

MAMCO
GENEVE

ÉTÉ 2021

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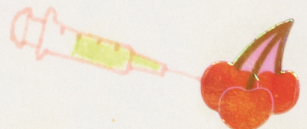


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Vidya Gastaldon and Jean-Michel Wicker

Sans titre, 1994-1996

sticker, marker pen, colored pencils on paper

29.5 × 21 cm (without frame)

coll. MAMCO, artists gift

Photo : MAMCO Geneva

INTRODUCTION

Our summer exhibition program is conceived as an innovative *modus operandi*. Based on the concept of an annual “rendez-vous,” borrowed from the world of magazines or biennales, the aim is to bring together diverse practices connected by nothing but the fascination they exert on us. Our summer program should also have featured talks, performances, and off-site events, developed in collaboration with other institutions and organizations. The pandemic of Covid-19 has forced us to cancel the 2020 edition and continues to weigh on our capacities to modulate the museum’s functioning as we intended originally. Nevertheless, *été 2021* is taking place and proposes an important project outside the museum, with the presentation of *The Clock* by Christian Marclay in collaboration with the Fondation Plaza.

été 2021 also represents a new way of thinking about our collection (and how it grows, is exhibited, and communicated), a chance to experiment with the concept of the museum as a place of “experiences,” and to re-think ways to showcase new talent, support and collaborate with artists across a broader timescale than that of the “simple” exhibition.

It is of course no accident that this new work method coincides with our planned renovation of the MAMCO building, in association with the City of Geneva: we are preparing for the future by redefining and experimenting with the future contours of the museum, once it will have secured the setting and means it deserves.

NATALIE CZECH IS IT TRUE YOU SAID POEMS ARE MADE OF WORDS?

Works by Natalie Czech (*1976, Neuss, Germany) stand at the confluence of Concrete poetry and “appropriationist” photography: movements that question the relationship between text and image, and which have themselves been the subject of a particular focus at MAMCO. Czech applies the Concrete poets’ spatialization of text, and their inference of the equivalence between what a poem shows and tells, between the legible and the visible.

Czech also develops the “appropriationist” critique of originality, for which she substitutes “intertextuality,” a concept that invites the viewer to consider every text as a “fabric of quotations” (Roland Barthes). Czech’s exclusively photographic work examines existing “textual fabrics” to reveal layers of meaning and poetry, in a play of unexpected connections, as in her *Hidden Poems*—a variety of reconfigured source materials in which the artist uses a pen or highlighter to reveal poems by e. e. cummings, Jack Kerouac, Robert Lax, and Frank O’Hara. The original text is “captioned” by this poetic revelation, while the new text is given a second layout. The *Poet’s Question* series selects and isolates questions in poems by writers such as Lev Rubinstein, Robert Grenier, and Charles Bernstein. The letters that make up these questions constitute a “stock,” like Scrabble tiles, which the artist seeks in everyday objects.

One photograph reveals the question “Do hearts break if you don’t touch them?” (from poet Charles Bernstein) on the music cassette “Imperial Bedroom” by the group Elvis Costello & The Attractions. The question is written in snippets of magnetic tape, as if the medium itself were reproducing the text. From music to text, and from poetry to photography, the self-referentiality is both intertextual and “inter-medial.” If we look more closely at the cassette itself, we see that each of the words used to write the question has been erased with the exception of three words that form a troubling response: “Loved ones beat.”

Specially created for this exhibition, the *Cigarette Ends* series is the culmination of a process of collection and assembly. Here the artist is no longer seeking to reveal existing poems but composes her own texts using the names of the brands printed on cigarettes. This minimalist poetry focuses the viewer’s attention on typography, giving these discarded scraps an unexpectedly plastic quality. Here, Czech continues to pay poetic/aesthetic homage to the most trifling of objects, whether mainstream records, cigarette butts or—elsewhere—plastic bags.

The exhibition is organized by Paul Bernard.

