Hirshhorn Announces Its First Google Art Talk

*Online Panel With Creator of Auto-Destructive Art Gustav Metzger*

On Friday, April 25, at 12:30 pm EDT, in conjunction with the exhibition “Damage Control: Art and Destruction Since 1950,” on view through May 26, 2014, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden will present its first ever Google Art Talk: “Gustav Metzger and the Art of Destruction.” This panel—which includes the artist, as well as the co-curator of the “Damage Control” exhibition and the Hirshhorn’s Interim Director and Chief Curator Kerry Brougher, and Andrew Wilson, Curator of Modern & Contemporary British Art, and Archives at the Tate, London, who has written extensively about Metzger’s work during the past twenty years—offers a rare opportunity for audiences internationally to hear directly from and engage with artist Gustav Metzger about his own work as well as the larger questions and meanings surrounding the invocation of destruction in art.

Please visit https://plus.google.com/events/cm7qf2p60po7c61c845d97po for more information. Questions by viewers may be submitted in advance or during the talk using the following hash tags: #MetzgerArtTalk #arttalks

Metzger (b. Nuremberg, Germany, 1926; lives and works in London), who escaped the Holocaust as a child in 1939 by fleeing to England, has influenced generations of artists with his concept of Auto-Destructive art, the direct use of destruction in art as a response to the self-destructive tendencies and policies of society. Metzger was also co-organizer of the 1966 Destruction in Art Symposium (DIAS) in London, a month-long event that brought together artists engaging with destruction in their work from around the world, including Yoko Ono and Raphael Montañez Ortiz (who both recently participated in the Hirshhorn’s opening events and symposium for “Damage Control.”) (http://www.hirshhorn.si.edu/bio/damage-control-symposium/). Metzger’s work and the
Invocation of destruction in art remain as relevant and important as they were more than fifty years ago when he wrote the first Auto-Destructive Art manifesto.

“Metzger’s work was so formative to our thinking about the ‘Damage Control’ exhibition and continues to be so central to any discussion about destruction in art that we are thrilled that he will be sharing his deep interest and commitment to this subject with us as part of our first Google Art Talk,” commented Brougher.

The Hirshhorn is pleased to present this important conversation with one of the most pivotal figures in 20th-century art as part of its commitment to providing a platform for the artist’s voice. As it continues to expand its digital educational outreach, this partnership with Google also offers new possibilities for fulfilling the Hirshhorn’s mission to provide meaningful opportunities for direct engagement with artists to its audiences.

The talk is organized by Deborah Horowitz, Director of Curatorial Administration and Publications for the Hirshhorn.

**About the Participants**

**Gustav Metzger** is a London-based artist, born in Nuremberg, Germany in 1926 to Polish-Jewish parents. From 1945 to 1953, Metzger studied at various art schools in Cambridge, London, Antwerp, and Oxford. In 1959, he developed the concept of auto-destructive art, proposing works that could self-destruct, to reflect the similarly destructive nature of political and social systems. At the heart of his practice, which has spanned over 65 years, are a series of constantly opposing yet interdependent forces such as destruction and creation.

**Kerry Brougher** is Interim Director and Chief Curator at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC. Before moving to Washington, he was Director of the Museum of Modern Art in Oxford, where he organized a retrospective of Gustav Metzger’s work, and, prior to that, Curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. He is the co-curator, with Russell Ferguson, of “Damage Control: Art and Destruction Since 1950,” which will travel to Mudam Luxembourg and Universalmuseum Joanneum/Kunsthaus Graz, Austria, after the Hirshhorn.

**Andrew Wilson** is Curator of Modern & Contemporary British Art, and Archives at the Tate. He has written widely on the work of Gustav Metzger over the last twenty years and is currently preparing a spotlight display at Tate Britain for 2015 on the development towards the theories and practice of auto-destructive art in Metzger’s work between 1956 and 1961.
About the Hirshhorn

The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, the Smithsonian’s museum of international modern and contemporary art, has nearly 12,000 paintings, sculptures, photographs, mixed-media installations, works on paper and new media works in its collection. The Hirshhorn presents diverse exhibitions and offers an array of public programs that explore modern and contemporary art. Located at Independence Avenue and Seventh Street S.W., the museum is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. (closed Dec. 25). Admission to the galleries and special programs is free. For more information about exhibitions and events, visit hirshhorn.si.edu. Follow the Hirshhorn on Facebook at facebook.com/hirshhorn, on Twitter at twitter.com/hirshhorn and on Tumblr at hirshhorn.tumblr.com. Or sign up for the museum’s eBlasts at hirshhorn.si.edu/collection/social-media. To request accessibility services, contact Kristy Maruca at marucak@si.edu or (202) 633-2796, preferably two weeks in advance.

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