Luis Camnitzer: Playing with Ideas MORRIS AND HELEN BELKIN ART GALLERY, VANCOUVER SEP 30 TO DEC 4 2011

by MARIAM NADER



Luis Camnitzer Landscape as an Attitude 1979 Courtesy Daros Latinamerica Collection Zürich / photo Peter Schälchli

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Conceptual art sometimes gets a bad rap for being too heavy-handed or dependent on intellectual prerequisites. However, flirting with the rigid foundations of conceptualism can result in pieces of art that are thoughtful without being ostentatious, and installations that are playful without being clumsy. These are the types of works for which Luis Camnitzer, currently the focus of a survey at the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery in Vancouver, is known.

Camnitzer, a German-born Uruguayan based in New York City, is a respected artist, theorist and educator who's made contributions to the field of conceptual art by focusing on the ways it can engage rather than

"I'm interested in minimal input and maximal output," he says in a conversation posted to the Belkin's YouTube channel. "I'm not reducing myself to a particular shape, form or material, or lack thereof. I'm more interested in how to activate an environment and people with some minimal stimulus so that there's more room for resonance and more room for creativity on the side of the public."



Luis Camnitzer Arbitrary Objects and Their Titles 1979/2011 Courtesy Daros Latinamerica Collection Zürich / photo David Aiken, Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery

To trace this practice, the Belkin is showing more than 70 Camnitzer pieces created from 1966 to the present day. Showing elsewhere on the UBC campus is the installation *Arbitrary Objects and Their Titles*. For this work, on view at the Walter C. Koerner Library until December 31, Camnitzer has taken various unremarkable objects (such as a clothespin, an elastic band and a screw) found around the campus and attached them to a wall. Beneath them, he has scribbled equally unremarkable words on scraps of paper. It's the kind of assemblage that might appear apathetic at first, but that gestures, like much of the artist's work, towards a higher aim—recontextualizing the ways we order the world around us.



Luis Camnitzer Arbitrary Objects and Their Titles 1979/2011 Detail Courtesy Daros Latinamerica Collection Zürich / photo David Aiken, Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery