

**Géza Perneczky - Bird Twittering**  
**An exhibition marking the 90th birthday of Géza Perneczky**

30 May – 4 July 2026

Géza Perneczky (b. 1936, Hungary) is a leading figure in Hungarian conceptual art and was part of the Eastern European neo-avant-garde of the 1970s. At the same time, Perneczky is a well-known art historian and critic, as well as an important chronicler of international Mail Art. As a dissident, he moved to Cologne in 1971, where he lived and worked for more than fifty years. Today, Perneczky is back in Budapest and has celebrated his 90th birthday on May 21.

The artist's life story is highlighted in a small exhibition at gallery annex14 through three works. The conceptual photograph "Kockoo" marks the beginning: Perneczky's first stop after arriving in Cologne was Helmut Rywelski's Art Intermedia Gallery, a place where the avant-garde of the time gathered and which caused a sensation in Cologne in the early 1970s. "Kockoo" became part of the "Marksgrafik" edition published by Rywelski in 1972, to which Beuys also contributed a print. More than fifty years later, this photograph is on view as part of the "Concepts Like Commentary" series in the MoMA New York collection exhibition "Photography and Language". While Perneczky has long been an icon as an art historian in Hungary, his artistic work—as was the case for many artists in Eastern Europe—only received institutional recognition late in life.

This late-career success, which began in Cologne's avant-garde circles, has secured the artist's work lasting visibility in the virtually infinite cosmos of art. That this is not a given was already underscored by Perneczky in 1982 with *"Isolated"*, a work consisting of eight stamp prints typical of his style, which, as artist books, form another, lesser-known group within his oeuvre.\*

*They don't know each other. They don't talk to each other. There are 5,000,000,000 great artists in today's encyclopedia of the world. They sit there, isolated, in alphabetical order.*

Perneczky's commentary on the title page of the series refers to the isolated and precarious situation of the artist in general, but can also be read as a reflection on his own isolation as a Hungarian dissident and emigrant in Germany. The stamp works are closely linked to the international Mail Art movement, which Perneczky helped shape as an artist and as an art historian, particularly in the 1970s and 1980s. Mail art brought movement and lively exchange into the artist's isolation and simultaneously opened up a transnational network of artistic communication. His contacts grew, and with them emerged a body of mail art works that, as soon as they were sent, vanished into the ether of the analog network. His seminal work on Mail Art, *"The Network Atlas"*, has stood the test of time, and the Post-Fluxus movement is also extensively documented by Perneczky, as an art historian, in his "Soft-Geometrie Archiv" at the Weserburg Museum.

A consistent feature of Géza Perneczky's diverse body of work—and of the man himself—is its humorous and reflective quality. Even in the anniversary year, "Kockoo" was on view in the exhibition "Seriously." – fittingly

alongside works by Fischli/Weiss – at Sprüth Magers in London. The third work in the exhibition at gallery annex14, titled "Bird Twittering" (1980), exemplifies how Perneczky consistently succeeds in translating his humorous reflections into a poetic and formally compelling form. In the spirit of Arte Povera, "Bird Twittering" makes use of ordinary "found objects" that serve as stamp templates to imprint eight different bird calls onto paper-stamped echoes of the birdsong drifting into the exhibition space from outside the gallery. We look forward to your visit!

Boldog születésnapot / Happy Birthday, Géza Perneczky

Patrick Urwyler  
Art historian & the artist's studio manager

\*A retrospective of his entire oeuvre, including works from the 1990s and 2000s, is in the planning stages and will be on view in Budapest in 2027.  
Boldog születésnapot / Alles Gute zum Geburtstag, Géza Perneczky