

GUSTAV METZGER, THE CONSCIENCE OF THE ARTWORLD

John A. Walker (Copyright 2009)



Gustav Metzger. Image may be subject to copyright.

Gustav Metzger is a survivor, an itinerant intellectual-agitator who has lived in various European countries including Britain. After residing in the Netherlands for some years - where he researched the art of Vermeer - he reappeared in London in November 1994. In March 1995 he gave a meticulously prepared and thought-provoking lecture about his beliefs and 'career' to student members of the Art History Society of Middlesex University. Here is a chronology of his life (revised in

2009):

1926. Metzger was born into a Polish-Jewish family that lived in Nuremberg, Germany - famous for its annual Nazi rallies. Metzger recalled that as a child he was impressed by the growing power and visual impact of those rallies and Nazi design/architecture; this is one of the reasons why he later became suspicious of design, architecture and forms of mass manipulation such as the press, political propaganda and commercial advertising. In 1939 Metzger was sent with his elder brother to England to escape Nazi persecution. Other members of his family were not so fortunate - they perished in the Holocaust. Naturally this loss shaped Metzger's view that humanity was brutal, dangerous and self-destructive.

1941-44. Studied woodwork and cabinet-making in Leeds. Made furniture and farmed near Bristol - lived in a commune of Anarchists and Trotskyists. Became interested in revolutionary politics and the ideas of Wilhelm Reich.

1944-53. Became interested in art. In 1944 he met Henry Moore and asked to become his assistant. Moore advised him to take up life drawing. Studied full and part-time at various art schools in Cambridge, London, Oxford and Antwerp. Influenced by the ideas of Eric Gill - combining art with political activism. In 1944 he tried his hand at stone carving. Painted from 1945 to 1957. Very influential was the drawing and painting tuition he received at the Borough Polytechnic, London from the Jewish-British, former Vorticist, David Bomberg. In 1946 Metzger thought

painting should be 'fast and intense'. When, years later, he saw Pollock's action paintings he realised that they were close to his ideal. 1945-46 'Exhibition of Paintings by Picasso and Matisse' at the Victoria & Albert Museum - Metzger impressed by the Picassos.

1948. Takes part in group exhibitions at Ben Uri Gallery and the London Group, Academy Hall London.

1950. East End Academy group show, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London.

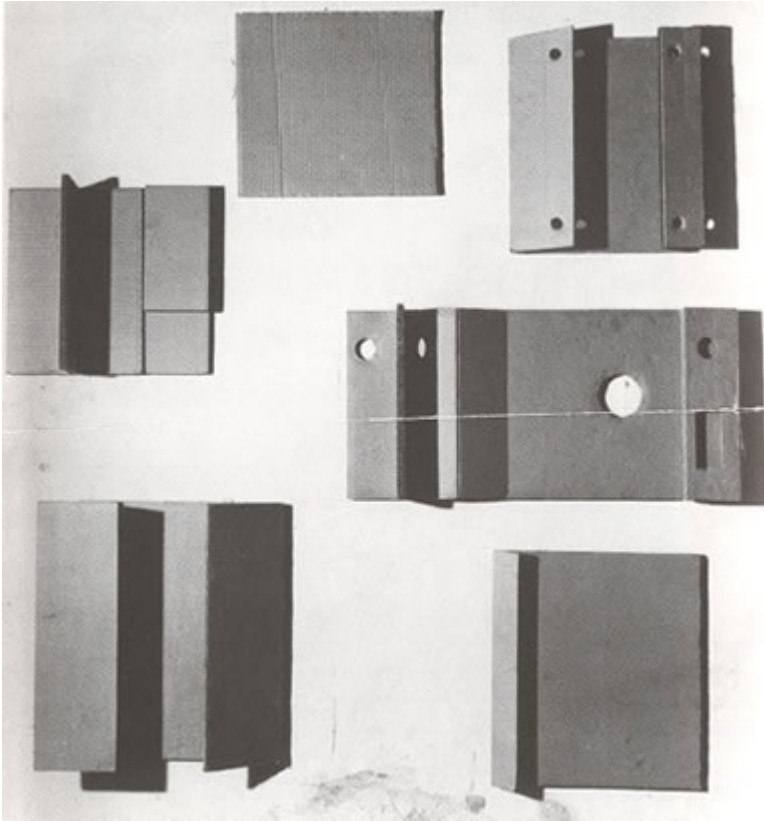
1953. With other Bomberg students, Metzger founded the Borough Bottega, a group designed to recognise Bomberg's achievements. Contributed to 'Borough Bottega' paintings and drawings show, November-December, Berkeley Gallery, London.

