

MUSEO JUMEX TO PRESENT FIRST SOLO
EXHIBITION IN MEXICO OF THE ART OF
GUSTAV METZGER

WE MUST BECOME IDEALISTS OR DIE.
GUSTAV METZGER

On view from JULY 18 – OCTOBER 25, 2015

(MEXICO CITY, MEXICO, DATE) – From July 18 to October 25, 2015, Museo Jumex will present the first solo exhibition in Mexico of the work of the influential artist and activist Gustav Metzger. The exhibition, titled *We Must Become Idealists or Die. Gustav Metzger*, features work spanning six decades and explores how the use of texts, symposia, and calls for public participation have been essential to Metzger's artistic practice. One seminal example of each will be used as the starting point for the exhibition: Metzger's manifesto *Auto-Destructive Art* (1959), the Destruction in Art Symposium held in London in 1966, and *Three Years Without Art 1977-1980*.

Guest curated by Daniela Pérez, Curator and Deputy Director of Artistic Programming at Museo Tamayo and Co-Founder of de_sitio, *We Must Become Idealists or Die. Gustav Metzger* features works from 1959 to the present including writings, works on paper, ephemera, photographs, videos, models and projects for sculptures and three-dimensional and projected installation works. The exhibition highlights the interdependency between the artist's core concepts of "auto-destructive" and "auto-creative" art. In the early 1960s, Metzger was one of a significant number of artists in Europe and the Americas who used everyday or industrial materials to create art objects that would decay or break apart over time, and he called these works "auto-destructive." In contrast, "auto-creative" works focus on growth instead of destruction and use technology to orchestrate processes of positive change.

Since the 1950s, Gustav Metzger has used art to encourage discussion of public issues. Through the artworks in *We Must Become Idealists or Die. Gustav Metzger*, the artist creates opportunities to reflect on issues such as inequality, nuclear weapons, genetically engineered foods and environmental extinction. Local audiences will have the opportunity to contribute directly to the exhibition by donating newspapers for use in *Mass Media: Today and Yesterday* (2011/2015), an ongoing participatory work in which visitors are asked to cut out articles related to extinction and pin them on a bulletin board, or may discard old batteries in a container placed at the museum's entrance as part of *Spent Batteries* (1999/2015).

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Additional exhibition highlights include *Supportive* (1965/2013) Metzger's monumental "auto-creative" work, which uses heat-sensitive liquid crystals to create changing colorful patterns that are projected onto seven 4 X 4 m screens. Another major work, which comes from the artist's *Historic Photographs* series of the 1990s, is *To Walk Into. Massacre on the Mount, Jerusalem*, a greatly enlarged newspaper photograph of the October 1990 "Massacre on the Mount" in Jerusalem, which is placed behind a linen curtain, so that viewers may engage with the photograph as they choose. *Mobbile* (1970/2015) is a mobile sculpture comprising a plant that is placed inside a clear Plexiglas box, which is affixed to the top of a car that is then driven through Mexico City or left idling in front of the museum. The vehicle's exhaust pipe is connected to the box, so that viewers may see the effects of the exhaust fumes that are fed to the plant.

We Must Become Idealists or Die. Gustav Metzger includes works recreated following the artists' instructions, as well as works on loan from the Sohm Archive, Stuttgart, Germany; The Tate, London, UK; Musée d'Art Contemporain, Lyon, France; and the artist's private collection.

On October 3, 2015, the museum will present a symposium related to the exhibition. Details will follow.

Also on view at the museum from July 11 through October 4 is *In Girum Imus Nocte et Consumimur Igni*, an interpretive installation of the permanent collection guest curated by Fernando Mesta and Eva Svennung, with the invited participation of the artists Bernadette Van Huy, Nicolas Ceccaldi and Peter Wächtler. Titled after a 2006 light sculpture by Cerith Wyn Evans that is in the Jumex collection, the exhibition proposes not one but several approaches to curating an installation and to understanding the choices implicit in forming and activating an art collection.

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ABOUT THE ARTIST

Artist and political activist Gustav Metzger was born in 1926 in Nuremberg, Germany. In 1939, he was sent to England in a rescue operation for Jewish children. This experience strongly marked his personal and professional life, and for decades his work has focused on generating discussion and debate in order to impact social consciousness.

As a young man, Metzger studied at various art schools in England and Belgium, beginning his career as a painter. In 1959, he abandoned painting and began to create artworks with everyday objects (such as cardboard, newspapers and plastic bags) and industrial materials that were meant to decay and eventually fall apart. This marked the beginning of his Auto-Destructive work.

Metzger's works can be found in the permanent collections of major institutions including Tate Modern in London and the Musée d'Art Contemporain in Lyon. His work has been presented in solo exhibitions at The New Museum in New York (2011), the Serpentine Gallery in London (2009), Zacheta National Gallery in Warsaw (2007), Westfälischer Kunstverein in Munster (2007), Lunds Konsthall in Sweden (2006) and the Generali Foundation in Vienna (2005). His work has also been included in major group exhibitions including the 2011 São Paulo Biennale, the 2009 Tate Triennial, the 2008 Yokohama Triennial and the 2007 Skulptur Projekte Münster.

Metzger lives and works in London but considers himself to be stateless.

* FUNDACIÓN JUMEX ARTE CONTEMPORÁNEO 4/5

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ABOUT THE CURATOR

Daniela Pérez is the Curator and Deputy Director of Artistic Programming at the Tamayo Museum. She is cofounder of de_sitio, a platform that conceptualizes, develops and promotes contemporary art projects. In 2013, Pérez received a grant from the Foundation for the Arts Initiative and was a member of the curatorial team for the Mercosul Biennial, Porto Alegre, Brazil. Between 2007 and 2011, she was Associate Curator at the Museo Tamayo. She has also held positions at the Museum of Modern Art in São Paulo; the New Museum in New York; and the Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil in Mexico. Pérez writes regularly for various publications and has taught at the National School of Painting, Sculpture and Printmaking “La Esmeralda,” and Soma. She earned her Master of Arts degree in Curating Contemporary Art from the Royal College of Art, London.

FUNDACIÓN JUMEX ARTE CONTEMPORÁNEO

Fundación Jumex Arte Contemporáneo was created to promote the production, discussion and knowledge of contemporary art and to generate innovative ways to foster art and culture. The Foundation carries out this work through Colección Jumex, the Foundation’s art collection; Museo Jumex, a new venue for the exhibition and activation of contemporary art; Galería Jumex Ecatepec, an experimental exhibition space; and Editorial Jumex, a platform for the publication and dissemination of contemporary art discourse. Additionally, Fundación Jumex promotes its mission through three complementary program areas: Fomento, dedicated to supporting the production of contemporary art and independent projects, education and research; Investigación, dedicated to research and analysis of contemporary culture; and Educación, committed to enhancing the visitor’s ability to understand and appreciate contemporary art.

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