



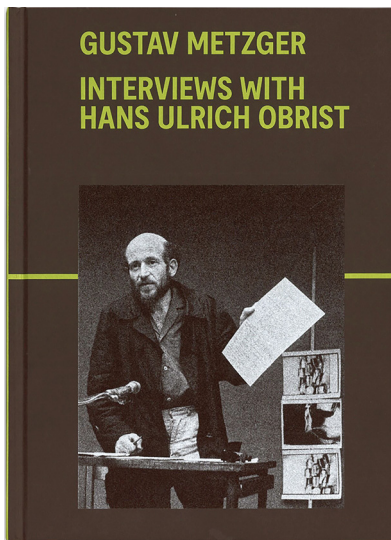
HAUSER & WIRTH PUBLISHERS

## Press Release

# Book Release: 'Gustav Metzger: Interviews with Hans Ulrich Obrist'

A comprehensive new publication telling the story of the visionary artist's life, art and activism in his own words

To be released on 10 September 2024 (UK / Europe), 5 November 2024 (US / ROW)



'Good art has to have many layers of meaning, so that every century can use it as needed at the time. Gustav Metzger's art has many layers, but the most important is his ability to predict the future of mankind. This is why he is so relevant and important today.' —Marina Abramović

'Gustav Metzger was an incredible artist. His energy changed the world.' —Yoko Ono

A visionary artist and thinker, Gustav Metzger asked provocative questions about the role of the artist and of conventional forms of artmaking and display. In this richly illustrated publication, edited by Karen Marta, Metzger tells the story of his life, art and political activism in a series of interviews with the curator Hans Ulrich Obrist, conducted over more than two decades. Together attesting to the undimmed urgency of Metzger's artistic position, the book coincides with the artist's exhibition 'And Then Came the Environment' at Hauser & Wirth Downtown Los Angeles, Metzger's first solo exhibition in the city and second major show in the United States.

With remarkable candour that speaks to the long friendship between artist and interviewer, Metzger recounts his Orthodox Jewish childhood in 1930s Nuremberg and his arrival in England as part of the Kindertransport, his impressions of wartime London, as well as time spent in Leeds, Bristol and King's Lynn as a young man. Shedding light on his development as an artist, Metzger reflects on his early contributions to computer art, his leading role in London's Destruction in Art Symposium of 1966 and his call for an art strike from 1977 to 1980.

An artist for our times, Metzger's uncompromising commitment to combating environmental destruction was fundamental to his understanding of art as a vehicle for change. Over seventy years, he wrestled with the contradictions of his time, championing both 'auto-destruction' and 'auto-creation' in science, ecology, politics and art as equally important tactics to address the state of humanity. This publication offers an insight into his thinking about ecology and nature and, in the later part of his life, the threat of extinction.



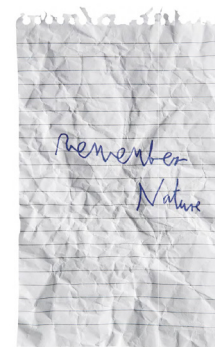
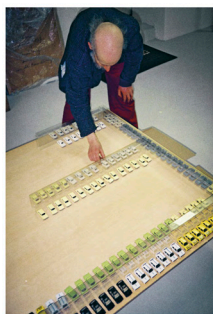
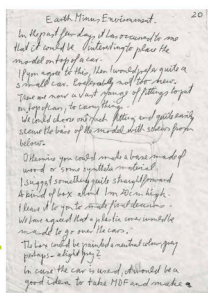
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Unfolding over eight chapters, this book illustrates Metzger and Obrist's words with nearly two hundred images, including striking artwork details and a wealth of archival materials, to provide a vivid impression of Metzger's life. Foregrounding the artist's unique voice, Metzger's testimony powerfully evokes his extraordinary lived experience and is complemented by a new, rigorously researched chronology. Panoramic in its scope, 'Gustav Metzger: Interviews with Hans Ulrich Obrist' is vital resource for Metzger scholars and newcomers alike.

