

Sat, 01.04.2017–Sun, 02.07.2017

Hansjörg Mayer: The Smell of Ink

ZKM_Atrium 1+2

Press Conference on Thurs, 30.03.2017, 11 am



With *The Smell of Ink*, the ZKM is dedicating the first extensive retrospective in Germany to London-based artist, printer and publisher Hansjörg Mayer. Mayer has not merely become one of the most important protagonists of concrete and visual poetry with his typographic experiments. In collaboration with artists such as Dieter Roth, Richard Hamilton or Tom Phillips, he also permanently expanded the scope of what is printable in art forever.

The world of art and literature became aware of Hansjörg Mayer (born in 1943, Stuttgart) as far back as the mid-1960s: In 1964, his first edition was published with the title *13 visuelle Texte*, and in 1968, the Gemeentemuseum Den Haag dedicated a first retrospective to the just turned twenty-five-year-old. Already as a young person, Mayer was in contact with Max Bense, a philosopher teaching in Stuttgart. He acquainted Mayer with the latest international trends in art, literature and music and their protagonists. Mayer's intuitive fascination for the by-products of the printing process, which he discovered and collected in his family's print shop, quickly developed into a poetry of material and coincidence in this context. In Dieter Roth, Mayer was then to find a life-long artistic partner in 1963 in order to flout the rules of printing both fearlessly and masterly. Following an invitation to the legendary *Between Poetry and Painting* (1965) exhibition at London's ICA, Mayer moved to England in 1966, where he taught at the Bath Academy of Art and the Watford School of Art. Commuting between London and Stuttgart, Mayer has since published over 330 books, posters, films, records and videos.

The exhibition presents Hansjörg Mayer's own graphic work together with a selection of experimental films, which he created with Georg Bense and Rainer Wössner between 1962 and 1963, and exhibits the rich spectrum of his publishing influence on art through to ethnology.

Hansjörg Mayer will be present at the opening of the exhibition.

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Press Contact

Dominika Szope
Head of Press and
Publicity Office

Tel: +49 (0) 721 / 8100 – 1220

Regina Hock

Spokesperson for Press and
Publicity Office

Tel: +49 (0) 721 / 8100 – 1821

Email: presse@zkm.de
www.zkm.de/presse

ZKM | Center for Art and
Media Karlsruhe
Lorenzstraße 19
76135 Karlsruhe

Founders of the ZKM



Baden-Württemberg

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On the occasion of the exhibition a book on the editorial work of Hansjörg Mayer will be published: *Hansjörg Mayer: The Smell of Ink and Soil. The Story of (Edition) Hansjörg Mayer*, edited by Bronac Ferran, Cologne 2017. (17 x 23 cm. 272 p., ill., paperbound, text in German and English.)

Poetic Expansions series

The three exhibitions – retrospectives of Nanni Balestrini (born 1935), Hansjörg Mayer (born 1943), and Gerhard Rühm (born 1930) – mark the start of the *Poetic Expansions* series of exhibitions, which will continue in the summer with Reinhard Döhl, Helmut Heißenbüttel, and Konrad Balder Schüffelen.

With a series of selected artistic positions, *Poetic Expansions* presents one of the most important tendencies of art in the twentieth century: the expansion of artistic media. In the 1950s to 1970s, new artistic forms were developed by removing the boundaries between text, image, object, theater and music and releasing art from its conventional materials and production processes, opening it up to technical media.

The aim of the *Poetic Expansions* series of exhibitions is to show that decisive impulses for this development came from poetry and literature. Poets and artists such as Nanni Balestrini, Reinhard Döhl, Helmut Heißenbüttel, Hansjörg Mayer, Gerhard Rühm, and Konrad Balder Schüffelen, accepted the inheritance of Mallarmé, the Futurists and Dadaists who liberated text from the linearity and constraints of narration. Letters, signs and sounds became material. In the form of objects, actions and performances, the artists conquered space and time, the third and fourth dimensions. *Poetic Expansions* shows the media revolution of the arts, born from the enquiry into linguistic communication at the end of the Gutenberg Galaxy and the beginning of the Turing universe.

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