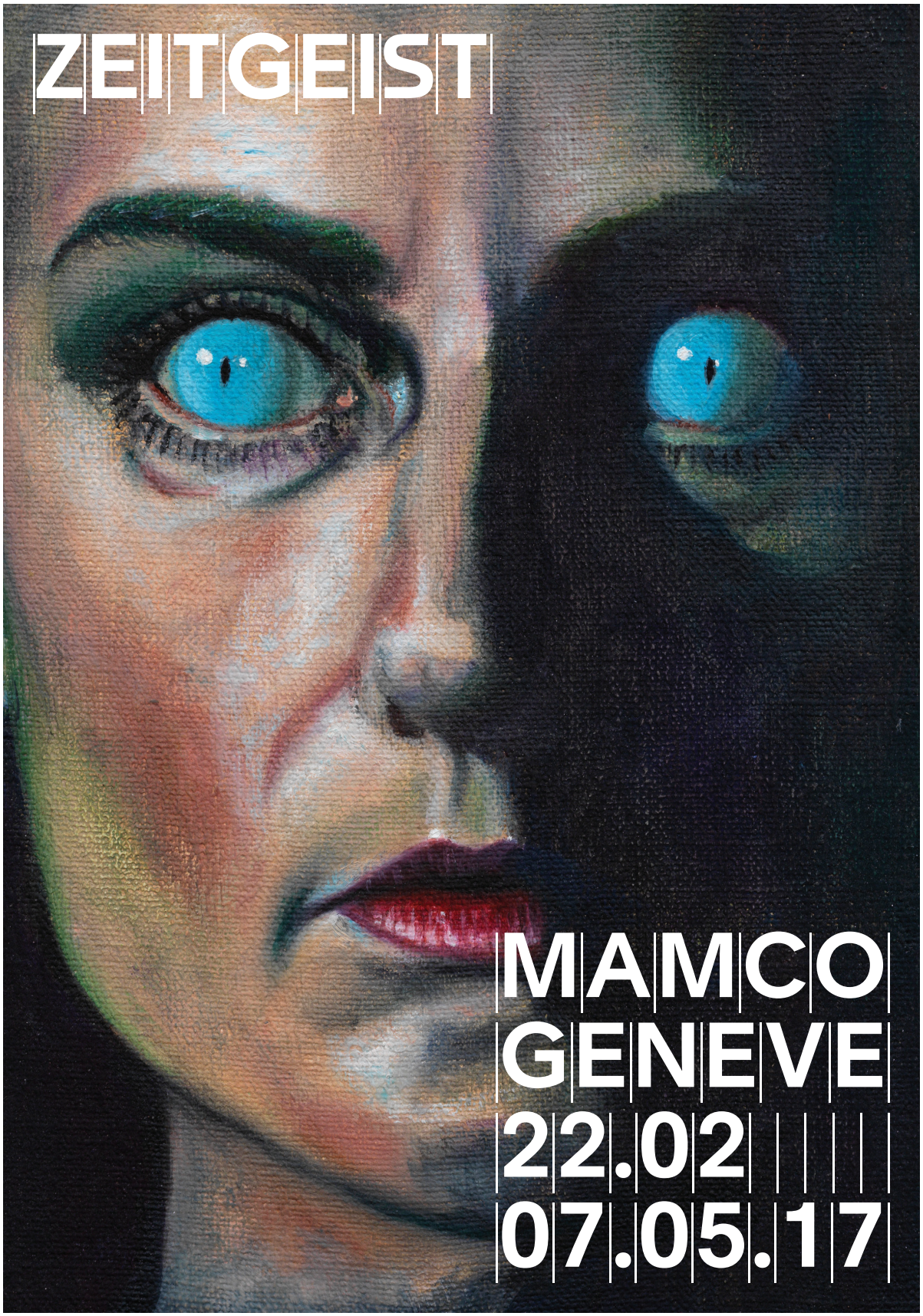
ZEITGEIST
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PRESS KIT

MAMCO, Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Geneva

Zeitgeist, – February 22 – May 7, 2017
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Zeitgeist

Noting the renewed interest in figurative and expressive artforms, this exhibition outlines a genealogy of these practices through forty European and American artists who have been active between the 1970s and today. If the title of the exhibition (the spirit of the time) intends on qualifying a current atmosphere, it also refers to an eponymous show held at the Martin Gropius Bau in Berlin, in 1982. Very much discussed at the time, the latter was a testimony to the surge of figurative and expressionist works appearing from both sides of the Atlantic, with American Neo-Expressionism, Italian *Transavanguardia*, and German *Neue Wilden*. Both an assessment and a manifest of this period, the Berlin exhibition left its mark in the recent history of art as the high point in the debates between modern and postmodern, often argued in terms of life and death of the painting.

David Salle's monumental diptych *Zeitgeist II*, shown at the Martin Gropius Bau in 1982, evokes this historical controversy in the way the painter crystallized the heated debates around figuration. Although figuration, on the cusp of the 1980s, is indeed denounced by some as being academic, reactionary, and market-oriented, it is also celebrated by others as a liberation from abstract and conceptual constraints which had prevailed in the modern narrative of the post-war era. The return of the figure thus appears as that of an outcast, free to delve into the melodramatic and the allegoric, as well as the grotesque and the abject.

