

HAUSER & WIRTH

Press Release

Roth Bar

Hauser & Wirth St. Moritz

9 December 2022 – 9 September 2023



Hauser & Wirth St. Moritz will present a fully-functional, specially-crafted bar designed by Björn, Oddur and Einar Roth, son and grandsons of German-born Swiss artist Dieter Roth (1930 – 1998). This exhibition will activate the gallery's ground floor space as a hub for socialising, music, readings and talks. First conceived by Dieter Roth in the early 1980s, 'the bar' is a dynamic and changing installation and is a continuing element in the Roths' cross-generational practice.

A driving force of Post-War European art, Dieter Roth produced a diverse oeuvre during his five-decade-long career that included drawing, painting, sculpture, film, immersive installations and bookmaking. Roth experimented with materials and language, exploring the interplay of different mediums, which underscores his distinct approach to artmaking.

The bar, comprised of scavenged materials, embodies a central motif found throughout Dieter Roth's work. Both bar and studio were central concepts and locales for the work of Dieter Roth. Since its first iteration, the bar has gradually evolved, as for each exhibition site-specific materials have been incorporated into the installation. 'Roth Bar' (2004 – 2015) was first unveiled in the exhibition 'Dieter Roth: Lest / Train' at Reykjavik Art Museum in 2005 before continuing on to Hauser & Wirth Coppermill, London (2006), HangarBicocca, Milan (2013), to Hauser & Wirth Zurich and to Hotel Les Trois Rois, Basel (2015). It was last shown in 2019 at Museum Tinguely in Basel. The story of 'Roth Bar' at Hauser & Wirth began when Dieter Roth insisted that a bar form part of his first show with the gallery in 1997. Along with his son Björn, Dieter Roth installed the functional 'Bar 2' (1983 – 1997) in Zurich and every beer bottle served became a part of the bar installation and visitors' conversations were recorded and archived.

'Roth Bar' will be presented in St. Moritz alongside the rare painting 'Doppel-Selbstbildnis (Double Self-portrait)' (1973), revealing an important dialogue between Dieter Roth's work from the 1970s and his wider practice. Self-portraiture was central to Roth's practice, which he rigorously explored through art and journals. Combining Roth's ceaseless experimentation with his abiding interest in self-portraiture, 'Doppel-Selbstbildnis' is an ode to the artist's boundless imagination. In this work, Roth renders the pictorial devices that underscore figurative painting in an enigmatic manner, challenging the conventions of traditional self-portraiture. Executed in an Old Master style, gradually building up thin layers of oil paint to achieve a rich tonal range, Roth's profile is cut from a plane comprised of a myriad of luminous and subtly blended colors. In line with the title, another barely visible cut-out on the curled bend is included.

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About the Artists

Dieter Roth was born in Hanover, Germany in 1930, relocated to Switzerland during the war, and married and moved to Iceland in 1957. He died in Basel, Switzerland in 1998. Björn Roth was born in Reykjavik, Iceland in 1961. He began working closely with his father on painting, music, films and publications as well as exhibiting in various galleries and museums.

Dieter Roth was an artist of an immense diversity and breadth, producing books, graphics, drawings, paintings, sculptures, assemblages, installations, audio and media works involving slides, sound recordings, film and video. He also worked as a composer, poet, writer and musician. He often collaborated with other artists, subverting the principle of authorship. Those partners included such significant figures as Richard Hamilton, Emmett Williams, Arnulf Rainer, and Hermann Nitsch. But it was Roth's long and symbiotic collaboration with his son, artist Björn Roth, that stands as testament to the enormous and enduring potency of his relentless process.

Through much of his life, Roth was restlessly peripatetic, moving between studios in many cities. His two primary bases of activity—Iceland and Basel—were decidedly outside the mainstream. Throughout his career, the artist continually circled back to earlier ideas and processes, reinterpreting and transforming works so that linearity and closure are consistently defied. Transience and order, destruction and creativity, playful humor and critical inquiry, the abject and the beautiful, all maintain a consistent balance throughout his work.

Roth represented Switzerland at the 1982 Venice Biennale and received a number of awards and prizes, including the 1991 Geneva Prix Caran d'Ache Beaux Arts, a prestigious Swiss prize. In 2004, The Museum of Modern Art and P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center in New York City jointly presented the major historical exhibition 'Roth Time: A Dieter Roth Retrospective,' a project co-organized with Schaulager Basel, Switzerland and the Museum Ludwig of Cologne, Germany. With 'DIETER ROTH. PRESSED SQUASHED SQUEEZED. MATERIAL- AND PRINTMAKING,' the Deichtorhallen Hamburg are currently dedicating a major exhibition to Roth's graphic oeuvre, presenting around 1000 of his works in the venue of the Falckenberg Collection.

For additional information, please contact:

Anna-Maria Pfab, Hauser & Wirth, annamariapfab@hauserwirth.com, +41 79 965 50 89 (Europe)
Maddy Martin, Hauser & Wirth, maddymartin@hauserwirth.com +44 7585 979564 (Europe)

Hauser & Wirth St. Moritz

Via Serlas 22
7500 St. Moritz

Opening hours:

Tue – Sat, 11 am – 7 pm

www.hauserwirth.com

Caption and courtesy information:

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Björn Roth, Oddur Roth, Einar Roth
Roth Bar (Zürich)
2004 – 2015
Mixed media installation
470 x 430 x 1050 cm / 185 x 169 1/4 x 413 3/8 in
Photo: Stefan Altenburger Photography Zürich

Dieter Roth in his studio, 1990s



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