1953-58. Worked as a junk dealer in King's Lynn, Norfolk. 1956. Very impressed by the 'This is Tomorrow', show at the Whitechapel Art Gallery.

1959. Moved to London. Fearing a world war fought with Hydrogen bombs, Metzger sympathised with the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.



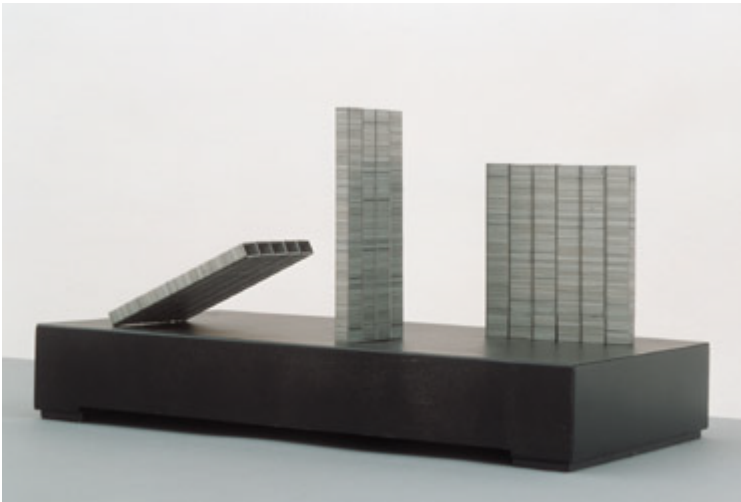
Metzger with cardboard works. Image may be subject to copyright.



'Cardboards'. Photo John Cox.

1959. His paintings were exhibited in the basement of a coffee bar, 14 Monmouth Street, London. 'Cardboards' - works recycling a cheap discarded material - also shown at 14 Monmouth Street, November 1959. Metzger wrote a manifesto: *Auto-destructive Art*. Earlier, the anarchist theorist Bakunin had stressed the reciprocal relationship between creation and destruction. Metzger experimented with a form of action painting that involved applying acid with brushes to nylon sheets laid on glass. (The slashed canvases of Lucio Fontana, the self-destroying machines of Jean Tinguely and the fire paintings of Yves Klein were comparable developments.) Auto-destructive art was conceived 'as a desperate, last minute subversive political weapon ... an attack on the capitalist system ... It is committed to nuclear disarmament ... It is an attack also on art dealers and collectors who manipulate modern art for profit'.

1960. 'Paintings and drawings 1945-60' show, Temple Gallery, London. First lecture-demonstration of Auto-destructive art at the Temple Gallery. Metzger's last involvement with a private art gallery. Henceforth, his art would be shown in public galleries and spaces. In 1960, along with the philosopher Bertrand Russell, he supported the Committee of 100, that is, people willing to commit acts of civil disobedience in order to provoke and overwhelm the authorities. 1960 *Model for construction in mild Steel* - a public art project that was never realised.



Metzger, *Auto-Destructive Monument*, (1960) Model, Staples, steel, varnished, 24 x 45 x 25 cm. Reconstructed in 2005 for Generali Foundation.

Lecture/demonstration, Heretics Society, Trinity College, University of Cambridge.



Metzger on the South Bank 3 July 1961. Photo Hulton Getty.

1961. Arrested and jailed for a month for his actions in support of the Committee of 100. 3 July public demonstration on the South Bank, London. Hydrochloric acid was sprayed on to three sheets of nylon (coloured white, black and red) stretched across a metal frame. As the acid hit the sheet, rents and holes appeared until the support disintegrated - the work was creative but at the same moment destructive. It also exemplified transformation over time and randomness. Another South Bank piece involved the smashing of glass sheets in a sequence. Contributes to 'Bewogen Bewogen', Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam and Moderna Museet, Stockholm and Museum Louisiana, Humlebaek, Denmark (article in catalogue).



Metzger at the London Festival of Misfits.

1962. Demonstration at London's 'Festival of Misfits' at Gallery One, London organised by Fluxus. Metzger's 'newspaper work' which included *The Daily Mirror's* coverage of Soviet missiles in Cuba proved too controversial for the organisers who rejected and removed the papers. Lectured at Ealing College of Art. Pete Townshend, of the Who, then an art student, was an avid listener. Summer: published 'Machine, Auto-Creative and Auto-Destructive art', in RCA's student magazine *Ark*.

