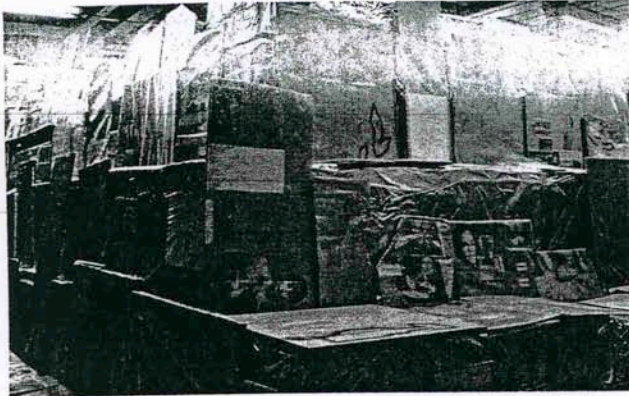


GLADSTONE GALLERY

Reust, H.R., "Thomas Hirschhorn", Artforum, Sept. 96, p.118

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Thomas Hirschhorn, *Très grand buffet (Grand buffet)*, 1995, mixed media. Installation view.

supermodels with images of torture and war, drawing arrows to suggest connections between clichés and images freighted with genuine emotion. Each photograph was altered by overdrawing in blue ballpoint pen. For example, the models' faces were coyly, ever so slightly blemished with teardrops, or inscribed with an emphatic "Thank you!" Negative spaces boldly outlined in adhesive tape on the cardboard marked the gaps in this giant inventory of glamour and horror. Small chainlike scrawls have worked their way into the most recent pieces—drawings of "viruses," as Hirschhorn calls them—as though hitherto healthy organisms, if not the whole data bank, were now being destroyed from within.

For Hirschhorn less is not more: the opulence of his buffet of images, his charming, cheap materials, and his work's ad hoc aspect served as an antidote to the neutral, static architecture of the exhibition space. At the same time, the "processional" path around the installation—which resembled a great sacrificial table—revealed the seductive power of the many little fetishistic objects, while at the same time the display's sheer variety, impossible to take in at one glance, undermined its devotional aspect. The work consisted of a multiplicity of optical tidbits whose tactile presence was only heightened by the transparent plastic wrap that covered each piece of cardboard. Not the least of its effects, this packaging, which served at once to protect each object and distance it from the spectator, added to the work's ambiguous resemblance to a commodity. One found a similar effect in the advertising-like display that was related to the publication of his book *Les plaintifs, les bêtes, les politiques* (Plain-

tiffs, beasts, politics, 1995), which Hirschhorn simultaneously installed in Geneva's Centre de gravure contemporaine.

For all the precision of the individual collages, *Très grand buffet* didn't read as an array of politically correct statements; rather, its political potential lay in the oppositional strategy by which it deconstructed its own authority as a work of art. Graphic clarity and glitter were juxtaposed with impoverished materials, overdrawing, and deliberate obfuscation, creating an intense effect but only an illusory cult value. This was certainly the same artist who once filmed the trash collectors of Paris as they carted off works of art from the door in front of his home.

—Hans Rudolf Reust

Translated from the German by David Jacobson.

F R I B O U R G

THOMAS HIRSCHHORN

FRIART — CENTRE D'ART
CONTEMPORAIN

An inner room, sectioned off from the main exhibition hall by lengths of cheap fabric in a colorful '50s pattern—this was Thomas Hirschhorn's U-shaped *Très grand buffet* (Grand buffet), a nearly room-sized, stepped construction covered with a shimmering layer of tinfoil and laden with a vast number of cellophane-wrapped objects. Resembling delicacies from a gala dinner or raffle prizes, these objects were in fact small collages on cardboard, inevitably conjuring up the worn signs, clumsily handwritten, that beggars wield, telling their life stories or urging passersby to give them money. Here, with the same admonishing directness, Hirschhorn paired fragments of photos depicting dream cars and the faces of