

MUSÉES DE LA VILLE DE STRASBOURG

Strasbourg, 31 May 2022

Press Release

« Tomi Ungerer's Metamorphoses »

**Tomi Ungerer Museum – international Illustration Centre
From 8 July to 6 November 2022**

Although this aspect of Tomi Ungerer's work has never before been presented as such, it is one that runs through all his work. With some 120 exhibits largely drawn from the Museum collections, this “Metamorphoses” trail covers a period extending from the late 1950s to the early 2000s.

Metamorphoses are a central theme in Ungerer's work, one that appears everywhere, from children's books to his advertising work, satirical and erotic drawings or sculptures. Interweaving human beings with animals, plants and machines or humanizing animals in transformations of all kinds, Ungerer's world can be seen as a kind of catalogue of metamorphoses. All these “hybridisations” create an absurd, surreal world reflecting the artist's creativity, his mind bubbling over with curiosity. Their overall purpose is humorous and often satirical. Showing how we behave socially, they reveal our human weaknesses. Reflecting vanity and superficiality, his treatment of grafts reduces humans to grotesque creatures endowed with a single sense. Finally, these works are a cry of revolt against the growing power of industry and consumer society, the confrontation between humans and machines.

Ungerer also uses this theme in other aspects of his work. In his collage-drawings, he juxtaposes human bodies with objects or animals with human elements, creating strange and incongruous creatures. His sculptures are a fantastic bestiary made up of recycled materials in a manner recalling that of Dada, the Surrealists or Hans Arp. But ultimately, Ungerer's metamorphoses are never complete: the human element never totally disappears from his work and this is one of its main thematic characteristics.

To complete the exhibition, works from the Strasbourg Museums' Prints and Drawings Department take us back to the sources of this technique and particularly to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. This was a text that gave rise to a whole world of fantasy imagery, one in which Ungerer clearly finds his place.

Curators: Morgane Magnin and Joffrey Roubinet, conservation assistants, Tomi Ungerer Museum

VISITOR INFORMATION

Musée Tomi Ungerer – Centre international de l'illustration

2, avenue de la Marseillaise, Strasbourg
Open every day from 10 am to 6 pm – closed on
Tuesdays / tel. +33 (0)3 68 98 50 00