

*We're all against war. But what are we for? Peace, we say.
What is peace? Nobody quite knows.*

Robert Filliou

Richard Saltoun Gallery celebrates the 30th anniversary of the THE ART-OF-PEACE BIENNALE, which took place at the Kunstverein in Hamburg, Germany, in 1985.

The Last Art-of-Peace Biennale does not restage the earlier exhibition but gathers some of its artists together to represent its spirit and understand its context. Curated around Filliou's key work *7 Childlike Uses of Warlike Material* (1970) the exhibition also includes works by Joseph Beuys, Henning Christiansen, Barry Flanagan, Sol LeWitt, Tony Morgan, Wolf Vostell, and Franz Erhard Walther. Important works include Sol LeWitt's *Proposal for Walldrawing* (1985) that invites visitors to draw on the walls of the gallery and was featured in the 1985 exhibition.

Consultant Curator: **Roddy Hunter** (b. 1970, Glasgow, Scotland)
Roddy Hunter is an artist, curator and educator. He is the self-appointed curator of The Next Art-of-Peace Biennale, 2015-17, resuming the project conceived by Robert Filliou and René Block in 1985. He is Associate Professor and Director of Programmes in Fine Art, Middlesex University, London. www.peacebiennale.info

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The Last Art-of-Peace Biennale

13 February – 20 March 2015

RICHARD SALTOUN



Joseph Beuys

Vacuum-Mass, 1970

Signed and numbered

Black and white photograph on canvas

125 × 169 cm

Edition 31 / 100

(JBE015)



Joseph Beuys

La Rivoluzione siamo Noi, 1971

Signed, titled, and numbered '123/180'

Screenprint on polyester, with written text

191 × 102 cm

Edition 123 / 180

(JBE022)



Joseph Beuys

Enterprise 18.11.72, 18:5:16 UHR 1973, 1973

Signed, titled and numbered

Zinc box, black and white photograph, camera and felt, in two parts

41 × 30.5 × 15 cm (Box)

Edition 4 / 24 (plus 5 AP's)

(JBE024)



Joseph Beuys

Capri-Batterie, 1985

Signed on inside of box, with signed and numbered certificate

Bulb, plug, lemon, certificate in a wooden box

Wooden box: 18.5 × 18.5 × 18.5 cm

Edition 107 / 200

(JBE025)



Henning Christiansen

Abschiedssymphonie, 1980s

Vinyl, LP

Recorded at Biennale des Friedens, Hamburg, November 29, 1985.

Featuring [Telephone] – Joseph Beuys

Mixed By – Jean Martin

Piano, Recorded By, Mixed By – Henning Christiansen

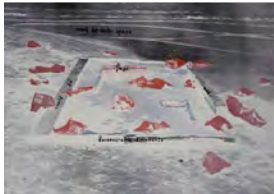
Piano, Violin – Nam June Paik

Recorded By – Ernst Kretzer, Esben

Christiansen, Lorenzo Mammi, Thomas Stelter

Edition unknown

(HEN001)



Robert Filliou

7 Childlike Uses of Warlike Material: A

Contribution to the Art of Peace (Ein Beitrag zur Kunst des Friedens), 1971

7 Handprinted screenprints

49.5 × 69.5 cm each

Edition 97 / 100

(ROF002)



Robert Filliou

The Kingdom of Arts is Inside You..., 1974

Felt-tip pen, anatomical map on paper, mounted on wood

125 × 175 × 6 cm

(ROF044)



Barry Flanagan

Chess Piece, 1973

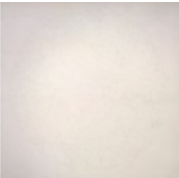
Signed on base and numbered

Dyed canvas filled with sand on cork chess board, laminated with aluminium.

