

***WAIT, LATER THIS WILL BE NOTHING* FOCUSES ON DIETER ROTH'S PROLIFIC AND INNOVATIVE PERIOD OF ART-MAKING FROM 1954 TO 1972**

Exhibition Includes Roth's Experiments with Diverse Materials Including Melted Chocolate and "Book-Sausages" Filled with Ground Paper

Wait, Later This Will Be Nothing: Editions by Dieter Roth

February 17–June 24, 2013

The Michael H. Dunn Gallery, second floor

Press Viewing: Wednesday, February 13, 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.

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NEW YORK, February 1, 2013—MoMA presents *Wait, Later This Will Be Nothing: Editions by Dieter Roth*, an exhibition focused on Roth's incredibly innovative and prolific period of art-making from 1954 to 1972, from February 17 to June 24, 2013. Presenting a comprehensive selection of prints, books, and multiples from the first half of the artist's career, the exhibition offers a lens through which to examine not only Roth's radical redefinition of these mediums but also his essential contributions to art in the 20th century. Drawing substantially from the extensive collections of both MoMA's Department of Prints and Illustrated Books and The Museum of Modern Art Library, the exhibition features nearly 160 works, and features several important new additions to the collection, including Roth's seminal *P.O.T.H.A.A.VFB (Portrait of the artist as a Vogelfutterbüste [birdseed bust])* (1968), a self-portrait bust of the artist as an old man, cast in chocolate mixed with birdseed. *Wait, Later This Will Be Nothing* is organized by Sarah Suzuki, Associate Curator, Department of Prints and Illustrated Books.

The work of Dieter Roth (Swiss, born Germany. 1930–1998) encompasses everything from painting and sculpture to film and video, but it is arguably through his editioned work—prints, books, and multiples—that he made his most radical contributions. These experiments include the use of organic materials in lieu of traditional mediums, including printed "pressings" and "squashing" of foodstuffs, book-sausages filled with ground paper in place of meat, and multiples of plastic toys mired in melted chocolate, as well as a dazzling array of variations on printed postcards. Taken together, they reveal a thorough reassessment of these formats, constituting an experimental body of work that calls into question the standard definitions of these staid, established mediums.

The centerpiece of *Wait, Later This Will Be Nothing* is an expanded presentation of *Snow* (1964/69), an artist's book by Roth in MoMA's collection. It marks a turning point in Roth's approach, away from the rigorous, abstract visual language of his early work and toward an embrace of chance, the everyday, and accumulation. Its pages reflect the mind of the artist at

work and provide a trove of information about Roth's creative process, plans for future works, literary and technical experiments, thoughts on artistic colleagues, and much more. The work is also a physical embodiment of Roth's burgeoning interest in entropy and decay, and an inscription by Roth inside—"wait, later this will be nothing"—predicts the eventual outcome of not only the tome but also himself and his oeuvre. The current presentation of *Snow* is the first time since 1969 that the interior pages of the book have been publicly exhibited.

Roth was the primogenitor of the artist's book as an artistic medium. A selection of handmade books, miniature volumes, Roth's own poetry, and the newly acquired *Literaturwurst* (1961–69), considered Roth's most radical experiment with the book format, are also on view. For each volume in *Literaturwurst*, Roth followed a traditional recipe for a sausage, but substituted one ground book where the recipe called for pork, veal, or beef. The subjects of Roth's attentions were a combination of those authors, volumes, and journals that he either envied or loathed. As a lover of language, Roth commingles the ideas of books and nourishment; the physical sustenance of food is likened to the intellectual one of the written word. The *Literaturwursts* suggest a means of ingesting and digesting information; but they also revel in the action of turning serious works of literature into mincemeat. The artist's subsequent radical experiments with editioned formats challenged traditional notions of beauty and offered an expanded definition of art in the 20th century.

Beginning in the late 1960s, the artist began working with chocolate, a material that became intimately associated with his work, as he explored issues of decay and decomposition. Roth's chocolate multiples from this period include the charming and insidious *Untitled (Doll)*, in which a plastic doll is immersed in melted chocolate; the *Kleiner Gartenzwerg als Eichhörnchenfutterplastik* (Small garden gnome as squirrel-food sculpture), whose prisoner could eventually be freed by the industrious gnawing of squirrels; and the abstract landscape *Basel am Rhein* (Basel on the Rhine). The apex of this group is *P.O. TH.A.A. VFB* (Portrait of the artist as a *Vogelfutterbüste* [birdseed bust]), one of the most self-deprecating self-portraits in the history of art.

The container, a common concept in Roth's work, offering both a means of enclosing chaos and a measure of portability for an artist who was always on the go, is the focus of the final section of the exhibition. Among the featured works are *Containers*, an encyclopedic portfolio of work to date, from delicate etchings and enigmatic texts to perforated postage stamps to pressings and squashings of chocolate and other sweets, multiples of fruit and sugar, and the 20-volume set of Roth's *Collected Works*, a self-produced catalogue raisonné, compiled into a miniature Roth library or portable museum.

SPONSORSHIP:

The exhibition is made possible by Maja Oeri and Hans Bodenmann, in memory of Dr. Ira G. Wool.

PUBLICATION:

Published in conjunction with the exhibition, *Wait, Later This Will Be Nothing: Editions by Dieter Roth* focuses on the prolific period between 1960 and 1972 and highlights examples of Roth’s most exciting and innovative books and graphics. An essay by curator Sarah Suzuki uses an extended examination of *Snow* (1964/1969), a complex book-sculpture, as a touchstone from which to further investigate Roth’s use of language, iconography, technical innovations, and relationships to other artists. A conservation essay offers two case studies that explore preservation issues around Roth’s work, and address larger concerns about the challenges of conserving contemporary art and organic materials. 8" w x 10" h; 96 pages; 102 color illustrations. Paperback, \$35. Published by The Museum of Modern Art and available in February at MoMA Stores and online at MoMAStore.org. Available to the trade through ARTBOOK | D.A.P. in the United States and Canada, and through Thames & Hudson outside the United States and Canada.

ONLINE:

The exhibition is accompanied by a website that features texts and numerous images from the exhibition. The site is accompanied by an original video produced by MoMA that tells the story and conservation of Roth’s work. The site launches on February 13, 2013. MoMA.org/rotheditions

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For downloadable high-resolution images, register at MoMA.org/press.

Public Information:

The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, NY 10019, [\(212\) 708-9400](tel:2127089400), MoMA.org.

Hours: Wednesday through Monday, 10:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m. Friday, 10:30 a.m.–8:00 p.m. Closed Tuesday.

Museum Admission: \$25 adults; \$18 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D.; \$14 full-time students with current I.D. Free, members and children 16 and under. (Includes admittance to Museum galleries and film programs). **MoMA.org:** No service charge for tickets ordered on MoMA.org. Tickets purchased online may be printed out and presented at the Museum without waiting in line. (Includes admittance to Museum galleries and film programs).

Film and After Hours Program Admission: \$12 adults; \$10 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D.; \$8 full-time students with current I.D. The price of an After Hours Program Admission ticket may be applied toward the price of a Museum admission ticket or MoMA Membership within 30 days.

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