One should also mention the parallel and progressive re-evaluation of a kind of painting marginalized from the official history of art, as revealed in the exhibitions *Bad Painting* (1978) and *The Other Tradition* (1966). In a provincial sort of way, it went against the aesthetic cannons and dealt with an extraordinary diverse iconographic repertoire, from Antiquity to mass culture. In this respect, we should mention the importance, today largely recognized, of figures such as William N. Copley or Dorothy Iannone, and the threads they managed to weave between the American vernacular and European avant-gardes.

These artistic debates found a particular resonance in Switzerland. In Zurich in the 1970s, the artistic eccentricities of a Friedrich Kuhn are a clear disavowal of Max Bill's dogma of Concrete abstraction, whereas Peter Fischli and David Weiss found in *art brut* and folklore means to question the virtuosity and the status of the artist. If this "other" tradition, this "other" modernity, was perceived for a long time as a parallel narrative caught up within the dialectics of insider/outsider, it appears today as an extension of the field of pictorial possibilities. Popular culture, myths, and irony are some of the many tropes available to artists now.

The MAMCO exhibition leads visitors through the several stages of this divergent narrative and, with a transatlantic geography in mind, underlines the critical questioning of the image, expressiveness, and style. Contributions by younger artists remind us that in our digital era — marked by a saturation of images — contemporary practices are perhaps more figural than figurative, and that expressiveness is to be thought as a critical tool rather than the testimony of an ever uncertain subjectivity.

The exhibition is organized by Paul Bernard, Lionel Bovier, and Fabrice Stroun, and is supported by the Fondation de bienfaisance du Groupe Pictet.

GREG PARMA SMITH

As the status of the image continues to be profoundly modified by its ever-accelerating circulation, painting often claims to be a means to slow down its ongoing dematerialization, to give it back a body of sorts. A significant majority of these contemporary practices are rooted in two recent historical transformations of the status of painting: its "horizontalization" by Abstract Expressionism in the 1950s, which de facto turns painting into an *object*; and Pop art in the 1960s which presided over the mutation of the motif into an *image*. Robert Rauschenberg's "flatbed" aesthetic, which allowed him to combine images and objects from heterogeneous sources, has been regularly revisited by subsequent generations of artists setting a stage where an endless mishmash of readymade styles create a composite image of our media-saturated psyche.

While the eclectic paintings of Greg Parma Smith—which juxtapose academic nudes, patterned origami paper, and self-published indie comics—seem to participate in this tradition, they in fact represent a real break with it. They are painted from nature "in the style of," rather being than one-to-one appropriations. All are rendered in oil with the same degree of skill, and their sources exhaust themselves in the precision of their craftsmanship. As such, they can be likened to decorative faux painting, and the resulting images become inseparable from the very stuff they are made of. In this respect, Greg Parma Smith's painted surfaces have more to do with Guyton\Walker's scanned images of fruit that can espouse any contour, whether a paint can, a mattress, or a painting, than with any of his Pop forebears.

While all of Greg Parma Smith's images call to mind an "elevated" idea of craftsmanship, whether the erudite strokes of Song dynasty brush painting, or the DIY ethos of graffiti lettering, the artist's facture neuters any kind of heroism that associates technical mastery and self-expression. Contemporary art has scavenged the world's images once too often (and for too long) to expect any narrative, psychological, or critical signification to surface at this point in time. Instead, these fetishistic assemblages seem to bring to light a perverse form of resistance, possibly best appraised by way of the Mod credo: extravagant, style-conscious, clean living under difficult circumstances.

The exhibition is organized by Fabrice Stroun and is supported by Fondation Casino Barrière de Montreux.

JACK GOLDSTEIN

"What can we make of an artist like Jack Goldstein who after performances, films, and painting that stressed spectacular effects, turns to "abstract" paintings — or, more precisely, painting of abstracted images or event…?" With this interrogation Hal Foster opened "Signs Taken for Wonders," an important essay published in 1986 that aimed to describe and evaluate practices by artists related to "appropriationism." Casting a critical eye on this "new painting," Foster remarks on its ability to instrumentalize styles inherited from the avant-gardes, its particular form of historical bad faith, and its more than ambiguous relationship with the market — a set of attributes it could share with neo-expressionism, the dominant trend of the time.

This text is symptomatic of Jack Goldstein's critical reception during the 1980s (born 1945 in Montreal, died in 2003 in Los Angeles, where he established in the 1990s having left New York). Indeed, his work played a pivotal role for many commentators reflecting on the rise of "appropriation" in the "Pictures Generation" and later of "Simulationism" and "Neo-Geo." First associated with post-Minimal sculpture, then linked to the development of performance in California (where he studied), to finally be affiliated with the critical return of a painting which foregrounded its own objecthood, Goldstein's protean figure was involved in most of the neo-avant-gardes of the 1970s and 1980s. His work seems to enable an entire generation of politically engaged critics, such as Douglas Crimp, Craig Owens, and Hal Foster, to make global prognostics on the fate of postmodernity.

Goldstein's practice is presented here by a selection of paintings ranging from the "war spectacles" period (1980–1983), and the "nature spectacles" one (1983–1986), to the "technology spectacles" (1986–1990), and also includes, in another room, a selection of his most wellknown 16mm films (1972–1976).

The exhibition is organized with the help of the artist's Estate.

JENNY HOLZER

The work of Jenny Holzer (b. 1950, Gallipolis, Ohio) is based on language and on modes of communication typical of our modern capitalist society. At the beginning of her career, the artist appended her texts, which were often subversive messages, on billboards and signs, first painting them by hand, then printing them; the *Truisms* (1977–1979) and *Inflammatory Essays* (1979–1982) are examples of this practice, one of which is presented in this exhibition.

