



Luis Camnitzer, *The Threat of the Mirror*, 1978,
mixed media, 10" x 16" x 1/4".

LUIS CAMNITZER

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“The mediocrity of beauty” seems an unlikely subject for Luis Camnitzer, a German-born Uruguayan pioneer of Conceptual art. His practice has always been oriented toward the social, political, and educational aspects of art, and also toward words and the language of “a political art oblivious to propaganda.”

The works in this show, dating from 1968 to 2015, argued for elegance versus beauty. A room-size cage of black vinyl tape trapped viewers with its words: “All lines are prisons.” “Please look away, you are invading my territory.” Visitors could escape the cage and confront a composite digital video titled *Jane Doe* (2012/15), which fuses photographs of women culled from police, legal, and newspaper reports into a blankly beautiful symmetrical face, or peruse the graphic work *Seven Virtues* (2014), with the cardinal virtues inserted as pathologies in a medical dictionary.

Upstairs was a generic brushy abstraction from 1973 offering a choice of titles and, therefore, meanings, and a photograph, *The Threat of the Mirror* (1978), in which a shattered mirror shows a portrait double that duplicates its disintegration. From Camnitzer’s early “Self-Portrait” etchings (1968–72), featuring only his name, to his “Symmetrical Jails” (2014), with “symmetry” etched in seven languages, the works vacillated between elegance and didacticism.

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