

MAMCO
GENEVE

AUTUMN EXHIBITIONS 2018
PRESS KIT

PATTERN, DECORATION & CRIME
MAI-THU PERRET

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PATTERN, DECORATION & CRIME ***MAI-THU PERRET***

PRESS RELEASE

This Fall, MAMCO explores, through a new set of exhibitions on the three floors of the museum, decoration as the true repressed of modernity.

This Fall, MAMCO examines the “Pattern & Decoration” movement, formed in the 1970s and that enjoyed international success in the 1980s, before fading in the decades thereafter. Most of the artists involved were reacting against the dominance of abstract schools in the post-War era, with a particular opposition to Minimal and Conceptual art. They also criticized the pervasive dominance of Western art and male artists in the context of modernism as a whole. Including an equal number of men and women, the group organized around “pattern and decoration” reconnected with what was widely perceived as “minor” art forms and asserted decoration as the true repressed of modernity.

Referencing ornamental motifs on wallpaper, patchwork quilts, or printed fabrics, the movement opened up Western art of the time to eclectic sources of inspiration : from Islamic decorative art, Byzantine and Mexican mosaics, to Turkish embroidery and Japanese prints, Indian rugs and Iranian miniatures. By creating works that blurred the boundaries between traditional paintings and decorative art objects, the movement’s artists — men and women alike — defined their position at the intersection between artistic disciplines, spearheading a critique of the traditional demarcation between the “fine” and “applied” arts. Finally, by

reviving interest in long-undervalued crafts and asserting the right to bring these techniques out of the domestic sphere and into the public world of art, they held much in common with the Feminist art movement of the 1970s.

“Pattern & Decoration” is justly viewed as an overlooked movement, but it served nonetheless as a springboard for a number of contemporary practices : taking an essentially historical approach, the exhibition aims to re-evaluate the movement and reassess its contribution in light of contemporary art today.

In order to make clear the contrast that the artists in the show “Pattern, Decoration & Crime” brought to the artistic landscape of their era, the third floor of the MAMCO has been rearranged around its collections. There can be found not only the Apartment, which here plays the role of a “period room” from the 1970s, but also new rooms devoted to Dan Flavin and post-minimal art. Furthermore, European artists, who are sometimes less well known, and who were associated with the dominant artistic movements of the 1960s-1970s, such as Fabio Mauri, Gianni Piacentino or Franz Erhard Walther, also benefit from a monographic presentation.

The museum’s first floor is devoted to a retrospective of the work of Mai-Thu Perret, a Swiss artist living in Geneva.

In recent years, Mai-Thu Perret's work has featured in large-scale exhibitions at institutions such as SFMOMA in San Francisco, the Renaissance Society in Chicago, the Chisenhale Gallery in London, the Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas, the Kunsthaus in Araau, the Bonnefantenmuseum in Maastricht, and the Haus Konstruktiv in Zurich, but this is her first major exhibition at MAMCO, following her nomination for the Manor Prize in 2011: a singular omission for an artist whose distinctive practice embraces disciplines from sculpture to film, ceramics and performance, referencing multiple sources from 20th-century avant-garde movements to Eastern philosophies, and blending methodologies to draw on her literary studies and her experience as a curator.

At the end of the 1990s, Mai-Thu Perret developed *The Crystal Frontier*, a fictional narrative of a community of women calling themselves *New Ponderosa Year Zero*, inspired by Llano del Rio, a real-life Socialist communitarian project established in the 1910s, in the Mojave Desert. The history of this fictional community is also the primary protocol for the artist's output of objects. Formally, the

works evoke Constructivism and the Bauhaus, movements that saw art as the catalyst for the construction of a new society and the revival of decorative forms often marginalized in the history of art. "I really think," declares the artist, "that men have dominated Western art history, and I am interested in histories that take account of marginal/forgotten figures or realities. I like using my work as a speculative space in which I can imagine alternative histories to come, stories that are still to be told."