In 1982, she started using LED technology, first by deploying them on advertising billboards found in Western metropoles, and later in more immersive environments as she began to appropriate this electronic technology even more. The texts that parade on these screens are of a poetical and political nature, like her first posters series. They are meant to trigger personal reactions in the visitors by mixing public and private, social and physical, universal and individual. Since 1996, the artist mainly works with light projections of texts on building facades, mixing her own texts with that of writers such as poet Henri Cole, or Literature Nobel prizes Elfriede Jelinek and Wislawa Szymborska.

Heir of Minimal and Conceptual art, and influenced by the 1970s feminist movements, Jenny Holzer is part of this generation of artists questioning the space of galleries and museums, as much as the role of subjectivity and individualism in art. She was part of the Colab group in New York in the 1970s and often gave priority to the collaboration process. This principle is at the heart of a series of paintings created by graffiti artist Lady Pink since 1983. Lady Pink (b. 1964, Ambato, Ecuador) has been working in New York since the end of the 1970s where she became a pioneer of urban graffiti. Pink chooses the motifs she sprays on the canvas, while Holzer entrusts Ilona Granet, another artist, with reproducing a text she wrote especially for this work on the canvas. Less known than the parading light texts, and other electronic projection devices from the same period, two of these sixhanded paintings are presented at MAMCO as well.

This exhibition is organized with the help of gallery Sprüth Magers.

GORDON MATTA-CLARK
OPEN HOUSE, 1972 (1985)

Gordon Matta-Clark (1943-1978) explored all manner of media: performance, drawing, sculpture, photography and film. Owing to the specific medium that brought them all together — decrepit buildings — few 'things' are left of his work. Yet these 'remains' are more than just traces, for they form a whole that still has political, social and aesthetic relevance. Despite his early death at the age of 35, Gordon Matta-Clark left a visionary legacy, an active dialogue developed through, and in opposition to, architecture: 'anarchitecture', 'non-uments', and 'mental projectiles' — a multifaceted view of 'imminent ruins.'

In May 1972, Gordon Matta-Clark created *Open House*, a short-lived work produced in a street in New York's SoHo neigborhood, between 98 and 112 Greene Street, two alternative exhibition spaces that opened in 1969 and 1970 respectively. This work continued his investigations of garbage recycling, using a dumpster that he divided up with wooden partitions — doors from hotels and restaurants that were about to be demolished. *Open House* also owes its name to the opening in the façade and the lack of a roof, producing osmosis and permeability in the created space, the street, the buildings. *Open House* instantly became an experimental, playful center for dancers, performers, and artists. Providing more freedom than alternative exhibition spaces, it was an urban equivalent to the works created in connection with land art.

An eponymous Super-8 film made on the opening day documents the public's confrontation with this 'place thing' or 'personal spatial epiphany', as Richard Nonas put it. The poet Ted Greenwald recorded the sound of his truck doing delivery rounds for the *Village Voice* newspaper: 'Even though it can't move, *Open House* now has an engine and a sound — the sound of a team at work.'

In October 1972, a second version of *Open House* was set up outside 112 Greene Street, where Matta-Clark had an exhibition from 21 October to 10 November. The coincidence in place and time made this new event a counterpart to the spaces at 112 Greene Street, which the artist covered with pictures of peeling, decrepit and yet attractive façades, giving the indoor space a street-like appearance. The larger container, made of irregular, deconstructed partitions, had an open flight of steps leading to a plateform with a brasero that occupied half of the structure. What Matta-Clark was trying to do here was juxtapose the disparaged world of urban wastelands and a festive activity perceived as typically suburban — a barbecue — in order to change the city.

Although, being events and conceptual projects connected with the recycling and 'contenairisation' of living spaces, the first two versions of the work did not survive, the Gordon Matta-Clark Estate, aware that there were few of the artist's spatial inventions still in existence, decided after his death to give his work and its way of presentation a lasting form. The permanent version, described in a detailed brief, made use of the industrial container from the second reconstitution of the work during *Gordon Matta-Clark: a Retrospective*, held at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, in 1985. This has now found a legitimate place at MAMCO close to Christo's *Corridor Store Front* (Matta-Clark assisted Christo on several occasions).

CHRISTO
CORRIDOR STORE FRONT, 1967

Designed and built in 1967, and shown the following year at Documenta 4 in Kassel, *Corridor Store Front* is in many ways a key work in Christo's artistic output. Indeed, the piece brings together several particular features of art in those days, notably the questioning of art's commodification and the use of modern materials (Plexiglas, aluminum, and plywood, which were finding their way into Minimal art then). But *Corridor Store Front* was also a way for Christo (1935, Bulgaria) to connect his work with the history of modernism through one of its venerable motifs, the display window.

