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**In His First Solo Museum Exhibition in Texas in Fourteen Years,
Robert Therrien Brings Both Existing and New, Never-Before Seen Large-
Scale Installations to The Contemporary Austin**



Robert Therrien

May 9 – August 30, 2015

The Contemporary Austin – Jones Center, 700 Congress Avenue

APRIL 28, 2015, Austin, Texas – For more than four decades, the Los Angeles-based artist Robert Therrien has been making forms and images inspired by daily, domestic life. In realizing his sculptures, drawings, photographs, and installations, the artist uses shifts in scale, intense colors, abstraction, manipulation of perspective, and repetition of visual elements that become altered over time to propose new considerations of everyday reality. While sharing aspects with important art tendencies of the second half of the twentieth century, including Minimalism, Conceptualism, Pop, and colorism, Therrien's work defies easy categorization.

This spring and summer, the artist brings his large-scale, illusory sculptures to The Contemporary Austin in his first monographic museum exhibition in Austin—and his first in Texas in more than fourteen years. From May 9 through August 30, 2015, the museum presents *Robert Therrien*, an exhibition of existing and newly created works that reflect the intensity of an artist with an exceptional ability to contemplate and derive meaning from his interior world. Throughout his career,

Therrien has imagined and displayed variations of constructed rooms as one component of his art, and these will be the thematic focus of the exhibition in Austin. With large-scale installations on both floors of the museum's Jones Center location (700 Congress Ave.), the exhibition shifts visitors' experience of everyday reality through subtle juxtapositions between familiar objects and unexpected perspectives and details.

"We are thrilled to bring a focused exhibition of the work of Robert Therrien to Austin. When I first started to look into the artist's work many years ago, it was based on the fact that, over time and at various museums, I had seen profoundly interesting objects by this artist and wondered why I didn't know more. There was the sense of a story needing to be told. That feeling still exists," said Heather Pesanti, Senior Curator at The Contemporary Austin. "It made perfect sense to invite the artist to share his work today with audiences in the Texas community and beyond."

Interpretations of perception and the familiar, built environment are central to the installations on view throughout *Robert Therrien* at The Contemporary Austin. The museum's entire second floor will be filled with one of the artist's most beloved and spectacular pieces, *Folding tables and chairs*, this version originally created in 2008 and consisting of a set of rusted green folding chairs and two folding tables, produced at nearly four times life-size. *Folding tables and chairs* comes from a group of works created over about two decades, inspired by Polaroid photographs the artist took of the underside of a table and chairs in his kitchen. (A selection of Therrien's Polaroids can be seen in the back gallery on the first floor of the Jones Center.) With these works—directly representational although blown up far beyond any expected human scale—the artist recreates the surprise he experienced upon discovering this fascinatingly uncommon vantage point and the "unknown" and expansive world it revealed. In the exhibition in Austin, visitors can walk through a magnified world where massive chairs and tables skew across the room and one table is overturned on top of the other as if, in the artist's words, "someone was mopping the floor."



The museum's first-floor galleries feature some of the artist's newest works, never before on view to the public: three individual room constructions containing assemblages of images and sculptures. Minimalist, refined, and more abstract than the giant pieces upstairs, these are no less intriguing. Examples include *No title (room, pants with tambourines)* (2014–2015), a room-within-a-room rendered ethereal through polished, painted white walls and exposed light fixtures. Within, a delicate arrangement of simple and mysterious objects—a handcrafted sculpture of tambourines in a neat pile on the floor and a painting of a pair of brown pants affixed to the back wall—nods to the surreal. For a second "room-within-a-room," Therrien has transplanted a bulletin board wall from the studio where he lives and works, pairing it with a mirror copy meticulously re-created, down to creased papers and pinholes, by the artist. These bulletin board walls, opposing each other here in

disorientating fashion, reflect Therrien's ongoing fascination with replication and perspective. Installed as free-standing boxes about the size of large walk-in closets or small bedrooms, with an open side into which the viewer may peer, these new constructions draw visitors into Therrien's imaginative and singular environments.

"All of Therrien's rooms present visitors with the transformative experience of entering another world," Pesanti continued. "Through encounters with both the artist's large-scale, industrially fabricated objects created over the past two decades and his new, handcrafted and surreal constructions on view for the first time in our exhibition, I think our audiences will leave the exhibition with a strong sense of who Robert Therrien is as an artist, as well as, in the best cases, a renewed sense of wonder at the world around them."

ROBERT THERRIEN

Robert Therrien was born in Chicago in 1947, and lives and works in Los Angeles. Selected solo museum exhibitions include Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (1984); Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid (1991–92); Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati (1997); Los Angeles County Museum of Art (2000, SITE Santa Fe, New Mexico); Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego (2007); Kunstmuseum Basel Kupferstichkabinett (2008); Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh (2010); De Pont Museum, Tilburg, The Netherlands (2011); Tate Liverpool (2011); The Broad Contemporary Art Museum at Los Angeles County Museum of Art (2011); and Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY (2013). Public collections include MoMA and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY; MCA, Chicago; LACMA, MoCA, and Getty Museum, Los Angeles; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Tate Gallery, London; and Centre Pompidou, Paris. Since 2009, Therrien's work has toured with the "ARTIST ROOMS" collection of international contemporary art.

EXHIBITION ORGANIZATION AND SUPPORT

Robert Therrien is organized by Heather Pesanti, Senior Curator at The Contemporary Austin. Support for the exhibition comes from Linda L. Brown, MaddocksBrown Foundation, Amanda and Glenn Fuhrman, Gagosian Gallery, Vision Fund Leaders and Contributors.

THE CONTEMPORARY AUSTIN

The Contemporary Austin reflects the spectrum of contemporary art through exhibitions, commissions, education, and the collection. The museum has two distinct yet complementary locations, the Jones Center in downtown Austin at 700 Congress Avenue, and Laguna Gloria, a fourteen-acre site on Lake Austin at 3809 W. 35th Street, which is home to the Driscoll Villa, the Art School, the Gatehouse Gallery, and the Betty and Edward Marcus Sculpture Park at Laguna Gloria. More information about the museum, its exhibitions, and related programming can be found at thecontemporaryaustin.org.

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IMAGE CREDITS:

Robert Therrien, *Folding tables and chairs*, dates variable. Courtesy Gagosian Gallery. Photograph by Robert McKeever.

Robert Therrien, *No title (room, pants with tambourines)*, 2014–2015. Mixed media. 114 x 139 x 151 inches. Courtesy Gagosian Gallery. Photograph by Joshua White/JWPictures.com.