

## THOMAS DANE GALLERY

### **Dana Schutz** ***One Big Animal***

Private view: Monday 13 October, 5–8pm  
Exhibition dates: 14 October–20 December 2025

Thomas Dane Gallery  
3 & 11 Duke Street, St James's, London SW1

Thomas Dane Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of new paintings and sculptures by Dana Schutz, opening during Frieze London 2025 across the gallery's two spaces on Duke Street, St. James's.

*One Big Animal* will be the artist's second solo exhibition with the gallery, following *Shadow of a Cloud Moving Slowly* in 2020, and major survey exhibitions in Europe in the intervening years: *Between Us* at Louisiana Museum of Art, Humlebæk, Denmark (2023) and *Le monde visible (The Visible World)* at the Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris (2023–2024).

Testing the canvas as an affective space, Schutz's paintings often depict ambiguous scenes of singular, coupled or grouped figures in hypothetical, absurd or impossible situations, or strange narratives where imagined crises and social relations are held in tension. While deeply informed by history painting, her pictures see the specifics of time and place recede to bring forward heightened psychological states, sensations and deeper subjective experiences. Built from an alchemy of deftly worked wet-on-wet painting, the dramas on the canvas run the gamut of emotive registers from humour and joy to anxiety and hopelessness, within which the terrible and beautiful collide.

The exhibition title, *One Big Animal*, evokes the sense of a group acting as one organism, working in unison or formation, whether knowingly or blindly. The idea finds pictorial form in the painting *Walking Boat*, in which a vessel carrying Cyclopes and figures, each preoccupied in their own endeavours – lighting their path with a torch, or stitching one of the lemons scattered around the boat – strides forth illuminating or destroying what is in its path. In *The Rally*, a gleefully chaotic mob, like a many headed monster, walks towards some shared future, leaving in its wake a trail of trash, broken bottles and buildings falling like dominoes in the distance. It is unclear who forms the group but, in the end, it does not matter as they push on with their horns and grimaces in their celebratory mood. In *The Kiss* two figures become one in an ambiguous embrace that is at once sexual, violent and repellent. The human's hair appears like tentacles, and she fights or dances with a monstrous bug, a sort of liminal creature: part crustacean, part insect. The weather is cheerful, the scene perhaps at the beach; a picnic blanket rests on the ground, anchoring the moment in the quotidian, real world.

Themes of political and social theatre emerge, and the relationship between viewer and viewed, in paintings that have an allegorical or mythological tendency. In *The Example* a figure, dressed like a suited salesman, gropes blindly around him and gestures towards a man-baby figure, bound to a tree in what might be a public humiliation. The figures are decentred and, with a blue jay bird in a bell jar, are framed by fecund apple trees, a fruit that evokes both wisdom and sin. The scene is set on a stage and tiny people gather below collecting apples, watching the show. In *The Mantle* another stage is set: a Dionysian chorus performs a public ceremony of sorts, perhaps of revelation or exposure. The masked/unmasked figures of the central protagonists look and reach out of the picture field, their forms sculpted and articulated in contrast to the crowd – a melting mass of people and material that surrounds them below.

Costuming and its typological and symbolic nature are explored with *The Bride*, who with brazen half-dressed and rosy-cheeked suggestiveness, stares out fragmented from the darkness. There are scenes of dressing and undressing, masks being put on or taken off. In *Daily Wear* a figure holds up the deflated skin of an assumed companion, as if grasping something that is slipping away. Body parts are strewn like discarded clothing across the desolate landscape around them and there is a pervading sense of sadness and loss.

3 & 11 DUKE STREET, ST JAMES'S, LONDON SW1Y 6BN

TEL: +44 (0)20 7925 2505 FAX: +44 (0)20 7925 2506 [info@thomasdanegallery.com](mailto:info@thomasdanegallery.com)

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Alongside these paintings, three new sculptures in bronze will be shown: *Lesson on a Boat*, *Glory* and *Bather* (all 2025). The characters and painterly physicality of Schutz's canvases are given three-dimensional form in her bronze sculptures in which enigmatic characters and scenarios appear to materialise from dense primordial matter. The sculptures are first moulded in clay, a medium which informs and guides the emergence of forms and retains the gestural quality of the hand as tactile residues in the final bronze. Negotiating the relationship between form and formlessness, the sculptures are seemingly captured in the moment of becoming.

Accompanying the exhibition is a group of eight new dry-point etchings published with Two Palms in New York, with whom Schutz has worked since 2012. Revisiting and reworking the scenarios of previous paintings – *Glory* (2024), *The Optometrist* (2024) and *Lesson on a Boat* (2024), for instance – Schutz worked directly on copper plates with traditional etching tools (burnishers, scrapers, roulettes and needles) as well as less traditional tools such as sandpaper, a rotary machine and a tattoo machine, giving them a singular intensity and texture.

Dana Schutz (b. 1976, Livonia MI) lives and works in New York. She received her BFA from the Cleveland Institute of Art and her MFA from Columbia University, New York.

Recent solo museum exhibitions include Dana Schutz: *Between Us* at the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark (2023), followed by *The Visible World* at the Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris (2023–2024); *The Island*, George Economou Collection, Athens (2024); *Eating Atom Bombs*, held at the Transformer Station, Cleveland (2018); an exhibition of new work at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston (2017); a career survey at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal (2015); and a comprehensive solo exhibition at The Hepworth Wakefield, England (2013, which travelled to Kestner Gesellschaft, Hanover, Germany, 2014).

*Dana Schutz*, the first comprehensive monograph on the artist's work, was published by Phaidon Press in 2023, and includes essays by Dan Nadel and Lynne Tillman, and an interview with Schutz by Hamza Walker.

Selected public collections include: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York NY; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York NY; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York NY; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles CA; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco CA; Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston MA; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston MA; The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal, Canada; Museo d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto, Rovereto, Italy; Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark; Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris, Paris, France; National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, Australia and Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia.

For exhibition and sales enquiries please contact Clare Morris: [claremorris@thomasdanegallery.com](mailto:claremorris@thomasdanegallery.com)

For press enquiries please contact:

Thomas Dane Gallery, Patrick Shier: [patrick@thomasdanegallery.com](mailto:patrick@thomasdanegallery.com)

Rees & Co, Megan Miller: [megan.miller@reesandco.com](mailto:megan.miller@reesandco.com) | +44 (0)7743 036449

Gallery hours: Tuesday to Friday 11am–6pm, Saturday 12pm–6pm or by appointment.

Admission: Free

Tel: +44 (0) 20 79252505

Nearest Tube: Green Park or Piccadilly Circus

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