

David Zwirner to represent the Estate of Juan Muñoz



Juan Muñoz, 2001. Photo: Hugo Glendinning.
Courtesy Estate of Juan Muñoz and David Zwirner

(New York, London, Paris & Hong Kong—July 9, 2020)—David Zwirner is pleased to announce its exclusive worldwide representation of the Estate of Juan Muñoz. The Estate comes to the gallery on the recommendation of Marian Goodman. Marian Goodman Gallery has represented Muñoz’s work since 1990 and has mounted six shows in New York between 1991 and 2015. David Zwirner is looking forward to continuing to promote and further the legacy of Juan Muñoz. The gallery is planning a solo exhibition of Muñoz’s work for New York in the spring of 2021, curated by Vicente Todolí. *Juan Muñoz: Six Rooms* will be on view at the gallery’s Chelsea spaces and will include six major installations by the artist, from 1986 to 2001, that exemplify the formal and perceptual breadth of his sculptural works.

Juan Muñoz was among the most significant artists to rise to international prominence in the mid-1980s and 1990s. In his formally inventive works, which range from isolated architectural elements that suggest a human presence to evocative large-scale installations comprising figures arranged in groups, Muñoz sought to foreground the relationship between the art object, architectural space, and the viewer. Until his untimely death in 2001, at the age of forty-eight, he produced an extensive body of work that includes not only sculptures and installations but also drawings, writings, sound works, and curatorial projects that uniquely explore the narrative and philosophical possibilities of art.

As curator Neal Benezra describes, “While Muñoz is committed to resolving the form and content of a particular object, a parallel interest centers on its conceptual and emotional underpinning.... [Muñoz opens] his work to a panoramic range of references and borrow[s] freely from the history of art as well as from architecture, literature, music, and theater. Ultimately he does so not to clarify or resolve his position, but rather to complicate and enrich a body of work dominated by silence and absence and

their psychological implications.”¹ In the artist’s own words: “Sculpture is space by negation. When placed in the right space, it takes over the powers that already existed there and joins them.”²

David Zwirner will be the Estate of Juan Muñoz’s exclusive commercial gallery. In this role, David Zwirner will promote the legacy of the artist through curated exhibitions at its New York, London, Paris, and Hong Kong gallery spaces, and through the development of new scholarship on the artist’s work through publications and international exhibitions.

As stated by David Zwirner, “We are honored to begin working with the Estate of Juan Muñoz, an artist whom I knew for many years. I have greatly admired his profoundly engaging work since my earliest days as a gallerist in the 1990s, when he was at the vanguard of an international group of sculptors that was reinventing the medium. His work remains as relevant today as it was then. His Estate comes to us from Marian Goodman, who presented a number of extraordinary shows of his work during his lifetime and for many years after. I want to thank Marian profoundly for suggesting that we could be a beneficial partner. Our work with the Estate will begin with a large-scale presentation of Muñoz’s work at our New York gallery next spring, curated by Vicente Todolí, one of the foremost experts on the artist’s work.”

Juan Muñoz (1953–2001) was born in Madrid. He spent a year studying architecture at the Polytechnic University in Madrid before deciding to flee fascist Spain for London in 1970. Muñoz went on to study at the Central School of Art and Design, London (1976–1977); Croydon College of Design and Technology, London, where he focused on printmaking (1979–1980); and Pratt Graphic Center, New York (1981). The periods Muñoz spent living in London and New York were particularly formative. While he was in London, his work was primarily performance-based, yet he progressively grew interested in a group of artists who were working to move beyond the canon of traditional sculpture, including Richard Deacon and Bill Woodrow, among others. Upon moving to New York in 1981, after being awarded a prestigious Fulbright Fellowship, he became an artist-in-residence at P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center in Long Island City. He also began his work in sculpture and was strongly influenced by Philip Guston, Robert Morris, Barnett Newman, and Robert Smithson. Muñoz developed a friendship with the Spanish curator Carmen Giménez, who introduced Muñoz to the influential sculptor Richard Serra. Muñoz returned to Spain the following year and devoted a year to curating, during which time he organized with Giménez the exhibition *Correspondences: 5 Architects, 5 Sculptors*, which included work by Serra, at the Palacio de las Alhajas.

