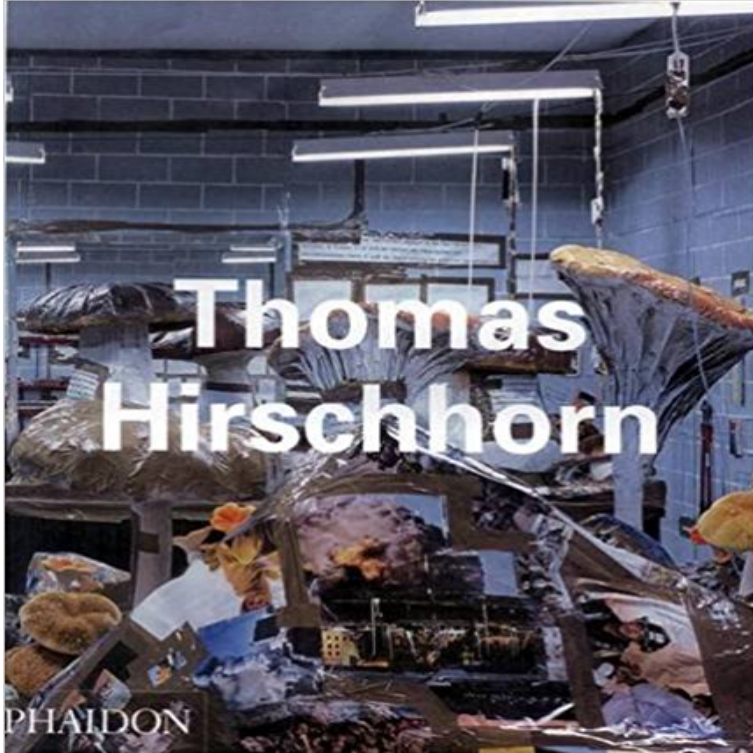


Thomas Hirschhorn (Contemporary Artists (Phaidon))



The work of Paris-based Swiss artist Thomas Hirschhorn (b.1957) comprises giant, labour-intensive, room-sized collages of low-grade materials - that is to say, rubbish. Hirschhorn is among the most significant artists to have emerged internationally in the 1990s. His work has been included in the worlds top exhibitions (including Documenta 11, 2003, and the 48th Venice Biennale, 1999), and he was recipient of the prestigious Prix Marcel Duchamp in 2001. Hirschhorn's work, a commentary on the spectacle of late-capitalist consumerism, is characterized by collages of tinfoil, cardboard, plywood, plastic and packing tape combined with an infinite variety of debris: handwritten texts and images culled from popular magazines, miniature toy airplanes and trains, knick-knacks by the hundreds, armies of plastic gold watches, effigies of Nietzsche and Princess Diana, monitors duct-taped into vitrines, and so on. Part text, part sculpture, part junk heap, and incorporating furniture, cardboard boxes, wooden frames and more, these installations reflect an extraordinarily prolific imagination. Their sheer volume and the time it takes to read and see these massive installations make them unforgettable, often quite humorous experiences.

Half-sculptural, half-architectural and fully revolutionary, some of Hirschhorn's most elaborate installations, such as the multi-room Cavemanman (Barbara Gladstone Gallery, New York, 2002), transform ordinary spaces into a labyrinthine, parallel universe of hybrid forms and fascinating accumulations. A key player in the contemporary art scene today, Hirschhorn moves beyond existing genres - the readymade, the post-Conceptual, video - to offer an important, unprecedented direction for twenty-first-century art. Noted professor and art theorist Benjamin H. D. Buchloh surveys the artists work, form its

anonymous beginnings in the streets of Paris to his recent virtuoso installations, as part of a long tradition of politically motivated anti-monuments. In her Interview, Alison M. Gingeras, who has worked with Hirschhorn numerous times since 2000, discusses with the artist his beginnings as a graphic designer and his more recent dealings with the contemporary art system. Carlos Basualdo offers a full analysis of, as well as a little background on, Bataille Monument at Documenta 11, which Basualdo co-curated. Emergency Library is a unique Artists Choice comprised of a series of oversized books attesting to Hirschhorn's love, both aesthetic and intellectual, for the familiar, well-thumbed copies of his beloved books. Hirschhorn's emphatic Artists Writings include project notes and personal correspondence.

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