

The Fruitmarket Gallery has produced a major new publication, *Dieter Roth: Diaries*, to accompany the exhibition. The book includes essays from Fiona Bradley, artist Andrea Büttner, and writer and curator Sarah Lowndes. It also includes new texts by Björn Roth, the artist's son and long-time collaborator and Jan Voss, who worked with Roth on his book projects, as well as a selection of interviews with Roth, translated into English for this publication. The book also reproduces pages of Roth's diaries for the first time, alongside images of installation works which relate closely to the theme of the diary. £24.95 RRP

Martin Creed *Work No. 1059*, 2011

Commissioned by The Fruitmarket Gallery as part of a refurbishment of The Scotsman Steps by the City of Edinburgh Council and the Edinburgh World Heritage Trust

The Fruitmarket Gallery is proud to have commissioned Martin Creed's *Work No. 1059*, a new permanent work of public sculpture on the Scotsman Steps, across the street from the Gallery. For more information pick up a leaflet or ask at the Bookshop.

Supported by Edinburgh Art Festival through the Scottish Government's Edinburgh Festivals Expo Fund, The Hope Scott Trust and the following generous individuals: Elizabeth Cowling, Sophie Crichton Stuart, Alistair and Susan Duff, Werner Keschner and Catherine Muirden, Jaap van Liere, George and Jacqui Morris, Barry Rosen in memory of Bruce Lentini and Dorothy Rosen, Robert and Nicky Wilson, Iwan and Manuela Wirth, The Zachs-Adam Family and The Fruitmarket Gallery Board of Directors



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Dieter Roth Diaries

Edinburgh Art Festival Exhibition
2 August – 14 October 2012

The diary is one of the most important themes in the work of artist Dieter Roth (1930–1998). Providing both material for art and a principle by which to organise and think about it, the diaries Roth kept throughout his life are a vital, yet hitherto unexplored part of his work.

Roth left behind an enormous body of work, which includes drawings, paintings, sculptures, installations, films and books. His work collapses art and life, and while he is best known for big gestures and large-scale installations, this exhibition celebrates the importance of intimacy and close observation within his artistic process.

The
Fruitmarket
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45 Market Street, Edinburgh
www.fruitmarket.co.uk

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People who knew Roth remember that he always carried a diary with him. In interviews, he talked of the system he tried to impose upon himself: he intended to use one set of diaries for recording appointments, another set for commentary about appointments, and another set for deeper analyses of those appointments. Over time, of course, these categories did not hold and the diaries as they are presented here mix appointments, addresses, notes, lists and reminders, drawings and doodles alongside silly poems and deeper thoughts. Intimate records, they were nevertheless made public by the artist, who consistently incorporated them into artworks, exhibiting painted copies of pages from his diaries as early as 1967. Three of these paintings are included in the exhibition.

Roth's decision to use his diaries and the diary format in an unmediated way was based upon a need to eliminate pretension and any competitive 'trumping' of other artists from his work. He did not want to elevate himself above the viewer, either. By presenting the visual and material traces of his life as they were, as free from mediation as possible, he hoped to put himself beneath the viewer, in order, as he later said, to '(...) simply portray my misery, so that no one had the feeling that I'm bigger or better. (...) Why should the viewer look at something that he can't do himself?' (1998)

As well as diaries, the exhibition also includes a set of Roth's copybooks, as near to complete as possible, and a shelving unit full of the scripts from which he made them. From 1965 to 1996, Roth gathered together in ringbinders a huge variety of materials, from drawings and copies of diary pages to packaging and instruction manuals. The contents of the ringbinders were then copied into volumes which Roth called 'copybooks'; hand-made books produced in small editions in collaboration with Jan Voss of Boekie Woekie, an imprint and book shop in Amsterdam. Roth sold these books, or gave them away to friends.

Drawings dominate the scripts and copybooks. The double-sided drawings entitled *2 x 97 x mutually accusing angel-destroyers and whiny swines* (1980) were originally bound into a volume that then became the model for a copybook which is on display here. The book was intended to be viewed from back to front as well as front to back, and both upside down and upright, and the pages are numbered accordingly, both at the top and bottom of the page. Like the drawings on yellow lined paper, *10 Chicago-Selves* (1977), most of the drawings are self portraits.

The installation *Flat Waste* (1975-76/1992) is a kind of diary, and also a self portrait of sorts. In 1975, Roth set out to collect all the waste material less than 1cm thick he encountered on a daily basis, punching, flattening or folding it in order to place it all in ringbinders and present the ringbinders as a sort of library or archive, in specially designed shelving units. Between every unit a lectern enables viewers to browse through a selection of the ring binders. The year dates vary because while Roth first made *Flat Waste* over the period of a year in 1975-76; some of the volumes that later went missing from the original year were replaced with binders of rubbish collected on the same day in later years.

The idea of the diary as a record and portrait of the artist structures the installation *Solo Scenes* (1997-98), its 128 monitors presenting a flickering wall of images Roth filmed of himself in his home and studios in Iceland, Switzerland and Germany during the last year of his life. Shown at the Venice Biennale in 1999 and *Documenta 11* in Kassel in 2003, it presents his life in the form of a series of observations of his daily acts. *Solo Scenes* owes its origins to *A Diary*, a radical work consisting of 340 Super-8 films on 45 rolls of films Roth presented when he represented Switzerland in the 1982 Venice Biennale. The video diary may be a common diary format now, but in the 1980s and 1990s it was unusual. Roth does not talk to the camera about his life; rather, he films the ordinary actions of life itself: getting out of bed, making work, cooking, eating, drinking and sitting on the toilet, getting into bed, sleeping, reading and thinking. Roth did all the filming himself, positioning the cameras and selecting footage.

Roth's work ranges from the playful to the mundane, from incisive and humorous comments and images to excessive self-analysis. Shame, torturous self-flagellation and critical self-obsession permeate the work, which blurs the boundaries between life, archive and art. Yet in bringing the raw materials of his private life into the public realm, Roth contends that it does not necessarily bring us closer to understanding him. As he put it, 'Who knows what people think? Who knows what you're thinking? You can't know at all. At the most, you can see what you say, and not even that: when you say something, then you've only heard it again.' (1979) This work does however help us to understand something about Roth's art, both its origins and its broader legacy, and to think about it in new ways. The work in the exhibition is perhaps most appropriately summed up by Roth himself: 'I believe the diaries are primarily an attempt to register a complaint, a shrill howl of complaint. As loud and as penetrating as possible to invoke crying, you know; that people bawl and cry when they read it. For me, it's about empathy, about this lament.'