

# CHRISTINE KÖNIG GALERIE

## GUSTAV METZGER

Gustav Metzger was born in Nuremberg in 1926 to Polish-Jewish parents and was evacuated to England as part of the Refugee Children Movement in 1939. He lives and works in London. For 60 years, Metzger has been a vehemently political artist and activist. In 1966 he initiated the „DIAS - Destruction in Art Symposium“ in London, and invited artists from all over the world - among them the Vienna Actionists. The evanescence, the self-destruction in Metzger's works is also targeted against the international art market, a rejection of the monetary exploitation of art. An illustration of this position is his spectacular and momentous demand for the art strike in 1974.

Selected exhibitions: 2012 *documenta* (13), Kassel; *Art and Press*, Martin Gropius-Bau, Berlin; 2011 *Gustav Metzger: Historic Photographs*, New Museum, NYC; *Gustav Metzger, e-flux*, NYC; Produced by Migros, Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel; 2010 Sao Paulo Biennale, Sao Paulo; Gwangju Biennale, South Korea; *I'm Not Here*, de Appel Arts Centre, Amsterdam; 2009 *Gustav Metzger: Decades 1959-2009*, Serpentine Gallery, London; *Altermodern*, Tate Triennial, Tate Britain, London; 2007 *Gustav Metzger Works 1995-2007*, Zacheta National Gallery, Warsaw; 2006 *Gustav Metzger, Works*, Lund Konsthall, Sweden; 2005 *History, History*, Generali Foundation, Vienna; *Summer of Love: Art of the Psychedelic Era*, Tate Liverpool; 2004 *Art and the Sixties - This Was Tomorrow*, Tate Britain, London; *Signatures of the Invisible*, P.S.1, NYC; 2003 *Dreams and Conflicts - The Dictatorship of the Viewer*, Venice Biennale; 2000 *Protest and Survive*, Whitechapel Gallery, London; 1998 *Out of Actions: Between Performance and the Object, 1949 - 1979*, MOCA, Los Angeles, MAK, Vienna, MACBA, Barcelona, Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo; *Gustav Metzger*, Museum of Modern Art, Oxford; 1996 *Life / Live*, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris; 1966 *DIAS - Destruction in Art Symposium*, Africa Centre, London.

## GERHARD RÜHM

Gerhard Rühm, born in Vienna in 1930, studied piano and composition at the National Academy of Music and Interpretative Arts in Vienna and later received private tuition from Josef Matthias Hauer. He lives and works in Cologne and Vienna. Rühm co-founded the "Wiener Gruppe" (1954-60). The group's radical language experiments are among the most important literary developments of the postwar era. From the very beginning, Rühm has employed the use of various media in an effort to search new forms of artistic expression. Rühm's work is based on the implementation of an absolutely interdisciplinary concept of the arts, oscillating between fine arts (visual poetry, gestural drawing, photomontage, objects) and music (auditive poetry, documentative melodramas and text-sound transformations).

Selected exhibitions: 2012 *Awakening the Night. Art from Romanticism to the Present*, Belvedere, Vienna; Taipei Biennial 2012, Taiwan; 2011 *Arsenale. Grafik aus der Sammlung Museion*, MUSEION, Bozen; 2010 *Gerhard Rühm. Die Ambivalenz des Konkreten*, MUMOK, Vienna; 2008 *JETZT - arbeiten aus 6 Jahrzehnten*, Christine König Galerie, Vienna; *Konzept. Aktion. Sprache*, MUMOK, Vienna; *Schriftbilder*, Museum Ludwig, Cologne; *Sounds. Radio-Kunst-Neue Musik*, n.b.k., Berlin; 2006 *Weit Weg und Ganz Nah, Retrospektive*, Fridericianum, Kassel; 2004 *I hate you - the Falckenberg Collection*, Louisiana, Humlebaek; 2003 *Kunst Kunst Kunst - der Große Österreichische Staatspreis*, Museum des 20. Jahrhunderts, Vienna; *Grotesk! - 130 Jahre Kunst der Frechheit*, Schirn Kunsthalle,

Frankfurt; 2002 *visuelle musik*, Philharmonie, Cologne; *Eine lange Geschichte mit vielen Knoten - Fluxus in Deutschland 1962-1994*, Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel; 2001 *zwischenräume. erotische und unerotische fotomontagen*, Christine König Galerie, Vienna; *minimalismo, un signo de los tiempos*, Reina Sofia, Madrid; 2000 *Aller Anfang ist MERZ - Von Schwitters bis heute*, Sprengel Museum, Hannover; 1999 *Die Wiener Gruppe*, Kunsthalle, Vienna; *zyklische arbeiten aus fünf jahrzehnten*, Christine König Galerie, Vienna; 1997 *Die Wiener Gruppe - The Vienna Group*, Venice Biennale; 1987 *documenta 8*, Kassel; 1981 *bildnerische arbeiten aus 25 jahren*, Museum moderner Kunst, Vienna; 1977 *documenta 6*, Kassel.

## Mass Media / Media Mess

Gerhard Rühm (born 1930) and Gustav Metzger (born 1924) are two major survivors of the heroic and expansive avant-gardes of the 1960s. Both are multi(media)-artists who do not allow their visions to be confined by formats and genres. To the present day, these two demiurges of deterritorialization have continued to pursue an aesthetic program of penetrating consciousness and demolishing reality that remains in harmony with radical 1960s fantasies of negating all boundaries. They are proponents of an “intermediality work” that causes knowledge to flash up in interstices and linking vectors. Gustav Metzger and Gerhard Rühm met personally at the “Destruction in Art Symposium“ held in 1966 in London. Although their artistic paths never crossed again, the two artists certainly remained in visual contact. The exhibition *Mass Media / Media Mess* delves into an approach that has been a driving force in the work of both artists since the very beginning: the use of the political in its media presentation as material for an act of deconstruction that in the reorganization of particles from the consciousness-raising industry allows the truth behind the fictions to shine through. Rühm shows *zeitungsrissebilder* (newspaper rip pictures), in which pages are collaged in layers, and the series *deutsche volkslieder* and *geistliche gesänge*, which set segments cut out of music scores into a pointed relationship with photos, pushing orthodox interpretational dispositifs to the point of absurdity. Two works by Gustav Metzger relating to media and politics are on view: In *MASS MEDIA: Today and Yesterday* thousands of newspapers are stacked into a towering rectangular ‘sculpture’. Visitors have the opportunity to select articles from a store of newspapers and pin them on the wall. This is a playful experimental setup that juxtaposes the mass of published opinion with the possibility of individual contraindications and small counterpublics. In *Historic Photographs: To Crawl Into - Anschluss, Vienna, March 1938* a historically charged photo of a traumatic moment in European history is covered by a piece of yellow cloth, so that it must be reconstructed in an act of physical approximation. Both artists are interested in ‘rupture’, in tears and folds in consciousness, in the destruction and recombination of information particles that play a role in the interpretation and shaping of the political. As Gerhard Rühm writes, it is a matter of achieving “a new, autonomous quality, a sort of timeless presence” that goes beyond the fragmentary readability of the affairs of the day. (Thomas Miessgang, 2012)