



Cortesi Gallery

PRESS RELEASE

**JAN HENDERIKSE
MINT**

Curated by Francesca Pola

18 September – 20 November 2018

Private view: 5 October 2018, 6 - 8.30pm

Cortesi Gallery, 41&43 Maddox Street, London W1S 2PD

Dutch artist Jan Henderikse (1937) is a pivotal figure in twentieth-century European art, whose importance is gradually garnering international attention. This exhibition at Cortesi Gallery, curated by Francesca Pola, is his first solo show ever presented in London: it brings together a series of highly significant examples of his work, to retrace the key stages in his creative career.

Since the 1950s, Henderikse's work has developed beyond the traditional notions of painting and sculpture, to redefine the coordinates of artistic imagery: first, by neutralizing the surface into the monochrome; then, since 1959, by employing unconventional materials and techniques in "allover" compositions that mark his distinctive language. Looking for everyday used objects (such as empty crates, bottles, corks, license plates, coins, bills, parts of toys, found photographs, and others), which he perceives as loaded with human and emotional content and interest, Henderikse combines them into assemblages and serial accumulations, sequences and multimedia installations, in order to show the immediate power of their significance. As objects taken directly from the world and left in their original state, they speak of the instants of life they belonged to, and rationalize this emotional load into a suspended poetic image, creating an immediate empathy with the viewer. This potential multiplicity of references implicit in every object is exemplified by the title of the show, as the word "mint" can indicate three different kinds of items: a candy, a coin or a precious thing in perfect conditions ("mint condition"). Henderikse's work is intended to disclose precisely this inevitable and poetic clash between pleasure and value, transient and permanent, ordinary and extraordinary.

The show sets off with a rare monochrome piece from 1959, to develop into some crucial typologies of his assemblages from the 1960: featuring works made with corks, crates, bottles, coins, license plates combined with ready found tapestry. These pieces embody Henderikse's affinities with contemporary movements of the 1960s: on one hand, ZERO in the reduction of expressive means, the refusal of expressive subjectivity and the repetition of structures; on the other, Nouveau Réalisme and Pop Art in the interest for objects and consumer culture. However, it is important to stress the uniqueness and specificity of Henderikse's work in this context: not only because he combines all these different aspects into a single vision, but also because his exclusive focus is on found objects from our civilization's trash flow that have a human memory: the more banal or humble, the better. All these objects of affection interest the artist as long as they have been used: in his pieces made with them, he combines the popular and the intellectual, the collective and the individual, the physicality of their material presence and the immateriality of their evocative power.

The exhibition also features rarely seen works from the 1970s and 1980s, such as his conceptual photographic sequences, like the one devoted to the Broadway intersections, or what he calls "rejected photographs": moments of life that have been shot and forgotten by the people who lived them. Or the "shredded money" pieces, which stick huge quantities of bills out of circulation, meticulously torn into fragments and piled up into large geometric and apparently monochrome volumes.



Cortesi Gallery

Special and unique features in the London show are a number of works the artist has conceived specifically for this occasion: a large installation combining hundreds of corks with glowing neon English words, a striking wall piece with a multiplicity of ready found Baseball players cards, and a new and unseen typology in his monochrome cork works from 2018.

Henderikse's pieces feature crucial and topical issues of our age, which he has been translating for decades into his carefully arranged assemblages: the melting pot of globalization, the accumulation and spectacularization of material culture, the dialectic between homologation and difference. His work takes the shape of a continuous, curious and affectionate exploration of the world, through these "empathic objects": fragments and instants of life that people have left behind. It is both a subtle and gentle commentary, and an incredibly astonished inventory, of the last 60 years of consumer culture, seen and registered through his innocent and poetic eye. The aim of this exhibition is to convey the fresh topicality and significance of both these souls in Henderikse's work: the material fascination for the real in the humanly loaded objects, and the conceptual tension that is implied by their selection, sequential arrangement, and re-contextualization.

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue, which includes essays by Francesca Pola and Antoon Melissen, images of all the works, installation views, and a bio-bibliographic appendix. Based on extensive art-historical research, it offers a more complete overview of Henderikse's work and is meant to pave the way to further international studies.

Jan Henderikse (Delft, the Netherlands, 1937) lives and works in Brooklyn, New York and Antwerp, Belgium. In 1959, he started developing a highly distinctive visual language, focusing on assemblages, readymade and installations. In the same year, he moved to Cologne, and shortly thereafter to Düsseldorf, one of the epicentres of the post-war European avant-garde. He connected to the international ZERO movement and network, and in 1961, together with Armando, Henk Peeters and Jan Schoonhoven, Henderikse formed the Dutch Nul Group, which took part in several major international ZERO initiatives. The exhibition *Nul* at the Amsterdam Stedelijk Museum in 1962, showed Jan Henderikse's installation of stacked beer crates: a true milestone in conceptual terms. The artist settled in Curacao from 1963–67, working with found objects, coins, photographs, and licence plates. In 1968 Henderikse moved to New York, working mainly with assemblages of found objects and photographic sequences. Since then, his work has continued to focus on conceptually-based photographic objects, multiples and readymade. His works can be found in the collections of museums around the world, and in 2014 and 2015 were featured in the exhibitions on ZERO at the Guggenheim Museum in New York, the Martin Gropius Bau in Berlin, and the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam. A retrospective solo exhibition in Schiedam, the Netherlands (2018) and recent contributions to group exhibitions in Dusseldorf, London, Miami, and Tokyo, reflect the ongoing and mounting interest in Henderikse's multimedia oeuvre.

Cortesi Gallery

41&43 Maddox St. W1S 2PD, London

+44 2074936009

Open Monday to Friday, 10am – 6pm; Saturdays 12 – 6pm

www.cortesigallery.com

info@cortesigallery.com