1963. Acid Painting event on the South Bank repeated for a film made by Harold Liversidge. Now this event exists in memories and photographs. One photo shows St Pauls and the financial heart of the City of London behind the empty metal frame - the work ends by revealing the squalid conjunction of religion and mammon. In this way, Marianne Turner and David Lowe perceptively point out, Metzger 'achieved the reality behind the picture which so many artists have sought' (1)

Lecture/demonstration, Bartlett Society, School of Architecture, University College, London.



Metzger, *Liquid Crystal Environment* , (1965/2005). Photos Tate Britain.



Metzger, *Liquid Crystal Environment*, (1965-88). Five slide projectors, glass slides, mechanical control. Zurich: Sammlung Megros, Museum fur Gegenwartskunst. Photo: FBM Studio Zurich, copyright the artist.

1965-66. Lecture: 'The Chemical Revolution in Art', Society of Arts, Cambridge University. Experimented with liquid crystals placed between Polaroid screens which were then heated; colour and organic changes over time; also used projected light. (Examples of Auto-Creative Art.) In 1966, 'Liquid Crystals in Art' was presented at Lamda Theatre Club. He also provided light projections for the bands Cream, The Who and The Move at the Roundhouse in Camden, North London.

1965. In a lecture on 'Auto-Destructive Art' given at the Architectural Association, Metzger described some monumental, time-based sculpture projects: a structure made from steel that would gradually corrode as a result of exposure to the polluted atmosphere. After ten years the work would cease to exist. He proposed another huge metal structure - *Five Screens with Computer* - consisting of stainless steel walls stacked with thousands of smaller uniform parts to be placed between blocks of flats, controlled by a computer, the parts were to be ejected at different speeds,

directions and frequencies until, after a decade, only the empty site remained.

(Window display 'Auto- Destructive Art', Better Books, London.)



**DESTRUCTION IN ART
SYMPOSIUM
SEPT 9TH & 10TH
AFRICA CENTRE**

SUNDAY 11TH 11AM-10PM (PUBLIC DAY) ADMISSON FREE FOR
DETAILS & INFORMATION FROM:
THE SECRETARY, DIAS DIAS - LONDON WC1
DOCUMENTATION EXHIBITION BETTER BOOKS SEPT-OCT
11AM-6PM





DIAS 1966, Metzger, Wolf Vostell and Al Hansen, Africa Centre, Convent Garden, London. Photo Tom Picton.

1966. Metzger was one of the chief organisers of a key event of the 1960s: the Destruction in Arts Symposium (DIAS), an international gathering of artists held in London whose work was about destruction and/or used destruction as an artistic technique. The killing of live animals was specifically excluded. Artists who participated included John Latham, Yoko Ono, Wolf Vostell, Al Hansen, Ivor Davies, Werner Schreib, Ralph Ortiz, and Hermann Nitsch. The pop music band The Who, whose stage act climaxed with guitar trashing, was invited but did not attend. There was much press and media coverage, most of it negative. The police charged Metzger with presenting an 'indecent exhibition'; he had to spend months preparing a defence and in 1967 the courts fined him £100. The magazine *Art & Artists* (August 1966) devoted a special issue to the theme of 'Auto-Destructive' with

statement by Metzger. Talk given at Masterclass Philip King, Sculpture Department, St Martin's School of Art, London.

1968. 'Extremes Touch', exhibition of new works, Filtration Laboratory, University College, Swansea. Metzger contributed *Five Screens with Computer* project to the 'Cybernetic Serendipity' exhibition organised by Jasia Reichardt at the ICA.

1967. Lectures 'Destruction in Art', Festival of Art, Exeter; 'The Aesthetic of Revulsion', Bristol Arts Centre, Bristol.

1968. Lecture: 'Theory and Practice', Blackheath Art Society, London.

1969. Contributes to 'Event 1: Computer Arts Society', Royal College of Art and to 'Computers and Visual Research', Zagreb, Yugoslavia. From 1969 to 1972, he edited *PAGE*, the bulletin of the Computer Arts Society. March: published article on 'Automata in History' in *Studio International*. Lectures: 'On the possible,' Portsmouth College of Education; 'The social relevance of art', Slade School of Fine Art, London.

1970. Lecture: 'Do you eat?' Slade School of Fine Art, London. 'Metzger Retrospective', National Film Theatre 2, London. Contributes to 'Happening and Fluxus', exhibition Kolnischer Kunstverein, Cologne (article in catalogue). London organiser of the International Coalition for the Liquidation of Art - Tate Gallery

demonstration. Early ecological work about air pollution: 'MOBBILE', South Bank and town centre. Metzger: it 'comprised a small car. Its exhaust went into a plastic box, and in the box there were bits of meat hanging and flowers and green stuff. The car was driven around near the Hayward Gallery, where there was a show of kinetic art.'



