

Luis Camnitzer

Symmetrical Jails (2014) consists of seven copper plate etchings, which intersect in patterns of text, line and symbol. In the realm of the political, for his recent suite of seven etchings, *Symmetrical Jails* (2014), Camnitzer stacked and mirrored each letter in the word “symmetry”—using the United Nations official languages Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish, plus he adds German—to create seven unique characters. For the artist, “Words are never able to fully convey what one truly thinks: thoughts and feelings are pressed into an alien format, like when poetry tries to imprison poetics in stiltedness. Symmetry worsens this by curtailing the freedom of information. ”Emblematic of his image and word pairings, Luis Camnitzer describes this work as “two languages that run parallel and are disconnected until you want to make a connection.”

Pioneering conceptual artist Luis Camnitzer works primarily in printmaking, sculpture, and installations. His humorous, biting, and often politically charged use of language as art medium has distinguished his practice for over four decades. During the 1970s, Camnitzer created a key body of work that blended both language and images by producing a series of object-boxes that placed ordinary items within wood-framed glass boxes with text printed on brass plaques. His work explores subjects such as social injustice and repression in his native Latin America, as well as institutional critique.

In 1964 he co-founded The New York Graphic Workshop, along with fellow artists, Argentine Liliana Porter and Venezuelan Guillermo Castillo (1941–1999).

Camnitzer’s work has been shown at important institutions since the 1960s, including one-person exhibitions at Kemper Art Museum, St. Louis; Daros Museum in Zurich; El Museo del Barrio, New York; and List Visual Arts Center at M.I.T., Cambridge. The Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía is planning a large-scale retrospective of the artist scheduled to open in 2018.

His work has appeared in numerous group exhibitions at venues such as the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; MoMA, New York; among others. He has been featured in several international biennials, including the Bienal de la Habana, Cuba (1984, 1986, 1991, 2009); the Whitney Biennial (2000); and Documenta 11 (2002). He also represented the Pavilion of Uruguay at the 43th Biennale di Venezia in 1988.

Camnitzer’s work is in the permanent collections of MoMA, New York; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; and Tate Collection, London; among others.

Camnitzer states, “I am interested in art as a formulation of and solution to problems, and it’s there where elegance is really important. In art, there may be many correct solutions, but the best is the most elegant among the correct ones. Elegance is not necessarily simple, but it is the one that may achieve the greatest complexity without getting lost in stupidity.”

Symmetrical Jails (2014)

7 etchings on copper plate

Sommerset laid paper 300 gram

Size: each 56 x 76 cm

Edition: 18

Each hand signed, numbered and dated

Etching plates printed at Städtische Galerie Wolfsburg by Kristof Baranski

Collophon letterpress printing by Atelier für Druckgraphik, Hamburg

Price: USD 50,000