

ARTFORUM

Critic's Picks
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Glasgow

Thomas Houseago, Dieter Roth, and André Thomkins

THE MODERN INSTITUTE, GLASGOW
Suite 6, Floor 1, 73 Robertson Street
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The contrasts at play in this collective exhibition of works by Thomas Houseago, Dieter Roth, and André Thomkins offer a kind of aesthetic parenthesis that contains a diverse set of reference points. The wall-based and sculptural works on view span from 1959 to 2009 and establish significant affinities between the artists that divert the pieces from their original contexts. Roth's *Faltened Bust of a Poet*, 1969, is a curious inclusion, rendering in sculptural form the nightmarish physicality of his drawings. This work brings to mind an immediate and flattering comparison to the younger Houseago's *Coin Mask*, 2008, as well as to his *Untitled*, 2009, which furthers Houseago's empathetic references to Naum Gabo in these abstract portraits. Roth's most resonant works in the exhibition, however, are the suite of thirty framed drawings collectively titled *30 Monsters from Danneckerstrasse*, 1969. These works depict, in twisted cartoonish imaginings, his pencil-drawn visage and suggest a melancholia that can feasibly be applied to the psychology of the other artists.

The intergenerational dialogues between the works here establish a contemporary relevance for the older works on view. For example, André Thomkins's unique Lackskin-on-paper pieces maintain their experimental and aesthetically alluring nature despite their dates of origin (1958–81). These technically curious pieces are illuminated by documentary footage that plays on a monitor, which depicts the methods he used and acts as an effective bridge between his production and the media's potential in the present. Such references provide the youthful Houseago with a historically rich heritage in which to position his practice.

— Steven Cairns



View of "Thomas Houseago, Dieter Roth, and André Thomkins," 2009. From left: Thomas Houseago, *Coin Mask*, 2008; André Thomkins, *Untitled*, 1959–64; Dieter Roth, *30 Monsters from Danneckerstrasse*, 1969.