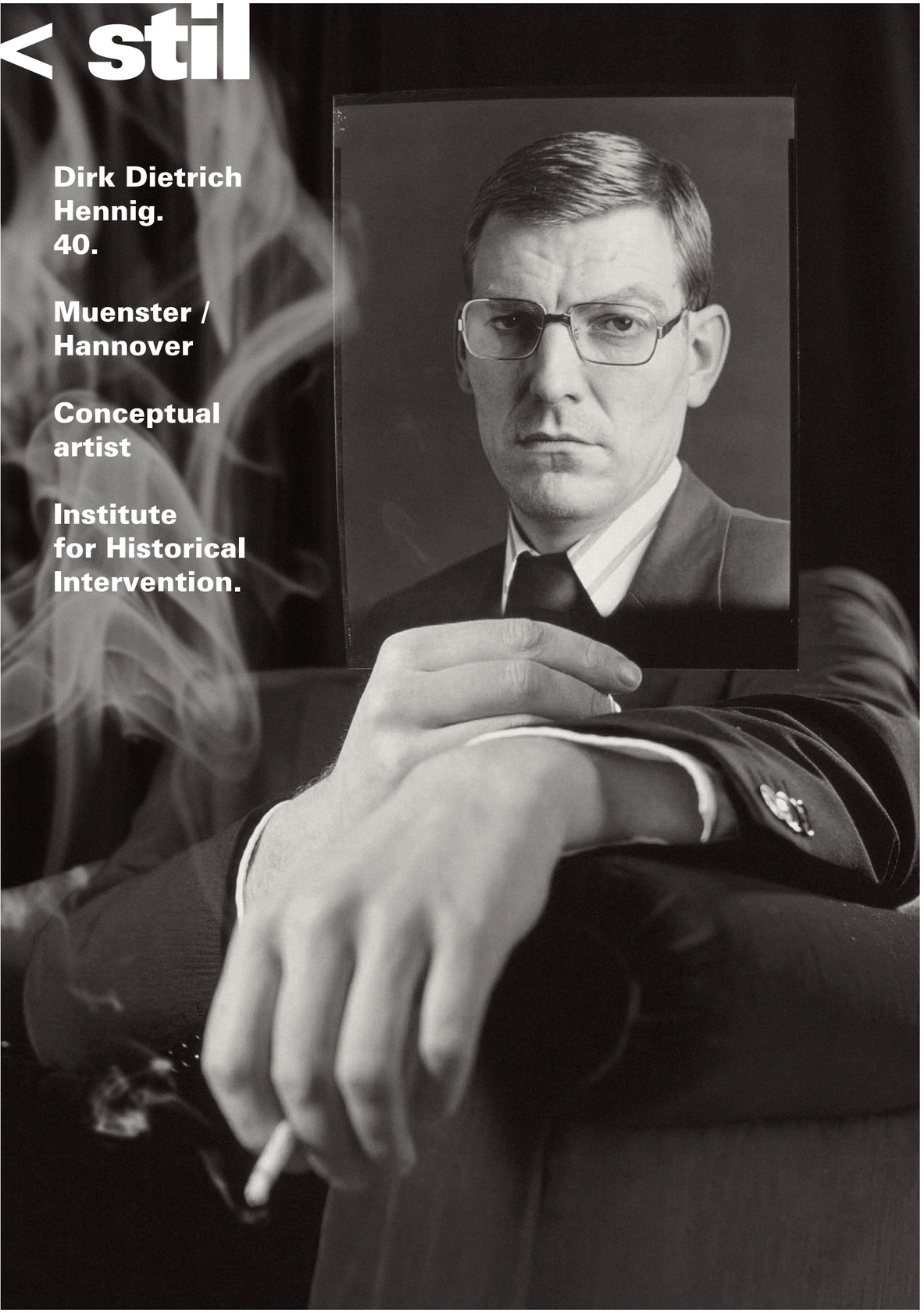

Dirk Dietrich Hennig.
40.

