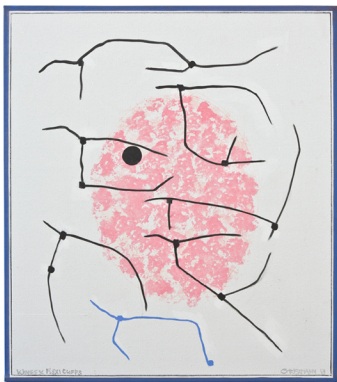


# THE COMMERCIAL

## GUNTER CHRISTMANN



### EXHIBITION NOW OPEN

in lieu of regular exhibition opening there will be a

### SPRING AFTERNOON CELEBRATION

**SATURDAY 20/09/14, 2-6pm**

live program to be announced closer to date

exhibition: 29/08/14 - 04/10/14

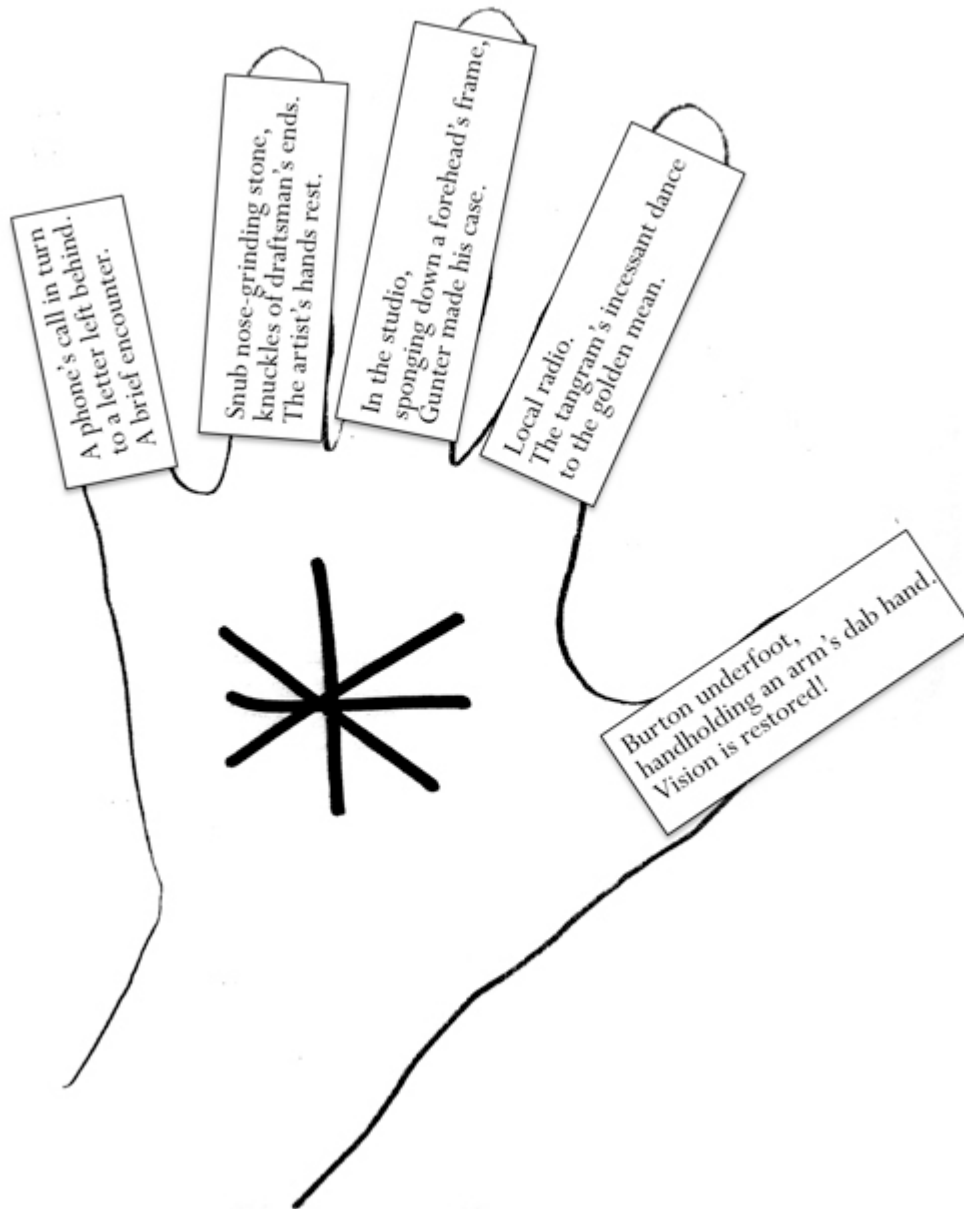
open Wednesday-Saturday, 11am-6pm

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[www.thecommercialgallery.com](http://www.thecommercialgallery.com)

On the occasion of *Gunter Christmann*, 2014 ...



\* During early 2013, in a conversation over coffee with Gunter Christmann, he mentioned to me almost casually that he was in the process of completing his 'last

paintings'. My look of bewilderment was met with an unrehearsed shrug of his shoulders. My then shouting down of the idea, trumped by an air of indifference and a return to the paintings at hand.

Mitch Cairns, August, 2014.

Gunter Christmann was an artist's artist (b. 1936, Berlin, d. 2013, Sydney). He made abstract and figurative paintings since the early 1960s soon after he moved to Australia. For thirty-eight years, he worked energetically and experimentally in his modest Sydney studio on the top floor of an apartment block in Darlinghurst opposite the National Art School. He lived there with his soulmate, Jenny Christmann (b. 1929, Düsseldorf, d. 2005, Sydney). Gunter - the artist, the Berliner, the bohemian - was a fixture of the surrounding streets and cafes and well-known to NAS students and the broader local community. A 50-year retrospective of his work currently on at Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne, is testament to his greatness as an artist and indicative of the extent, diversity and excellence of his life's work.

Christmann exhibited in key historic exhibitions including *The Field* at the National Gallery of Victoria (1968), the *XI Biennale of Sao Paolo* (1971) and the 1st and 4th Biennales of Sydney (1973 and 1982). He exhibited at Central Street, Coventry Gallery, Yuill | Crowley and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery all in Sydney throughout the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s and 1990s (roughly) respectively. He exhibited for thirty years continuously with Niagara Galleries in Melbourne until his death.