47.5 × 47.5 × 7 cm

Edition of 40, AP 2 / 6

(BFL063)



Sol LeWitt

Proposal for Walldrawing: Within a two meter circle

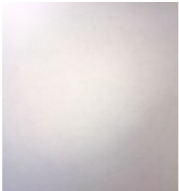
(pencil) each person may make one continuous

straight abstract line, in pencil., 1985

Pencil

2m diameter

(SLW011)



Sol LeWitt

Proposal for Walldrawing: Within a two meter circle

(pencil) each person may make one continuous not

straight abstract line, in pencil., 1985

Pencil

2m diameter

(SLW012)



Tony Morgan

Book of Exercises: Washing, 1972

Black and white photograph

50 × 50 cm

Edition of 7

(TMO034)



Tony Morgan

Dante's Inferno, 1985

Book (Dante's Inferno illustrated by Gustave

Doré) and black rope

33.5 × 28 × 5 cm

(TMO065)



Wolf Vostell

El avion es el huevo en la mano del cielo, 1971

Signed 'Vostell'

Various materials, collage and acrylic on wood panel in wooden case and glass

105 × 75 × 7 cm

(WVO001)



Franz Erhard Walther

Werkzeichnung (Blind), 1966

Signed and dated lower right 'Walther 66'

Gouache, watercolour and pencil on paper

29.5 × 21 cm

(FEW004)



Franz Erhard Walther

Untitled, 1967/69

Signed and dated

Mixed media on paper

29 × 21 cm

(FEW010)



Franz Erhard Walther

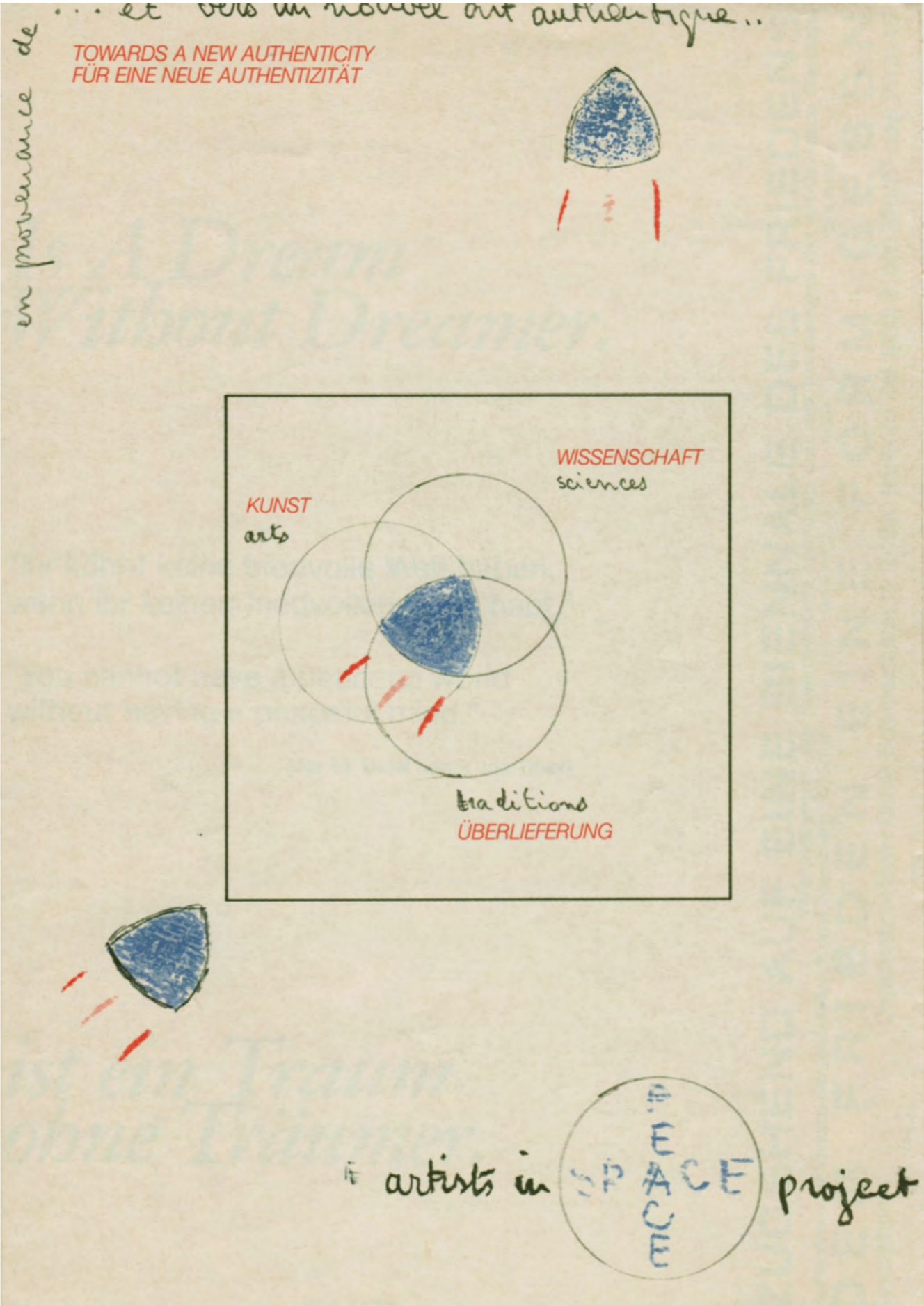
Recto/Verso: Untitled, 1967/69

Signed and dated

Mixed media on paper

28 × 21.5 cm

(FEW011)



