

LARS BOHMAN GALLERY

Elis Eriksson

"Since the 1960s, words, letters and texts have all been central elements in Elis Eriksson's art. As early as the end of the 1950s he abandoned a number of realistic and post-cubic styles, adopting instead a freer experimentation with objects between image and text, and developed a special collage technique in which the text was central and the image complementary. In this powerful form of typography, images and figures are replaced by signs and then augmented with texts both political and poetic. Eriksson has attempted and on the whole succeeded in liberating himself from artistic, classic traditions and conventions. Concepts such as "art", "creating", "inspiration" and "imagination" are prohibited in Eriksson's singular language. He regards himself as a tool, or a slave to be used by another party on another frequency level. The image, or rather the product, exists already and the artist's job is solely to mediate this product to the viewer. In 2000 he received the prestigious, annual Major Grant award from the Swedish Arts Grants Committee, with the following motivation "... for his absolute individuality and for his convincing reflection of his own time, using a language ahead of his time. In the 1960s Eriksson left tradition behind by positioning himself against the artworld's demands for a personal style and artistic responsibility. Instead, he carefully documented everyday nonsense about politics, poetry, slapstick and erotica in the form of books, maps and games. Paradoxically, this denial of style led to his developing one of the most personal artistic styles of the 20th century. He is completely of his own time and, at the same time, ahead of his time. The visual arts today follow in his footsteps. Younger artists have, therefore, much to thank him for.

Elis Eriksson was born in 1906 in Stockholm where he lived and worked. He passed away in January 2006.