

GLADSTONE GALLERY

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Dieter Roth

"Drawings"

April 5 - May 3, 2008

Gladstone Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of over 500 drawings by German-born Swiss artist Dieter Roth. Covering a vast terrain throughout his career, producing prints, sculpture, installation, audio and video, Roth thoroughly documented his subjective view of the world while eluding any easy classification. The thirty-six bundled groups of drawings on view were created between 1977 and 1990 and represent a central part of his oeuvre, despite their rare showings during his life. While appearing in the *Kopiebucher* (Copy Books) that he created in small editions during his life, this exhibition marks the US debut of some of these most telling and essential works from this fascinating artist.

Roth collected and bound these works on paper in unique books that he mostly kept private during his life, turning them into a wondrous archive of the artist's mind. Just as he exhibited the dexterity of his skill in creating objects from such disparate materials, such as chocolate and sausage, his drafting techniques range from simple graphite lines to more swirling compositions rendered from multiple layers of ink and gouache over-painting. Working in series allowed Roth to sustain his flowing train of thought, while permitting his constant experimentation with texture and imagery. Though some works may seem unfinished, failed, or hastily dashed-off, in each work his gestural fluidity spirals closer to a portrait of the mind in constant production. The diary would be an apt metaphor for the position these played in his conceptual view of the world, as the continued insistence upon his working mind as subject shades each group of drawings with the impressions and feelings that filled his day-to-day life. As Theodora Vischer wrote in her preface to his retrospective "Roth Time: A Dieter Roth Retrospective," "Art and life for Roth flowed readily into each other and were impossible to separate." It is this impossibility of classification, supported by his continual experimentation and pioneering methodologies across media that rightly secures his singular position within art history.

Dieter Roth was born in 1930 in Germany and died in 1998. During his life he worked mostly in Switzerland, but also spent large amounts of time in Iceland. Early in his career, Roth was closely associated with the Swiss "concrete" artists, though his interest in working in perishable media previously disregarded within the hierarchy of artistic production ushered in a new period of development. In addition to exhibitions all over the world, including representing Switzerland in the 1982 Venice Biennale, Roth also taught both in Europe and the United States. In 2003 the exhibition "Roth Time: A Dieter Roth Retrospective" was organized by the Schaulager, Basel, and traveled to Museum Ludwig, Köln, and The Museum of Modern Art and P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center in New York.

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