. Gustav Metzger, *Mobbile* (1970). Photo of car with roof structure, West End of London. Photo produced courtesy of the artist.

In 1972 a larger version with four cars was proposed for Documenta 5. Contributed to 'Tendencije 4' Galerie Suvremene, Umjetnosi, Zagreb. Article on Kinetics published in *Art & Artists*. Contributes to 'Computer graphics '70', Brunel University, Uxbridge.

1971. Contributed to 'Art Spectrum' show, Alexandra Palace, London.

Lecture/Demonstration at National Film Theatre, London.

1972. Contributes to 'British thing', Henie-Onstad Kunstsenter, Hovikadden,

Norway. Elected vice-Chairman of the Artists Union - an attempt to organise artists in a collective fashion. 'Unrealizable Disintegrative Architecture', Architectural Association, London. 'Executive Profile' exhibit at the ICA as part of 'The Body as a Medium of Expression': images of business executives culled from newspapers with typed comments added were displayed in order to reveal 'retarded attitudes'. Took part in 'Three Life Situations', Gallery House, London and British Council Heinie/Onstadt Show, 'Professional Massage' project realised. Published an attack on John Latham and the Artist Placement Group. Invited to contribute to 'Documenta 5' exhibition at Kassel: 'I sketched out a proposal for documenta titled KARBA. This only involved four cars positioned around a three-metre plastic cube. Harold Szeemann said that the technicians could execute it and that I didn't need to come to Kassel to oversee the work. Anyhow, it wasn't made, and so I was never in Documenta, except in the catalogue ... I had an exhibition in this magnificent art gallery in Lund two years ago [in 2005]. The curator, Pontus Kyander, was determined to realize KARBA within the courtyard of the gallery. Every hour a motor started, and the exhaust went in and the water ran down the inside of the three-metre cube.' At the Tate Gallery in 1972 Joseph Beuys appeared in public and Metzger debated art and politics with him. Lecture: 'Ethics of the Art/Science/Technology link', Leicester Polytechnic and Kingston Polytechnic.

1974. Although Metzger had decided to withdraw from the artworld he did agree to contribute to the catalogue of the ICA show 'Art into Society/Society into Art: Seven German Artists'. He provided a bibliography on 'The Art Dealer' and a series of

questions about political art. Metzger proposed an art strike. There was no response. He concluded that most artists were 'disgusting bastards'.

1976. Became interested in the historiography of art and fascism. Proposed 'Art history with a Gun' and an AGUN Symposium ('Art in Germany Under National Socialism' - published an article with this title in *Studio International*.

1977. Featured in the show 'Towards another Picture,' Midland Group Gallery, Nottingham. 1977-80 Three year period in which all artists were supposed to strike, to cease all artistic production and to stop exhibiting. Metzger himself did not make any art during this period.

1980. Moved to Frankfurt.

1981. Metzger collaborated with Klaus Staeck and others (so-called Kollektiv Group) and contributed to the 'Passiv-Explosiv' exhibition held in Cologne and 'Vor dem Abbruch', Kunstmuseum, Bern. Also, 'Faschismus Deutschland: Darstellung Analyse Bekämpfen', University of Bern. Living in Frankfurt, Germany Metzger becomes very conscious of historical anti-Semitism and the rise of Neo-Nazism and produced text works concerning Hitler's laws against the Jews. Lecture: 'Auto-Destructive Art', Faculty of Philosophy, University of Frankfurt.

1983. 'Gustav Metzger on his work', Visual Arts Society, University of Sussex,

Brighton.

1988. A chapter was devoted to Metzger by Stewart Home in his book *The Assault on Culture*. Home called him 'a one person art movement'.

1990s. Metzger engaged in art-historical research in the Netherlands.

1992. Lecture/demonstration: 'Auto-Destructive Art', V2 Organisation, s-Hertogenbosch, Netherlands.

1993. Featured in show 'The Sixties: Art scene in London,' Barbican Art Gallery, London.

1994. Lectures: 'Johannes Vermeer and Cesare Ripa', Cesare Ripa Conference, University of Utrecht, Netherlands; 'Vermeer and Freud's fetish theory', 'Dutch Past', University College. Moves back to London to live.

1995. Metzger's show 'Damaged Nature: Two New Works and Documents' and the publication *Damaged Nature and Auto-Destructive Art* were at Workfortheyetodo Gallery London, September 29 to December 2. Lecture: 'Auto-Destructive art and the Twentieth Century', Art History Society, Cockfosters, Middlesex University.



