

MAMCO, Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Geneva  
Press kit

Kelley Walker

*Swiss Pop*

General Idea, *Photographs (1969-1982)*

Jack Goldstein, Jenny Holzer, Sherrie Levine,  
Cady Noland/Laurie Parsons/Félix González-Torres



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May 31st—September 10th, 2017

Press conference Tuesday May 30 2017, 10 am

Opening from 6pm

MAMCO Geneva will present a major exhibition of the work of the American artist Kelley Walker (b. 1969, Columbus, Georgia). The exhibition will be on view from May 31st through September 10th, 2017, and will be installed throughout the 1000 m<sup>2</sup> of the museum's first floor.

In his work, Kelley Walker uses techniques common to Pop art, such as collage, photography, and silkscreen printing, as well as digital tools, to question today's frenetic circulation and consumption of images. The show, organized by Fabrice Stroun and Lionel Bovier, will provide a retrospective overview of one of the most innovative artists working today. It will include Walker's most notable bodies of work, specifically "Black Star Press" paintings, where layers of chocolate cover and partially obscure images similar to those used by Warhol; intricate mirrors made of handcut acrylic plexiglas, and reminiscent of the inkblot test designed by the famous Swiss psychologist Hermann Rorschach; "Brick paintings," which combine silkscreen brick patterns with collage from newspapers and magazines; as well as more recent works that explore the transformation of image to object.

This exhibition, in succession to Wade Guyton's one in 2016, will provide an opportunity to address issues concerning the image and its corporeality in recent art history.

The Kelley Walker exhibition benefits from the support of Henri Harsch HH SA.

'Swiss Pop', based on a proposal by Samuel Gross, on view on the museum's third floor, will serve as an introduction to one of the Postwar Era's first interrogations of the status of the image, both in terms of its auratic unicity and its (mostly industrial) mode of fabrication.

An exhibition of images and photographic projects by Canadian collective General Idea extend, on the same floor, this reflection on the mediatic and physical versatility of the image within the McLuhanesque society taking shape after the Second World War. The exhibition of General Idea, *Photographs (1969 – 1982)* benefits from the support of Le Laboratoire and Re-pro-Solution, Geneva.

Finally, works by Cady Noland, Laurie Parsons, and Félix González-Torres on the second floor, conclude this examination of American practices linked to the "Pictures Generation," appropriation, and the politics of representation (Jenny Holzer, Jack Goldstein, Sherrie Levine). It ends a cycle of exhibitions organized by Lionel Bovier aiming at providing an overview of the main stakes shared by a generation of artists that one might call the "last iconologists": in short, artists for whom the image still possesses weight, presence, and semantic power—all features that the growing digitalization of the 1990s progressively erased to the benefit, in the 2000s, of an understanding of the image as a "liquid skin," able to mutate indefinitely and to be applied on any support.

# Kelley Walker

An exhibition organised by  
Fabrice Stroun and Lionel Bovier

**Kelley Walker (born in 1969, Columbus, USA) uses both techniques from Pop Art (such as collages, photography and screen-printing) and contemporary digital tools to examine the circulation and consumption of images.**

The MAMCO retrospective brings together the main series that the artist has produced, namely: the *Black Stars Press*, which involves superimposing screen-printed images similar to those used by Warhol and layers of chocolate; the *Rorschach*, fragmented mirrors alluding to the Swiss psychiatrist's famous test; the *Brick Paintings*, mixing patterns of bricks and information from printed media; and some of his more recent probes into the shift from image to object, as well as several new works.

Using collage, borrowings, displacement, and juxtaposition, Kelley Walker observes how images are diffused in the media and explores their irreductible materiality. Whether dealing with melted chocolate, a shattered windscreen, stickers or printed matter, Kelley Walker's work underlines our urban, anonymous gestures (be they collective or regressive) which are all always acts of insubordination to the messages imposed by the media.

For example, the photographs in *Disasters* have been scanned from magazines, then transformed using infographic software and confronted with a political slogan. As simple digital files, these pieces allow their owner to choose the print dimensions and modes of distribution that suit them best, thus alluding to the judgements made in the world of the media. While in his early work the artist dealt with questions of cultural signs by using material elements, this exploitation of the infinitely multipliable potential of the digital universe adds an extra distance.

The paintings of bricks, or the adoption of documents to do with the repression of the Civic Rights movement, which the artist—like Warhol—has taken from *Life Magazine*, are some of the routes that he has adopted so as to draw up an anthropological landscape of the USA, its ideology and racial as well as sexual violence.

In his appropriation of images and reuse of loaded cultural signs, Kelley Walker displays a particular economy: devoid of any nostalgia for the loss of art's aura, his works develop both a strategy of formal seduction and a distancing of the spectator. The technical process that allows images to be displayed as icons or messages is, thus, a process that deflates their power.

Kelley Walker's show benefits from the support of Henri Harsch HH SA.



Kelley Walker, *Mia Wasikowska Interview Summer 2016, 2016*. Four-color process silkscreen with acrylic ink and magazine collage on canvas .189 × 45,70 cm. Courtesy of the artiste / Paula Cooper Gallery, New York ; Thomas Dane Gallery, London ; and Galerie Gisela Capitain, Cologne

## Press Office

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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.

Regular admission: CHF8.–  
Reduced admission: CHF6.–  
Group admission: CHF4.–

## Partners

MAMCO is overseen by FONDAMCO, which is made up of Fondation MAMCO, the Canton, and City of Geneva.

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