VIDYA GASTALDON AND JEAN-MICHEL WICKER

Vidya Gastaldon and Jean-Michel Wicker began working together after they completed their studies at Grenoble's Ecole des Beaux-Arts and continued to collaborate throughout the 1990s. The range of media they explored included video, drawing, performance, print, and fiber sculpture. This exhibition is based on a donation made by the artists to MAMCO and includes some 20 works on paper and several installations.

The artists' drawings, produced between 1994 and 1996, are the oldest works in this exhibition. The viewer is presented with a constellation of slogans, brands, names, lists, figures, landscapes, stars, skulls, cacti, bees, etc. The materials used to create them are equally varied—stickers, collages, markers, colored pencils, paint, ballpoint pens, glitter, and so on. Each constituent element retains its specific texture and identity, and links the drawings together, yet without making them a single composition. This sense of fragmentation is as much a reflection of a shared aesthetic agenda as it is the way in which the works were produced. Gastaldon and Wicker would begin drawing individually and then pass the sheets back and forth so that the other could add elements, emphasizing and transforming the existing work. These pieces can thus be understood as transcriptions of a wide-ranging conversation, the main theme of which is the legacy of psychedelic utopias—subsequently commodified by the wellness and fashion industries—and the resurgence of their promise of liberation for the masses through electronic music and rave culture aesthetics. The humor that infuses this dialogue is not so much critical or analytical as it is jubilant and full of desire.

There is also a political dimension to the creation of these works, since the artists' collaboration did not give rise to a hybrid or fictional authorial figure, but rather remained fluid and elusive. It was a way of divying the artist's role—a concept the pair continued to develop. It also allowed them to bring in others from their entourage, as they did with their films, created with an ever-changing roster of artists that included, among others, Serge Comte and Christophe Terpan in Grenoble and Sidney Stucki in Geneva.

The textile installations and sculptures from the late 1990s create a similar spatial, perceptual disorder. *Politique de l'extase* (2000), which takes its title from Timothy Leary, is an installation consisting of knitted wool, beads, silk, pompoms and garlands of melon and watermelon seeds. Are we confronted with a depiction of the infinitely small, at cellular level, or rather a model of the infinitely large, something of a geological or even cosmic nature? Are we dealing with a return to formal and conceptual questions derived from American post-minimalism, or an array of post-hippie decorative elements? Should we focus on each element in its materiality or, on the contrary, on how they interact and the ways in which they define the surrounding space?

Twenty years on, the power of these works to elicit an abundance of sensations and interpretations without ever becoming reduced to a single discursive posture, together with the playful fluidity that underpins their creation, remains radically optimistic.

The exhibition is organized by Lionel Bovier.

TOBIAS KASPAR

This summer, an installation by the Zurich artist Tobias Kaspar will be featured in "The Apartment," located on MAMCO'S third floor. The Apartment is a unique, paradoxical exhibition space: it is a reconstruction of Ghislain Mollet-Viéville's Paris apartment at 26 rue Beaubourg where, from 1975 to 1991, the collector promoted Minimal and Conceptual art. "I use the term 'paradoxical,' Mollet-Viéville explains, in the sense that, at the end of the 1970s when I opened on rue Beaubourg, this intellectual art form was only being exhibited in sterile 'white cube'-type spaces. My aim was to make the viewer's experience of this work more pleasant by exhibiting it in another context—in a comfortable, convivial environment such as an apartment. This was not an obvious strategy at the time."

In 2020, at the height of the pandemic—and faced with the closure of galleries, art fairs, museums, and art centers—Tobias Kaspar developed a project to "rent his life." This provided a solution to both his financial difficulties and the absence of exhibition possibilities. In *Rented Life*, the artist outsourced his monthly expenses by creating a series of lots offered as subscriptions. In the accompanying catalogue, some expenses are generic (insurance, cigarettes, rent), while others refer to personal preferences: *Americano*, *Vegetable Basket*, *Pilates*, etc. Some headings use marketing terminology: the phone lot is entitled *World, salt.ch (Unlimited Phone Data)* and that for music *Music Spotify® Premium Family*. The works offered in exchange to subscribers adhere to various stylistic and narrative registers. The monochrome series, for example, is described as an attempt "to colour-match champagne." In another lot, a series of photographs was taken with a disposable camera, whose obsolescence echoes that of air travel, a mode of transport severely curtailed by the pandemic. Other works are proposed to cover the cost of the artist using Uber's ride-hailing service: a series of small clay horse sculptures, executed with finesse and care.