Sol LeWitt
Proposal for Walldrawing: Within a two meter circle (pencil) each person may make one continuous straight abstract line, in pencil., 1985
Pencil
2m diameter
Courtesy the Estate of Sol LeWitt
(slw011)

Robert Filliou
Commemor, 1970
(detail, exhibition catalogue for *Robert Filliou – Commemor*, Neue Galerie, Aix-la-Chapelle)
Ed size unknown
30.3 × 21.5 cm
(rof054)

Robert Filliou
Towards a New Authenticity, 1985
(detail, exhibition pamphlet for *Zugehend auf eine Biennale des Friedens*)
21.3 × 15 cm
(xxxxx)



Franz Erhard Walther
Werkzeichnung (Mit Moritz und Lehman), 1969
Signed and dated lower right 'Walter 69'
Gouache, watercolour, and pencil on paper
28 × 21.5 cm
(few005)

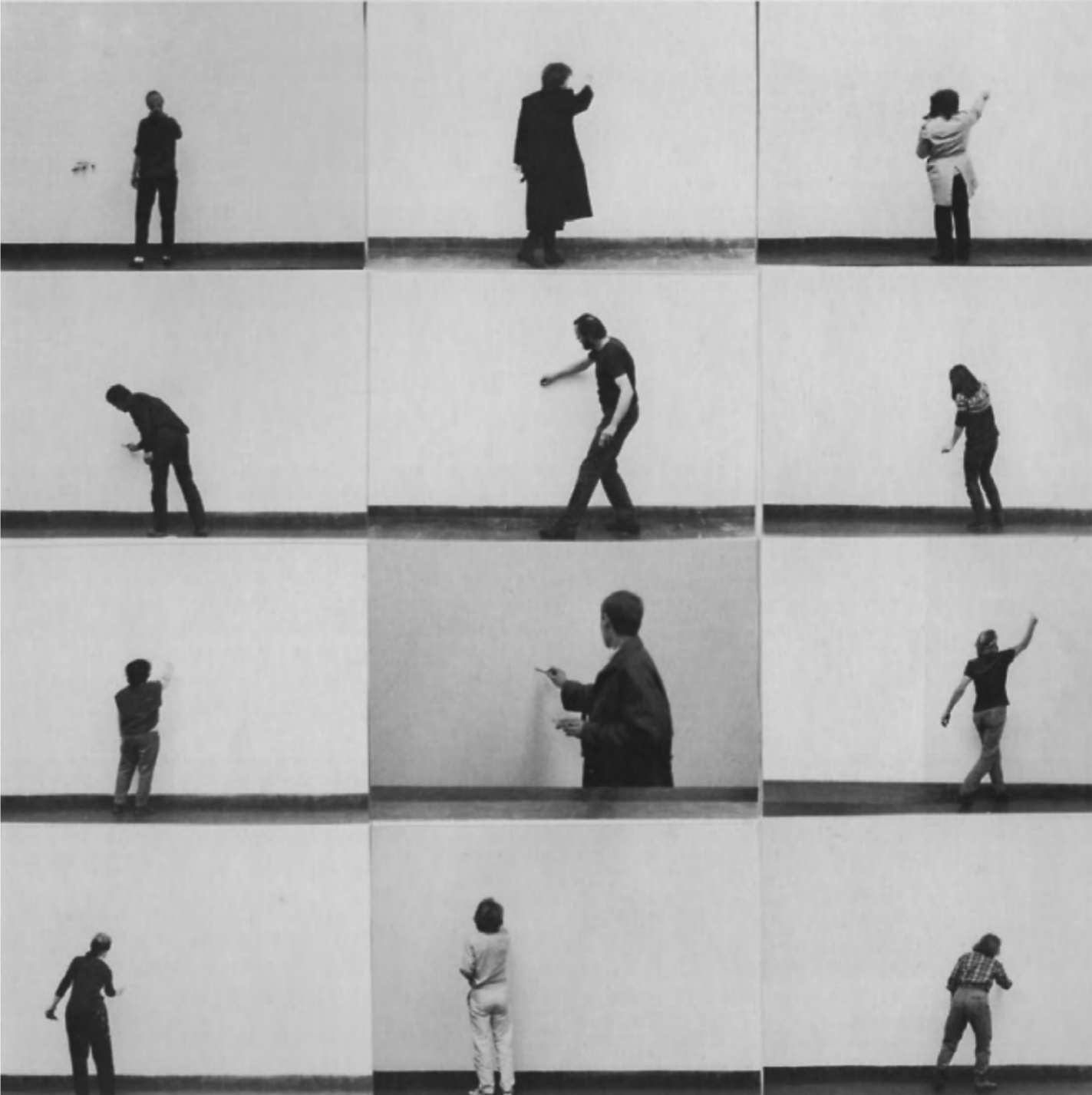
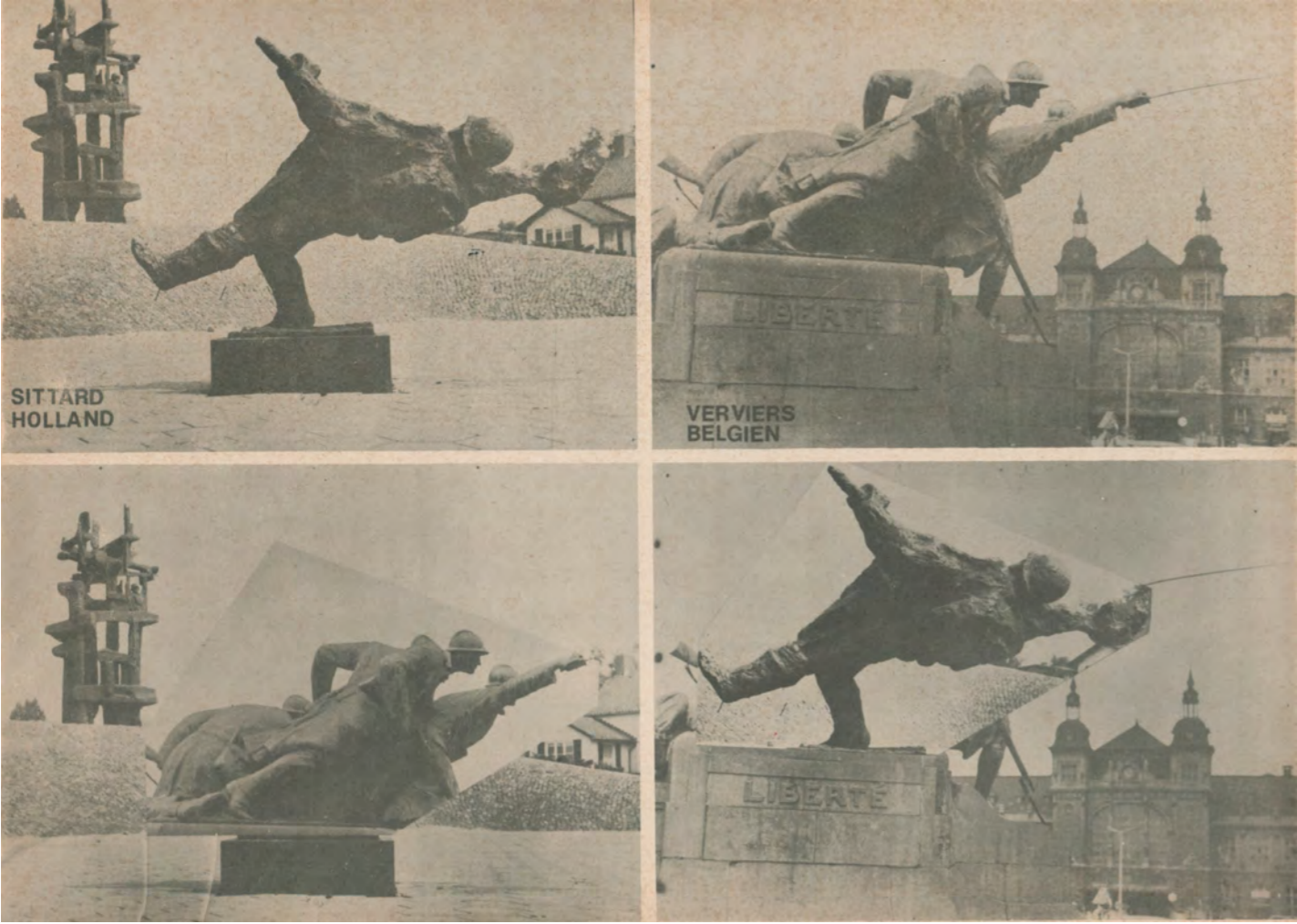


