

# MERZBAU DORF

1923—  
1947

**MAPPING THE DNA OF MODERNISM  
RECONSTRUCTING SCHWITTERS' MERZBAUS**  
ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART, LONDON, 4-8 May 2009

WORKSHOP 1-4 MAY  
RECONSTRUCTING SCHWITTERS' MERZBAUS

EXHIBITION 4-8 MAY  
MERZBAU INSTALLATIONS 1923-1947

SEMINAR 6 MAY 10-5PM SCHWITTERS' MERZBAUS IN CONTEXT

MERZ BARN RESTORATION FUNDRAISING ART AUCTION 7 MAY 2009 6PM / WWW.MERZBARN.NET

LITTORAL ARTS TRUST, 42 LODGE MILL LANE, TURN VILLAGE, LANCASHIRE BLO 0RW, UK,  
+44 (0) 1706 827 961, LITTORAL@BTOPENWORLD.COM, WWW.LITTORAL.ORG.UK



# MERZDORF 1923-1947

## MAPPING THE DNA OF MODERNISM RECONSTRUCTING SCHWITTERS' MERZBAUS

1-8 MAY 2009 ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART, LONDON

An one week intensive programme of installation workshops, seminars and temporary exhibitions exploring new curatorial and art research methodologies involved in documenting and reconstructing the critical trajectory of Kurt Schwitters' seminal Merzbauten installation projects, which he produced in Germany, Norway and England between 1923-1947.



**FRIDAY 1 - MONDAY 4 MAY 2009**

### **MERZBAU INSTALLATION / ARCHITECTURAL RECONSTRUCTIONS WORKSHOP**

Workshops run from 10am - 5.00pm daily

(NB please use Jay Mews entrance to the Royal College of Art)

Exploring new architectural, art and advanced digital technologies in researching and reconstructing Kurt Schwitters' seminal Merzbau projects and related sculptures.

Three day intensive team-based workshop programme with hands on experience in reconstructing all four of Schwitters key Merzbaus. Participants will be experimenting with different media, construction techniques, and large scale model making, and will also be working under the supervision of leading international Merzbau / Schwitters experts; Peter Bissegger (Zurich), Dr Gwendolen Webster (Aachen), Dr Dorothea Dietrich (Corcoran, Washington), Andrew Shepherd (Architectural Association), PLASMA studios, etc. The aim of the workshop is to assemble in one venue (for the first time) all the available information; texts, 3D fragments, drawings, photographs and other documentation relating to Schwitters' four key Merzbau projects; i.e. the MERZDORF as a temporary MERZBAU research village. The workshops and seminar are open to artists, architects, art students and art restoration practitioners. Workshops fee: £15 students / £25 waged. Places are limited and applications will be on a First come basis.



**MONDAY 4 - FRIDAY 8 MAY 2009**

### **MERZDORF EXHIBITION - CURATING SCHWITTERS**

The above MERZBAU workshops will also contribute to the installation and curatorial structure of the main MERZDORF exhibition which will present new documentation, drawings, plans, etc. (most of which have never seen in public before), alongside models and full-scale reconstructions all based on new study of Schwitters' four key Merzbau projects; Hannover (1923-33) Norway (1937-40), and Elterwater in England (1947). The exhibition is also partly designed as a research laboratory in which to test out some of the basic curatorial and reconstruction methodologies to be employed with the major international Merzbau survey exhibition proposed for the Hancock Museum (Tyne and Wear Museums) Newcastle in 2012.



**WEDNESDAY 6 MAY 2009 10-5 PM**  
**LEGACY AND FRAGMENTATION, RECONSTRUCTING THE**  
**MERZBAUTEN - RESEARCH SEMINAR**

*'Fragmentation – many pieces that are not close together.'*



Leading architects, artists, curators and art restoration experts will meet to discuss some of the ethical, aesthetic and practical problems associated with attempting reconstructions of the Merzbaus and, by association, other major art and architectural works of the early-mid modern era. The seminar will also discuss forthcoming publications, artists' projects and exhibitions about Schwitters, including the proposed Merzbau publication and survey exhibition at the Hancock Museum, Newcastle.

**10 – 11.30 am The Hannover Merzbau**

Tracing the history of its development and influences. Including an update about recent research work on the Merzbau, a review of past attempts at reconstructing the work, and related artists' projects.

