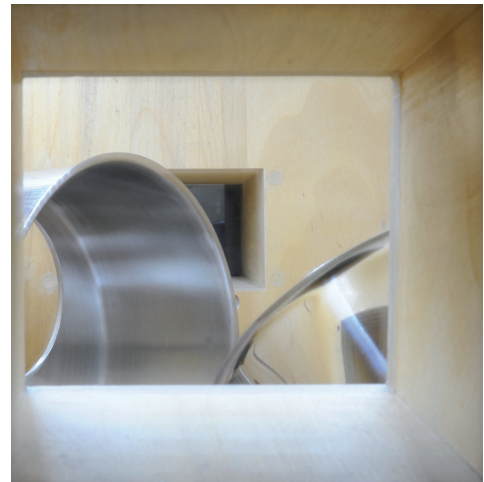


ALDO WALKER - ENVELOPPE

March 3 to April 2, 2011

Open 24 hours every day



Kunsthalle Marcel Duchamp

Place d'Arme / Quai de l'Indépendance, CH-1096 Cully

Aldo Walker (1938-2000) is one of the great Swiss artists whose significance has not been fully appreciated to this day. His biography sets him apart from most other artists. He worked as a self-employed electrician for six months every year for economic reasons. Not only did he not have a family to support but the arrangement also enabled him to devote the remaining six months to conceptual art, a labour of love. His career as an artist began in the early 1960s with the so-called welding torch pictures, of which only one has come down to us. These paintings, informal in style, were attacked by the artist with a welding torch in the last stage of their completion. In this way, Walker made their destruction part of their genesis. This technique foreshadows all the ingredients of Walker's later work, which consistently focuses on meaning and significance – on the signifier and the signified – in the context of art. Representing Switzerland, together with John Armleder, at the Venice Biennial in 1986, he concentrated on his lifelong concern of how a visual sign is read and how it generates content. His work is rooted in semiotics, in the Concept Art of the 1960s and, above all, in Marcel Duchamp's "anart". Self-consciously delighted with the playful, ironical, tongue-in-cheek stringency of his concepts and at the same time highly critical of his actual artistic output, Walker produced an astonishing oeuvre from the mid-1970s. In physical and/or visual terms it materialized most notably in two outstanding work groups – the "logotypes" (objects and object-like experimental setups) and the "pictograms" (figurative line pictures). Guided by the conviction that for Duchamp's unique avant-garde works to be fully understood they require the setting of an art museum, he strove to occupy the space left vacant, as he saw it, by Duchamp's "ready-mades". The answer for him lay in artistic statements or, more properly, visual signs, that manifest themselves as visible, readable and amenable to experience also in contexts not immediately related to art. The results were pictures and objects of outstanding quality, whose linguistics-oriented character raised the "readability" of the "picture" to the status of an artistic credo.

In its fourth exhibition since its foundation, the Kunsthalle Marcel Duchamp puts on display Aldo Walker's late multiple, "Untitled, 1998", a work that harks back to the logotypes from the 1970s and alludes at the same time to Duchamp's concept of the modified ready-made. One of the last works the artist was able to complete before his death, "Untitled, 1998" consists of two off-the-shelf, plain saucepans, 16cm and 18cm in diameter. Circular holes have been cut in the bottoms; the diameters chosen for them are such that they are in the golden ratio to the overall diameters of the pan bottoms. Jürg Nyffeler, who is also the owner of this work, was commissioned by the artist to realize five specimens of this multiple. Put on display at the world's "smallest museum", "Untitled, 1998" unfolds an impressive visual presence. The miniature museum makes the readability and the significance of this modified kitchen utensil a truly outstanding aesthetic experience: "All the world talks about cooking as art. I would like to make that art a wee bit more troublesome." (Aldo Walker)