Following his inclusion in notable group shows, including the 1986 Venice Biennale, in 1987 the artist had his first solo museum show, *Juan Muñoz: Sculptures de 1985 à 1987*, at the CAPC Musée d’Art Contemporain, Bordeaux, and his first solo museum presentation in the United States took place at The Renaissance Society at The University of Chicago in 1990. These early exhibitions established Muñoz as a key figure in bringing figurative language back to sculpture, alongside his friends and fellow artists Robert Gober and Thomas Schütte. Muñoz’s work has been the subject of numerous solo presentations throughout the United States and Europe, including at the Instituto Valenciano de Arte Moderno (IVAM), Valencia, Spain (1992), and Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin (1994). Two significant solo exhibitions of his work took place in 1996: *Juan Muñoz: monólogos y diálogos*, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid (traveled to Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zurich in 1997), and *A Place Called Abroad* at Dia Center for the Arts, New York (traveled as *Streetwise* to SITE Santa Fe, New Mexico, in 1998). The artist’s work was the subject of a solo presentation at the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark, in 2000. That same year he also was commissioned by the Tate Modern, London,

¹ Neal Benezra, “Sculpture and Paradox,” in Benezra and Olga Viso, eds., *Juan Muñoz*. Exh. cat. (Washington, DC and Chicago: Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden and The Art Institute of Chicago, 2001), p. 24.

² Juan Muñoz, “Leaving an inscription in space,” in Vicente Todolí, ed., *Juan Muñoz: Double Bind & Around* (Milan: Mousse Publishing and London: Koenig Books, 2015), n.p. First published in English in Adrian Searle, ed., *Juan Muñoz: Writings* (Barcelona: Ediciones de La Central, 2009).

to be the second artist—the first being Louise Bourgeois—to take over its Turbine Hall. Muñoz spent months developing a major installation, which opened to the public in 2001.

Also in 2001–2002, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC, presented a midcareer survey of Muñoz's work that subsequently traveled to The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (2002); the Art Institute of Chicago (2002); and the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston (2003). K21 Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Dusseldorf, presented *Juan Muñoz – Rooms of my mind* in 2006–2007, and Musée de Grenoble, France, presented *Juan Muñoz: Sculptures et dessins* in 2007. A major museum retrospective devoted to Muñoz's work opened at the Tate Modern, London, the following year. The show traveled through 2009 to the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, Spain; Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Serralves, Porto; and Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid. Additional solo shows have been held at the Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts (2010); Pirelli HangarBicocca, Milan (2015); and the Art Institute of Chicago (2016). In 2018, Muñoz's work was the subject of a solo exhibition at the Skulpturenhalle of the Thomas Schütte Stiftung in Neuss, Germany.

In 2017, PLANTA, the project space developed by Sorigué and Fundació Sorigué and located in Lleida, Spain, installed the artist's major work *Double Bind*, which was created in 2001 for the Turbine Hall at the Tate Modern, London. The installation is on long-term view.

Muñoz's work has been featured in a number of significant international group exhibitions, including the Venice Biennale (1986, 1993, and 1997) and Documenta (1992 and 2002). In 2000, he was awarded the Premio Nacional de Artes Plásticas by the Spanish government.

During the artist's lifetime and for many years following his death, Muñoz was represented by Marian Goodman, where his work was the subject of numerous solo exhibitions in the gallery's New York and Paris locations. The first took place in 1991, early in the artist's career, followed by solo shows in 1993, 1999, 2004, 2006, and 2014–2015.

The artist's work is represented in prominent public collections, including the Art Institute of Chicago; Carré d'Art - Musée d'art contemporain de Nîmes, France; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC; Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston; Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark; M HKA, Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerp; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona; Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam; The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (S.M.A.K.), Ghent; and the Tate, London.