From the early 1970s, as an extension of or adjunct to painting, Christmann produced sound sculpture, which he named *audio-plastik* as well as a number of notable photographic-based works in the form of analogue slide carousels. In more recent years, short digital videos incorporated a temporal dimension into his shuffle-boxes and float-tanks, simple devices for the creation of composition in painting.

Christmann developed the shuffle-box technique in the early 1970s and it was integral to his paintings of the time. It facilitated, within the given frame, the arrangement and rearrangement of debris picked-up from the streets around where he lived - the "ever-present, never-ending treasure, there underneath my feet." That the universe offered up all that was needed for subject matter, arrangement and framing was fundamental to his approach to painting and was continuous with the idea that each canvas was its own complete and contained universe. This philosophy was most clearly expressed in his short text, 'TERRA SUBPEDE (The Earth underfoot)' (1980). He returned to this method of making paintings in the last ten years.

Christmann's work is in the major state and public collections in Australia including extensive holdings in the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (over sixty works). International collections include the Berlinische Gallerie, Berlin, H.R.M. Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands' Collection and the British Museum, London.

*Gunter Christmann: Now and Then* at Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne, curated by Lesley Harding continues until 16/11/14. Installation images of the Heide exhibition can be seen on The Commercial's website. An 80-page exhibition catalogue has been published to accompany the retrospective with essays by Simon Barney, Lesley Harding and Noela Yuill.

Gunter Christmann's first solo exhibition at The Commercial Gallery was in March 2013. *Gunter Christmann, 2014* is his second solo exhibition with the gallery. The exhibition consists of six new paintings – a selection from a larger group – created in the year before he died.

In lieu of a regular opening, a daytime celebration will take place during the exhibition on Saturday 20 September, 2-6pm. Details of the live program will be given closer to the date.



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