

JIMMIE DURHAM

GOD'S CHILDREN, GOD'S POEMS



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NEW MONOGRAPH

Artist, performer, poet, essayist, and activist Jimmie Durham (b. 1940, Washington, Arkansas) is one of the most influential voices of the contemporary art world. He explores the complex encounters between the human being, technology, and nature from different cultural perspectives. His oeuvre spans sculpture, drawing, collage, printmaking, painting, photography, video, performance, and poetry, demonstrating a remarkable attention to form and a specificity of material choices. Durham became internationally famous in the 1980s for his sculptures made from materials such as wood, stone, and the bones and skulls of animals, with which he frequently embodies the incorporation of Native American elements into contemporary art, thus breaking down standardized visual languages and discourses.

This publication accompanies his exhibition "God's Children, God's Poems" at the Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, which, as the artist explains, "gathers the skulls of the largest animals of Europe and brings them back into our world." Featuring an introduction by Jimmie Durham, and with contributions by the curator and art historian of the Cree Indians Heritage Richard William W. Hill, and the Migros Museum Director Heike Munder, the book reflects Durham's examination of our relationship to animals. He states: "It does not matter if another type of animal is not like us in the areas of speech, reasoning, or such criteria, and everyone who has had a pet or friend

animal of another species knows this. It is not anthropomorphic. It is anthropocentric to imagine that we are the standard, that we are angelic, unearthly, or 'higher' beings.”

Taking his reflection on mankind's anthropocentric viewpoint as a starting point, this volume contextualizes the exhibition within the larger body of Durham's artistic practice, which is a continuous examination of issues such as the representation of civilizing values, historicity, and social identity.

Jimmie Durham lives and works in Berlin and Naples. His works have been presented in numerous exhibitions around the world, most recently, for instance, at the Armand Hammer Museum of Art in Los Angeles (2017), the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York (2014, 2003, 1993), the Venice Biennale (2015, 2005, 2003, 2001, 1999), the Museo Madre, Naples (2013, 2008), documenta in Kassel (2012, 1992), the 29th São Paulo Bienal (2010), and the musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris (2009).

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