

Press Release

TOWER^{MMK}, 27 July 2024 – 5 January 2025

Opening: Friday, 26 July 2024, 7 pm

GUSTAV METZGER



Gustav Metzger, *Public Adverts, Cheap Flights*, 2005–2009 (detail), Private Collection, © VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2024

“I have nothing to say and that is politics.” Gustav Metzger

Refugee, survivor, stateless person, carpenter, gardener, anarchist, antiquarian, environmental activist, intellectual, and artist. Gustav Metzger was born in Nuremberg in 1926. One of his earliest memories is of his mother bathing him. At the age of four, he witnessed the Nazi parades. At the age of twelve, in January 1939, he arrived in England on one of the last Jewish Kindertransports. His parents and most of his family were murdered by the Nazis.

Confronted with the murderous violence of human beings at an early age, Gustav Metzger regarded drawing attention to the systematic destruction of nature and fighting for its preservation and respect as a matter of existential importance. For that reason, at the height of the nuclear arms race, he wrote *Auto-Destructive Art* manifestos calling for art created for its own destruction. In 1960, along with Bertrand Russell, he cofounded the Committee of 100. Composing manifestos, organizing symposia, undertaking interventions in the public space, and, above all, participating in contemporary discourse, remained fundamental to Metzger throughout his life. Many of his works address the inexplicable nature of violence, history, and, in particular, the Holocaust, promoting understanding and opposing the modes of suppression and forgetting.

The exhibition *Gustav Metzger* at TOWER^{MMK} is the first museum retrospective to be devoted to the artist (1926–2017) in Germany and is curated by Susanne Pfeffer and Julia Eichler. Some of the works are on public display for the first time.

“Born in Nuremberg, at home in London, he is perhaps the most important artist that Germany never had.” Ben Lewis

Press photos can be downloaded here: <http://www.mmk.art/en/about/press>

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