Merchandise is a central theme in postmodernism studies, which views it either as a form of ensnarement or a mechanism to be overcome. The categories listed by Kaspar, who has itemized his life into budget entries and lots, are freed from this issue insofar as they combine elements such as narratives of emancipation and subjugation, a critique of institutions and social standing, marketing, and the "commodification" of culture.

The exhibition, curated by Julien Fronsacq, is supported by Fachstelle Kultur Kanton Zürich, Landis & Gyr Stiftung, and Stiftung Erna und Curt Burgauer.

CHRISTIAN MARCLAY

Christian Marclay's work focuses on spaces where the visual and auditory arts intersect. Early in his career, Marclay, who was born in 1955 in San Rafael, California, became interested in performance art, including the work of Dan Graham, Vito Acconci, and Laurie Anderson, and, more directly, shows by Punk Rocket. Starting in the early 1980s, he attracted attention by converting a turntable into a device for producing—instead of *reproducing*—sounds, which was exactly the opposite of Laurie Anderson's approach, who turned her violin into a turntable (*Viophonograph*, 1977). In 1983, he transformed a turntable into a "phonoguitar," which he "played," employing the same moves a guitarist would make.

Marclay is also interested in visual depictions of music, appropriating music industry codes by creating fake concert posters (*False Advertising*, 1994) and record sleeves. In his *Body Mix* series (1991), he treated album covers as found objects, stitching them together and mining their visual content.

Vinyl is central to Marclay's work, not only because a record is a visible object, but also because the medium, which was designed to reproduce sound, is a form of engraved writing—a "dead" sound that Marclay is free to re-contextualize, disrupt, manipulate and mistreat. In *Record Without a Cover* (1985), he inscribed a blank record with random scratchings, which was then intentionally sold without a jacket.

Although sound and image are closely linked in many of Marclay's videos, the use of silence, in a variety of forms, is another prominent theme. For example, with *Secret* (1988) the artist offers a record with a padlock through its center, and *Untitled (Record Without a Groove)*, published by Ecart Editions in 1987, is a blank LP packaged in a soft protective cover. Devoid of any acoustic reality, these mute works—similar to his *Snapshots* (1993–2006) and his ghostly cyanotypes of tangles of magnetic tape—hold our attention: silence is there to sensitize us to what we are in fact hearing.

The room's presentation, organized by Françoise Ninghetto, echoes to the presentation of *The Clock* in Geneva, in collaboration with Fondation Plaza (June 25–July 18, 2021).

ANITA MOLINERO ASSIS, DEBOUT, COUCHÉ

Two old mattresses upon which rest some twenty or so roughly cut cobblestones, the entire thing sprinkled with confetti. Three sorts of modest objects, all collected beforehand, and all “untransformed,” or barely. Three materials that have nothing in common, other than the fact that they are abundant and cheap. Three trivial, even banal, gestures combining them into a whole. Three times nothing, hardly anything at all; the piece is not even polite enough to offer a title that we can use to set the interpretative machine in motion.

This mute work by Anita Molinero (*1953, Floirac, France) renders manifest some essential principles of her art. It quickly becomes clear that the mattress, cobblestones, and confetti admirably condense a certain idea of the street (glimpsed level with the bitumen), and of the ghosts of bodies that make it their own: the homeless, the revolted, the revelers. So many figures of what, in a public space, exceed the public order. The piece symbolically crystallizes something akin to the aftermath of a big night, a riot, or a demonstration, the streets strewn with the remains of banners and signs. On the plane of art, it must be noted that the work, which barely rises to twenty centimeters, has the audacity to declare itself a sculpture.