Muenster / Hannover

Conceptual artist

Institute for Historical Intervention.

17/keeper-of-secrets

If he shows his face, then history can vanish. Who knows what he might need it for next? The answer is simple: only Dirk Dietrich Hennig himself knows. And of course, history itself. But is it actually true? Hennig, a conceptual artist, smiles at such question marks. „Whether it‘s true or not isn‘t important. People crave history and stories,“ the 40-year-old asserts, and he really means history. What he does: tear down one or two museum-like bastions of truth and engage in historical intervention. Still have questions about this history? Certainly!

And that, in turn, is perfectly acceptable. Because what lies behind Dirk Dietrich Hennig‘s artistic work, his art concepts, is so mysterious, so unbelievable, that it demands close examination. In short—as far as that‘s even possible—Hennig, who studied Fine Arts in Münster in the 1990s, develops and „transplants“ fascinating life stories into historical contexts and presents them, under a pseudonym, to an astonished public. Fictional life stories, mind you, which become deceptively real through Hennig‘s artistry and meticulous attention to detail. Deceptively real? „I uncover previously undiscovered historical figures,“ counters Hennig, whose artistic internet platform is the so-called „Cupere Institute for Historical Intervention.“ Historical falsification, some might protest. „Why?“ Hennig replies: „You can only falsify something that already exists. My art, however, is the creation of possibilities.“ True: And possibilities simply cannot be wrong. For all his conceptual seriousness, Hennig is a brilliant entertainer. For example, when he appears in an orthopedic supply store in Münster as the curator of a „Special Exhibition of Orthopedic Rarities“ to draw attention to the forgotten story of the performer and ape-man Mario Tombarell. Or when, as a local history-loving treasure hunter, he shares the story of „Hinrich von Hagens‘ Treasure in the Aasee“ with the public. Or when, as in 2003, when he came to Worpswede in northern Germany as a Barkenhoff scholarship recipient, he added two missing weeks to the life story of the town‘s famous daughter, Paula Modersohn-Becker. Spectacularly, in Worpswede, Hennig literally unearthed the Hungarian-German composer and photographer Gustav Szathmáry, who was connected (or supposedly connected?) by a love affair with the renowned painter Paula Modersohn-Becker and a friendship with Rainer Maria Rilke. Hennig brought together Szathmáry‘s life, stories about him, and other „discoveries“ into an exhibition. The stories are captivating and linger in the memory long after visiting the exhibitions. The visitor is challenged, unsettled, and sometimes even led astray. Because: Is this actual history or historical intervention? The answer to this question is not part of Dirk Dietrich Hennig‘s concept. Quite deliberately. Accordingly, it remains his secret how many of his eleven previous conceptual art exhibitions are unidentified. „It should be enough if all my concept names are listed on my gravestone someday,“ Hennig says with a smile, who is currently working on a new project. Incognito, of course. Without showing his face.

“My art, however, is the creation of possibilities.”

added value ...

Link:

www.dirkdietrichhennig.com

Examples:

The Franco-German Fluxus artist Jean Guillaume Ferrée, who suffered from the rare neurological condition retrograde temporary agnosia, accidentally shot himself in 1974 and understood his work as a manifestation of his fading memories.

The Bremen merchant Karl Anton Breitenhut disappeared from a photograph showing him in his grandmother‘s garden.
Three years later, his photograph reappeared on a trading card for the cigarette brand „Turf“ in New York, raising new questions that remain unanswered to this day.

Kaes van Dongen, Dutch poet of numerous love poems, presented Princess Elisabeth of the Palatinate, daughter of the Winter King Frederick V, with a pair of underpants as a gift.

The Treasure in the Aasee:

„The Treasure in the Aasee. The Whole Truth“ (Paperback)
by Dirk Dietrich Hennig (Author)
Publisher: Solibro Verlag; Edition:

1 (October 2004)
ISBN-10: 3932927230
ISBN-13: 978-3932927232