

Press release

**Harald Szeemann. Individual Methodology**

**On the occasion of professional preview of the 9<sup>th</sup> Lyon Biennial on 17-18 September 2007, the eight participants of the 16<sup>th</sup> session of Ecole du Magasin present their book on the curatorial practice and methodology of Harald Szeemann. The book is a result of a ten-months research in the frame of curatorial training program at Magasin – National Contemporary Art Centre of Grenoble.**

The book *Harald Szeemann. Individual Methodology* is the result of a research done in the archive of Harald Szeemann. Thanks to an exceptional opportunity, kindly offered by the Szeemann family, the team was able to access the archive at *Fabbrica Rosa*, the old factory in Maggia, canton of Tessin, Switzerland. The *exhibition maker* moved his archive to *Fabbrica Rosa* since 1988 and this research was based on the invaluable information found there.

Eight participants of the 16<sup>th</sup> session of Ecole du Magasin chose to treat methodology of Harald Szeemann not as historians but as curators wishing to connect his past to the present. The editorial approach aims to enlighten Szeemann's self-organization and its developing all along his career. This self-organization, contradictorily to his exhibitions, didn't leave any traces accessible to the public now. The book constitutes itself an informative and analytical manual for people interested in curatorial practices and history of exhibitions. The research is based on the unpublished documents and testimonies of his closest collaborators. The title of the book as well as its four parts—situations – concepts/processes – works – information—refer to Harald Szeemann's universe of *individual mythologies* and his exhibition *When Attitudes Become Form* (1969).

The first part of the book—***Situations***—contextualizes the period of activities of Harald Szeemann regarding theoretical questions and discussions in the art field.

The essay *This Funeral Is For The Wrong Corpse* by Hal Foster is an extract from his book *Design and Crime (and Other Diatribes)* first published in 2002. Here Hal Foster goes back to the funeral questions of the four past decades, the end of art, modernism, post-modernism (...) and their trauma effects on the artistical potential.

The essay *Art and Its Context or the Question of Culture* by Jean-Marc Poinot is published here for the first time. He analyzes the effect of curatorial approaches that the directors of *Documenta 10* and *11* have brought regarding social and cultural problematic. Some exhibitions of Harald Szeemann are mentioned as predecessors of this cultural evolution.

The interview with Tobia Bezzola—curator at Kunsthaus Zurich and Szeemann’s collaborator during several years—retraces the itinerary of *independent permanent curator* from the end of the 1950s till the last biennials in the 2000s and analyzes the evolution of Szeemann’s status.

The second part of the book—**Concepts/Processes**—presents two analyses. The first is dedicated to the organization of Harald Seemann’s archive at *Fabbrica Rosa*; the other – to the establishment and functioning of his *Agency for Spiritual Guestwork*. For better understanding of Szeemann’s work methodology being independent curator, this part includes numerous documents (photographs, facsimiles, plans) and testimonies of his collaborators.

In the third part of the book—**Works**—the two exhibitions studies are presented: *Documenta 5* realized in 1972 and *L’Autre—the 4<sup>th</sup> Lyon Biennial* in 1997. The authors chose these shows in order to enlight the relation between the exhibitions and its historical and artistical contexts. These two case studies are based on the documents from the archive and interviews with some artists, co-curators of *Documenta 5*, and the artistic director of the *Lyon Biennial*. All the mentioned above helped to understand the evolution of Szeemann’s practice during 25 years that separated these two exhibitions.

In the fourth part—**Information**—there is practical information on Harald Szeemann: his biography, illustrated chronology of his exhibitions since 1957 till 2005, and a selective bibliography of Szeemann’s writings.

*Harald Szeemann: Individual Methodology* is a project developed by the 16<sup>th</sup> Session of Ecole du Magasin (National Contemporary Art Centre, Grenoble): François Aubart, Julija Cistiakova, Haeju Kim, Lucia Pesapane, Fabien Pinaroli, Karla G. Roalandini-Beyer, Yuka Tokuyama and Sadie Woods under the tutorship of Florence Derieux.

Publisher: Magasin – National Contemporary Art Centre of Grenoble and JRP | Ringier

Format:

Number of pages

Number of illustrations

Texts in English and in French

ISBN

Price