



Luis Camnitzer, *The Discovery of Geometry*, 1978/2008, silver gelatin print, 11h x 14w in (27.94h x 35.56w cm)

SP-Arte 2015 | Stand F12

Alexander Gray Associates presents historical work by Luis Camnitzer (b.1937) that highlight the artist's practice of creating poetic associations between language and visual imagery. The featured artworks speak to the politics of geography and the artist's interest in challenging and broadening preconceived realities by considering art as a formulation of ideas and a solution to problems.

On view is *Envelope* (1967), an important work produced by Camnitzer during his time at The New York Graphic Workshop (1964–1970), a collective he co-founded along with fellow artists Liliana Porter and José Guillermo Castillo. In this suite of 10 etchings, the artist pairs a single geometric form with 10 words—such as “envelope,” “tunnel,” and “window,” among others—suggesting different interpretations for the same object. This work embodies Camnitzer’s ability to use language as primary medium, a defining characteristic of his practice, and marks the beginning of his investigation into authorship and originality.

Through the 1970s Camnitzer delved into issues of language by pairing images and text to amplify the associations between ordinary words and objects. He expanded his practice from printmaking to include room-size installations such as *Arbitrary Objects and Their Titles* (1979/2015), as well as his three-dimensional *Object Boxes* (1973–78). This decade was also marked by Camnitzer’s increased interest in shifting paradigms; foremost the commercialization of art and the changing political landscape of rising military regimes in Latin America. Camnitzer produced a body of work critiquing the commodification of art, including *Pintura Original* (1973), a painting on canvas that ironically spells the work’s title along with the estimated costs for production materials and the symbolic value of the artist’s signature. While living in New York, he witnessed and responded to the rise of political repression in his homeland of Uruguay and throughout Latin America through works such as *Marighela* (1970), an etching in homage to Brazilian revolutionary Carlos Marighella.

The politics of landscape and geography are two dominant themes in Camnitzer’s practice, as exemplified in *Canales* (1980). This diptych incorporates a collaged world-map and text written by the artist in which he imagines a future reality with multiple cross-continental canals. This altered landscape results in the equitable distribution of land and goods, rebalancing the social, economic and political realities across the globe by displacing dominate geopolitical forces, primarily the United States and Europe. In *Tratado sobre el paisaje* (1996) Camnitzer indexes the elements of traditional landscape painting by placing assorted objects into glass bottles labeling them with words such as “sky,” “sun,” “tree,” and “mountains.” For Camnitzer, these works employ the act of “re-imagining our thought processes,” and embody the intersection between art and life.

Camnitzer’s work has been shown at important institutions since the 1960s, including one-person exhibitions at El Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos, Santiago, Chile (2013); Kemper Art Museum, St. Louis, MO (2011); El Museo del Barrio, New York (1995); Museo Carrillo Gil, Mexico City (1993); and List Visual Arts Center at M.I.T., Cambridge, MA (1991). Retrospectives of his work have been presented at Lehman College Art Gallery in the Bronx, New York (1991); Kunsthalle Kiel, Germany (2003); Daros Museum in Zurich, Switzerland, El Museo del Barrio, New York; and Museo de Arte Moderno de Medellin, Bogota, Colombia (2010–13). His work has appeared in numerous group exhibitions, including *Under the Same Sun: Art from Latin America Today* at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (2014); *Information* at Museum of Modern Art, New York (1970); among others. He has been featured in international biennials, including the Bienal de la Habana, Cuba (1984, 1986, 1991, 2009); Pavilion of Uruguay, 43 Biennale di Venezia, Italy (1988); Whitney Biennial (2000); and Documenta 11 (2002). His work is in the permanent collections of Museum of Modern Art, New York; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX; Tate, London; Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires, Argentina; and Daros Latinamerica Collection, Zurich; among others.