

PHILIPPE COGNÉE

Crowds

7 January – 12 March 2017

Private view: Saturday 7 January from 12:00 to 8.30 pm



Philippe Cognée, *Crowd under the Sun*, 2014, wax painting on canvas, 78 3/4 x 78 3/4 in.

French artist Philippe Cognée returns to Paris and Galerie Templon for the first time in four years with an exhibition devoted to his new series of paintings of crowds.

With these works, he continues to explore the individual and the collective, the visible and invisible, the place of the real and the place of art.

Figures emerge then dissolve into compact, hazy throngs within compositions that at first sight appear abstract. The viewer, faced with such extreme pictorial density, can no longer distinguish the image as figure from the material: 'That which is enclosed within this layer of paint, within the crowd itself, is the individual.'¹

'From figuration to defiguration, immediate to distant'¹, Philippe Cognée's blurred crowds are redolent of visions provided by new technologies and satellites, at once implacable yet imprecise. In the face of this proliferation of degraded images, Cognée responds with the power of painting, unique in its ability to transcend the movement of swarming humanity within a landscape that is at times dreamlike.

Philippe Cognée's twenty-year artistic journey has led him to encounter a reality that is both stark and commonplace, made up of motorways, suburbs, industrial abattoirs, supermarket shelves and recycling plants. He draws on this encounter to paint a remarkable portrait of a reality described by Guy Tosatto as 'signposted and indefinable.'²

Philippe Cognée was born in 1957 and studied at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Nantes, where he lives and works. One of the leading artists of his generation, a Villa Médicis prize winner in 1990 and nominee for the 2004 Marcel Duchamp Prize, he taught at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts in Paris until 2015.

His work has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions, including at Geneva's Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (MAMCO) in 2006 and the Haute-Normandie regional contemporary art collection in 2007. In 2011, he inaugurated *Echo*, a public commission for the Château de Versailles. The Musée de Grenoble held a major retrospective of his work in 2013, which then transferred to Dole. Also in 2013, he featured in the *Vues d'en Haut* exhibition at the Centre Pompidou Metz. In 2014, he exhibited his work at Château de Chambord in the Loire Valley, and in 2016 at the Fondation Fernet-Branca in Alsace.

His works feature in many prominent collections, including at the Musée National d'Art Moderne - Centre Pompidou and Fondation Cartier in Paris, and the Museum Ludwig in Cologne.

Philippe Cognée is represented by Galerie Templon since 2003.

¹Judicaël Lavrador, *Stephan Balkenhol/Philippe Cognée*, Fondation Fernet-Branca, 2016

²Guy Tosatto, *Philippe Cognée*, Musée de Grenoble, 2012