

Thomas Ruff
jpegs ny

September 10–October 17, 2026
533 West 19th Street, New York



Thomas Ruff, *jpeg ny02*, 2004. © Thomas Ruff/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Germany
Courtesy the artist and David Zwirner

David Zwirner is pleased to present an important group of photographs by Thomas Ruff at the gallery's 533 West 19th Street location in New York. Featuring images from *jpegs ny*, a subset of the artist's larger *jpegs* series, the twelve works on view are derived from images of the World Trade Center attacks in New York on September 11, 2001. Coinciding with the twenty-fifth anniversary of the attacks, this exhibition was conceived by the artist as a commemoration of that day. Prior to the exhibition in New York, this group of works was also on view as part of Unlimited at Art Basel 2026.

Ruff was in New York on September 11, 2001, and he shot numerous photographs documenting that day and its aftermath, but when he returned home to Germany several days later he realized there were no images on his camera. Three years later, in 2004, the event was still front of mind for the artist. Seeking an appropriate artistic response to tragedy on such an unimaginable scale, he began to source and appropriate imagery of September 11 from the internet. Using digital techniques, Ruff altered the selected images by changing their structure, often increasing their compression, lowering the number of pixels per centimeter, and adding color. Through these manipulations, he initiated a process of

abstraction that would make these otherwise ubiquitous images his own. Blown up to the scale of traditional nineteenth-century history paintings, these works remain legible yet noticeably blurred, producing an almost painterly effect wherein grids of mechanical pixelation substitute for the expressiveness of a brushstroke, and, like the works of the impressionists, the full image only comes into view at a distance. The resulting large-format prints appear overtly pixelated and at times almost abstract.

Other editions from *jpegs ny* are held in the collections of The Broad, Los Angeles; Glenstone Museum, Potomac, Maryland; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; and Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. Concurrent with this exhibition, a related work from this series will be on view at a group exhibition at the New York City Fire Museum organized by Ground Zero 360, which will also commemorate the anniversary. The artist has also been invited to install a special presentation at Paris Photo at the Grand Palais, which will coincide with the opening of a solo show at David Zwirner Los Angeles in November 2026. That exhibition—Ruff's first solo presentation in Los Angeles since 1990—will survey his production over four decades of his career, highlighting the multiplicity of procedures he deploys to create his photographs.

Born in Zell am Harmersbach, West Germany, Thomas Ruff (b. 1958) attended the Staatliche Kunstakademie in Düsseldorf from 1977 to 1985.

In 2024, Ruff was the subject of the inaugural exhibition at Malkastenforum, the new building of the Malkasten artists' association founded in Düsseldorf in 1848. A solo presentation of the artist's work was on view at K20 – Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf, in 2020–2021. Works from *tableaux chinois*, alongside fifteen other series dating back to 1989, were on view in *Thomas Ruff: after.images – Works 1989–2020*, a major solo exhibition of the artist's work curated by Martin Germann at the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Taichung, in 2021. In 2022, *Thomas Ruff: Méta-photographie* was on view at the Musée d'art moderne et contemporain de Saint-Étienne Métropole (MAMC+), France. Later in 2022, a two-person exhibition, *Dark Matter*, featuring work by Ruff and James Welling was presented at Kunsthalle Bielefeld, Germany.

In 2018, Ruff was featured in *Photography Spotlight*, an exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London that celebrated the opening of the museum's new Photography Centre. The artist created a new body of work titled *Tripe* as a special commission to inaugurate the space.

Ruff's work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at prominent institutions worldwide, including Whitechapel Gallery, London (2017); The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo (2016; traveled to 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Japan); Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto (2016); Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (S.M.A.K.), Ghent (2014; traveled to Kunsthalle Düsseldorf); Haus der Kunst, Munich (2012); LWL-Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte, Münster (2011); Centro de Arte Contemporáneo de Málaga, Spain (2011); Castello di Rivoli, Turin (2009); Museum für Neue Kunst, Freiburg, Germany (2009); Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna (2009); Múcsarnok Kunsthalle, Budapest (2008); Moderna Museet, Stockholm (2007); Sprengel Museum Hannover, Germany (2007); Musée d'art moderne et contemporain, Geneva (2004); and Museo Tamayo, Mexico City (2002).

In 2001–2002, *Thomas Ruff: Photographs 1979 to Present* opened at Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden, Germany. This major solo exhibition of the artist's work traveled through 2004 to the Museet for samtidskunst, Oslo; Museum Folkwang, Essen, Germany; Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich; Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin; Artium Museoa: Museo de Arte Contemporáneo del País Vasco, Vitoria Gasteiz, Spain; Museu de Serralves, Porto; Tate Liverpool, England; and Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art, Warsaw.

Ruff's work has been represented by David Zwirner since 2000, and in that time he has had thirteen solo exhibitions with the gallery, including numerous shows in New York (2000, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2010, 2013, 2016, and 2022), as well as exhibitions in London (2016, 2025), Hong Kong (2019), and Paris (2021).

Work by the artist is held in museum collections worldwide, including the Art Institute of Chicago; Dallas Museum of Art; Essl Museum, Klosterneuburg, Austria; Nationalgalerie, Berlin; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC; K20 – Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; National Museum of Photography, Copenhagen; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; and Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (S.M.A.K.), Ghent. Ruff lives and works in Düsseldorf.

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