observation.” An avid mushroom-forager, Wolfe adds, “To provide an alternate context, I also spend as much time as I can getting out of this urban setting and spending time looking at nature. My interest in finding mushrooms is often the impetus for these travels, and has caused me to look more carefully at plants and



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nature. Several newer pieces in the exhibition will reflect this, by incorporating patterns and color schemes found on certain mushrooms and plants.”

R & Company principal Zesty Meyers explains, "What sets Thaddeus Wolfe's work apart in the current landscape of design is how beautifully he weaves together influences and processes from painting, sculpture and glassmaking, while also pushing forward the material in a way I have never seen. We are thrilled to present Thaddeus's first solo exhibition at R & Company, and to have the opportunity to show a body of work that makes his accomplishments apparent.”

Wolfe's work has been compared to Brutalist architecture, which is apt given the architectural process by which he builds his work. Viewers are often surprised to find, upon touch and closer viewing, that Wolfe's pieces are indeed glass. Interestingly, glass artists are not present among those Wolfe cites as current inspiration. Instead, his inspirations include the Austrian sculptor Franz West, the playfully intellectual Italian designers Gaetano Pesce and Ettore Sottsass who both worked in a variety of media, and Peter Voulkos and Ken Price—the abstract expressionist sculptors whose medium was clay, and whose works are revered as icons of American craft and art. Wolfe works in a single material, glass, but his skill is such that he can employ any particular inspiration, process and form to lift the material beyond preconceived ideas about its visual or formal possibilities.

Thaddeus Wolfe: New Work remains on view through October 29th, 2015.

About Thaddeus Wolfe

Emerging glass artist Thaddeus Wolfe (b. 1979) employs a non-traditional approach to classical glass techniques and processes to create an exciting body of work that offers a unique and captivating new direction for the material. Born and raised in Toledo, Ohio, Wolfe studied glass at the Cleveland Institute of Art, graduating with a BFA in 2002. Wolfe has held artist residencies at Pilchuck Glass School (Seattle, WA), Wheaton's Creative Glass Center of America (Millville, NJ) and the Museum of Glass (Tacoma, WA). He has also worked as an apprentice and assistant to leading glass blowers, including Jeff Zimmerman and Josiah McElheny. He lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

About R & Company

R & Company is a gallery committed to historic and contemporary design exhibition and education. Founded by Zesty Meyers and Evan Snyderman in 1997, it presents groundbreaking exhibitions and publications of both historic significance and emerging talent. R & Company represents a diverse program of international design from North America, South America, Europe, and Asia, produced between 1945 and today. R & Company has an extensive archive, library, and collection that chronicle the rapid ascent of the design market. In addition to the exhibition program, gallery, and publications, Meyers and Snyderman contribute widely to publications and lecture frequently about design.

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Images: Unique assemblage vessels in hand-blown, cut and polished glass. Designed and made by Thaddeus Wolfe, USA 2015. Photo: Joe Kramm/R & Company.

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