

MAMCO GENEVE
27.02.19-05.05.19
PRESS KIT

René Daniëls, *Fragments from an Unfinished Novel*
Martin Kippenberger, *The Museum of Modern Art Syros*
Gordon Matta-Clark, *FOOD*
Marcia Hafif, *Inventory*
Richard Nonas, *Riverrun (from Swerve to Bend)*

Opening: Tuesday February 26, 2019 (6pm)
Exhibitions visible through May 5, 2019

MAMCO Genève
10, rue des Vieux-Grenadiers
1205 Geneva



GORDON MATTA-CLARK

FOOD

An exhibition organized by Sophie Costes, with the support of Gordon Matta-Clark Estate

The restaurant "FOOD" opened in New York City in October 1971 at 127 Prince Street, at the corner of Wooster. Thanks to the commitment of Carol Goodden and Gordon Matta-Clark, during the three years of its existence, FOOD was a meeting place, providing food and work for artists, and a truly original collective experience. On Sunday evenings, there was the Special Guest Chef Night: Rauschenberg served there a Chili of his own invention and the Matta Bones can be included among the legendary dishes of this restaurant, which also highlighted Cajun cooking, and one of his emblematic recipes, the Gombo. "FOOD" was a place for culinary communion, where nourishment became a creative, festive event. Matta-Clark regularly experimented with unusual cooking techniques ("Photo-Fried," "Agar-Agar" ...) and all the ephemeral events that he organized led to parties, such as the Braserio placed on the platform of the *Dumpster Duplex*, the second version of *Open House*, in October 1972.

While this experience brought together around its two founders other figures of the

New-York underground (Tina Girouard, Suzanne Harris, Rachel Lew, the members of the Anarchitecture group, and contributors to the magazine *Avalanche*), the renown of Matta-Clark's work has now crystallized attention around him. It was in particular during the refurbishing of the restaurant that he made his first "cuttings": "One of the first times that I can remember using cuttings as a way to redefine a space was at the restaurant 'FOOD,' launched during the first days of SoHo ... We put on shows and created a theater of food. The first version of this space was not practical enough for our needs, when the restaurant became a business. So I had to spend the second summer redesigning the site. I did it by cutting up what had already been constructed and turning it into work spaces. I then attended to the walls and other partitions that divided up the inner space. This was perhaps the last time that I used cutting, the process of cutting-up for practical purposes."

FOOD has become an urban legend, with Matta-Clark, for a while, thinking of selling the concept to Leo Castelli.

MARCIA HAFIF

Inventory

An exhibition organized by Lionel Bovier and Sophie Costes

Marcia Hafif (1929–2018) entered the realm of abstraction in the early 1960s, in Rome. She no longer saw painting as a means of representing the outside world but considered each picture as an object in its own right, describing her work as “concrete.” She took a methodical approach to the problems of line/ground and color/form. Her artistic influences were shaped in large part by the Ferus Gallery in Los Angeles (1957–1966), directed by Walter Hopps and Edward Kienholz, and she was a partial follower of a new direction in abstract painting spearheaded by Clement Greenberg as a reaction to the decadence of Abstract Expressionism. Her paintings were based on regular, geometric forms, anonymous execution, the use of two contrasting colors rather than contrasts of light and shade, and a refusal of pictorial illusion and three-dimensionality.

In Rome, she discovered a highly stimulating art scene in which film played a vital, foundational role. Everyday life intervened constantly in the genesis of her works, and the osmosis between her Californian influences and the register of colors and forms she encountered in Rome (in architecture, urban signage, design, and film) is clearly visible. The result is abstraction that flirts with figuration.

On her return from Italy, Marcia Hafif experimented with Conceptual art for a short period, focusing on photography, film, and

sound installations. She described the experience as “a way to stop painting” and break her “dependence to a single artistic medium.”

In New York, in 1971, she painted a monochrome work, defining it as a “painting with a single figure.” This experimental phase was short-lived and unproductive, however; through the daily practice of drawing on large-format supports, she paved her way for her return as a painter. In *Beginning Again*, an article published in *Artforum* in 1978, she chronicles her return to the fundamental questions of what constitutes the very act of painting, and her unfashionable attachment to the medium, which distanced her from the trends of the day. Hafif’s painting is often characterized as “radical,” but it is also, and equally, an ode to the pleasure inherent in the application of paint, an uncompromising exploration of the effects of pigments on a given surface: “more painting and less talk.”

Following earlier exhibitions of works produced during the Roman years, MAMCO proposes a survey of Marcia Hafif’s work, with a selection of drawings, collages, photographs, and paintings covering her output as a whole.

RICHARD NONAS

Riverrun (from Swerve to Bend)

An exhibition organized by Lionel Bovier and Sophie Costes

Richard Nonas (*1936, New York) has devoted himself to sculpture from the beginning of the 1970s, after taking courses in literature and social anthropology and also spending years studying the Indians of the USA and Canada.

Nonas describes his way of working as follows: "I install each sculpture to reopen and close the part of the world where it is placed. I install it to transform a new real story into human existence. I install my sculpture to give shape to the changing past. To recognize the very possibility of history in a world that runs away."

Made up of 37 steel pieces of the same length but of a variable height, *Riverrun (from Swerve to Bend)* can be set up in various ways: it is possible to use all of its elements, or just some of them. In other words, this work can be adapted to the space displaying it, which is also reconfigured by it.

This sculpture can immediately be associated with a Minimalist aesthetic, with a simplicity of forms, modularity, and repetitiveness, making one work into a whole—all of the aspects associated with American art from the late 1960s can be found here. It also employs the horizontality of space. *Riverrun (from Swerve to Bend)* unfurls under our feet—it is in fact possible to walk across it to

experience it—stretched out across the floor in a distinctly constructed way. This is an element which is clearly present among the American artists of Nonas' generation, such as Robert Morris, Carl Andre, or Richard Serra. This type of work confronts the entire history of classic statuary which presents strict forms, that were upright and around which the spectators could walk. This is nothing like it: it is the floor itself that becomes the pivotal point, rather than the plinth of the sculpture, and is its entire zone of appearance.

There is another possible story about such horizontality. Marcel Duchamp was doubtlessly one of the first 20th-century artists to produce works which were low (spatially speaking), with works tumbling down to the floor (*3 Standard Stoppages*, 1913/1914) or which were fixed onto the ground in such a way that we might tumble over them (*Trap*, 1917). In a figurative and surrealist vein, Alberto Giacometti also explored just the same horizontal spacing with his *Woman With her Throat Cut* (1932), a bronze skeleton placed on the ground. The American artists of Nonas' generation then extended this horizontal exploration of space. The work of Nonas himself stands as a meaningful moment in this exploration that can also be led externally, towards natural landscapes.

CONTACTS & INFORMATION

MAMCO Press Contact

For all requests, information and visuals, please contact:

MAMCO Geneva
Viviane Reybier
v.reybier@mamco.ch
tél. +41 22 320 61 22

International Press Contact
Sutton / Alexandra Ross
alexandra@suttonpr.com
+44 (0)7 715 216 971

Informations

MAMCO
Musée d'art moderne et contemporain, Genève
10, rue des Vieux-Grenadiers
CH-1205 Geneva

Tel. +41 22 320 61 22
Fax +4122 781 56 81

www.mamco.ch

Monday: closed
Tuesday–Friday: 12-6pm
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