In 1963 Christo began showing shop display windows, covering up their insides with paper and opaque cloth. In 1964 he started producing life-size store fronts himself, initially with found objects and later new materials. To do *Corridor Store Front*, Christo transformed his SoHo apartment in New York into a true production and exhibition space. Once the piece had been built in his living space, it naturally took up a large part of the available volume; the half-open door seen at the end of the corridor here originally allowed people to reach other rooms in the loft. Moreover, it was possible to visit this piece of art. The production site thus became the exhibition venue. A year later the piece was transported to Germany. Christo didn't use a ready-made store display window. But to display and sell what exactly? Certainly not products offered to consumers in a so-called consumer society, which was just then grappling with major questions about its future (*Corridor Store Front* dates from the same period as May 1968 and the student protest movements). Rather, by removing every trace of marketable goods from this corridor store front, it is emptiness, the void, that is put on display here, not a product to be admired (which also makes this piece a barely disguised homage to the 1958 void exhibition that Yves Klein mounted in Paris). *Corridor Store Front* appeared on the New York art scene just around the time that the question of art's relationship to the world of commerce was being raised. Indeed, in 1961, for instance, Claes Oldenburg had opened *The Store* in his studio. With that piece, the production site of artworks becomes a sales location like any other, and the artist in his shop offers all the requisite products for satisfying our daily needs, that is, what is for sale is on the order of immediately consumable goods. Thus, Christo is responding to Oldenburg here by emptying out the store.

This store front in the form of a hallway is also an integral part of the history of depicting shops. In the late 19th century, for example, Eugène Atget photographed the streets of Paris and in particular the fronts of shops. It is an iconography that overall devotes quite a lot of space to goods on sale and their public display in cities. Later, it would be the most inventive artists who were to seize on the shop window — or store fronts — as a place to make art. Marcel Duchamp, for instance, drew the door of the Gradiva Gallery, that André Breton opened in 1937 at 31, rue de Seine, in Paris. Several years after that, he was to create an installation, with the same André Breton, in the shop window of the Gotham Book Mart in New York, 9 and 10 April 1945, in conjunction with the bookshop's promotion of Breton's *Arcane 17*. In the autumn of the same year, Duchamp put together another installation, this time working with Enrico Donati, in the window of the Brentano's bookstore on New York's Fifth Avenue, to mark the sale of an expanded edition of *Le Surréalisme et la peinture*. A little closer to us, Andy Warhol showed his first paintings in 1961 in the window of the Bonwit Teller department store in New York, among the mannequins sporting high-fashion dresses. This diverse range of examples lays out a genealogy that clearly includes *Corridor Store Front*. Each moment of that genealogy may be no more than an exploration of what Marx calls in *Capital* the "fetishism of commodities." Except that Christo seems to have pushed that exploration to the limit. By removing the commodities from the shop window, now transformed into an empty site, he points up the inanity of the social and political play centered on it.

SYLVIE FLEURY
BE GOOD! BE BAD! JUST BE!, 2008

At first sight, Sylvie Fleury's grotto seems to have turned her work on its head, for here she counters its usual themes of consumption and luxury with a dark bareness; and the sidereal voyages suggested by her rockets and flying saucers with a place for withdrawing inside oneself. The grotto, a quintessentially womb-like place, invites us on an exploration that also entails looking back over our past and returning to our origins. As an observer of popular forms of esotericism, Fleury's response to this mystical recess is to enjoin us all to be ourselves: *Be Goo! Be Bad! Just Be!*— thereby returning to the world of consumption since this slogan has been lifted from a perfume advert.

One area of Sylvie Fleury's work consists in sounding the opposition between superficiality and interiority. By using quotations from the world of advertising, the artist is echoing Conceptual art, which uses language as the material for work that may sometimes, as in the case of Joseph Kosuth, have philosophical ambitions. This kind of sampling-with-a-twist is the same as that she employs in her pastiches of Piet Mondrian, Daniel Buren, and Carl Andre with fake fur and nail polish. Artists such as these inspire both fascination and iconoclastic longings in Fleury. *Be Good! Be Bad! Just Be!* could therefore be seen as a crucible in which the Geneva-based artist's multiple preoccupations are recast, for their better redeployment in the extravagant forms more usually associated with her work.

Created for the retrospective Sylvie Fleury (1961) had at MAMCO in 2008, this work was offered to the museum by the artist in 2011. It was restored in 2012, with the support of the Fondation BNP Paribas.

JEAN DUBUFFET AND THE "BARBUS MÜLLER"

In 1939, art collector Josef Müller acquired seven anonymous sculptures representing stylized faces. Nothing else has ever been revealed about them; the artist remains unknown and their dating is only deemed "recent." At best, their origin is supposed to be French, perhaps from Burgundy or Auvergne judging by the stones. These works quickly attracted the attention of leading figures from the art world, such as art collector and author Henri-Pierre Roché, gallerist Charles Ratton, and most of all Jean Dubuffet. As these faces are often wearing beards and moustaches, they became associated with this feature and the name of their discoverer to become the "Barbus [Bearded] Müller."

In 1946, Dubuffet entitled the first issue of his *Fascicule de l'art brut* "The Barbus Müller and other works from provincial statuary." The issue was printed by French publishing house Gallimard but was never distributed. The following year, the "Barbus Müller" were at the center of an exhibition at the Foyer de l'Art Brut, Place Vendôme in Paris, in the basement of gallery Drouin where Dubuffet later showed his works. The collection and promotion of *art brut* undertaken by the painter over the next four decades of course greatly informed his own pictorial research.

These singular sculptures are therefore at the crossroads between *art brut*—this important alternative movement to the so-called "official" art history of the second half of the 20th century—and "primitive art," collected by Müller and which influenced the avant-garde at the beginning of the 20th century. They now belong to the collection of the museum founded by Josef Müller's son-in-law, Jean Paul Barbier-Mueller. The latter also collected tribal art. By adding his collection to that of his father-in-law, he created a coherent and comprehensive ensemble whose conservation and exhibition is today entrusted to the Barbier-Mueller Museum.

Jean Paul Barbier-Mueller died on the 22nd December 2016. Exhibiting these works, in the context of the museum's 40th anniversary, allows us to pay tribute to his memory.

ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISM

During the premises of the Second World War, numerous artists gathered together in New York where they created what became the first important American Art "School" of the 20th century: Abstract Expressionism. Well informed about the work of the European avant-gardes, in particular Cubism and Fauvism, they were also associating with artists who had fled Nazism and the war, in particular professors of the first Bauhaus and the Surrealists. The abstraction defended by the first and the exploration of the psyche attempted by the latter constituted the foundation from which Abstract Expressionism developed its own singularity.

Arshile Gorky, an Armenian immigrant living in New York in 1920, was one of the first to implement this new plastic language. His influence became paramount, in particular the spontaneity and formal freedom transpiring through his work.

Robert Motherwell, ten years younger, was also meeting with the exiled Surrealists. Peggy Guggenheim incited Motherwell, who was an art historian and theorist before he became a painter, to try out collage for a 1943 exhibition. He subsequently used this medium throughout his career, concurrently with his painting. In 1958, Motherwell married Helen Frankenthaler, who is also included in this exhibition. Frankenthaler played a pivotal role on the New York scene bridging the gap between the first generation, working at the end of the 1930s, and the emerging artists from the second half of the 20th century. Morris Louis, who visited her studio in 1953 said about her that she embodied "a bridge between Pollock and what was possible." Just like Pollock, she worked on a canvas lying on the floor without a chassis, but she applied a very diluted paint, thus creating images without any thickness. Louis appropriated this technique while leaving large parts raw between the color stripes.

Ray Parker, who, like Frankenthaler, also exhibited at gallery Tibor de Nagy, summed up what he then called "direct painting": "The process of painting is improvised. Its rhythm can be slow or hastened, and its character impulsive or reasoned. The subject of the painter is the painting, and the subject of the painting is the artist himself, whose experience is consumed within the creation process."

ASGER JORN

In 1959, Danish artist Asger Jorn (1914–1973) created his *Modifications* series, twenty paintings that he modified by hand. These were originally figurative paintings with an academic or kitsch composition made by unknown artists, which he bought on flea markets and modified through slight touches, traces and diverse signs applied on the canvas, bringing these seemingly bland images towards new aesthetic horizons. The five paintings belonging to the *New Defigurations* series created in 1962, part of the Jenisch Museum's collection in Vevey, are based on the same principle. This time, Jorn essentially bought portraits, in particular images of soldiers and battle scenes. He modified them by adding a heretical cross above a cardinal's head and vertical paint traces prolonging the face (*Grand baiser du cardinal d'Amérique*); or by exaggerating the lips and eyes in a woman's portrait (*Souriez rue froide*); or even by applying large color blocks thus modifying the background of a scene showing a French soldier embracing an Alsatian woman (*L'Amour s'avance sur la balance* ou *La Grande Illusion*).

"Be modern, collectors, museums. If you have old paintings, do not despair. Retain your memories but detourn them so that they correspond with your era. Why reject the old if one can modernize it with a few strokes of the brush?," Jorn explains about his enterprise. This pictorial gesture belongs to a practice largely initiated by the Situationist group to which Jorn belonged until April 1962. It is the implementation of the *détournement* theory formalized in particular in the third issue of the *Internationale Situationniste*, a journal published by the group. One could read that "*détournement*, the reuse of preexisting artistic elements in a new ensemble, has been a constantly present tendency of the contemporary avant-garde (…). The two fundamental laws of *détournement* are the loss of importance of each detourned autonomous element (…) and at the same time the organization of another meaningful ensemble that confers on each element its new scope and effect." The result is a critique of the notion of individual property (images belong to everyone and everyone can detourn them); a negation of the difference between popular art and expert art (even low quality images, when detourned, can access the world of fine arts); and even negating the distinction between creation and destruction.

THE APARTMENT

The "Apartment" is no ordinary exhibition space. Located on the museum's third floor, it is a reconstruction of the Paris apartment where, from 1975 to 1991, Ghislain Mollet-Viéville worked to promote Minimal and Conceptual art. Calling himself an "art agent," Mollet-Viéville initially organized his living and work space to conform with the protocols of the works in his collection, before deciding to yield to the consequences of their "dematerialization" and move to a new apartment with no visible works. This meant his collection could be entrusted to MAMCO when it opened, in 1994. In 2016, the museum has begun to acquire a large part of it.

This selection of 25 works is representative of the work of the first-generation Minimalist artists such as Carl Andre, Donald Judd, and John McCracken, and of their Conceptual counterparts — Joseph Kosuth, Sol LeWitt, and Lawrence Weiner, for example. If the former explore a lexicon of elementary, logical, and radical forms that keep at bay any anthropomorphism and narrative features, the latter mainly offer protocols for execution, turning the collector into an agent on whom the works' material existence depends. Both have dispensed with pedestals, frames, lighting, and all other *mise-en-scène* props, in favor of an immediate intellectual and sensory experience.

Compared with MAMCO's other galleries, the "Apartment" sets the works the challenge of a domestic setting. For visitors this means the opportunity to experience them on more intimate terms, in a space where they are invited to step outside the conventions, whether attending a lecture, a special event, or simply pausing to read and to linger a while in the company of works that have been talking among themselves for several decades now.

ARTISTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

In the 1960s, American Conceptual artists created books in which the photographic reproductions in offset prints on common paper are devoid of the artistic qualities usually characterizing art photography. In 1970, seven years after the publication of *Twentysix Gasoline Stations*, Ed Ruscha's founding book, gallerist Marian Goodman published *Artists and Photographs* which bears witness to the development of these experiments. This box set, now historic, serves as a point of departure for a presentation made up of the most emblematic artists' books from that period, kindly loaned by the Print Room of the Musée d'art et d'histoire in Geneva or belonging to MAMCO.

Artists and Photographs, whose box was designed by Dan Graham, gathers books and print contributions (leaflets, booklets, objects, envelops) by nineteen artists represented by gallery Marian Goodman. Although 1,000 copies were initially printed, only 200 were finished. The box includes an introduction written by Lawrence Alloway in which the British art critic observes that all the photographs manifest a refusal of expertise and "glamour." The break with previous practices is important as it is not anymore about distributing reproductions of works, but works themselves in a printed form.

Artists and Photographs is not only manifest of artists' interest for the industrial photographic reproduction technique, but also shows how much the artist's book has rapidly spread, helped by utopias of art's democratization. Artists appreciate the advantages of this object whose stages of fabrication they can control and whose reproducibility and trade circuits allow for a wider and more diversified audience. In parallel with this publication, on long-term loan, emblematic publications by Peter Downsbrough, Douglas Huebler, Hamish Fulton, Richard Long, Allen Ruppersberg and, of course, Ed Ruscha, are exhibited; works which have redefined the fields of photography, books, and art, as much by their formal radicalness as by the new ideology they contain.

ROYDEN RABINOWITCH

Royden Rabinowitch (b. 1943, Toronto) is a main figure from the renewal of post-Minimalist sculpture. His work, based on the explicit distinction made by Henri Poincaré between the abstract (geometrical and continuous) space and that of the ordinary experience (discontinuous and localized), questions the notion of space. He works in series, giving priority to mechanically bent steel plates, and to wooden sculptures whose elements are doubly curved like barrels. Interested in the "anthropomorphic bodies" of David Smith, Rabinowitch also discovered, at the beginning of the 1960s, works by Donald Judd and Anthony Caro. Whereas to him, Judd and Caro respectively positioned their sculptures in relation to architecture and landscape, Rabinowitch created sculptures that enter into dialogue with the space of the body.

1st Address to "Le Nez" (C): Central Order of Things and Events — 1st Judgement on the Basis of Abstract Thinking (1962) is made up of a truncated cone partially closed inside from which is hung a weight — an object chosen for its metaphorical potential which also refers to the lengthening of the nose. The work is thought as a series of operations; coiling of the cone, then hanging of the weight. It belongs to an ensemble of five works all referring to Alberto Giacometti's œuvre and to two sculptures by Boccioni: *Development of a Bottle in Space and Unique Forms of Continuity in Space*.

Grease Cone (1965) results from a series of operations: the coiling of the cone and the greasing of the surface which, as it cannot be spread evenly, makes the cone asymmetrical. The grease applied on the metal hides the underlying material and modifies the aspect of the sculpture.

Karakorum (1968–1971), name of the city founded by Genghis Khan to unify the vanquished tribes, aims at summing up his previous works in one construction. The artist proceeds to a synthesis through folding and stratification of previous forms, which herald the *Handed Manifold* (starting in 1972), a series of flat sculptures visible from multiple locations.

Although Royden Rabinowitch's complex process alienates him from the preoccupations of contemporary Minimalist artists, the materials used and the strippeddown geometrical forms confer his œuvre a place within the emblematic experimentations of the 1960s–1970s.

The works presented here, on loan at MAMCO since its opening, were donated to the museum in 2016 by the collector who had gathered them.

AROUND CONCRETE POETRY

In collaboration with Zona Archives

Concrete poetry designates both an artistic and literary movement that emerged on the international scene during the 1950s. This experimental form of poetry plays on the word's matter itself, while also exploring the notion of space in which the word is inscribed. This is a visual form of poetry where meaning and interpretation are cast aside in favor of immediacy and simplicity. Language is no more considered as a medium, but as a material, a true playground where the poet can freely compose. Eugen Gomringer, an important figure from this movement, underlined the fact that the poem aims at being a "reality in itself" and at referring only to itself and nothing else. The visible is just as important as the readable.

Among the objects exhibited in this cabinet, one can find artists' books, poetry volumes, silkscreen prints, cards, posters, ephemeral documents, and rare editions — all testifying of the multiplicity of media on which Concrete poetry was developed, thus offering an overview of its world reach. These works have been entrusted to MAMCO by Zona Archives (Florence). This organization, led by Maurizio Nannucci and Gabriele Detterer, has collected more than 30,000 documents on art and avant-garde practices which are regularly presented in libraries and museums worldwide.

The previous exhibition *About Concrete Poetry* constituted the first chapter of this collaboration between MAMCO and Zona Archives. This new chapter, *Around Concrete Poetry* resumes this overview of Zona Archives' rich collection of Concrete poetry. This time, the exhibition focuses in particular on the avant-garde movements which were developing at the same period and which present similarities with Concrete poetry, in particular in the work of Conceptual artists. This presentation allows to glimpse at the numerous ways in which contemporary practices have by-passed the subjective imagery with the help of textual material.

The project is supported by the Fondation Leenaards.

SIAH ARMAJANI

MANIFESTO. Public sculpture in the context of american democracy

"I embrace the common. I explore the familiar, the low. Give me insight into today, you may have the antique and the future" Emerson

1. Public sculpture is a logical continuation of the modern movement and the enlightenment which was tempered and conditioned by the american revolution.

2. Public sculpture attempts to de-mystify art.

3. Public sculpture is less about self-expression and the myth of its maker and more about its civicness. Public sculpture is not based upon a philosophy which seeks to separate itself from the everydayness of everyday life.

4. In public sculpture the artist offers his/her expertise, therefore the artist as a maker has a place in the society. The social and cultural need support the artistic practice.

5. Public sculpture is a search for a cultural history which calls for structural unity between the object and its social and spatial setting. It should be open, available, useful and common.

6. Public sculpture opens up a perspective through which we may comprehend the social construction of art.

7. Public sculpture attempts to fill the gap that comes about between art and public to make art public and artists citizens again.

8. Generally speaking, public sculpture is not of a particular style or ideology. It is through action in concrete situations that public sculpture will become of a certain character.

9. Public sculpture has some kind of social function. It has moved from large scale, outdoor, site specific sculpture into sculpture with social content. In the process it has annexed a new territory for sculpture that extends the field for social experience.

10. Public sculpture believes that culture should be detectable geographically. The idea of region must be understood as a term of value. It is in politics. Why not in culture?

11. Public sculpture is not artistic creation alone but rather social and cultural productions based upon concrete needs.

12. Public sculpture is a cooperative production. There are others besides the artist who are responsible for the work. To give all the credit to the individual artist is misleading and untrue.

13. The art in public art is not a genteel art but a missionary art.

14. The ethical dimensions of the arts are mostly gone and only in a newly formed relationship with a non-art audience may the ethical dimensions come back to the arts.

15. We enter public sculpture not as a thing between four walls in a spatial sense but as a tool for activity.

16. There is a value in site in itself but we should keep our preoccupation with site to a minimum.

17. Public sculpture is not here to enhance architecture in or out, nor is architecture here to house public sculpture in or out. They are to be neighborly.

18. Art and architecture have different histories, different methodologies and two different languages.

19. The use of the adjectives *architectural* in sculpture and *sculptural* in architecture, for the purpose of establishing analogy, simile, metaphor, contrast or similarity between public sculpture and architecture is no longer descriptive or valid.

20. Public sculpture puts aside the allusion, the illusion and the metaphysical supposition that the human being is only a spiritual being who was misplaced here on earth. We are here because home is here and no other place.

21. The public environment is a notion of reference to the field in which activity takes place. The public environment is a necessary implication of being in the community.

22. Public sculpture depends upon some interplay with the public based upon some shared assumptions.

23. There is a limit to public sculpture. There are also limits in science and in philosophy.

24. Public sculpture should not intimidate, assault or control the public. It should enhance a given place.

25. By emphasizing usefulness public sculpture becomes a tool for activity. Therefore we reject kantian metaphysics and the idea that art is useless.

26. Public sculpture rejects the idea of the universality of art.

Siah Armajani
Compiled: 1968-1978
Revised: 1993

FRANZ ERHARD WALTHER

"The viewer who acts defines the work of art and answers for it; he or she cannot be involved solely as someone who is looking at something; their entire body is engaged." This declaration by Franz Erhard Walther (1939, Germany) suggests the framework in which part of his artistic output exist, that is, in which it is truly put to work or takes shape. It is in fact with the body of the person who activates the piece, who makes it come alive, that art assumes both its full meaning for Walther, and its place in the overall sum of activities embraced by the human subject.

It was in 1963 that Walther laid out this physical, participatory dimension of his work, specifically of his sculpture, which the artist qualifies as 'objects', thus underscoring their instrumental character. In that year the artist debuted a group of pieces under the title *1. Werksatz* [Work Series No. 1]. To create these pieces, Walther decided he would no longer operate from a system of forms that was shut up on itself — artifacts that were meant to be looked at only and which the viewer was never to take in hand — but according to processes and gestures that would be unique each time, never set in stone once and for all. The objects he was to produce would be means to an impetus. These objects adopt simple geometric shapes (rectangles, squares, lines, circles, etc.) and are made of cloth, which transforms them into so many waistcoasts, rugs, strips, and so on. The way one takes them in hand is of course up to the individual and remains undecidable. In each case it is viewers' bodies that become the means for activating, revealing or inventing the formal possibilities that are specific to these sculptural objects. Each time it is the acting individual who invents the profile and use of these available forms. The decision to employ cloth, a malleable material that has of course a certain configuration but can also be shaped according to the actions of the operator (folding, unfolding, clothing the individual), makes the physical reappropriation of the sculpture easier. It makes possible the 'return to square one, where nothing has shape and everything begins to take shape once again', which Walther seeks to encourage. Or in other words, it allows the body to experience the genesis of the sculpture, to feel the very process of the appearance of a form. Through this encouraged connection with the body, an action that thus lends the work all of its formal impact, an act that creates the sculpture, the artist shows that it is not only our visual perception that is worthwhile but the body that has a certain sense and significance.'In other words, to borrow the title of a book devoted to Walther, it is indeed with the body in this instance that one must see (and create the work of art). This situation gives rise to several important consequences. Unlike one tradition in the West, which has its roots in Platonic philosophy and for which art is a matter of the eye pure and simple, art is a field that is exclusively optical — this is the meaning of Leonardo's famous definition of it as *cosa mentale* — in other words, unlike the status that history reserves for the Western viewer, conceived as an eye without a body (the eye of the soul), Walther ties the use of vision to the reality of the embodiment, thus making the tactile dimension of the works something fundamental. This amounts to a major historic and esthetic break. Secondly the fact that the body, its gestures and poses create the piece, transforms the body into a processual device in which time plays a crucial role. The body at work stresses the temporary-object aspect of the sculpture. Finally, with his works from the early 1960s, Walther joins a certain number of artists who, during the same period, were turning out scultpures that were not only activated by viewers but indeed configured by them. There was, for instance, the Brazilian artist Lygia Clark, who began her series of *Bichos* in 1960, metallic structures that can be manipulated and boast no single, permanently fixed shape. Like Clark, Walther has explored and invented the faces of artworks that are destined to remain eternally available, that is, forms that are constantly assuming new forms and are therefore — provided that someone takes them in hand — endlessly being invented and reinvented. Or we might say the German artist has created open works of art, the term coined by the semiotician Umberto Eco in a famous book published in 1962, in other words, just one year before Walther begans his *Work Series No.1.*

NAM JUNE PAIK

Among the five works by Korean artist Nam June Paik (1932–2006) shown in this room, two directly refer to Joseph Beuys, the main figure of postwar German art.

Beuys and Paik met in Düsseldorf in 1961 and their friendship led them to collaborate on numerous occasions; the first one was *24 Stunden* and took place in Wuppertal in 1965, and one of their last collaborations took place in Tokyo in 1984.

Beuys Vox (1961/1986) presents itself as a photo souvenir album covering the entire duration of their friendship. It is made up of thirteen works by Paik, four by Beuys and one by John Cage. Some of Paik's works explicitly refer to Beuys (such as the concrete hat referring to the famous headgear Beuys used to wear at all times); other works translate directly the spirit of Fluxus, a movement they were both connected to. Other works rather belong to the documentation genre, such as the video cassette with a recording of Beuys' installation *Schmerzraum* at gallery Konrad Fischer in Düsseldorf in 1984.

Nam June Paik — pioneer of video art, sometimes nicknamed the "Michelangelo of electronic art" — uses television both as a form in itself (he created numerous "video sculptures") and as a tool to broadcast images. In *T.V.BOYS/BEUYS* (1988), it is both an element from the graphic world and a way to gather together an ancient and cross-historical form (the painting) and current images (the screen).

In *Homeless Buddha* (1989), a wax Buddha and a filmed Buddha echo each other, thus mixing, without any hierarchy, the digital image and the sculptural form. Paik started integrating the image of the Buddha in his work at the beginning of the 1970s through very diverse processes, the most famous being the *TV Buddha series*. It allows the artist to create a link between ancient history and a more contemporary version from modern technology — or rather a more current version as the use of a shopping trolley and the title of the work both explicitly refer to a current state of decay in advanced capitalist societies.

MAMCO Events

February 2017

Tuesday 21
—6-9pm, **VERNISSAGE** of our new exhibitions
Exhibitions, open until May 7, 2017

March 2017

Wednesday 1
— 7pm, **COMMENTARY** by Sarah Lombardi, director of the *art brut* collection in Lausanne, on Jean Dubuffet and the "Barbus Müller" lent by the Musée Barbier-Mueller

Tuesday 7
— 12:30pm, **WALKING WITH…** Sophie Costes, curator in charge of the collections at MAMCO, on William N. Copley's work in the *Zeitgeist* exhibition

Saturday 18
— 12:30pm, **MEETING** with Mathis Gasser, artist, and Jill Gasparina, art critic and independent curator, on *Zeitgeist*

Thursday 23
— 6:30pm, **COMMENTARY** by Lionel Bovier, director of MAMCO, and Paul Bernard, curator, on *Zeitgeist*

April 2017

Tuesday 4
— 12:30pm, **WALKING WITH...** Jean-Paul Jungo, art collector, on *Zeitgeist*

Wednesday 5
— 7pm, **COMMENTARY** by Catherine Quéloz, honorary Professor and winner of the Meret Oppenheim award, on Jenny Holzer and the "Pictures Generation" movement

Tuesday 11
— 6-9pm, **VERNISSAGE**
Inauguration of the collections

May 2017

Tuesday 2
— 12:30pm, **WALKING with...** Fabrice Stroun, curator-at-large, on Greg Parma Smith's exhibition

Wednesday 3
— 7pm, **MEETING** with artists of the *Zeitgeist* exhibition
Discussion moderated by Paul Bernard, curator, and Fabrice Stroun, curator-at-large

Other Events

Nuit des Bains
— Thursday, March 23, 6-9pm, free admission
— Thursday, May 18, 6-9pm, free admission
In collaboration with the association of Quartier des Bains

Nuit des Musées
— Saturday 20 May, 6pm-12am
Paid admission

Journée Internationale des Musées
— Sunday 21 May, 11am-6pm
Free admission

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The Museum is open Tuesday through Friday from noon to 6pm, the first Wednesday of the month until 9pm, and Saturday and Sunday from 11am to 6pm. Closed on Mondays as well as April 14, 2017.

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Group admission CHF 4.–

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