Mai-Thu Perret adds new corpuses to her work each year — mannequins, ceramics, textiles, rattan sculptures, neon and more — like the successive chapters in a concrete, existential fiction. She does more than excavate the elements of modernism: she reinstates them in our present context, as narrative "shifters" at disposal to the viewer.

PATTERN, DECORATION AND CRIME

Lynda Benglis, Cynthia Carlson, Jennifer Cecere, Marc Camille Chaimowicz, Brad Davis, Noël Dolla, Sam Gilliam, Tina Girouard, Simon Hantaï, Valérie Jaudon, Richard Kalina, Joyce Kozloff, Robert Kushner, Thomas Lanigan-Schmidt, Alvin D. Loving, Kim MacConnel, Rodney Ripps, Tony Robbin, Miriam Schapiro, Alan Shields, Ned Smyth, George Sugarman, Claude Viallat, Betty Woodman, George Woodman, Mario Yrissarry, Robert Zakanitch, Joe Zucker

Curated by Lionel Bovier, Franck Gautherot, and Seungduk Kim, in collaboration with Le Consortium, Dijon. The exhibition received a United Way Worldwide Grant on behalf of the generosity of Soros Fund Charitable Foundation.

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Most of the artists involved were reacting against the dominance of abstract schools in the post-War era, with a particular opposition to Minimal and Conceptual art. They also critiqued the pervasive dominance of Western art and male artists in the context of modernism as a whole. Including an equal number of men and women, the group organized around “pattern and decoration” reconnected with what was widely perceived as “minor” art forms and asserted decoration as the true repressed of modernity. Referencing ornamental motifs on wallpaper, patchwork quilts, or printed fabrics, the movement opened up Western art of the time to eclectic sources of inspiration: from Islamic decorative art, Byzantine and Mexican mosaics, to Turkish embroidery and Japanese prints, Indian rugs and Iranian miniatures. By creating works that blurred the boundaries between traditional paintings and decorative art objects, the movement’s artists — men and women alike — defined their position at the intersection between artistic disciplines, spearheading a critique of the traditional demarcation between the “fine” and “applied” arts. Finally, by reviving interest in long-undervalued crafts and asserting the right to bring these techniques out of the domestic

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“Pattern & Decoration” is justly viewed as an overlooked movement, but it served nonetheless as a springboard for a number of contemporary practices: taking an essentially historical approach, the exhibition aims to re-evaluate the movement and reassess its contribution in light of contemporary art today. Essentially American, the “Pattern & Decoration” movement was supported by gallerists Holly Solomon in New York and Bruno Bischofberger in Switzerland, and was first formed by Valerie Jaudon, Tina Girouard, Joyce Kozloff, Robert Kushner, Kim MacConnel, Tony Robbin, Miriam Schapiro, Ned Smyth, Mario Yrissarry and Robert Zakanitch, quickly joined by Cynthia Carlson, Brad Davis, Richard Kalina, and Jane Kaufman, and enlarging later to Rodney Ripps, Betty Woodman, George Woodman, and Joe Zucker.

The exhibition also includes several pieces by artists associated with the Supports/Surfaces group, Noël Dolla and Claude Viallat, whose work has been widely revisited and reconsidered in recent years, together with works by Lynda Benglis, Jennifer Cecere, Marc Camille Chaimowicz, Sam Gilliam, Simon Hantaï, Thomas Lanigan-Schmidt, Alvin D. Loving, Alan Shields, and George Sugarman.



Cynthia Carlson, *Animated Struggle*, 1976
Acrylic on canvas
61 x 61 cm
Courtesy the artist
Photo Karen Bell



Alan Shields, *Reip Red River Rip or Honest to God Indian Soo*, 1971-1973
Wood, acrylic, canvas, beads
208.3 x 61 cm
Courtesy Alan Shields Estate and Van Doren Waxter



Tina Girouard, *Screen #4*, 1974-1975
Fabric piece
182.8 x 182.8 cm
Courtesy the artist
Photo Amy Bonwell



Marc Camille Chaimowicz, *Geneva Diptych, Leaning... with Chorus Girls and Sentinels*, 1984
Ppolyptych, oil and synthetic paint on wood, black and white photographs
7 elements 4 x (180 x 60 cm) 2 x (180 x 40cm) 1 x (180 x 48 cm), thickness 1.5 cm
Collection MAMCO

MAI-THU PERRET

The exhibition is organized by Lionel Bovier and Julien Fronsacq and is supported by the Fondation de bienfaisance du Groupe Pictet.

Born in 1976, Mai-Thu Perret's distinctive practice crosses a broad range of disciplines, from sculpture to film, ceramics and performance, incorporating multiple references (from avant-garde movements of the 20th century to Oriental philosophy) and fusing disparate methodologies culled from her academic literary background and her experience as a curator.

In the late 1990s, her fictional work *The Crystal Frontier* chronicled a community of women under the name 'New Ponderosa', inspired by Llana del Rio, a communitarian, socialist experiment established in the Mojave Desert in the 1910s. The history of Perret's fictional community is also her primary protocol for the production of objects. Her works are inspired by Constructivist and Bauhaus forms—movements which sought a role for art in the making of a new society, and which embraced artisanship and the decorative arts, both often marginalized in the history of Western art.

Year on year, Mai-Thu Perret adds to the concrete, existential fiction of her work, with new 'chapters' (mannequins, ceramics, textiles, wicker sculptures, neons, etc.) that do more than simply excavate elements of modernism: rather, she reinstates them in the present moment, making them available to the spectator as narrative "shifters."

MAMCO exhibition is organized in six "chapters": *New Ponderosa*, *Apocalypse Ballet*, *Evening of the Book*, *Arts & Crafts*, *Garden of Nothingness* and *Féminaire*.

By confronting Perret's work with conventional museum categories (abstraction, portraiture, decorative arts, etc.), the exhibition sheds new light on alternative narrative histories, and the collage of styles and genres so characteristic of Mai-Thu Perret's work.

Mai-Thu Perret's work has been the subject of major exhibitions in recent years, at SFMOMA in San Francisco, the Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago, London's Chisenhale Gallery, the Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas, the Araau Kunsthau, the Bonnefantenmuseum in Maastricht and the Haus Konstruktiv in Zurich, but this is her first large-scale show at MAMCO, following a much smaller presentation in 2011, when she was nominated for the Prix Manor Genève.

New Ponderosa

The town of Ponderosa, in California, has a population of just 16. Nonetheless, in the late 1990s, Mai-Thu Perret set about collecting and editing an oral history of the community under the title "New Ponderosa." "New Ponderosa Year Zero" is the story of a group of women in their 20s and 30s who choose to follow the activist Beatrice Mandell and create a self-sustaining community in the New Mexico desert. Perret's works derive their form and function from the possibilities and potential of narrative itself. Each text (diary extracts, songs, theoretical notes) corresponds to a speaker (Kim, Beatrice, Marina), a form of address (intimate, or to the community at large), a vision (forward-looking or retrospective), and a

sentiment or state of mind (inward- or outward-looking). Depending on their attribution (to Mai-Thu Perret or a member of the community), the works in the corpus range from utilitarian objects to artistic experiments. Together, they define a new space that eschews conventional hierarchies and embraces artisanship, fine art, literature and the visual arts, delving deep into modern and postmodern social history.

Apocalypse Ballet

Apocalypse Ballet is an installation devised for Mai-Thu Perret's 2006 solo exhibition at the Renaissance Society in Chicago, entitled *And every woman will be a walking synthesis of the universe*. An ensemble of mannequins is arranged to form a history of the body, in spheres ranging from medicine to politics, dance and film. The figures' poses evoke experiments in emancipation from the 1900s (*Lebensreform*, Monte Verità), and 1920s East-West propaganda (in particular, Russia's Spartakiad and American musicals), in which the body is instrumentalized and stripped of its individuality. The figures appear to dance around a giant teapot, itself a display space for small, abstract paintings.