A well-known witticism, which some attribute to Barnett Newman and others to Ad Reinhardt, says: “Sculpture is what you bump into when you back up to see a painting.” Molinero has always claimed, indeed sought, the aggressiveness specific to the sculptural medium. We see this violence in the materials—impure and devoid of quality—that her oeuvre is made of: omnipresent in modern life, the materials she uses had for years remained invisible in art. In turning to them, Molinero is not trying to transfigure the miserable or to add yet another episode to the bad series about the eternal reconciliation of art and life. The point, rather, is to explore an aesthetic blind spot and to extract from it the rawest, but also the most familiar, scraps of the real. Indeed, the strength of her assemblage sculpture is that it establishes itself in a no man’s land between figurative fiction and readymade. If we are to understand it correctly, we need to hear the artist marvel at Degas’ *Petite danseuse de quatorze ans*, at the whiff of perversion it gives off, at the vulgar rag that represents the skirt in the bronze statue.

And so, regardless of whether we place it on a symbolic or a material level—a decision that depends on whether we focus on the assembled objects or on what they are made of—the “mattress sculpture” (for it must be named somehow) embodies the provocation, the arrogance, characteristic of Molinero’s oeuvre—a lost body of work that is here reinterpreted. It serves as the starting point for the exhibition, which features close to a dozen sculptures created over the past decade. Each in its own way conjures up a different physical state. Mattresses are displayed alongside a delivery table, wheelchairs and assemblages that appear to be walkers. Seated, standing, reclining – the status of bodies and sculptures is reduced to commands reminiscent of dog training. Here one can discern a wry commentary on our idea of physical norms, which the physically challenged referenced here—those with disabilities, pregnant women, the homeless—cannot hope to attain.

The exhibition is organized by Paul Bernard.

CAROLINE TSCHUMI

Caroline Tschumi (b. 1983) has been obsessively producing drawings since she was a child. Following her studies at Geneva's Haute École d'art et de design (HEAD), from which she graduated in 2018, Tschumi expanded the boundaries of her practice to include a variety of formats and media, including oil paintings and immersive installations. Nevertheless, drawing remains, on a daily basis, one of the artist's central activities.

The pieces on display in the Graphic Arts Cabinet were produced during the past decade. They were chosen from the artist's portfolios with the aim of displaying a broad array of her techniques (including pen, felt-tip, gouache, grease pencil, watercolor and so on), and they reveal the immediacy of her approach to drawing. As she describes it: "For me, it's vital for drawing to remain a raw means of expression. I never make sketches or preparatory drawings. I just go straight to the paper and wait for something to unfold. We're practically in the realm of automatic drawing here. Figures emerge through associations of ideas and incongruities."

Her syncretic imagery includes mythological figures and characters from cartoons, graphic novels and medieval tales, all combined in scenes that are halfway between surrealist compositions and psychedelic hallucinations. Tschumi also has an unwavering devotion to 1960s music groups that inhabited a powerful visual world, such as the Beach Boys and Pink Floyd, to which she often listens while working. We find traces of this in the notebooks she has been filling since her teenage years. Shown here for the first time are two accordion books that she produced in 2016 and 2017. Their horizontal format emphasizes both their narrative and musical qualities. A single pattern is repeated, creating a unique rhythm.

Tschumi's influences include Walt Disney and Naoko Takeuchi, the author of "Sailor Moon." But these faux-naïve images, whose violence is not immediately apparent, also evoke the drawings of Henry Darger on display at the Collection de l'Art Brut in Lausanne. Like Darger's, Tschumi's works trawl the depths of the adolescent and adult subconscious to produce a world of puerile imagination with heightened morbid, scatological and sexual associations.