Franz Erhard Walther
Two lines, two fields, 1969/71
Signed, dated, and titled.
Recto: Mixed media on paper
Verso: Typed text and mixed media
29.6 × 21 cm
(few015)



Franz Erhard Walther
Die Gestalt ist innen – Form braucht Körper, 1969/74
Signed, dated, and titled
Mixed media on paper
22.4 × 32.2 cm
(few014)

Franz Erhard Walther
Werkzeichnung (Blind), 1971
Signed and dated lower right 'Walther 71'
Gouache, watercolour, and pencil on paper
27.6 × 20.9 cm
(few007)



The Last Art-of-Peace Biennale

‘Welcome, in the name of’¹

‘The Last Art-of-Peace Biennale’ is an exhibition that revisits another, namely ‘Zugehend auf eine Biennale des Friedens’ (or ‘Towards an Art-of-Peace Biennale’), that took place in Hamburg from November 1985 – January 1986. Why? The significance of both exhibitions lies in thinking curatorially about the question, ‘what shapes peace?’² Conceived as a question and a strategy initially by Robert Filliou, the Hamburg Biennale was organised by René Block and its itinerant potential seems likely to have influenced his thinking around the formation of the better known Manifesta European Biennale of Contemporary Art. Future editions of Art-of-Peace Biennale were likewise intended to travel, have different curators and take different forms. Notwithstanding Louwrien Wijers’ important ‘Art Meets Science and Spirituality in a Changing Economy (AmSSE)’ symposia of 1990s, ‘Zugehend auf eine Biennale des Friedens’ remains by name the inaugural, sole edition of the Art-of-Peace Biennale and is ripe for exploration now, after globalisation and after the Net. What shapes peace now?

‘Welcome to all of you – and in the words and wishes of Robert Filliou, whose dream of an Art-of-Peace Biennale has brought us all together,

When we say *you*, we mean *us*,
And when we say *artists*
We mean *you* also.’³

Emmet Williams thus opened the 1985 Biennale in Hamburg as Robert Filliou was in retreat at a Tibetan Buddhist Centre in Dordogne. He had gone there with his wife Marianne in late 1984, intending to remain for ‘three years, three months and three days.’⁴ He would die there on 2 December 1987. Five years earlier in 1982, he had proposed the Art-of-Peace Biennale to Joseph Beuys and Louwrien Wijers in a hotel in Bonn immediately following their much-anticipated meeting with the Dalai Lama. That Beuys had wanted to meet the Dalai Lama earlier that year at Documenta 7 prompted Filliou to suggest, ‘on the same basis as Kassel, why couldn’t there be a show, like a biennale or a triennale or a quartenennale, of work by artists that deals with the specific problem of making the world a world with peace and harmony.’⁵ Wijers worked with Filliou and then later Block to make the Art-of-Peace Biennale a reality.

Though not the meeting of artists, scientists, spiritual leaders and economists anticipated by Wijers, the Biennale featured work of 391 artists from 33 countries in curated, open and juried sections of the exhibition. It opened on 29 November 1985 with a ‘Friedenskonzert’ (or ‘Peace Concert’) performed by Henning Christiansen, Nam June Paik and Joseph Beuys. Like Filliou, however, Beuys was absent in person if not in spirit. His sudden and rapidly failing health meant he contributed by telephone and requested an oxygen cylinder be placed beneath his piano and positioned next to a blackboard in his absence. These objects,

as well as his arcane text about authenticity, interpretation and liberation written on the blackboard⁶, were reconstituted as a sculptural work within the exhibition. Beuys’ contribution to the ‘Friedenskonzert’ would be his final public action, given his death on January 23, 1986 only 11 days after the Biennale ended. Filliou’s absence from Hamburg was also balanced by the presence of sculptural work. His ‘Télépathic Musique No. 21’ was one of a long-running series in which a mandala of music stands suggests a physical site for telepathic communication across what he called the ‘Eternal Network’ or ‘La Fête Permanente’. This also relies on Filliou’s concept of ‘permanent creation’ as a horizontally distributive, participatory space-time of uninterrupted creativity overcoming dualities of art and life, here and there, presence and absence, and even auguring life and death. This work playfully affirmed telepathy as a viable contribution to the art of peace rather than restricting itself to thematic critique of war.

