

The Fruitmarket Gallery

October 2007 – May 2008

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Admission free



Roman Signer Works

Exhibition **2 November 2007 – 27 January 2008**

Catalogue

A new book has been produced to accompany the exhibition. Designed in collaboration with Roman Signer and including sketches for and photographs of his work as well as an essay by the exhibition's curator Fiona Bradley, the book is a useful introduction to Roman Signer's work.

A major figure in international contemporary art since the early 1970s, Swiss artist Roman Signer makes sculptures, installations and films that bring everyday objects together in unexpected ways. This, his first exhibition in Scotland, presents new work made since 2000 in the context of *Installation (2006)*, a reworking of classic film works from as far back as 1975. Selected by the artist for The Fruitmarket Gallery, the exhibition provides both a snapshot of his current preoccupations and an insight into the themes and ideas that have inspired him throughout his long career.

The works in the exhibition present curious combinations of objects, forces and effects. Inflatable arm bands are attached to snow skis; an umbrella blasts through a briefcase; suspended from the ceiling, a bottle of whisky rotates over a fan. All of Signer's sculptures and films are art works, but they are also radical experiments. Signer makes them in order to see what will happen when objects are used against our expectations of them.

Signer's works challenge our ideas about familiar objects and how we experience them in time. Fireworks, gunpowder, wind, fans and gravity



Opposite,
Roman Signer
Sand

Opposite,
Roman Signer
Sand Installation, 2007

are harnessed as animating forces, making possible his strange assemblages. The film *Office Chair (Bürostuhl)* (2006) shows Signer sitting in a swivel chair spun round by two fireworks he hold in his hands, releasing the chair from its desk-bound mundanity and turning it into a revolutionary fun ride. To make *Easter Bunny with Rocket (Osterhase mit Rakete)* (2006) the artist shot a chocolate rabbit with a firework through a small cannon at close range. The result, a damaged representation of a rabbit, elicits more sympathy than its accepted fate as an edible confection. The works are paradoxes, serious and humorous, technically difficult but visually simple, even elegant, absurd in their conception but supremely logical in their execution.

In Signer's sculptures, installations and films, events happen, have happened or might happen – past and future events are present when we view the work. In *Sand Installation (Sandinstallation)* (2007), we are confronted by a completed action – sand has fallen over a rotating umbrella and formed a ring on the floor around it – but our imagining of the sand falling juxtaposes past and present. *Installation* (2006) brings ten film works made between 1975 and 1989 together with new films of a signer translating each event into sign language. These works call into question our ideas about the possibilities and limits of visual representation, of translation and interpretation, and their distance from actual experience.



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