Metzger, *Historic Photographs: Liquidation of the Warsaw Ghetto, 19 April, 28 days 1943*, (1995). Bromide print, wooden shuttering, galvanised steel channel stock 150 cms x 184 cms. Photo courtesy of the artist.

Metzger began his lecture by explaining that his primary concern was not with art as such but with art's context: the history of the 20th century; the destructive aspects of the capitalist (and communist) mode of over-production, science, industry, weaponry and technology. Via a series of telling slides of recent media images, he reminded the audience of the latest threats to human life - environmental pollution and genetic engineering. At the same time, Metzger's own history revealed that he is not a luddite opposed to all scientific research and new technology; the purposes to which they are put are crucial. (However, he refuses to own a telephone.) As his interest in chemicals, automata, machines, the factory-assembly of

art, and computers during the 1960s demonstrated, Metzger himself has been willing to use industry and technology for critical ends. He has also been an active supporter of the British Society for Social Responsibility in Science.

Violence and destruction in art are sources of disquiet. Given the predominant orientation of the arts towards aesthetic pleasure, Metzger's 'aesthetic of revulsion' clearly worked against the grain. Journalists covering the DIAS events of the 1960s complained about the dubious morality of using destruction to protest about destruction. But was not the Nietzschean tactic comparable to a vaccine - using a small dose of a disease in order to immunise the body - against it? The Press ignored the cathartic and therapeutic effects of witnessing violent, destructive art. (Is this not the social function of horror and crime movies?) It also ignored the positive aspect of destructive violence during revolutions. Metzger insisted that DIAS was an opportunity for an inquiry into the sources of violence in human behaviour; destruction *in* art did not mean the destruction *of* art.

Metzger's distaste for the artworld - a microcosm of capitalism - and the role of art as a commodity benefiting the wealthy soon became evident. His history revealed repeated attempts to create work that resisted commodification, that was public in character, that avoided permanence and artworld venues, that attempted to organise artists and to change the economy the artworld, and that was a critique of the dealer/gallery/collector/museum system. Clearly, Metzger has had an ambivalent relationship, a love-hatred towards art and the artworld. Contradictions abounded: to remain inside the artworld was to be compromised, but to go outside it was to

abandon visual means of expression and to vacate a site of some cultural influence. His progressive disenchantment led to gradual withdrawal; hence, his present virtual invisibility. (This is no longer the case.) It is true that most art has exchange-value but it also has use-value. To my mind, Metzger exhibited a lack of faith in the power of radical art and media to move, educate, politicise and motivate people. The mixture of aesthetics and politics can be extremely potent.

In the debate that followed the lecture, I expressed scepticism regarding his art strike proposal; most artists have no employer against whom to strike, they are not employees in the industrial sense and consequently unions of fine artists are lost causes; artists are more like small entrepreneurs/producers, in competition with one another, selling their handmade wares on the open market. In any case, successful artists are generally extreme individualists; they are most unlikely to risk their lucrative income. Metzger explained that the strike was intended to be temporary and to serve as a period of reflection and self-education in which artists could reconsider their social role and refresh themselves by doing something different. Whatever the internal contradictions and paradoxes of Metzger's history and practice and despite its many unrealised projects, Metzger's artistic 'career' - or should it be anti-art 'career' - is, to me, far more interesting and intellectually challenging than that of most conventional artists .

(1) Student essay, 1995.

Update.

Since the mid 1990s Metzger has been extremely active and his work has been increasingly appreciated by art students, artists, art critics, art magazines, museums, publishers, arts organisations and arts funding foundations. Increasingly he has been able to create new work and to reconstruct or recreate old projects.

1996. Publication *Earth to Galaxies: On Destruction and Destructivity*, (Glasgow: Tramway, Tramlines 5, 1996). Introduction by Ross Birrell. Publication *Gustav Metzger: Damaged Nature, Auto-Destructive Art*, (London: Coracle, c 1996).

Contributes to 'Life/live: La Scene artistique au Royaume-Uni en 1996', Musee d'Art Moderne, Paris and Centre Culturel de Belem, Lisbon. Included in 'Made New ...' show City Racing, London.

1997. 'Gustav Metzger', Kunstraum Muenchen, Munich.

1998. In Los Angeles 'Out of Actions: Between Performance and the Object, 1949-1979' exhibition held at the Geffen Contemporary at MOCA - an attempted re-enactment of his 1961 auto-destructive art event. Contributes to 'Deep Storage: The Arsenal of Memory', Henry Art Gallery, Seattle. Solo exhibition held at the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford with publication by Astrid Bowron & Kerry Broucher (curators), *Gustave Metzger*, (Oxford: MOMA, 1998). Contributes to 'Speed - Visions of an Accelerated Age', Whitechapel Art Gallery, London.



