

AUTRE

LUIS CAMNITZER'S TOWARDS AN AESTHETIC OF IMBALANCE @ ALEXANDER GRAY ASSOCIATES IN NEW YORK

January 27, 2020



In 1988, Luis Camnitzer represented Uruguay in the 43rd Venice Biennale, where he produced a series of works that combined physical objects, printed images, and text. In the context of the end of Uruguay's military dictatorship (1973–1984), these works addressed themes of torture, abuse of power, and repression, combining seemingly disparate elements to elicit poetic interpretations. Despite political instability during the transition to democracy, Camnitzer agreed to participate in the Biennale, realizing that “keeping one's purity could be in the way of more important things like the cementing of a regained democracy.” Throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s, Camnitzer built upon the political themes in his work, developing new series and projects, including *The Agent Orange Series* (1985) and *Los San Patricios* (1992). Conceptually building on the work he debuted eight years prior at the Venice Biennale, Camnitzer presented *El Mirador* in 1996 at the São Paulo Biennial. Consisting of an enclosed room that is only visible to the viewer through a narrow slit in the wall, *El Mirador* evokes multiple spaces of confinement: a prison cell, a psychiatric hospital, and a torture chamber. Various objects are placed throughout the white-walled room, which is starkly lit with glaring light, lending the installation a surreal quality. In this tableaux, uncanny elements are gathered—an iron bed frame with a single glass sheet as a mattress, a shattered wall mirror, a house of playing cards, and a window with panes made of AstroTurf grass—resulting in a hallucinatory aura, meant to destabilize the viewer's initial interpretations.

Towards an Aesthetic of Imbalance is on view throughout Feb. 15th at Alexander Gray Associates 510 West 26 Street, New York, NY.
Photographs courtesy of the Alexander Gray Associates.