The show, curated by Paul Bernard, is on display in the Graphic Arts Room, a temporary exhibition space created with support from the Leenaards Foundation.

|GAIA|VINCENSINI|

Gaia Vincensini's works, such as *Heartbreak*, *Calm*, *Seclusion* and *Escape*, take their titles from the realms of psychology and human emotions. There is also a social dimension to how Vincensini plays with traditional formats and techniques. By combining drawing, engraving, graphics, embroidery, monotypes and mosaic work, she transcends the traditional boundaries between art and handicraft, and between trained professional and amateur artist—distinctions that are a product of the art world insofar as they arise from relationships between actors within a *network* (the creator and their public, as well as their peers, critics, exhibitors and sponsors). Whatever the nature of an artwork, it is rooted in a generalized interdependence: a product of this network of actors and their subjectivities. Artistic approach is important to Vincensini, whose lineage includes a sculptor grandmother, a printmaking mother, and a ceramicist aunt.

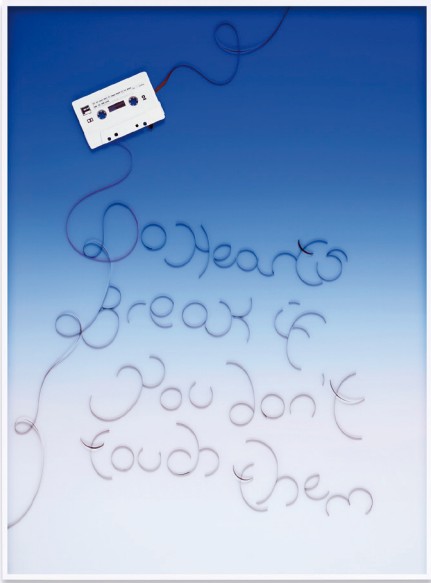
In Vincensini's works, the viewer may recognize local Swiss brand names juxtaposed with existential reflections: "Truth is expressed through symbols," "warwick/swisscaution/ubs," "trust," "You are a valuable human being." Her focus is twofold: on hybrid narratives that convey private messages, and on her native city, Geneva, from which she borrows elements from corporate storytelling, i.e. the art of transforming a company into a compendium of positive messages.

Vincensini's exhibition at the MAMCO showcases a ceramic safe—a formal setting in which to house her grandmother's sculptures—as well as engraving plates, which adorn panels shaped like armored doors. The piece is accompanied by a film that was shot in the Museum in which various artists' works serve as a backdrop. Vincensini's combination of techniques and narratives explores the interplay between the value systems that structure both art and society.

Exhibition curated by Julien Fronsacq. Gaia Vincensini was the Geneva winner of the 2021 Manor Culture Prize. Members of the jury included MAMCO director Lionel Bovier, Elisabeth Jobin, assistant curator at Lausanne's Musée Cantonal des Beaux-Arts, artists Sylvie Fleury and Fabrice Gygi, and two representatives from Manor Group: Chantal Prod'hom, director of the MUDAC in Lausanne, and Pierre-André Maus, Vice-Chairman of the Board at Maus Frères SA.

ICONOGRAPHY

ÉTÉ 2021



Natalie Czech, *A Poet's question by Charles Bernstein (Cassette/Loved Ones) (Do hearts break if you don't touch them abcdeefhhikmnoooooorrrstttuy)*, 2018
tirage pigmentaire, 133 × 99 cm (avec cadre)
éd. 2/5, coll. MAMCO, œuvre acquise grâce à l'Association des Amis du MAMCO, un donateur anonyme et la banque Mirabaud & Cie



Vidya Gastaldon et Jean-Michel Wicker
Sans titre, 1994-1996, stickers, glitter, feutre, crayons de couleur, peinture et papiers découpés sur papier
29.5 × 21 cm (hors cadre)



Vidya Gastaldon et Jean-Michel Wicker
Chocolate Explosion, 2000
bois, collage de laine, laine tricotée, marqueterie de papier, Plexiglas coloré, dimensions variables
coll. MAMCO, don Lionel Bovier

ICONOGRAPHY

ÉTÉ 2021

TOBIAS KASPAR

RENTED LIFE

2020 / 21

Tobias Kaspar, *Rented Life*, Catalogue, 2020 / 21.



