

CAROLINA NITSCH PROJECT ROOM



DIETER ROTH

Order / Disorder

April 29 – June 30, 2017
Opening: April 27, 6-8pm

Carolina Nitsch Project Room
534 West 22nd Street, New York, NY 10011

Carolina Nitsch is pleased to announce *Order / Disorder*, an exhibition of Dieter Roth works spanning two decades, highlighting the transition and contrast of the artist's early linear hand-cut books from the late 1950's to his experimental editions with chocolate and spices from the 1960's and 70's.

In the 1950's Dieter Roth was employed as a graphic designer and worked in Denmark in textile production, while privately developing experimental books and films characterized by optical and kinetic elements. The hand-cut books on view here from the early 1960's are loose pages with manually cut horizontal, vertical and diagonal slits of varying lengths. Roth called these *Fensterbilder* (slit books) and are intended to be configured by the viewer, creating thousands of variables depending on the page's order and direction. Artist's books would become a major component of Roth's work through the 1960's and 70's and he is often credited with being among the most influential in the genre.

The *Stupidograms* from 1962 are grids of printed commas on small pages with random looping pencil lines intersecting and connecting in a sort of absurdist concrete poetry. Poetry was indeed a great interest of Roth's since childhood and he created many works which explore experimental uses of text such as the *Literature Sausages* and the "meat book" on view here titled, *Poemetry* (1968), which is text printed on transparent plastic bags filled with minced mutton. By the mid 1960's Roth began experimenting with various foodstuffs and found objects in his art; he would run bananas, cheese, sliced salami, bonbons and eggs through a printing press letting pressure and chance create wonderfully haphazard abstractions. *Der Lauf Der Welt* (The Run Around the World), 1969, features a foil wrapped Santa and Easter Bunny perched behind cardboard squares and pressed into a plastic sleeve. Chocolate's smell and transience were immensely appealing to Roth who is closely associated with its use. Similarly, the *Two Lightbulbs* (1969) were crushed with glue in between two plastic sheets and then sealed.

In 1970 Roth began a series of sculptures with wooden frames and glass on both sides filled with various spices. The fabricator who worked with Roth on many objects, Rudolf Rieser, remembers, "After doing repulsive things with moldy food, we wanted to do something beautiful, something refined. Stimulated by the wonderful smells in an herb market, where the spices were stored in bags, we came up with the idea of using them to make objects." Each *Spice Window* features removable lids so that one can smell the contents and the 5 frames open out so that viewers can look at them from both sides. The arrangement of different spices in layers recalls desert landscapes and also has allusions to seaside sand art bottles or even to an ant farm. Like all Roth's work it is tinged with humor and full of experimentation.

As Garry Garrels, Curator of Roth's 2004 exhibition at MoMA writes, "Roth's work developed over a fifty-year period with both a diversity and a logical coherence that establish him as one of the most singular and important artists of the second half of the century. Roth shifted from a foundation in classic modernism into the arena of contemporary art, or what has been sometimes called "post-modernism". Testing fundamental issues of authorship and the notion of the self is fused with equally essential questions of the character and nature of art, the materials from which art may be made, as well as the hierarchies and distinctions between media."

For more information or images please contact the gallery at 212-645-2030 or email: info@carolinanitsch.com