

MAMCO GENEVA

11.10.17–04.02.18

PRESS KIT

William Leavitt, *Retrospective*

General Idea, *Photographs (1969-1982)*–extended

*Narrative Art*

*Fictional Artists*

Gordon Matta-Clark, *Food*

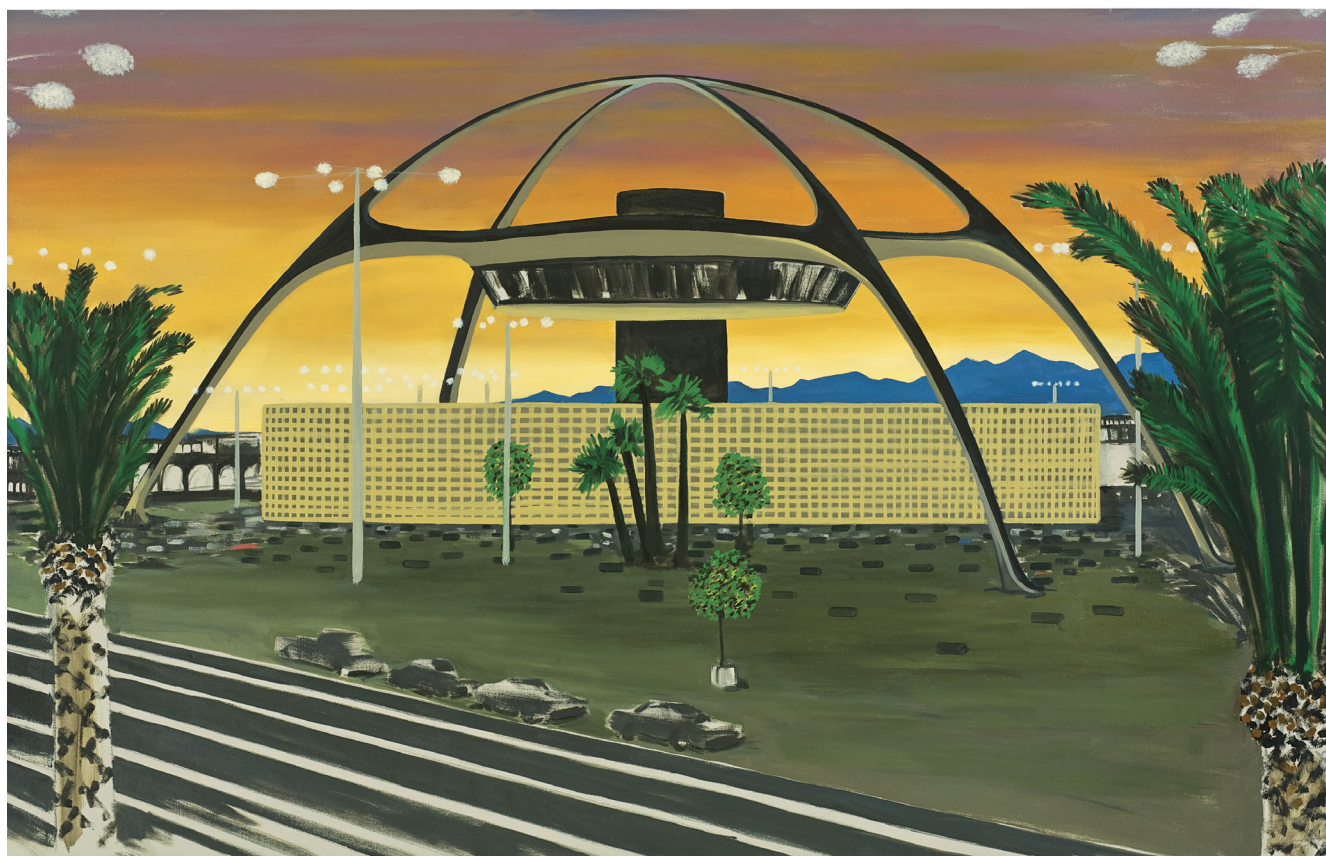
Adrian Piper, *The Mythic Being*

Martha Rosler, *House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home*

Allen Ruppersberg, *The Never Ending Book*

**Opening: Tuesday October 10, 2017 – 6pm**

**10, rue des Vieux-Grenadiers, 1205 Geneva**



William Leavitt, *Theme Restaurant*, 1986.

Oil on canvas. 116,84 × 182,88 cm, Collection Richard S. Massey, Miami (FL)

# PRESS RELEASE

William Leavitt, *Retrospective*

General Idea, *Photographs (1969–1982)*–extended

*Narrative Art*

*Fictional Artists*

Gordon Matta-Clark, *Food*

Adrian Piper, *The Mythic Being*

Martha Rosler, *House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home*

Allen Ruppersberg, *The Never Ending Book*

**Exhibitions from October 11, 2017 until February 4, 2018**  
**Press conference Tuesday October 10, 2017, 11 am**

This fall, MAMCO is organizing the first European retrospective of William Leavitt (born in 1941, Washington, USA), an historic figure of the Los Angeles art scene. Deployed on the entirety of the first floor, this exhibition brings together pieces ranging between 1970 until now. Through his installations, drawings and paintings, play and sound performances, Leavitt re-examines the production of the Western imaginary, as imposed, since the end of WWII, by the "Hollywood factory." Through a selection of parts of stage sets, the isolation and recombination of fragments coming from everyday culture, which often conceals a conservative social order and politics, the artist turns these representations inside out: he makes us see them as conceptual frameworks in which stories (fictional ones or from our own lives) can be set.

