

SPRÜTH MAGERS BERLIN LONDON

Kenneth Anger

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Sprüth Magers London february 19 - march 27 2010

Sprüth Magers London is delighted to present an exhibition of work by the legendary filmmaker and artist Kenneth Anger, in his first solo show in London for five years. Making films continuously since the late 1940s and considered a countercultural icon, Kenneth Anger is widely acclaimed as a pioneering and influential force in avant-garde cinema. His groundbreaking body of work has inspired cineastes, filmmakers and artists alike. Many channels of contemporary visual culture, from queer iconography to MTV, similarly owe a debt to his art.

The exhibition will feature his seminal 1969 film *Invocation of My Demon Brother*. This work, a hypnotic montage of jarringly edited images, shifting intense colours and symbols with a repetitive synthesised soundtrack by Mick Jagger, is typical of Anger's sinister and subversive aesthetic. The aim of Anger's subliminal techniques is to get through to 'the great Collective Unconscious' and evoke the idea of an alternative reality, which, in turn, adds to the viewers' anxiety. The claustrophobic setting and jagged texture of *Invocation* seems to parallel the uncertainty of the counterculture at the time. Brief glimpses of the Rolling Stones performing in Hyde Park, in memory of Brian Jones who died in the summer of 1969, darkly presage their notorious concert at Altamont later that year, at which Hell's Angels killed Meredith Hunter. Furthermore, many of the fragmented scenes which make up the film feature Bobby Beausoleil, Anger's erstwhile Lucifer, who was convicted of murdering the musician Gary Hinman, alongside the infamous Charles Manson, in 1970. The film's intense torrent of images also include a US military helicopter unloading soldiers in Vietnam, the Magnus played by Anger himself performing fevered rituals during a ceremony filmed at the autumn equinox of 1967, flashes of the novel *Moonchild* (1917) written by the influential occultist Aleister Crowley and brief shots of Marianne Faithfull, Anton LaVey, Keith Richards and Anita Pallenberg.

Kenneth Anger's work constitutes a radical critique of Hollywood, often evoking and referencing an iconography of contemporary pop culture within occult settings, and depicting youth counterculture in the midst of 'magick' rituals, violence and eroticism. Using a non-narrative style, Anger's abstract films are highly symbolic and cinematic manifestations of his occult practices, exploring themes of ritualistic transformation. His films are imbued with a baroque splendour stemming from the heightened sensuality of an opulent use of colours and mystic imagery. Devoid of dialogue, the recurrent theme of music is immediately apparent in Anger's visionary films which have earned him widespread acknowledgement as the pioneer of MTV and the music video.

Anger's playful neon sign Hollywood Babylon (1975/2009) is part of a site specific installation exploring the artist's longstanding fascination with the outrageous antics and sordid tales of old Hollywood detailed in his classic book Hollywood Babylon (1959/1975). Additional exhibition highlights include the photograph Lucifer (Leslie Huggins) taken from Anger's epic film Lucifer Rising (1970/1981) featuring a further collaboration with Bobby Beausoleil who is unique in being the only musician to score a film while serving a life sentence.

Kenneth Anger was born in Santa Monica, California. His most iconic works include the classic Fireworks (1947), Eaux D'Artifice (1953), Rabbit's Moon (1950-1973), Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome (1954-66), Scorpio Rising (1964), Invocation of My Demon Brother (1969) and Lucifer Rising (1970/81). His work has been featured at the Whitney Biennial 2006, P.S.1 Contemporary Art Centre, New York in 2009 and the Athens Biennial 2009. He lives and works in Los Angeles.

On the occasion of his exhibition at Sprüth Magers London, Anger presents this evening of his unforgettable films at Tate Modern at 7pm on Friday 19 February 2010.

Please see www.tate.org.uk/modern/eventseducation/film/20958.htm for more information and tickets.

Kenneth Anger's iconic work is concurrently on show at the Jameson Dublin International Film Festival until 28 February 2010. Please see www.jdifff.com for more information and tickets.

To coincide with the AV Festival, a screening of Kenneth Anger's film work and artist talk will take place at the Tyneside Cinema, Newcastle, at 7pm on Friday 12 March 2010.

Please see www.avfestival.co.uk for more information and tickets.

For more information, interviews or images, please contact Sally Hough:

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Visitor Information

Address: 7A Grafton Street, London, W1S 4EJ

Opening hours: Tuesday Saturday, 10am - 6pm

Admission: Free

Nearest Tube: Green Park

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