



Aanant & Zoo

PRESS RELEASE

LUIS CAMNITZER

Nov 18, 2013 – Jan 28, 2012

Aanant & Zoo is proud to announce the first solo exhibition of Luis Camnitzer in Berlin.

For Luis Camnitzer art is, above all, an instrument for the expansion of knowledge. Since the sixties he has probed primal questions as to the social functions of art, the relationship between artist and observer as well as the multilayered network of language and power. It is essential to his method that the process of making sense occurs in tandem with the audience, where the work functions as the generator of communication to open mental space. An important working medium is the written word that in both Camnitzer's artistic creations as well as in his theoretical writing strives to be as astute as it is profound in its expression. Born in Lübeck in 1937, Camnitzer grew up in Uruguay and moved to New York in 1964 where he lives today as an influential artist, educator, critic and art theorist.

Camnitzer imparted new impetuses on conceptual art developed in relation to the social and political revolutions of the sixties and seventies in various places around the world in which his culturally comprehensive experiences left an indelible mark. A further driving force in the development of his varied body of work was a reevaluation of printmaking, whose potential as a democratic instrument of information he – together with Liliana Porter and Jose Guillermo Castillo – catalyzed in his New York workshop. Always with an eye of a non-conformist, Camnitzer is above all an analytical observer and critical companion of our time that in no way sees his scope of action restricted to the context of art.

With his most recent project, "The Assignment Book," (2011) he confronts himself and the audience with yet another challenge. With his assemblage of partly absurd questions and riddles, Camnitzer wishes to engage visitors in a dialog that immediately breaks the microclimate between producer and consumer apart. Not unlike a blog, the miscellaneous proposals for a solution are to be displayed next to one another in equal standing. In doing so, the exhibition space becomes defined as a platform for exchange in the speculative domain. "The Assignment Book" provides no instructions or the creation of art or the comprehension of an aesthetic experience as they have explicitly appeared since Duchamp made them prevalent. As Camnitzer traces various problems that are meant to be mutually evaluated, he calls into question the manner in which knowledge and learning

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processes are generally structured. For Camnitzer, art is less a discipline than a method that has the potential to be a resistance against learned perception schemas and, with that, to pave the way for unconventional questions that ultimately lead us to not only be interested in art, but in life itself.

The Professor of Philosophy Craig Callender indeed comes to an unconventional conclusion in his newest research: It is possible, says Callender, that time does not exist at all and that it only acts as a useful agent with which to compare processes. Time is generally known in physics to illustrate the fourth dimension of space. According to Callender, the manageability of physical laws now depend on which method of sectioning a created unified space-time is deconstructed by ("Scientific American," June 2010). Inspired by the potential of alternative sectioning methods and ordering systems in four-dimensional space, Camnitzer is adapting the approach to other other disciplines not without humor. He makes use of a collection of essays from Umberto Eco – his dedication to arguably the most famous contemporary Semiotic – whose texts are famous for an elaborate montage technique. The source material is deconstructed and is both temporally and spatially interlinked entirely anew. An until-now unknown symbol system that quickly leads the well-established mechanisms of symbol interpretation to absurdity arises to the protagonists in Camnitzer's "Eco Book" (2011). Here, the previous knowledge that has been assigned to the text cannot be adjudicated upon the interpretation. Lastly, it is essential not only to observe the symbols, but also to alter them.

Camnitzer has always considered himself an artist with an ethical responsibility. Accordingly, the realization of political and social realities forms a constant in his output. The work cycle "Last Words" (2008) pays tribute to the last words of condemned men that deal with love, parting and forgiveness on six poster-sized prints. The judicial authority in the U.S. state of Texas not only painstakingly retains the last statements of the executed, but also releases them on its official homepage. The matter-of-fact and simple text fragments derived directly from this source are spliced together into an emotionally charged whole. As Camnitzer presents the observer with existential questions beyond guilt or innocence, he assumes his responsibility as much as he demands it of others.

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