Some of Filliou’s earlier works contributing to the art of peace – and featured in the current exhibition – were by contrast more likely to adopt a thematic approach more obviously critical of war. His ‘Seven childlike uses of warlike material’ (1971) for example included everyday found objects that could represent militaristic character similar to how a child can imagine a stick to be a gun. The following year he built and photographed assemblages of these objects on sites along the Rhine with Hartmut Kaminski so that if ‘a saw could be a submarine’, ‘a nail could be a missile’ and ‘sticks of wood could be guns’ then ‘I can put the submarine on the mountains, ‘the missile on the moon’ and ‘the guns into the ocean’. The work would contribute to the art of peace through Filliou ‘setting the war academy on fire’ in his imagination at least. Similarly, ‘COMMEMOR’ (1970) conceptually and representationally played with Filliou’s ingenious proposal that countries exchange war monuments instead of making war through simple, naïve collage superimposing war monuments of one place onto another. Though humorous, simple and precise, ‘COMMEMOR’ could be critiqued nonetheless as typically confining the politically intent artist within a play of representation, within language-games of art that do not impact beyond the artist’s imagination. Filliou himself later suggested this maybe a hopeful strategy at best conceding ‘I don’t know how to achieve [all my social projects], but somehow by illustrating them [they] may be solved.’⁷

Whether concepts and language in art possess or evade materiality and whether this in turn impacts upon their potential function to act or intervene in the world is clearly debatable. Language is not only conceptually or aesthetically abstract and as cultural and social discourse offers an imminent site of at least aesthetic intervention. Sol LeWitt termed ‘conceptual art’ where ‘the idea or concept is the most important aspect of the work, all planning and decisions are made beforehand, and the idea becomes a machine that makes the art.’⁸ Such emphasis on primacy of the idea (typically as concept or instruction for process) can suggest immateriality or intangibility in a literal

sense. Yet LeWitt’s works in the Hamburg Biennale, re-exhibited in the current exhibition, were two ‘Proposals for Wall Drawings’ offering visitors a space of physical action to draw either a ‘one continuous not straight abstract line’ within a two metre circle on one wall or a ‘one continuous straight abstract line’ on another. Participatory and experiential then, LeWitt’s Hamburg works created an accumulative image recalling the apparent holism of a globe or sphere or the topographical surface of the planet among other things. A Situationist standpoint might still critique such participation as illusory suggesting instead that the experience of drawing the irregular lines within the geometrically bound circle demonstrates agency, of whatever kind, predicated by a structure of unseen power. Nonetheless, similar to Filliou’s ‘Télépathic Musique No. 21’, LeWitt’s work relied at least on sensory activation of the viewer’s imagination to bring about a different kind of dialogue, however remaining on the aesthetic plane of experience.

It is also important to remember that the Hamburg Art-of-Peace Biennale happened in the mid-1980s, not the mid-1970s where its political register may seem to belong. The 1980s meant amongst other things Cold War Europe, The Iran–Iraq War, Thatcherite and Reganomic policy, the incipient acceleration of global capitalism, The Irish ‘Troubles’, Culture Wars, AIDS and all this in the Northern Hemisphere alone. In the USA, for example, artists like Group Material were among those developing a proliferation of responses to the cultural urgency of the time. Of artists in the Hamburg Art-of-Peace Biennale, Stephen Willats is one who had engaged directly in those social issues of poverty and urban alienation and yet the choice of his work in Hamburg is a portrait of Leigh Bowery which seems neither to explicitly or thematically identify those issues the Biennale needed to address. Clemente Padin, another participant in Hamburg, was by contrast not only rare in being a mail artist included in the curated section of the exhibition but also a recognised and committed dissident with a clearly politically engaged practice. In contrast to LeWitt’s systematic strategy of artistic implementation, we can’t say that the primary idea of the Art-of-Peace Biennale appears to have been curatorially implemented consistently in Hamburg, 1985.