Panel: Dr Dorothea Dietrich, Dr Karin Orchard (Sprengel Museum, Hannover), Peter Bissegger (Zurich) and Dr Gwendolen Webster, (Aachen). Chair: Professor Roger Cardinal

**11.00 – 12.30pm The Norwegian Merzbaus**

New information about the Lysaker and Hjertøya Merzbaus; proposals for the documentation and restoration of the Hjertøya Schwittershytta.

Panel: Drs Jarle Sanden and Terje Thingvold (Romsdal Museum, Norway), Dr Isabel Schulz (Kurt and Ernst Schwitters Foundation)), Derek Pullen (Tate Britain), Michael Perry and Adam Lowe (FACTUM ARTE Madrid – via Skype). Chair: Dr Gwendolen Webster

**Lunch**

**1.30 – 3.00pm The Elterwater Merz Barn**

An update about proposals for the Merz Barn's restoration and reconstruction, and future plans for the development of the site at Cylinders. Proposals for Kurt Schwitters in England Foundation and a Merzbau / Merz Barn museum and study centre.

Panel: Andrew Shepherd (Head of Architectural Heritage Restoration, Architecture Association), Derek Pullen (Tate Britain), Myra de Vries (Kunstgeographie.nl), Dr Ian Hunter (LITTORAL Trust). Chair: Mel Gooding

**3.30 – 5.00pm**

Open forum discussion, an update about the proposed 2012 Merzbau survey exhibition and publication project proposed in collaboration with Tyne and Wear Museums, NE England.

Chair: Dr Dorothea Dietrich

The seminar aims to:

- (i) Gather together and review all the information, literature and documentation currently available about Schwitters' Merzbau projects. (Obviously impossible in the context of a one day seminar but, hopefully, this can be achieved through a series of seminars and conferences being proposed over the next few years).
- (ii) Consider some of the gaps in scholarship, misunderstandings and/or problems relating to study of Schwitters' Merzbaus, and how one might begin to plan out and direct a future programme of scholarly research and documentation aimed at addressing these.
- (iii) Provide a welcoming and supportive platform for wider public debate about Schwitters' Merzbaus and which would also encourage younger art historians, scholars, artists and students to get involved in future research work and exhibitions about Schwitters and the Merzbau projects.
- (iv) Help outline and document the basic curatorial and editorial structure for the proposed Merzbau exhibition and publication project, now being discussed as a possible partnership with Tyne and Wear Museums, and the Hancock, Museum and Hatton Art Gallery in Newcastle in 2012.



**WEDNESDAY 6 MAY 2009 8PM-MIDNIGHT**  
**MERZVOLTAGE KABARET AT THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART**

Performers: Billy and the Goats (jazz/rock/tradional Cumbrian folk music), Jaap Blonk (URSONATE performance), Rosanna Raymond (Sistar S'pacific (Samoan/Maori dancer and performer), Irish traditional dancers, Florian Kaplik (Hugo Ball performance and choral URSONATE project with Royal College of Music students), Eleanor Dennis (Kurt Weill and Berlin Cabaret songs), Beats of Polynesia (Young london-based Pacific Island drummers and musicians), and contributions from other poets, musicians and performers  
Tickets on the door: £10/ £6.00 (student / unwaged)

**THURSDAY 7 MAY 2009 6PM**  
**MERZ BARN RESTORATION FUNDRAISING ART AUCTION AND RECEPTION AT THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART**

Exhibition and auction of art works donated by leading artists, architects and galleries in support of the restoration of Kurt Schwitters' Merz Barn; works by Damien Hirst, Anthony Gormley, etc. Full details of the artists and art works being donated for the Merz Barn fundraising art auction are available on [www.merzbarn.net](http://www.merzbarn.net).

**PLEASE CONTACT US FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND TO BOOK FOR THE WORKSHOPS AND SEMINAR.**

**MERZDORF WORKSHOP AND SEMINAR**

Full professional rate £25 per day

Unwaged/concessions £15 per day

Name / Title \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Email / Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Please send with SAE to LITTORAL Arts Trust, 42 Lodge Mill Lane, Turn Village, Lancashire. BL0 0RW, UK, +44 (0) 1706 827 961, [littoral@btopenworld.com](mailto:littoral@btopenworld.com), [www.littoral.org.uk](http://www.littoral.org.uk), Reg. Charity No. 1002365



LITTORAL

