

André Thomkins Eternal Network

19 October 2013 – 5 January 2014

André Thomkins (1930 Lucerne – 1985 Berlin), was one of the most innovative and versatile artists of the second half of the twentieth century. His heyday was in the 1960s, when he embarked on a huge variety of artistic experiments, some of which he started developing in the mid-50s. In this exhibition, Kunsthalle Düsseldorf celebrates one of Germany's most important post-war artists, who also had very close ties with Düsseldorf; he spent over 20 years of his life in the Rhineland and taught at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf in the 1970s. This was the place where he created his famous palindromic signs for Spoerri's Eat Art Galerie am Burgplatz, had a group exhibition with his Swiss friends Spoerri, Karl Gerstner and Dieter Roth at the Kunsthalle in 1969, and a high-profile solo show in 1978.

Despite the diversity of his artwork and participation in two documenta exhibitions (5/1972 and 6/1977), Thomkins was primarily renowned for his drawings; his experimental works never received the same attention. It was only recently in the context of new artistic strategies and a fresh interest in his group of works *Lackskins* that this part of Thomkins' oeuvre was rediscovered. Here we see that everyday materials like rubber, magazine photos and pages, food and found objects are just as important in his work as traditional techniques and media. His experiments with this variety of materials produced works of great wit and imagination, poetic depth and playful associations on complex and surprising themes.

The André Thomkins retrospective that comes to us from the Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein presents us with a whole new perspective on this artist and his work. In *André Thomkins. Eternal Network*, we meet a great experimenter whose technical and formal innovations, verbal and visual pieces, objects and musical ventures are decidedly on a par with his far better known collections of drawings. The exhibition also includes two important works created in the course of art actions, including the piece called *Wohnungsentwöhnung*, which was produced in front of Kunsthalle Düsseldorf in 1969, as well as many works from his estate that have hardly or never been seen before. This is the first opportunity to see the work of André Thomkins in all its breadth and variety.

The exhibition was developed by the Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, Vaduz, which has been systematically reviewing the artist's estate since 2002, in cooperation with Kunsthalle Düsseldorf and the Bruseum, Universalmuseum Joanneum Graz.

The exhibition is accompanied by a comprehensive catalogue with contributions from W. Dörstel, E. Gomringer, G. Jansen, S. Kunz, F. Malsch, B. Räderscheidt, D. Streckel and a conversation between F. Malsch and H. Molderings. Published by Kerber Verlag, 408 pages with colour illustrations of all exhibited works. Price: €40.00

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