The Hamburg Biennale did though at least offer divergent strategies whether activist, artistic, naïve, playful, political or spiritual in addressing the art of peace. Filliou’s experience as a former member of the French Resistance and UN economist led him to ‘drop-out’ as a strategy to move from ‘political economy’ to what he termed ‘poetical economy.’⁹ His dissent evaded obvious oppositionality as he sought answers to fundamental issues of the art of peace from the militarization of space, the ‘murderous obscenity of all nationalisms’, and ‘the economics of prostitution’ on an increasingly extra-macrocosmic, spiritual, universal plane. His diagram ‘Kunst-Wissenschaft-Überlieferung’ depicts three circles; one each for Art, Science and Tradition that overlap to indicate a hybrid space of enquiry that he terms the Art-of-Peace.

Given Filliou in retreat, Beuys dying, and Wijers’ frustration¹⁰ with the curatorial format of the Hamburg Biennale, what else can be gained through revisiting ‘Zugehend auf eine Biennale des Friedens’ now? Amidst the melancholic passing of the modern, utopian, post-avantgarde in art, there remain organising principles, curatorial premises set out by Filliou that may actually flourish better in our contemporary world. Precisely now in the ‘high-tech gloom’¹¹ of mendacious globalisation might be the best moment to revisit the ‘Last Art-of-Peace Biennale’. The emphasis upon the nomadic Biennale, on Biennale-as-Meeting, as-Workshop, as-Network means the Art-of-Peace Biennale as curatorial model may yet fulfil Filliou’s aims for periodical gatherings of artists – by which we mean *you* remember – ‘presenting their individual contributions to this collective research.’¹² The prospect of curating any future edition needs to consider the opportunities and limitations of distributed curatorial and artistic practice of online networks, which only supplant the ‘globalism’ of communication sought by the post-avantgarde with the military-information-entertainment complex of ‘globalisation’ of its neoliberal successor era until we claim it back.

Such broadening of cultural, political, social and technological discourse since 1985 – particularly in respect of understanding networks – does allow valuable re-reading of ‘The Art-of-Peace Biennale’ through acknowledging conceptual and cosmological models alongside technological understandings of online and offline network behaviour, before and after the Net. Thus my proposal to curate The Next Art-of-Peace Biennale, 2015–17 as a network of online and offline ‘manifestations, meanderings, meditations, microcosms, macrocosms, mixtures, meanings ...’¹³ This exhibition provides historical bearings from where to conclude evaluation and commence practice.

Welcome, then, in the name of The Next Art-of-Peace Biennale, 2015–17.

Roddy Hunter www.peacebiennale.info

1 Emmet Williams’ Opening address, in René Block, ed. *Zugehend auf eine Biennale des Friedens* [Hamburg: Woche der Vildenden Kunst, 1985], 12
2 René Block, in Chris Thompson, *Felt: Fluxus, Joseph Beuys, and the Dalai Lama* [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011], 179
3 Williams, in Block, ed. *Zugehend auf eine Biennale des Friedens*], 12
4 Ibid.
5 Robert Filliou, in Chris Thompson, *Felt: Fluxus, Joseph Beuys, and the Dalai Lama*, 179
6 Beuys’ text read, ‘Bei einem wesensgemässen beschreiben des geschehens zur befreiung der von der fähigkeit getragenen arbeit ist es doch logisch, dass das tragende zuerst befreit werden muss.’
7 Filliou in Clive Robertson and Robert Filliou, *Porta Filliou* [video, 47:00 minutes, B&W, English], 1977
8 Sol LeWitt, *Paragraphs on conceptual art*, Artforum 5, no. 10 [June 1967], 79
9 Robert Filliou: *From Political to Poetical Economy* [Vancouver: Morris & Helen Belkin Art Gallery / University of British Columbia, 1995]
10 Thompson, *Felt: Fluxus, Joseph Beuys, and the Dalai Lama* , 175–176
11 Williams, in Block, ed. *Zugehend auf eine Biennale des Friedens*], 7
12 Ibid.
13 Filliou, *Teaching and Learning As Performing Arts* [Köln: Verlag Gebrüder König, 1970], 202