Metzger, (Twyford Down), *Historic photographs: Till we have built Jerusalem in England's green and pleasant land.* (1998). Cibachrome print, dry mounted on aluminium, tyres, 150 x 200 cm. 2007 Installation at Zacheta National gallery of Art, Warsaw. Photo copyright S. Madejski and the artist.

1999. 'Gustav Metzger', Spacex Gallerey, Exeter. Exhibition 'Gustav Metzger - Ein Schnitt entlang der Zeit', Kunsthalle, Nurnberg. Publication with the same title issued by Verlag fur Moderne Kunst, Nurnberg. Text by Michaela Unterdorfer and Astrid Bowron, plus interview with Gustav Metzger. Contributes to 'Deep Storage - Arsenale der Erinnerung', Stiftung Museum Kunst Palast, Dusseldorf. Publication: Ian Cole (ed), *Gustave Metzger: Retrospectives*, (Oxford: MOMA, 1999). Contributes to 'Dream City' a Munich Group project, Kunstraum Munich. Plus

‘Laboratorium’, Antwerp, Belgium (article in catalogue), plus ‘Sublime: The Darkness and the Light’, John Hansard Gallery, Southampton.

2000. ‘Dream Machines’, Camden Art centre, London. ‘Live in your Head; Concept and Experiment in Britain 1965-75’, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London. ‘Protest and Survive’, Whitechapel Art Gallery. Participates in group show ‘Look Out. Art/Society/Politics’, Wolverhampton Art Gallery, and PM Gallery & House, London (2001).

2001. ‘City Racing 1988-1998: A Partial Account’, ICA, London.

2002. Contributes to ‘St Petrischnee’, Migros Museum fur Gegenwartskunst, Zurich and ‘Iconoclash - Jenseits der Bilderkriege in Wissenschaft, Religion und Kunst’, ZKM/Zentrum fur Kunst und Medientechnologie Karlsruhe. ‘Blast to Freeze: British Kunst im 20 Jahrhundert’, Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, Germany. ‘Strike’, Wolverhampton Art Gallery.



Metzger, *100 000 Newspapers. A Public-Active Installation*, (2003), T1+ 2 Artspace, London, exhibition view.

2003. Exhibition ‘Gustav Metzger *100 000 Newspapers. A Public-Active Installation*’,

held at t1+2 artspace. London. (Members of the public were invited to cut out any articles from the newspapers that interested them.) Contributes to ‘Zona People 1974-85’, Non-Profit space Firenze, Mamco, Musee de Art Moderne et

Contemporain, Geneva and Venice Biennale, and ‘Independence’, South London Gallery, London. ‘C’est arrive demain’, 7e Biennale de Lyon. ‘Adorno: Die

Möglichkeit des Unmöglichen’, Frankfurt Kunstverein. ‘Dreams and Conflicts - The Dictatorship of the viewer’, Venice Biennale.

2004. Documentary film directed by Ken McMullen, *Pioneers in Art and Science:*

***Metzger*, (London: Arts Council, September 2004) DVD. Contributes to ‘Art & the**

60s: This was Tomorrow', Tate Britain, London & Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, and 'Artists' favourites Act II', ICA, London. 'Signatures of the Invisible', P.S.1, New York.



Reconstruction of First Public Demonstration of Auto-Destructive Art. (London: Tate Britain, 2004). Photo courtesy of Tate Britain. A cleaner removed the bag of waste paper on right by mistake!



Metzger, Installation, Vienna 2005. 'To Crawl Into' a very large photograph of Viennese Jews scrubbing the pavement, laid out on the floor and entirely covered by a cloth. In order to view the image the viewer has to get down onto the floor and crawl under the cloth.

2005. 'History History' retrospective exhibition held at Generali Foundation, Vienna, April 11-August 28, 2005 plus publication: Sabine Breitwieser (ed), *Gustav Metzger: History History*, (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2005).



Installation 'Eichmann and the Angel' (Industrial conveyer belt, wall of *Guardian* newspapers, reproduction of Paul Klee's *Angelus Novus* [1920] plus a wood and glass cage recalling that in which the Nazi prisoner Adolf Eichmann was held during his 1961 trial.) Commissioned by Cubitt Artists Gallery, London, September-October, also shown at Lund's Konsthall, Sweden. Contributes to 'Zur Tektonik der Geschichte,' Forum Stadtpark, Graz; and 'II Bienal de Valencia - Agua sin ti no

soy,' Bienal de Valencia, Spain; and 'Summer of Love: Art of the Psychedelic Era', Tate Liverpool. Mounts 'an art exhibition without art' , that is, a real time multimedia, interactive communication via internet and other electronic media for a period of seven weeks at 'East International' at Norwich Art Gallery, Norwich.