This show, organized by Lionel Bovier and Julien Fronsacq, is thus an opportunity to go back over several issues in art history, whether it be the 1970s movement of

"Narrative Art" or the fictional dimension present in the practice of General Idea, whose exhibition is extended until the beginning of February. Narration is also at the heart of a project devoted to fictional artists by David Lemaire, and the ensemble of works by Adrian Piper and Martha Rosler, respectively brought together by Elise Lammer and Sophie Costes.

This sequence is the third phase of a method of investigation into the art of the past decades, inaugurated by *Zeitgeist* in spring, and then continued with the series of exhibitions organized around the retrospective of Kelley Walker in the summer. In this way, MAMCO has been offering, via a system of nested presentations, a prismatic reading of the artistic movements and debates that have traversed our era. This singular museographical proposition, the result of the collective work of the curators of the MAMCO and its associated curators, is itself set in the heritage of the "global exhibition" concept, which has been prevalent in the museum ever since its opening in the 1990s.

# Adrian Piper, *The Mythic Being*

An exhibition organized by Elise Lammer

**Adrian Piper (born 1948 in New York, lives and works in Berlin) is a major figure of first-generation American Conceptual art, and a philosopher specialized in analytic philosophy, particularly in the writings of Immanuel Kant.**

Between 1973 and 1975 Piper developed and embodied *The Mythic Being*, a male alter ego who manifested himself during performances, in newspaper ads, drawings, and a series of black and white photographs. Deciding to completely change her appearance, Piper went out to public and private events as a drag, sporting a short curly wig, reflective sunglasses, a moustache, and dark pants. Piper sometimes also adopted a hunched posture and aped masculine movements and behavior in order to conceal her breasts and be more convincing. Each month *The Mythic Being's* experience was shaped by a passage of Piper's journal, that she had kept since 1961. Conceived as a "witness in disguise", as Piper would explain, *The Mythic Being* would repeat and meditate the same entry, like a mantra, until the personal meaning and significance of the sentence would be transcended. During the project Piper placed ads in the gallery section of New York's *Village Voice*. In each advertisement, *The Mythic Being* appeared together with a speech bubble containing the selected mantra. The project was also documented in posters, notably when Piper was invited by Robert Horvitz to lecture at Rhode Island School of Design in 1975, a period during which, in order to maintain her autonomy, she attempted to turn her back to the art world by only producing works that were publicly avail-

able through media distributed widely by using cheap means of reproduction. In his 1973 film, *Other Than Art's Sake*, Australian artist Peter Kennedy documented and interviewed Piper in the only film footage showing her performing *The Mythic Being* in the streets of New York, in which one can fully experience the reaction of her accidental audience.

The series of original black and white photographs show *The Mythic Being* evolving in a more personal and familiar environment, posing with friends or family, subtly revealing the visual and psychological shift between the fictional persona and Piper herself; from external behaviour to internal self-consciousness. In 1975, the last year of the project, the aesthetic and formal characteristics of *The Mythic Being* seemed to become secondary to Piper, and evolved into more static forms of alien confrontation, with series of photographic portraits of the artist, undisguised, aggressively addressing her audience in speech bubbles, thus letting *The Mythic Being* bridge the confrontation of the self and the other.

This exhibition is organized in collaboration with the Adrian Piper Research Archive Foundation Berlin.

# MAMCO GENEVE

## Press Office

For all requests, information and visuals, please contact:

Press Office  
presse@mamco.ch  
tel. +41 22 320 61 22

## Informations

MAMCO  
Musée d'art moderne et contemporain, Geneva  
10, rue des Vieux-Grenadiers  
CH-1205 Geneva  
tel. +41 22 320 61 22  
fax +4122 781 56 81

[www.mamco.ch](http://www.mamco.ch)

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.

Regular admission: CHF 8.–  
Reduced admission: CHF 6.–  
Group admission: CHF 4.–

## Partners

MAMCO is overseen by FONDAMCO, which is made up of Fondation MAMCO, the Canton, and City of Geneva. FONDAMCO would like to thank all its partners, both public and private, and in particular Famille Sandoz as well as Fondation Coromandel, Fondation Lombard Odier, Fondation de bienfaisance du Groupe Pictet, Fondation Casino Barrière de Montreux, Fondation Valeria Rossi di Montelera, Mirabaud, Richemont, and Sotheby's.

The exhibition of William Leavitt benefits from the support of the Fondation du Jubilé de la Mobilière Suisse Société Coopérative and of the Greene Naftali Gallery, New York.

The General Idea's exhibition received the generous support of Le Laboratoire and ReproSolution, Geneva.

MAMCO's fourth floor "A collection of spaces" exhibition would not have been possible without the essential support of Fondation Leenaards.

Media Partners: Bolero, Le Temps

Hotel Partners: Hôtel Tiffany, Le Richemond Genève – Dorchester Collection

Other Partners: Belsol, Café des Bains, La Clé, Payot, Transports Publics Genevois



RICHEMONT



FONDATION  
LOMBARD ODIER



Sotheby's

la Mobilière

LE TEMPS

BOLERO

PAYOT  
LIBRAIRE

σtpg

TIFFANYHOTEL  
GENEVE



SUBVENTIONNÉ  
PAR LA  
VILLE DE GENEVE



REPUBLIQUE  
ET CANTON  
DE GENEVE

fondation mamco

MAMCO GENEVE  
11.10.17-04.02.18