

# MARC STRAUS

NEW YORK

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## THOMAS BANGSTED

Exhibition on view: **October 22 – December 10, 2017**

Opening Reception: **Sunday, October 22, 2017, 5pm–7pm**



Thomas Bangsted, *Schlachtschiff Tirpitz*, 2012-2017, Pigment Print, 63.5 x 110 inches (161.3 x 279.5cm)

MARC STRAUS is pleased to present its third solo exhibition of new works by Danish photographer Thomas Bangsted.

In his new body of work, Thomas Bangsted considers remarkable World War II scenarios from the perspectives of the opposing factions. On the Allied side, the British were obsessed with sinking the colossal German battleship, Tirpitz. For the Axis with their morale at stake, it was imperative that the giant ship stayed hidden in the protective bay of the remote Norwegian Fjord, Kaafjord.

This fascinating hide-and-seek narrative unfolds in each astonishingly detailed tableau. There is a palpable air of apprehension: the viewer is presented with the critical moment in the story and we are each left to imagine the outcome. Was the ship ever discovered?

However utterly convincing, these pictures are pure inventions: they are aggregates of numerous elements photographed individually at different times in different locations, over several years. Fastidious research has always been integral to his process. Scrutinizing historical documents, here Bangsted recreates scenes as he envisions they were in 1943. He uses recent 3D computer modeling to revive nonexistent artifacts and lost ships.

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In the monumental *Schlachtschiff Tirpitz (2012-2017)*, Bangsted presents an exacting view of how the aforementioned ship might have appeared on the early morning of April, 1943 shortly after its arrival. Resurrected from the seabed, where in fact this infamous ship has been rusting away since the end of the war, the Tirpitz, along with the torpedo net and smaller auxiliary boats, are meticulous 3D reconstructions truthful down to the last mast. During the course of making this large image, Bangsted returned twice to the peaks of the adjacent Norwegian cliffs to capture the Fjord and its landscape. He was working against urbanization—a modern bridge had to be digitally removed to return the mountains to their former majesty.

Further conflating fiction with reportage, *Port of Embarkation (lady liberty SS Margaret Knight), 2012-2017* is a dramatic scene where a docked WWII American Liberty ship is being loaded with supplies. These cargo ships were built rapidly in great numbers to meet the demands of war. As with his ground-breaking series of Dazzle camouflage warships—first exhibited in 2014 and then at The MET in 2015. lady liberty SS Margaret Knight is adorned with a geometric camouflage that recalls American Hard-edge Abstract paintings.

The foreground, gravel, vehicles and supplies have all been photographed at various locations. Several details such as the cargo net, crates and life raft had to be built specifically for the picture. Characters who appear are hired WWII reenactors dressed in period clothing. Such is Bangsted's piety to veracity.

In his holistic, uncompromising vision, Bangsted converges aspects of nature, history, war, storytelling, journalism, technology and art. By excavating single moments as he does, Bangsted imbues them with urgency. Thus the greatest of all wars is seen by having us focus on a few particulars—placing equal importance in a single fray in a rope to the complex textures of the mountain, Bangsted offers these wonderful, enriching moments in their full glory.

Thomas Bangsted (b. 1976, Denmark) received a MFA in Photography from Yale University, School of Art in 2007. Bangsted has had numerous solo shows in Denmark including Brandts 13 (2015), Galleri Tom Christoffersen (2010) and Galleri Hornbaek (2007). Group exhibits include Tang Museum, NY (2016), The Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Denmark (2016), The Metropolitan Museum of New York (2015), Knoxville Museum of Art, TN (2015), Bronx Museum of the Arts (2011), the Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art, Peekskill, NY, The Prague Biennial (2009) and the New York Photo Festival (2008). His work is in the permanent collection of the Metropolitan Museum of New York and was included in their 2015 exhibition of recent acquisitions and reviewed in The New York Times. Bangsted is represented by MARC STRAUS, New York and Galleri Tom Christoffersen, Denmark.

Thomas Bangsted would like to thank Stefan Damiński for his skill and collaboration (Tirpitz), and the Jerome Foundation for its generous support.

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