2006. Receives a Paul Hamlyn Foundation Award for the Visual Arts. Kristine Stiles article "Metzger's Fierce, Poignant, and Prescient Manifestos." *Rett Kopi: A Norwegian Journal of Art and Aesthetics* (2006). Exhibition 'Gustav Metzger - Eva Weinmayr 2006', Kunstraum Munich, September - November 2006. Includes installation 'Siegesallee, Victory over The Sun'.





Metzger, *Siegesallee, Victory of the Sun*, (2006). Munich: Kunstraum Munich. Photo copyright Eva Weinmayr and the artist.

Publication *Water Found on Mars*, by Eva Weinmayr and Gustav Metzger (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2006). Exhibition ‘Gustav Metzger In Memoriam: New Works’, Kunsthalle, Basel. (‘Eichmann and Angel’ installation plus ‘In Memoriam’. The latter consists of cardboard boxes that reference Eisenman’s 2005 holocaust memorial in Berlin.)



Metzger, *In Memoriam*, installation, (2006). Cardboard boxes, Basel: Kunsthalle.

Contributes to 'MERZ - Magazin 4', Bregenzer Kunstverein, Bregenz.



Metzger, *Recreation of 1961 Auto-Destructive art event*. 14 October 2006. South Bank near Hayward Gallery. Photo Jack Goffe. (Man executing the work was actually the artist Brian Hodgson.)



Metzger, *Historic Photographs: Terror and Oppression*, (2007). Black and white photos on fabric, 444 x 563 cm, 444 x 471 cm. Installation at Zacheta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw. Photo copyright S. Madejski and the artist.

2007. Show entitled ‘Gustav Metzger Works 1995-2007’ held at Zacheta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw, March-April. Publication: *Gustav Metzger*, do druku podata Hanna Wroblewska, (Warsaw: Zacheta Narodowa Galeria Sztuki, 2007). Project ‘Model - Equivalence: Shattered Stones’, Westfalischer Kunstverein, Munster in the context of ‘Sculpture Project Munster 07’, June to September.



‘a man will drive a forklift to the Westfälischer Kunstverein, step off the vehicle, go inside the building, and use a password to activate a computer program that will inform him, by means of a random generator, how many stones he has to take to a certain location in the city. The man will find his payload in the courtyard of the LWL-Landesmuseum, use the forklift to take it to the allotted place, and then make a photograph of the pile of stones. When he returns to the Kunstverein, he will post the image online for all to see.’

Metzger: ‘the Allied bombardment of Münster destroyed 80 to 90 percent of the city, and it was done in retaliation for the German attack in 1940 on Coventry and Coventry Cathedral. So for 109 days in Münster there will be a series of stones laid, in 109 different places in the city, in commemoration of the bombardment.’



Contributes to ‘Performa 07 - The Second Biennial of New Visual Art Performance’, Performa, New York City, and ‘SAMMLUNG’, Generali Foundation, Vienna; and ‘bit international – [Nove] Tendencije’, Neue Galerie Graz am Landesmuseum Joanneum, Graz; and ‘8th Sharjah Biennial - Sharjah International Art Biennial, United Arab Emirates: ‘Project Stockholm, June (Phase 1),’ originally conceived in 1972 for the first UN Conference on the Human Environment. 120 cars were parked around the perimeter of a square frame sealed in plastic. Engines switched on, the cars exhaust fumes filled the structure in what was envisaged as the first phase of the project. Phase 2, which was not realised in

Sharjah, prescribes that the cars are then to be encased in the structure, engines still running, until they inevitably overheat and burst into flames.

