

"Zero to Infinity: Arte Povera, 1962–1972"

TATE MODERN

London

Suddenly, after the Giacometti years and the Henry Moore years, and the days of David Smith and Anthony Caro, came the tendency labeled by Italian art critic and curator Germano Celant *arte povera*. It was first attributed to a group of young Italian artists who managed without the normal prerequisites for making art, such as paint and bronze. They used, instead, *povera*, or "poor" and unconventional materials. The movement involved recycling and improvisation, all in the name of informality. At the time, 1967 to '68, there was Vietnam, Woodstock, lots of talk of revolution, and "All You Need Is Love." In this context, *arte povera* was a devastating makeshift.

However, an *arte povera* roundup of 14 artists—co-organized by Frances Morris, senior curator at the Tate Modern, and Richard Flood, chief curator of the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis—proved curiously enervated. Nowadays the informal gestures (like Giovanni Anselmo's head of lettuce clamped between two granite blocks) are no longer casual. Arrangements reconstituted by conservators and curators cannot have the freshness or audacity they at first brought to the scene. And although some devices still have piquancy—Giuseppe Penone's planks whittled back to reveal the twigs that once sprouted where knotholes show—others look like chic shop-window displays.

Yet the entire show, in all its calculated diversity, did amount to something. It represented a moment in art history when possibilities seemed unlimited, just as in the early 1920s when Surrealism caught on. The Italians, who added stylish debunkings in humdrum materials to the language of art, infected an entire generation with their attitudes. Hence Nauman and Serra: the two who have perhaps proved themselves best capable of extending what *arte povera* set out to do.

—William Feaver

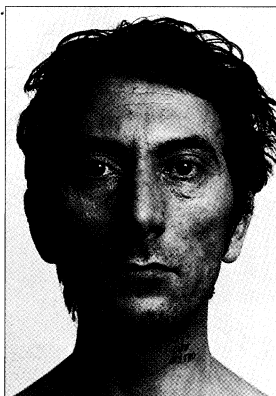
The show travels to the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (October 13 through January 13, 2002), the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (March 10 through August 11), and the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C. (October 17 through January 12, 2003).

Roman Signer

HAUSER & WIRTH

Zurich

Ranked among Switzerland's premier contemporary artists for three decades, Roman Signer continues to produce a deadpan conceptualism that amuses and



Giovanni Anselmo, *Lato Destro*, (Right Side), 1970, color photograph, 13" x 9". Tate Modern.



Roman Signer, *Schlauch mit Kamera* (Tube with Camera), 2000, board, water tube, video cameras, and video projector, variable dimensions. Hauser & Wirth.



Helmut Newton, *Sweden*, 2000, gelatin silver print, 44" x 64". De Pury & Luxembourg.

amazes. Generally, he performs an activity or stages an event, such as an explosion, then exhibits its documentation—videos, films, photos, or sometimes the objects he used for the piece. Past examples include sinking a canoe with small explosives and riding a bike down a narrow hallway with flaming signal flares on the handlebars.

As part of this show of recent work, *Kamera-mann* featured a video snippet—a shaky vertical tracking shot from the sky to a church to the woods surrounding the church, then back up to the sky—on eight monitors lined up on the floor. The image, hypnotizing and gorgeous, could have stood alone as eye candy. But the signature Signer stroke was the ninth monitor. It showed the artist bouncing ridiculously atop a giant rubber ball, videocam aimed out a window of the room he was in as he filmed the mesmerizing sequence.

Schlauch mit Kamera (Tube with Camera) similarly involved a camera tracking along a vertical axis, but this time it was the gallerygoers who controlled its movement. Visitors could walk on top of a large hose with a camera attached at one end that pointed directly at them. The weight of one stepping on the hose pushed the trapped air toward the tube's end, thereby elevating the lens. A live-feed recorded the camera's movements and projected them on the wall.

Less obvious in its workings, *Beobachtungskiste* (Observation Box) at first seemed merely an odd rectangular assembly of plywood, electrical wires, and a welder's helmet. But closer inspection revealed it to be a contraption that Signer had sat in while detonating an explosion two feet away. Only the burnt line from the fuse and circular scorch marks on the box serve as clues, demonstrating Signer's pitch-perfect sense of the balance between mystery and transparency in recording and displaying the surreal moments he creates.

—Marc Spiegler

Helmut Newton

DE PURY & LUXEMBOURG

Zurich

Simon de Pury and Daniella Luxembourg recently opened their new Zurich gallery with a stunning overview of the work of Helmut Newton. Concentrating on his images of the 1990s, "Sex and Landscapes" revealed for the first time another side of Newton, best

known for his cutting-edge fashion photography. Adding to his repertoire were outdoor scenes that include dramatic reflections of sunlight and moonlight on a calm or surging sea, a silhouetted battleship, and stark views of urban balconies.

Newton's cityscapes, seascapes, landscapes, and skyscapes are every bit as charged as his well-known erotic nudes. An airplane streaking across the sky