

HERMANN NITSCH

DAS ORGIEN MYSTERIEN THEATER

Massimo De Carlo is proud to present *Das Orgien Mysterien Theater*, a new exhibition by the Austrian artist Hermann Nitsch. The artist returns to London fifty-two years after his first exhibition in 1966, when he took part in the Destruction in Art Festival, and has since performed and exhibited at the Whitechapel gallery in 2002.

The artist is an iconic dissident figure in contemporary art, having been one of the co-founders of the Viennese Actionism movement and having reformed the notion of art in the 1960's.

Hermann Nitsch performed the *Das Orgien Mysterien Theater* at the start of his career in 1957: it was a six-day long festival of ritualistic and spiritual creativity, accompanying its own theory and philosophy that focused mainly on reaching a state of absolute being. The artist would make groundbreaking audience-engaging performances and action paintings, involving and stressing all of the viewer's senses. Since, the artist has never stopped experimenting with this type of *total-work-of-art*; drenched in mysticism, psychoanalysis and philosophy, that encompasses every type of medium from installation to paintings, drawings to performances.

Das Orgien Mysterien Theater at Massimo De Carlo is structured as a mini retrospective of Hermann Nitsch's work: the artist is presenting a vast series of his signature large canvases spanning from the 1980's to more recent work created specifically for the show along with documentation of the history of Nitsch's performances, immersive installations and vitrines containing objects that are linked to his actions.

On the first floor of the gallery, there is a selection of *Relics*: each of these canvases or object vitrines has been composed by an assemblage of relics of Nitsch's actions, tools such as cotton cloths, stretchers and shirts that have been stained by blood or splattered by paint are exhibited as the tangible remains of the artists performances. Hermann Nitsch states that the relics are there to celebrate life by being a reminder of the actual art, which is the *Das Orgien Mysterien Theater*.

On the ground floor, there are a series of large-scale canvases, part of the artist's Action Paintings body of work. In the words of the Hermann Nitsch: "The action paintings began as a way to capture and conserve what is for me the essential event of the sensory arousal triggered by the painting process itself." Fluids, fictional innards and flesh, and paint are used to enhance the painterly gesture that is transformed into a performative action: each canvas on show is the result of an action, capturing and conveying Nitsch's mystical art philosophy through extreme materiality.

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The basement offers photographic and video insights into the history of the *Das Orgien Mysterien Theater* and hosts an immersive one-room installation: a theatrical display where each wall is covered by projected images as eerie, discordant music stimulates the viewer's perception of the room itself, a pure reflection of existence.

HERMANN NITSCH

Hermann Nitsch was born in Vienna in 1938. He lives and works in Prinzenhof in Austria. Hermann Nitsch has had solo exhibitions at prominent institutions, the most recent ones include: Kunsthalle Arlberg 1800, Austria (2017); *Hermann Nitsch – O.M.T. Colore dal Rito*, Museum CIAC, Foligno, Italy (2017), *Hermann Nitsch – Das druckgrafische Werk*, Nitsch Museum, Mistelbach, Austria (2017); *Feast of Existence. Hermann Nitsch and the Theatre*, Theatermuseum Vienna (2015), Museum Villa Stuck, Munich and AMO, Verona (2016); *Artist Talk: In vivo Hermann Nitsch*, Centre Pompidou, Paris, France (2012). Recent group exhibitions include: *Hermann Nitsch / Julian Beck / Shozo Shimamoto / Joseph Beuys*, Casa Morra, Naples, Italy (2017); *Body, psyche & taboo*, Mumok, Vienna, Austria (2016); *Explosion! Painting as action*, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden and Fondació Joan Miró, Barcelona, Spain (2012); *A bigger splash: painting after performance art*, Tate Modern, London, UK (2012). Hermann Nitsch took part in the 55th Venice Biennial in 2013. Since 1962 the artist has created more than 150 action performances, the first took place in Vienna in 1962 and one of the latest took place in 2017 in Hobart, Tasmania. Hermann Nitsch has also directed a hefty series of symphonies and organ concerts in renowned locations such as the Begijnhof Church in Brussels or the Mozarteum in Salzburg. Hermann Nitsch's work is presented in his two monographic museums in Mistelbach, Austria and Naples, Italy and is included in prestigious collections worldwide such as, among others: the Castello di Rivoli, Turin, Italy; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France; Guggenheim Collection, New York, USA; Kunstmuseum, Bern, Switzerland; Metropolitan Museum, New York, USA; Tate Modern Gallery, London.

Hard Facts:

Massimo De Carlo, London
55 South Audley Street
London W1K 2QH

From April 11th, 2018 until May 25th, 2018

Open Tuesday to Saturday, 10:00am – 6.00pm

Opening: Tuesday 10th of April 2018, 6.00 to 9.00 pm

For further information and materials:

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