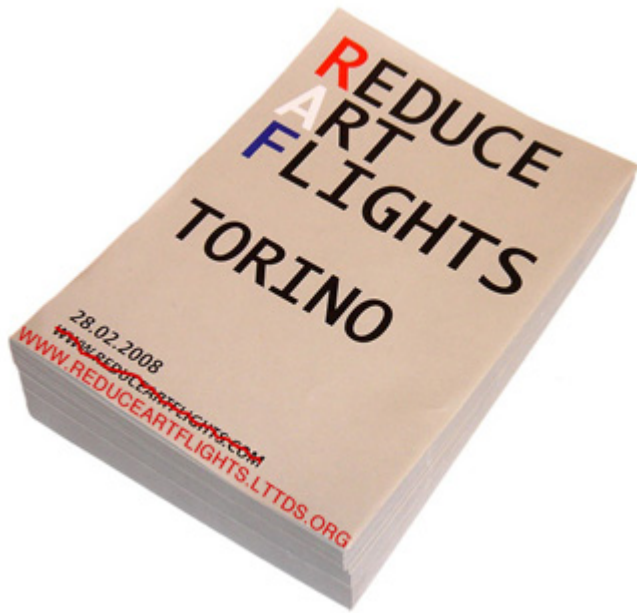


METZGER, *Project Stockholm, June (Phase 1)*, 1972/2007. Scaffolding, polythene sheets, 100 cars. Commissioned by Sharjah Biennial 2007. Photo: Peter Riedlinger.

and ‘Ruins / Emotional Landscapes’, Safn, Reykjavik; and ‘For a Special Place: Documents and Works from the Generali Foundation Collection’, Austrian Cultural Forum, New York City; and [The Evil - Part I](#)’, [Galerie Gebr. Lehmann, Dresden](#), [The Evil Part 2: Pop & Politics](#)’, [Galerie Gebr. Lehmann, Dresden](#). Metzger contributes to discussion with Esther Leslie held at Conway Hall, London 28 June 2007 ‘On the condition of politics’. October: contributes to Serpentine Gallery Experiment Marathon along with 99 other artists.

2008. [Self-Cancellation](#) event held at Beaconsfield Gallery, London (2008), a response to *Auto-Destructive Art Manifestos* - A projection showed acid being painted on nylon slides and included amplified sounds of the disintegration process.

Contributes to 'Yokohama Triennale 2008 - Time Crevasse', Central and Waterfront Sites in Yokohama, Japan; and 'Moralische Fantasien - Künstlerische Strategien in Zusammenhang mit der Klimaerwärmung,' Kunstmuseum des Kantons Thurgau, Warth; and 'Experiment Marathon Reykjavik - Listasafn Reykjavíkur,' Reykjavík Art Museum, Reykjavik; and 'Old News 4', Midway Contemporary Art, Minneapolis, MN; and 'Biennale Cuvée', O.K Centrum für Gegenwartskunst, Linz; and 'bit international. [Nove] tendencije | Computer und visuelle Forschung | Zagreb 1961–1973', ZKM | Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie Karlsruhe; and 'Paul McCarthy's Low Life Slow Life: Part 1.' CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco, CA. Metzger contributes a 'newspaper work' to 'UBS Openings The Long Weekend 2008,' Tate Modern, London, May 24-26. Participates in The Nuclear Forum (28 November 2008) debating the future of nuclear energy at the Royal Society of Arts, London. Project: 'Reduce Art Flights' (RAF, 2008) - leaflets appealing to the arts community to reduce flying to art fairs, etc.



Andrew Wilson publishes article 'Gustav Metzger's Auto-Destructive/Auto-Creative Art: An Art of Manifesto, 1959-1969,' *Third Text*, Vol 22, No 2, March 2008, pp. 177-194.

2009. Publication *Hans Ulrich Obrist & Gustav Metzger: The Conversation Series 16*, (Cologne: Walther Konig, March, 2009). Participates in an informal event at the Whitechapel Art gallery to celebrate 'UN World Environment Day', 5 June 2009. Contributes to book *Voids/Vides; A Retrospective of Empty Exhibitions*, (NY: JRP Ringier, 2009). Contributes to 'Moralische Fantasien', Museum Morsbrioch, Leverkusen, and 'Tate Triennial 2009 - Altermodern', Tate Gallery, London. 'Flailing Trees' installation contributed to Manchester International Festival July 2009. 'It comprised 21 inverted willows, a subversion of the natural order that brings nature and the environment into close focus. With flourishing branches

replaced by dying roots, the sculpture is both a plea for reflection and a plaintive cry for change. The artwork will be installed at Victory Peace Garden for the duration of the festival, and then be moved to the grounds of the Whitworth Art Gallery.'



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**‘Gustav Metzger’ solo show held at the Serpentine Gallery, London, September-
November. Interview with critic Jonathan Jones published in the *Guardian* on 29
September 2009.**

**John A. Walker was Reader in art and design history at Middlesex University until
his retirement in 1999. An earlier version of this article appeared in *Art Monthly*
October 1995. He is the author of *John Latham – the Incidental Person – his Art and
Ideas*, (London: Middlesex University Press, 1995) and *Left Shift: Radical Art in
1970s Britain*, (London & New York: I. B. Tauris, 2002).**