

# Petzel

**HANNE DARBOVEN**

*Fin de Siècle - Buch der Bilder*

January 12 – February 25, 2023

520 West 25th Street

Petzel is pleased to present *Fin de Siècle - Buch der Bilder (Book of Pictures - Fin de Siècle)*, Hanne Darboven's second solo exhibition with the gallery, on view from January 12th to February 25th, 2023, at Petzel's new Chelsea location, 520 W 25th Street. This one work exhibition captures Darboven's life-long interest in weaving together computational procedure, historical and cultural artefact, and autobiographical documentation to generate a visual system that explores the disconnect between subjective and objective perceptions of time. This presentation of *Fin de Siècle - Buch der Bilder (1992–93)* marks the centennial of the work's earliest invocation of time—the 1923 edition of Austrian poet Rainer Rilke's *Buch der Bilder (1902)*, which not only figures in the red arabesque pattern replicated from its cover throughout the exhibition's vitrines, but also in Darboven's chosen title and structure for the work.

*Fin de Siècle - Buch der Bilder* is comprised of 520 framed working sheets, 42 picture panels and 54 picture books. The working sheets include Darboven's day calculations from the years 1988 through 1989, tallied in her typical, hand-numbered system—words and numerals for 1988, and numerals only for 1989. Darboven prefaces the rows of sheets with index and title pages, along with 42 collaged motifs reproduced from her earlier work *Bilddokumentation (1978) (Picture Documentation)*. Those images are classified into three categories: “history,” “intellectual development,” and “technical development.” By punctuating her computations with images of man-made objects, Darboven exposes humanity's role in constructing time and unleashes history's multitude of implicit chronicles. Yet, when seen in toto, her work has a levelling effect that counters any notions of teleological progress. Instead, a network of time-transcending parallelisms emerges, assuming an abstracted form. On a postcard, she notes: “History takes place by itself, that is historical time—[Evolution]—; intellectual history, technical history} what humankind did:—mutual influence—man and machine.”

Darboven's tripartite categorization of development extends to the work's 42 picture panels, which she labels, numbers, classifies and contextualizes with a photograph of an object from her studio—a telescope, pedestal, figurine, clock—on the righthand corner of the frame. Darboven inserts herself into her investigations of historical time not only through the photographic documentations of her studio, but also through the green postcards that back them, which bear the stamp of her studio home, Am Burgberg.

In the ring-bound picture books encased by vitrines, Darboven mounts 188 photographed worksheets, grouped in fours, over backings that reproduce the patterned cover of her Insel-editioned copy of Rilke's book. The albums, each subdivided into two parts (and further broken down into two subchapters) borrow their structure from Rilke's volume of poems. Each album brims with photographs of Darboven's notes, objects from her studio, her U-waved date calculations from 1988 to 1999, as well as their transliterations into musical scores. Differences abound between Darboven's mathematical lyricism and Rilke's fin de siècle aesthetics; however, by starting her investigation from the essence of things to frame them into larger developmental contexts, Darboven echoes the Austrian writer's “thing poetry” approach, which similarly seeks to describe objects in a distanced and dissociated way to surface their inner being. Creating this installation a decade prior the turn of a century, Darboven contends with Rilke's fin de siècle anxieties regarding the passage of time, and implicates future generations to grapple with recording, indexing and situating her own work within larger historical frameworks.

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## About Hanne Darboven

Hanne Darboven (1941–2009) is one of the most important and enigmatic figures in postwar German art. Born in Munich, she studied as a pianist, before training in art at the Hochschule für bildende Künste in Hamburg from 1962–1965. Though based in Hamburg, it was during a two-year stay in New York in the late 1960s that Darboven discovered what would become her life-long project: the visualization of time in all its formations. Upon return to her hometown in 1968, she continued to live and work at her parental home in Hamburg's Harburg district until her death in 2009. Selected solo exhibitions by Hanne Darboven include Kunsthalle Bern (1969); Kunstmuseum Basel (1974); Deichtorhallen Hamburg (1991 and 2017); Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven and Musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris (both 1986); Dia Center for the Arts, New York (1996); Hamburger Kunsthalle, Berlin (1999 and 2006); Deutsche Guggenheim, Berlin (2006); Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid (2014); Bundeskunsthalle, Bonn and Haus der Kunst, Munich (both 2015); Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin (2017), and Museum Küppersmühle für Moderne Kunst, Duisburg (2020). Selected group shows include documenta, Kassel (1972, 1977, 1982, 2002); Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (1970, 1981, 1989, 2000, 2006); Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (1971, 1983); Museum of Modern Art, New York (1976, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2014, 2017, 2018); National Museum of Art, Osaka (1989); National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne (1991); The National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. (1994); Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (1996); Haus der Kunst, Munich (1997, 2003, 2008); Museum für Moderne Kunst MMK, Frankfurt (2000, 2010); Centre Pompidou, Paris (2002); Hamburger Kunsthalle (2013, 2016); Kunstmuseum Basel (2014); Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami (2017); Westbund Art Museum, Shanghai (2019); Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich (2020); Kunstmuseum Bonn, Bonn (2021), and Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg (2022). She represented the Federal Republic of Germany at the 1982 Venice Biennale (along with Gotthard Graubner and Wolfgang Laib).

Petzel Gallery is located at 520 West 25th Street New York, NY 10001. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00 AM–6:00 PM. For press inquiries, please contact Ricky Lee at [ricky@petzel.com](mailto:ricky@petzel.com), or call (212) 680-9467.