Lot 1	Insurance <small>Plus d'infos</small>	30,90 <small>€ TTC (hors taxes)</small>	12-charm bracelet c. Ø 12 cm
			<p>Twelve unique charms including a personalized tag pendant, key, clay object and more.</p> <p>The first shipment will include a string to which all twelve charms can be attached.</p>



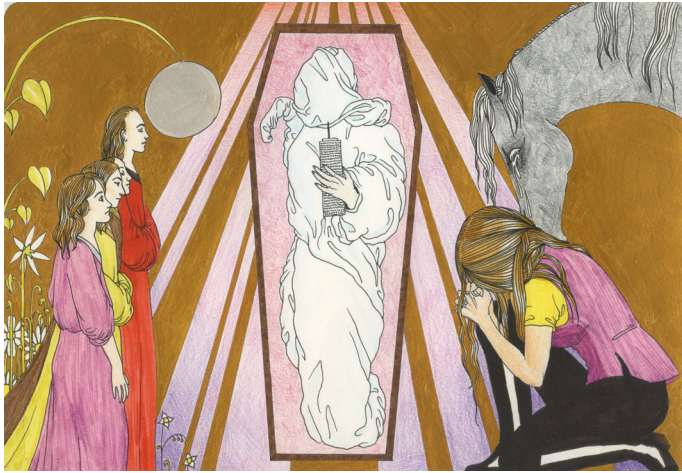
Christian Marclay, *Collages for To Be Continued*, 2016
12 collages, vignettes de bandes dessinées (couleur et noir et blanc) découpées et marouflées sur papier
29.7 × 42 cm
Coll. MAMCO, don Stiftung Usine



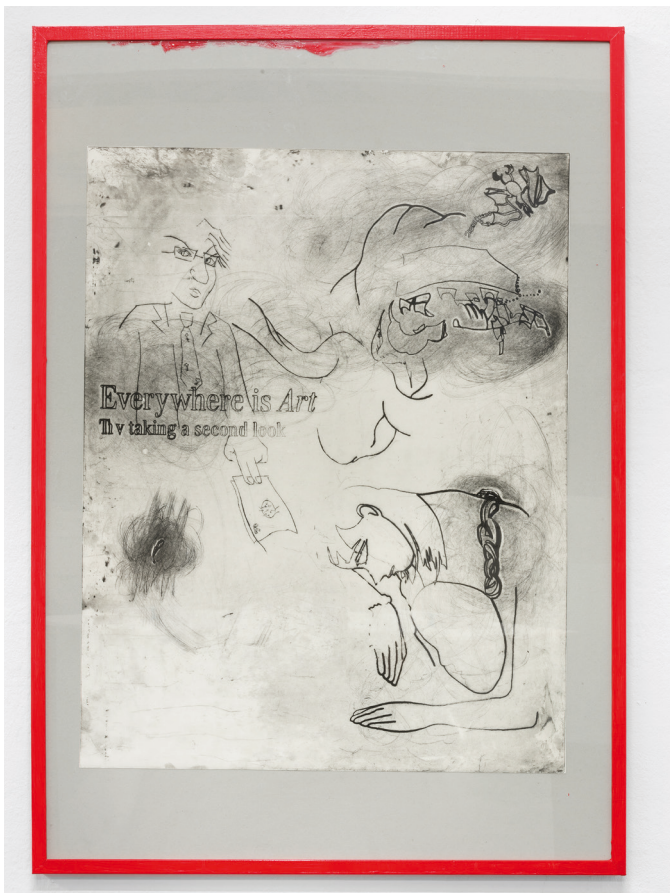
Anita Molinero, *Sans titre (1 à 11)*, 2012
sculpture composée d'une structure en fer à béton et d'emballages de fast-food en polystyrène, sangles
180 × 73 × 43 cm
coll. MAMCO, don de l'artiste

ICONOGRAPHY

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Caroline Tschumi, *Sans titre 3_5*, 2007
Feutre, gouache, crayon gras
20.7 × 29.5 cm
Coll. MAMCO, don de l'artiste



Gaia Vincensini, *Everywhere is Art, try taking a second look*, 2018. Gravure sur aluminium, 50×65 cm.
Courtesy de l'artiste. Photo Julien Gremauda

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