

MAI 36 GALERIE

Peter Hujar & Paul Thek

Opening: Thursday, January 23, 2020, 6 – 8 pm
Duration: January 24 – March 21, 2020
Opening hours: Tues-Fri 11 am to 6.30 pm, Sat 11 am to 4 pm

Mai 36 is delighted to present, for a second time, a joint exhibition with works by artists Peter Hujar and Paul Thek.

The life and photographs of Peter Hujar (1934-1987) are inextricably linked with New York. He moved in the intellectual spheres of avantgarde dance, music, art and drag performances. Originally working in the field of commercial photography, Hujar began in the early 1970s to focus his interest more on the portrayal of the actual lives around him. From then on, he photographed people, animals and plants, still-lives, landscapes and city scenes, making the portrait a central tenet of his oeuvre. Hujar himself was very much a part of the life he portrayed. He did not over-aestheticize it, but instead, created uncomplicated, direct photographs of divers and difficult subjects, immortalizing the aspects, personalities and subcultures of a city that was, at the time, at the forefront of a very public coming out of the homosexual community, and would later go on to become a central place of the AIDS crisis.¹ A major retrospective of his work was recently launched at the Jeu de Paume in Paris, running until January 2020.

Paul Thek (1933-1988) was an American sculptor and painter. In addition to the sculptures and installations for which he is best known, he also produced paintings and drawings. In the early 1960s, Thek travelled to Europe, where he created extraordinary *environments* that were shown in major international exhibitions. They combined elements from the fields of art, literature, theatre and religion, expanded the then prevailing concept of the artwork and questioned perceptions of art and life. During this period, Thek participated in several groundbreaking exhibitions, including documenta 4 and documenta 5 in 1968 and 1972 respectively, as well as the 1976 Venice Biennale. In the late 1970s, Thek returned to New York, where he devoted himself to small-scale, sketch-like paintings on canvas. At the same time, he created further *environments*.

Peter Hujar and Paul Thek met in 1956. They remained close friends until Hujar's death, sharing a strong intellectual and artistic connection that influenced the work of both artists.

The exhibition at Mai 36 features vintage prints by Peter Hujar alongside later paintings, watercolors, *newspaper drawings* and the object *Untitled (meat cables), 1969* – one of the seldom seen *meat pieces* by Paul Thek.

Mai 36 has represented the estate of Paul Thek for almost 30 years and that of Peter Hujar since 2014.

Opening on Thursday, January 23, 2020 from 6 pm. Visual materials are available on request (office@mai36.com).

We look forward to seeing you at the gallery and thank you for your interest.

Mai 36 Galerie
Victor Gisler

January 2020

¹ Cf. Jeu de Paume, Paris