

press information

May 2007

Dieter Roth

Drawings

June 11 to July 28, 2007

Opening: Sunday, June 10, 11 am – 8 pm

Galerie Eva Presenhuber is pleased to present an exhibition of over 500 drawings by Dieter Roth (1930 – 1998) this summer, following a comprehensive show of the artist's graphic-print work in 2003.

The featured bundle of works comprises 37 groups of drawings done between 1977 and 1990, most of which Dieter Roth has published as photocopied *Kopiebücher* (*Copy Books*) in a small edition. Although being a central part of his oeuvre, the original groups of drawings that Roth had collected and bound in unique books were kept under lock and key all his life, with the exception of a few specimens that he would give or sell to close friends. Hence, it is with this project that, for the first time, a nearly complete exhibition of these private gems from the Dieter Roth Estate is offered to the broad public.

Following a period of dedication to concrete art during the 1950s, the prolific work of this 20th-century universal artist has been marked by a firmly subjective awareness of time and the world surrounding him. In the early 1960s, Roth begins to experiment with media and low-quality, perishable materials, which does not only reflect a destruction of hierarchies, but also a consistently existential attitude aiming at the creation of a vivid kind of art beyond established forms of creativity. With his pictorial (and linguistic) articulation becoming increasingly subjective, Dieter Roth now unfolds a discussion about the processes of transformation and transitoriness of all the things existing in a reality defined by subjective perception, rather than by objective notions. At the same time, Roth's focus progressively shifts towards the process of artistic creation inspired by his own existence, so as to push the final result into the background.

In this light, it becomes obvious why Roth has come to see drawing, just as writing, as the most important and most personal way of expressing himself. There is probably no other medium that allows to directly represent the duality of describing and recognizing conscious and latent perceptions as pertinently as drawing ("to see is to represent"). What is more, working in series favors the formation of permanently flowing trains of thoughts, while the energetic quality of the drawn line translates and visualizes the current state of mind.

Self-centeredness, transformation, change, and variation are the constitutive characteristics of the groups of drawings on display that, with few exceptions, have been done in the A4 format. For most series, the artist has made use of the sensory and ambivalent quality of the pencil line. In other drawings, he has experimented with different painting techniques by drawing with ink and a felt-tip pen, by overdrawing a pen picture, or by overpainting it with broad gouache brushstrokes.

The body of work on view sets in with pieces dating from the second half of the 1970s that thematically revolve around the artist's self, reflecting his morale. Often created on one day within a short span of time, the drawings are to be read as visual diaries that serve to write down emotions and draw up pictorial ideas. Many a title refers to the circumstances of creating

the work – one sees unfinished, failed, desperately or hastily dashed-off drawings in which the artist confronts himself with his alter ego. He lets himself fall into a gestural, fluid, and at times rotating hotchpotch of human and animal-like amorphous shapes and visionary epiphanies, struggling for and with his identity, thereby producing fantastic excrescences and metamorphoses. The struggle continues with the viewer who, with his mind building up associations as his eye traces and follows the drawn line, contributes an essential part to the visualizing process.

For further questions, please contact Claudia Klausner at Galerie Eva Presenhuber.

On the occasion of this exhibition, the following book will be published by JRP | Ringier:
Dieter Roth – Drawings, including a text written by Veit Loers.

Parallel to this show, we will be presenting the exhibition *Equilibres* by **Peter Fischli / David Weiss**.

Opening hours: Tuesday - Friday 12 noon – 6 pm
 Saturday 11 am – 5 pm

Outdoor sculpture project: Mark Handforth, *Platz*
Tessinerplatz, near the Enge railway station, Zurich
June 10 to August 26, 2007

Venice Biennale, Church of San Stae: Urs Fischer / Ugo Rondinone
June 10 – November 21, 2007
Opening: June 7, 4 – 7 pm

Art | 38 | Basel June 13 – 17, 2007 Hall 2.1 Booth R4

Upcoming exhibitions:

Urs Fischer
August 25 – October 13, 2007
Opening: August 24, 2007

Tim Rollins + K.O.S.
October 20 – December 22, 2007
Opening: October 19, 2007