

NEWS RELEASE

THE
CLARK
ART
INSTITUTE

Williamstown
Massachusetts 01267
413 458 2303
clarkart.edu

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[Digital image available upon request]

THOMAS SCHÜTTE: CRYSTAL OPENS AT CLARK ART INSTITUTE

Williamstown, MA—Contemporary artist Thomas Schütte's first full-scale architectural art installation in the United States, *Thomas Schütte: Crystal*, opened at the Clark Art Institute on June 14, 2015. Schütte arrived at the unusual asymmetrical shape of *Crystal*, which was conceived specifically for its location on the Clark's Stone Hill trails, by imagining a small piece of crystal scaled up to architectural proportions.

"It's thrilling that one of the most recognized artists working today has chosen the Clark as the site for his first architectural installation in the United States," said Michael Conforti, the Felda and Dena Hardyman Director of the Clark. "The views from Stone Hill have attracted hikers and Clark visitors since the our opening sixty years ago and now these views can be experienced from inside the fascinating irregular space that Schütte has designed."

The structure's interior is clad in wood, referencing the traditional materials of rural vernacular architecture; the outside is zinc-coated copper, a modern material representing contemporary means and methods. *Crystal* is located on a meadow near the top of Stone Hill, close to the woodland's edge. Visitors enter the structure through doors on the northwest side; the southeast side of the structure is open and frames a view of cherry and ash trees and the Hoosac mountain range behind them.

Crystal provides visitors the opportunity to reflect on how landscapes and places, including the Clark's campus, are constructed and preserved. The work's unusual design does not clearly communicate its purpose, allowing visitors to construct their own meanings and functions for the structure and site.

"Schütte's work is a persistent engagement with artistic forms that have been historicized and inherited. Through critical wit and formal invention, his sculptures of imagined persons have given new life to depictions of the body," said the exhibition's curator David Breslin, John R. Eckel, Jr. Foundation Chief Curator, Menil Drawing Institute. "With *Crystal* and other projects that blur the line between sculpture and architecture, Schütte similarly reimagines the history and purpose of built spaces and

the worlds they create. It was a real joy to work with Thomas as he realized this project for the Clark and Williamstown.”

Accessible transport to *Thomas Schütte: Crystal* is available daily between 11:30 am–1:30 pm, weather permitting. Information and sign-up is available at the Clark’s admissions desk.

Major funding for *Thomas Schütte: Crystal* comes from the Ellsworth Kelly Foundation and from Elise Jaffe + Jeffrey Brown, whose gift made possible *Crystal*’s project design and architectural work.

ABOUT THOMAS SCHÜTTE

Thomas Schütte (German, b. 1954) is best known for his public large-scale sculptures of figures that reimagine the role of statuary and monuments. The artist’s fascination with architecture as a kind of public sculpture that is both symbolic and practical complements his figurative practice and its exploration of the human form. Since the 1980s, Schütte has created a series of architectural models that conjure up spaces ranging from a tiny efficient home to a temple.

Schütte studied at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf where he studied under artists and art historians including Gerhard Richter, Daniel Buren, and Benjamin Buchloh. He has been the subject of important exhibitions at the Serpentine Galleries, the Kunstmuseum Winterthur, Dia Art Foundation, the Serralves Foundation, and others. His works are included in the permanent collections of major museums including the Tate Modern, The Museum of Modern Art, and the Art Institute of Chicago.

Related Programs

Saturdays, June 20–August 29, 12:30 pm

Explore the many facets of *Thomas Schütte: Crystal* with a series of talks by Clark staff involved in the installation. Each week a different staff member will talk about the *Crystal* from his or her unique professional perspective.

Sunday, June 28, 1 pm

Enjoy an afternoon of fun and learning atop Stone Hill as the Clark celebrates *Thomas Schütte: Crystal*. Take a hike up Stone Hill and learn about the artist and his art. Make a box with mirrored tiles and contribute to a group project inspired by *Crystal*. This event is free and weather dependent.

Tuesday, August 18, 3 pm

Join in a conversation about *Thomas Schütte: Crystal* with curator David Breslin, John R. Eckel, Jr. Foundation Chief Curator, Menil Drawing Institute, and Lynne Cooke, senior curator of special projects in modern art, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

ABOUT THE CLARK

The Clark Art Institute, located in the Berkshires of western Massachusetts, is one of a small number of institutions globally that is both an art museum and a center for research, critical discussion, and higher education in the visual arts. Opened in 1955, the Clark houses exceptional European and American paintings and sculpture, extensive collections of master prints and drawings, English silver, and early photography. Acting as convener through its Research and Academic Program, the Clark gathers an international community of scholars to participate in a lively program of conferences, colloquia, and workshops on topics of vital importance to the visual arts. The Clark library, open to the public with more than 240,000 volumes, is one of the nation's premier art history libraries. The Clark also houses and co-sponsors the Williams College Graduate Program in the History of Art.

The Clark is located at 225 South Street in Williamstown, Massachusetts. Galleries are open Tuesday through Sunday, 10 am to 5 pm; open daily in July and August. Admission is \$20; free year-round for Clark members, children 18 and younger, and students with valid ID. For more information, visit clarkart.edu or call 413 458 2303.

Press contact:

Sally Morse Majewski

Clark Art Institute

smajewski@clarkart.edu 413 458 0588