To celebrate the release, a book launch and talk with Serpentine's artistic director Hans Ulrich Obrist will take place at Hauser & Wirth Downtown Los Angeles on 15 September at 11 am. Obrist will be joined by Joan Jonas for a second book launch and talk at Hauser & Wirth New York, 18th Street, taking place on 21 September at 3 pm ahead of Climate Week NYC.

'Gustav Metzger. And Then Came the Environment' is on view at Hauser & Wirth Downtown Los Angeles from 13 September 2024 through 5 January 2025. This year also sees two museum shows about the artist: 'Gustav Metzger' at MMK Frankfurt, Germany (27 July 2024 – 5 January 2025) and 'Hans Ulrich Obrist—Chapter 4: Gustav Metzger—All of Us Together' at LUMA Arles, France (ongoing).



### About the Artist

Born in Germany, Gustav Metzger (1926 – 2017) was an artist whose legacy is profoundly rooted in political and artistic activism. At the heart of his practice were the constantly opposing yet interdependent forces of destruction and creation. Metzger's auto-destructive art sought to provide a mirror of a social and political system that he felt was unwittingly progressing towards total obliteration. Comprehensive solo exhibitions highlight the significance of Metzger's oeuvre, presented at major institutions such as MMK Frankfurt, Germany; Serpentine Gallery, UK; Fundación Jumex, Mexico; MAC Lyon, France; and New Museum, New York.



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**'Gustav Metzger: Interviews with Hans Ulrich Obrist'**

**Release date: 10 September 2024 (UK / Europe), 5 November (US + ROW)**

Edited by Karen Marta. Text by Gustav Metzger, interviewed by Hans Ulrich Obrist.

English

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**About Hauser & Wirth Publishers**

In keeping with Hauser & Wirth's artist-centric vision, Hauser & Wirth Publishers works to bring readers into the universe of artists and behind the scenes of their practices. From publishing artists' writings and exceptional exhibition-related books to commissioning new scholarship and pursuing the highest levels of craft in design and bookmaking, Hauser & Wirth Publishers creates vital, lasting records of artists' work and ideas, forging critical gateways to the cultural discourse they inspire.

Through its Oral History Initiative, Hauser & Wirth Publishers is building an enduring record of artists' voices for future generations. Additionally, the imprint publishes Ursula magazine, a bi-annual print and digital periodical that features essays, profiles, interviews, original portfolios, films and photography by thought-provoking writers and artists from around the world.

Across its dedicated bookstores in the U.S. and Europe, Hauser & Wirth Publishers complements and amplifies the artist's voice by hosting a robust slate of special programs, including talks, panels, readings and learning initiatives that engage a variety of audiences and communities.

Publishing has been a cornerstone of Hauser & Wirth's activity since the gallery's founding in 1992. Its publishing activities steadily flourished through partnerships with imprints such as Hatje Cantz, JRP|Ringier, Snoeck, Steidl, Thames & Hudson and Yale University Press before the establishment of Hauser & Wirth Publishers, with headquarters in New York and Zurich. Hauser & Wirth Publishers' titles are distributed worldwide via Distributed Art Publishers, Interart and Buchhandlung Walther König.





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Cover of 'Gustav Metzger: Interviews with Hans Ulrich Obrist' (2024) Courtesy Hauser & Wirth Publishers

Gustav Metzger practicing for a public demonstration of autodestructive art using acid on nylon, King's Lynn, 1960 © National Portrait Gallery  
Photo: John Cox

Gustav Metzger, Liquid Crystal Environment, 1966 / 2021, Installation view, Hauser & Wirth Somerset, UK, 2021 © The Estate of Gustav Metzger and The Gustav Metzger Foundation. Courtesy the Estate of Gustav Metzger and Hauser & Wirth  
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'Gustav Metzger: Interviews with Hans Ulrich Obrist' (2024) Courtesy Hauser & Wirth Publishers

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