

6 April - 23 November 2025

ACCESSIBLE VISIT

Visit the exhibition «Thomas Schütte. Genealogies» at Punta della Dogana with this booklet in Simple English and videos in International Sign Language (IS).

Special thanks to
Davy Mariotti, interpreter

Punta della Dogana
Palazzo Grassi
**Pinault
Collection**

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INTRODUCTION

Thomas Schütte is a famous German artist, born in 1954. He is a sculptor but has also worked in architecture and painting. In this exhibition you find a wide variety of his work. The title of the exhibition is *Genealogies*, which means 'family histories.' For Thomas Schütte, a genealogy is a group of subjects or works he repeats and transforms throughout his career. In the exhibition you will see several genealogies: the *Geisters* are on display twice: as spirits in red glass in Room 5 and as giants in the cube (Room 9).

[Watch the video in International Sign](#)



ROOM 1

These large sculptures are called *Mann im Wind*, or *Men in the Wind*. They are human figures with their feet imprisoned in the base and they look like they are blown away.

Usually, Thomas Schütte makes small models in wax. He then transforms them into monumental works like these. The feet imprisoned in the base arise from the wax figurines that Thomas Schütte held upright by dipping the feet into a thick base.

The colorful flags (*Deka Fahnen*) on the walls have geometric patterns and symbols that you will also see in other works in the next few rooms.

These flags have been displayed only once before today, in 1989. They are featured at the beginning and end of the exhibition.

[Watch the video in International Sign](#)



ROOM 3

Thomas Schütte lived in Rome in the early 1990s. He was very impressed by the classical Roman sculptures in the city, and also by the news about the *Mani Pulite* (Clean hands) scandals: the faces of corrupt politicians and businessmen were in the news every day.

In the centre of the room, there are large bronze busts with frightening faces: they almost look like masks.

This work is called *Fratelli* (Brothers). The busts recall the ancient power of Roman emperors. The deformed faces are a reference to politicians shouting on television. The monumental heads seem to dialogue with the portraits of the *Criminali* (Criminals) on the walls: all artworks here are connected to the idea of corrupt power.

Thomas Schütte's works takes inspiration from everyday situations and personal events that the artist experiences.

[Watch the video in International Sign](#)



ROOM 9

Here in the Cube (Room 9) you see three Great Spirits (*Drei Ganz Grosse Geister*).

They are monumental figures that result of a long process.

First they are made of wax, in a small scale, then of aluminium and bronze.

You can notice the signs of the workmanship and even see the structure that holds the statues up.

Here in the exhibition - in Room 5 - you can also see small glass versions of the same *Spirits*.

It is important to acknowledge this repetition: the artist repeatedly works on the same subject, even many years later. The subject is the same, but it changes size and material.

This habit of repeating subjects over time brings us back to the title: Genealogies, that is families of works.



[Watch the video in International Sign](#)

ROOM 11

The three frightening *Efficiency Men* are sculptures. Here Schütte uses a variety of materials: he uses silicone for the grotesque faces, he uses iron for the structure, and he uses moving blankets for the clothes. They are made of common, low-quality materials.

The artist makes them at great speed, but he still manages to make them expressive and dramatic. Like the *Fratelli* and the *Criminali* you saw in room 3, the *Efficiency Men* also speak of contemporary life: they refer to the forces that plunder the world of all its riches.



[Watch the video in International Sign](#)

ROOM 13

Several watercolours are on display here. Thomas Schütte painted them in 2022.

It was a very difficult period in his personal history. He was in hospital for a nervous breakdown and he channelled his energy into painting. He paints a lot.

Look at the dates on the watercolours: you will see that he completes several works a day.

Although they are very difficult months for him, he never lost his irony: you can tell this from the titles of the works, which are often amusing puns.

Unfortunately, they are in German, so they are difficult to translate into other languages.

Look also at the statues of women in the centre of the room: we will soon talk about them.



[Watch the video in International Sign](#)

ROOM 14

Thomas Schütte has been working on architecture since the 1980s. Architecture is based on drawing but requires imagining objects in three dimensions, like sculpture. This meets the artist's interests.

In this room you can see some architectural models: they are small shelters.

They are projects of spaces where you can hide and be safe.

Two series of drawings are on the walls.

In the red background series, you find geometric elements and shapes, which you can find in some of the banners in the first room.

The artist likes to repeat the same images over time and rework them in new ways.



[Watch the video in International Sign](#)

ROOM 16

We finally meet the artist: this pink glass head is a self-portrait. As you walk around, you will see it changes: glass, like water in Venetian canals, plays with the light and shadows. Thomas Schütte's face is stylized: it is made with few details, So it does not look exactly like the artist, Thomas Schütte can work with all sorts of media, as the choice of glass as a material demonstrates.



[Watch the video in International Sign](#)

ROOM 19

Female figures are reclining on these metal tables.

Observe them: you have seen small versions of them upstairs.

It is again an example of genealogies.

The artist works on the same subject at different times:

he transforms it, enlarges it, changes the material in which he makes it.

These large sculptures are made of aluminium, while their smaller versions were made of ceramic.

Women are lying down, naked, offering themselves to the visitors' gaze, as in the classical nudes of women throughout the history of art.

But although they remind us of classical nudes,

these sculptures by Schütte are impossible:

bodies take absurd positions and unrealistic shapes.



[Watch the video in International Sign](#)