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WALEAD BESHTY

MARTIN|||||||| |KIIPPENBERGER

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Summer 2019

May 29 – September 8, 2019

Opening May 28, 2019

MAMCO Genève 10, rue des Vieux-Grenadiers 1205 Geneva



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PRESS RELEASE

What is an image? And what do the images that engulf us daily want? These questions, posed over the past twenty years in the field of "visual studies," invite us to consider images not only in terms of their existence as objects, and their meaning, but also in terms of their relationship to the society in which they are produced. We have long characterized the work of a particular artist by her/his technique, but must now accept that the medium is more than a work's materials or its message: it is the ensemble of practices that have brought the work into existence, i.e. not only the canvas, stretcher and paint, but also the studio, gallery, and/ or museum, the art market, and the critics.

From challenges to conventional "fine art" categorizations, to ontological shifts in the realm of the "visual," exhibitions at MAMCO in 2019 explore this evolving concept of the image.

This spring, we examined how figurative imagery can also act as a critique of representation, in the work of René Daniëls; and how abstract images can also derive from sensory experience and command a phenomenological response, in the work of Marcia Hafif.

This summer, a major exhibition of works by Walead Besthy makes explicit the status of the image as the outcome of a process —more "software" than "hardware." As "scripted" productions, Walead Besthy's works examine both the apparatus of their making and their connection to the real world. His productions also give us the measure of the lasting transformation wrought by Conceptual practices on art. and bring us face-to-face with one of its most distinctive legacies: the notion that art may inhere less in the object itself and more in its surroundings, in the things that bring an object to life when we "utilize" it, look at it, display it, and interpret it.

Other presentations, related to MAMCO collection's politics of development, such as the exhibitions dedicated to the Givaudan donation, the work of Piotr Kowalski, and a major installation by Nam June Paik recently gifted to the museum, together with rooms featuring recent acquisitions and activations

of works, as well as the prolongation of the project around Martin Kippenberger's MOMAS, reflect the same focus on works defined by both their "programmatic" and their "open-ended" nature.

This fall, the museum constructs a typology of pictorial gestures and signs through four experimental practices. Thus MAMCO traces a unique path through the history of postwar painting, with retrospectives of the work of Martin Barré and Rosemarie Castoro, a major exhibition of work by Irma Blank and an ensemble of pieces by Arnulf Rainer (the Foëx donation). The replacement of brushwork by the use of spray, the extension of painting to the body and the space, the liberation of language from meaning, or the covering-over of pre-existing images are just some of the tropes on show—"gestures" that remind us that artists think above all in forms, that cannot be properly looked at and apprehended until they are understood as such.

Mirabaud's gift: in 2019, MAMCO is free for all

Admission to the museum will be free of charge throughout 2019, thanks to a generous gift from Mirabaud, in celebration of the company's 200th anniversary.

The gift furthers Mirabaud's commitment to MAMCO as part of the company's growing involvement in contemporary art. As a partner company to MAMCO since 2017, Mirabaud supports the museum's development activities, in particular the project 'In Course of Acquisition'. Free admission to MAMCO in 2019 reflects the museum's determination to make contemporary art accessible to the widest possible public. We thank Mirabaud for their support in implementing this policy of outreach and sharing.

WALEAD BESHTY

Curated by Lionel Bovier, with the assistance of Lisa Kaczmarek With the support of Fondation de bienfaisance du Groupe Pictet

Walead Beshty (b.1976 in London, living in Los Angeles) first became known for his large-scale photograms, seemingly abstract images that in fact tell the story of their own making. Produced by folding and processing light-sensitive paper, the works develop patterns of angles, creases, and folds, while their colors are generated by the chemicals of the developing process.

In 2006, for his "Travel Pictures" series, shot in the then-recently defunct Iraqi Diplomatic Mission in Berlin, Beshty explored the damage that airport security X-ray scanners can do to images, making them not only "relics" of a particular place but of his own travel experience as a whole. In 2007, pursuing his reflection on displacement and global transit, he produced his first "FedEx Sculptures," in which shatterproof glass boxes are shipped to various destinations in standard FedEx containers—the works' final appearance being determined by the damage accumulated while travelling. Displayed alongside the material evidence of these journeys—the opened FedEx boxes complete with waybills, time stamps, and dated forms—these glass sculptures reveal the violence of globalization that most commodities conceal and thus demonstrate the artwork's vulnerability as a body moving across international borders.

His "copper" works from the 2010s register the manipulation and labor involved in their production, installation, and displacements. Much like film capturing a moment in time, they map the actions that have brought them into existence, and interrogate the space within

which contemporary art and its discourse are produced and distributed, positing the art object as perennially open and dynamic, rather than finite and static.

MAMCO's exhibition brings together these different bodies of work. It begins on the ground floor, with a "mirrored floor" installation that breaks and cracks under the weight of viewers and museum staff during the course of the exhibition. On the first floor, a series of rooms arranged as semi-autonomous clusters provides an overview of Beshty's work. The exhibition pays particular attention to the artist's use of "scripts" to generate forms, spotlight the "institutional critique" that runs through his work, and underscore the relationship between his essentially conceptual practice and a poetic form of debris art, as seen in the series of works made from shredded reject images, ironically titled "Selected Works."



Walead Beshty, Office Work (Apple iBook-Intel Core 2 Duo/2.13 13-inch), 2016
Apple iBook Intel Core 2 Duo/2.13 13-inch, steel, extension cord, timer
183 x 43 x 44 cm
court. the artist, Regen Projects, Los Angeles, and Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Zurich
Photo Stefan Altenburger



Walead Beshty, FedEx® Medium Art Box©2011 FEDEX 163095 REV 7/11, 2012
Laminated glass, FedEx shipping box, accrued FedEx shipping and tracking labels, silicone, metal, tape 86 x 10 x 71 cm court. the artist, Regen Projects, Los Angeles Photo Robert Acklen



Walead Beshty, Travel Pictures [Tschaikowskistrasse 17 in multiple exposures* (LAXFRATHF/TXLCPH-SEALAX) March 27–April 3, 2006] *Contax G-2, L-3 Communications eXaminer 3DX 6000, and InVision Technologies CTX 5000, 2012 Chromogenic print 225 x 127 cm court. the artist, Regen Projects, Los Angeles and Thomas Dane Gallery, London Photo Hugh Kelly



Walead Beshty, El Circo Contemporáneo (February 17–March 1, 2015: Cerámica Suro Contemporánea, Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico), 2015
Ceramica Suro slip cast remnants, glaze, firing plates
129 x 107 x 122 cm
court. the artist, Regen Projects, Los Angeles, and Petzel Gallery, New York
Photo Robert Acklen



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

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The current exhibitions are supported Fondation de bienfaisance du Groupe Pictet, de la Fondation genevoise de bienfaisance Valeria Rossi di Montelera, de Serge Aboukrat, Soizic Audouard, Christian Bernard, Caroline Bourgeois, Christoph Doswald, Marc Jancou, Benjamin Kaufmann, Andrea Kowalski et de Zurich Insurance Company Ltd.

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Monday: closed Tuesday–Friday: 12-6pm Saturday–Sunday: 11-6pm

Free entry in 2019