

together to culminate in a single object, *Sedan Chair* (fig. 111); he also included a number of drawings on white cardboard. The first piece in the *Chair* series sat on a pale pink wooden pedestal on wheels, which had a dog leash attached to it. The chair's left front leg stood on a large chunk of meat, and the lacquered surface of its seat was intentionally scratched. On the second chair, lacquered reddish-brown, thin slices of meat crept like scales up one of the legs, across the seat, and up toward the backrest (fig. 98). In the third chair, lacquered in a high-gloss red, the "creeping" meat had arrived on the chair's backrest (fig. 99). On the fourth chair, painted pale pink with a matte finish, two small birds' wings covered in bronzed silver were attached to the outside of its backrest (fig. 91). Incredibly, the first three chairs had arrived unscathed, and damage to the

fourth was limited to the piece of "meat" that Paul had originally mounted between the wings on its backrest, which had dislodged and broken in two.

The second sculptural sequence, *Headboxes*, was to consist of five cubes, four of which were made of wooden frames lacquered in light pink with a matte finish (figs. 94–97). The four sides and the "lid" of the cubes had inset glass panes, while the wooden board that formed the bottom of each had a head-sized hole cut out of it. A curved wooden bracket on a square-cut shaft was attached on either side of the hole outside the box. In order to wear the head boxes, one had to place the brackets on one's shoulders so that one's head was inside the glass cube from the nose up. Just as with the *Chairs*, flat slices of meat moved along the outside of the cubes, starting from the bottom and inching up the corners on the frames. One of the cubes had a mirrored lid, on which a larger piece of meat had been placed. The fifth box, which was substantially smaller, had solid wooden sides and was displayed with its lid opened wide (figs. 101 and 103). A narrow pink leather belt was attached to the bottom exterior of the box, and the belt itself was fastened to a tree branch about six feet long. The "handle" of the branch was wrapped with another narrow leather belt, so when you picked up the branch, the box hung upside down. The opened lid was to reveal a long piece of meat attached inside, covered with bright blue shimmering butterfly wings.

It was the *Headboxes* that presented a truly horrific sight when we unpacked them in Essen: The cubes were a mess of broken glass and severed slices of wax meat; parts of the carrying brackets had broken and snapped off; and large shards of glass jutted from all the wooden frames. The meat in the fifth box had become detached and, although was itself undamaged, its butterfly wings had crumbled into dust. (We later found a butterfly farm on Long Island that supplied us with new wings to restore the work.) But thank God, at least the mirror on the fourth box had survived; it turned out that Paul was even more superstitious than I was.

The culminating object intended to unite the two sculptural sequences in the exhibition, *Sedan Chair*, was a kind of litter with four massive square-cut shafts that supported a two-tiered wooden pedestal crowned with a chair (fig. 111); on its seat was a flat piece of meat on an (intentionally) broken plate. A head box on four poles hovered above the chair with a two-headed baby hung inside suspended by thin chains. If one were to take a seat on the chair, one's head would be in the same position as described for the other boxes. The entire object was painted a pale pink with a matte finish, and like most of the *Chairs*, it, too, had arrived intact.



Fig. 85. Thek wearing his head boxes in his Rome studio, c. 1968. Collection of Michael Nickel