



Luis Camnitzer: *Short Stories*, installation view, Alexander Gray Associates (2017)

Luis Camnitzer: *Short Stories*

February 23 – April 1, 2017

Luis Camnitzer: *Short Stories*, features new work in a variety of media, including: video, printmaking, and modified readymade objects. For his fifth solo-exhibition at the Gallery, Camnitzer employs his characteristic wit to investigate notions of time, creating open narratives for viewer engagement, redefining established systems, and questioning assumed realities. His recent work speaks to his belief in art making as a platform for organizing and acquiring new information through the decontextualization of familiar tools and objects.

Ground Floor



Improbability 4-5, 2017
Mixed media
9h x 9w x 1.5d in

Improbabilities, 2017

"Improbabilities," are a series of dice assemblages contained in artist-made frames. Each *Improbability* is comprised of 100 dice organized into a perfect square. Using the dotted surface of the dice, Camnitzer creates five distinct patterns that rely on numerical repetition. The artist brings together objects which would traditionally be rolled to achieve an arbitrary outcome and implements visual order in place of potential randomness. His use of dice is representative of his ongoing interest in both literal gameplay as well as the way in which he views art and life: as a game in and of itself.



Bereaved Bird Bit Bloody-faced Bohemian, 2017
Mixed media
Dimensions variable

Bereaved Bird Bit Bloody-faced Bohemian, 2017

The title of the mixed media installation, *Bereaved-Bird-Bit-Bloody-faced-Bohemian*, refers to the headwords on the pages of five open unabridged Merriam Webster dictionaries; books which serve as indexes of verbal communication. Camnitzer constructs a short, but fully-realized story from the alphabetically-arranged words that were designed as tools to help readers navigate books which are becoming less prevalent in a search-driven digital era. The story, which might initially be unclear to a viewer on pages of unrelated text, is indicated by Camnitzer on a brass plaque meant to mimic a museum wall label. Camnitzer states that "we try to free ourselves from an existing order, but language fights us because it's an orderly system," a notion which is exemplified by the logic of dictionaries as a means of cataloguing and organizing vocabulary.



Timelanguage, 2016
Xerox toner on laid paper
in 14 parts
18.75h x 12.25w in each
Edition of 12 + 1 AP (Ed. 8/12)

***Timelanguage*, 2016**

Timelanguage is a portfolio of 14 Xerox prints, which spell-out the made-up word “Timelanguage,” beginning on the first sheet with only the letter “T.” Each consecutive print reveals one more letter until the full word is rendered. Printed on a gradient from a light gray to black so that the first print is the lightest, and the last is the most pigmented, the sequence uses these visual markers of accumulation and addition to signify the passage of time and information. These works emerge from Camnitzer’s longstanding commitment to expanding the possibilities of printmaking, and embody his ability to use language as a primary medium, both defining characteristics of his practice. This suite was produced by Atelier für Druckgraphik Hamburg.



Gödel's Proof of the Existence of God, 2013
Pen on paper
10.75h x 8w x 2.5d in

***Gödel's Proof of the Existence of God*, 2013**

This work refers to “Gödel’s ontological proof,” a formal argument by the mathematician Kurt Gödel (1906–1978) for God’s existence. Camnitzer has copied the equation onto a notebook page, which he then crumpled, and displays on the ground. The page appears as if someone has confirmed the existence of a higher power and then discarded the evidence as unimportant trash. The artist undermines the relevance of religion in society by highlighting the futility of proving an issue of faith through science; the study of which is often at odds with religious belief. Camnitzer, notes that his religious identity is “only an ethical component, a bond with my [Jewish] grandparents who were gassed with the famous six million, all of whom I feel died so that I may live.” Thus, his own experiences provide him insight into the role religious differences play in inciting conflict, suggesting an alternative reason for rejecting Gödel’s proof of the existence of God.

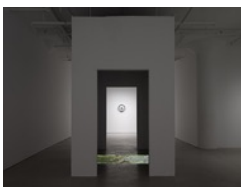


Meanwhile, 2014
Glass, brass plaque, cork,
and aluminum
15.6h x 3w x 3d in

***Meanwhile*, 2014**

Meanwhile is a corked, but empty glass bottle onto which Camnitzer has affixed a brass plaque with the engraved text, “Meanwhile.” The word evokes notions of both narrative and time; it links disparate events together through their common timeframe. Additionally, the bottle contains only air, much like the space in the room around the bottle. In this way, the elements both within and outside the container are the same despite their physical separation and containment. The apparent emptiness of the bottle simultaneously suggests nothingness and infinite unrealized situations onto which the viewer can project any narrative.

Second Floor Gallery



The Time Project, 2017
Mixed media
Dimensions variable

***The Time Project*, 2017**

The large scale installation, *The Time Project*, brings together different indicators of the passage of time, both natural and cultural. The work is comprised of a free standing room that frames a floor video-projection of a stream in the woods, and two modified wall-clocks situated on opposite sides of the gallery. The short-loop video depicts a stream of clear water, the surrounding vegetation, and sounds of nearby nature and distant church bells. The arhythmic bells cease to announce the hour and instead become a circular sound element similar to the flow of water, removing a linear marker of time passing. Anchoring the installation are the clocks, which face the doorways to the centrally-situated video room. Camnitzer modified the wall-clocks, shedding their function as timekeeping devices; in one case, tangling the hour and minute hands with a length of string, and for the second clock, hanging it upside down, though setting the hands to Eastern Standard Time. The installation constructs a narrative around time that inverts notions of progress, suggesting an alternative understanding of the indefinite continued passing of events as a circular phenomenon.