

PETER FREEMAN, INC. 140 GRAND STREET NEW YORK NEW YORK 10013

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PRESS RELEASE

exhibition: Franz Erhard Walther

date: 31 October – 20 December 2013

Peter Freeman, Inc., New York, is pleased to present an exhibition of new work by German artist Franz Erhard Walther. It is the gallery's second solo show with Walther, and is the artist's first exhibition of new work presented in New York in 22 years.

Walther is widely recognized as an originator of participatory art. Since the 1960s, he has conceived of his canvas sculptures as "instruments," and has placed the viewer in a critical role: only when the objects are used, in ways appointed by the artist, are they completed. Unlike many other artists following his lead in creating sculptures for the viewer to handle and animate, Walther is not motivated by spectacle, humor, or the nature of performance, but rather the meditative and contemplative possibilities of the experience.

The new works on view are from the recent series *Körperformen (Body Shapes)*, dating from 2006 to 2013, and relate to the *Werksatz* drawings as well as to *Vier Körperformen* (1963), also on view, a reminder of the origins of, and the artist's long engagement with, themes of sculptural/bodily interaction. The new *Body Shapes*, made of dyed canvas sewn around foam shapes, are composed of four, six and eight elements, allowing for multiple installations adaptive to the exhibition space. In that sense, they broaden the scope of the work beyond the body into spatial installation and the sculptures' relation to one another, with potentially infinite resulting sculptural situations. Another important development in the new work is that the deliberately stiff and solid nature of these sculptures reduces physical manipulation—the imagination now participating in what the artist has long called the "action process" of the viewer's role. The exhibition is completed with a group of 28 new drawings made in 2013, part of a larger series that will feature in Walther's upcoming artist's book to be published by Hatje Cantz in 2014.

Walther was born in 1939 in Fulda, Germany, where he now lives and works. He studied at the Städelschule Frankfurt and continued studies at the Düsseldorf Academy in the early 1960s with Karl Otto Götz. Walther soon gained recognition for his own experimental sculpture and was included in important group exhibitions such as *When Attitudes Become Form* (1969, curated by Harald Szeeman at Kunsthalle Bern, recreated for the 2013 Venice Biennale) and *SPACES* (1969-70, Museum of Modern Art, New York) and participated in *documenta* four times between 1972 and 1987 (Kassel, Germany). Recently, his work was included in the 2012 São Paulo *Biennale*. Walther has had more than 50 one-person museum shows at venues including Secession, Vienna (1989); Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain, Geneva (1999 and 2010), DIA: Beacon, New York (2010), and Hamburger Kunsthalle (2013). His work is in many important public collections, including Centre Pompidou, Paris; Hamburger Kunsthalle; Kunstmuseum Bonn; Museum of Modern Art, New York; and Staatsgalerie Stuttgart. His work will be featured in several upcoming shows internationally, including a solo show at WIELS Centre d'Art Contemporain in Brussels (2014).

A reception for the artist will be held on Thursday, 31 October, from 6 to 8 pm.

For reproduction requests, interviews with the artist and general inquiries, please contact the gallery at 212-966-5154 or info@peterfreemaninc.com.