According to the critic Walter Benjamin, the fetishization of the body is enacted by an illusionistic play on form, on a continuous spectrum from body to object, the living to the inert: a form of metamorphosis perfectly illustrated in a print by Jean-Jacques Granville appropriately titled *Apocalypse du Ballet* (1844), which shows wine glasses transforming into pairs of hands, and a dancer (literally) turning into a bobbin of thread.

Evening of the Book

An Evening of the Book (2007) is a film and installation, both produced at New York's celebrated experimental

performance venue, the Kitchen. The film is in three parts—*Holes and Neon*, *The Book and Dance of the Commas*—each projected onto a sheet of paper covered with Constructivist motifs. *An Evening of the Book* is a free adaptation of an eponymous stage work by artists Varvara Stepanova and Alexander Rodchenko (1924), associates of Russia's Constructivist movement who devoted themselves to the production of art in support of the Revolution, from 1920 onwards. Identically-dressed female dancers perform elementary gestures in a kind of moving, living tableau against a plain backdrop alternately filled by a black banner and fluorescent tubes. They are surrounded by props in the shape of commas: punctuation marks essential to basic sentence structure. The exhibition's subtle homage to Milca Mayerovà's danced alphabet (1926) is also expressed in an ensemble of sculptures. Motifs drawn from Constructivism, Minimalism, and modern dance achieve a strange stylistic harmony, as though Mai-Thu Perret sought to trace a fine line connecting ritual, propaganda, and the concept of modernity.

Arts & Crafts

This section presents an ensemble of items (carpets, wallpaper, tableware, lights) and techniques (ceramics, warp-weighted tapestry weaving, kilim weaving) which are often consigned by conventional museography and art history to disparate categories including the fine, decorative or applied arts, and folk art. The decorative arts encompass the many skilled crafts and disciplines involved in architecture and interior decoration but are distinguished from the fine arts due to their functional nature. The "applied arts" came to prominence with the rise of the modern movements; the term refers to the use of

design and decoration in the production of everyday objects.

Mai-Thu Perret engages with these notionally disparate spheres to emphasize what they include or exclude, and how: the decorative arts retained their hand-crafted character, while the applied arts gave way to industrial production techniques. However, the Arts & Crafts and Bauhaus movements (respectively 1860–1910 and 1919–1933) disrupted the close connection between artisanship and industry, and the registers of authorship and anonymity.

By revisiting motifs and techniques as wide-ranging as kilim rug-weaving, Sophie Taeuber-Arp's *Dada Bowl*, and warp-weighted tapestry weaving, Mai-Thu Perret sheds new light on what these practices have in common and deconstructs the traditional thinking behind their separate classification.

Garden of Nothingness

In the sole gallery overlooking the outside world, Mai-Thu Perret has designed a space which is simultaneously abstract and narrative, chiming with the symbolic system of Zen that has inspired so many contemporary western artists. A closure, partially obscuring MAMCO's windows, draws back-lit traces of lightning which depict the illumination of *Satori*, or spiritual awakening in Buddhism.

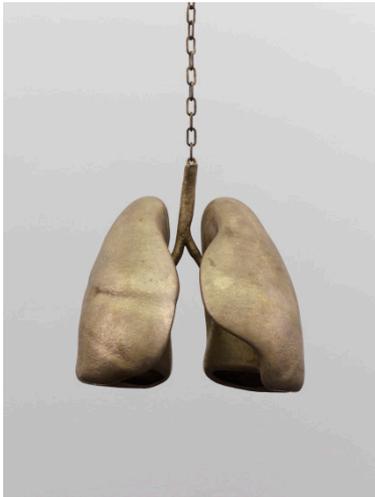
This new production is inspired by the Japanese garden *Ryōgin-an*, created in 1964 in the Kyoto region, which

organizes a spatial succession of stones in greenery, alongside a design using gravel, and a bamboo palisade decked with designs depicting lightning bolts.

The artist has made this enclosure chime with instruments for a possible ritual, an *Eventail des caresses* (Fan of Caresses), featuring a series of bronze bells shaped like human organs, including a uterus, lungs, and a heart. This installation is thus set around the Zen principle of an interpenetration between emptiness and fullness, while also evoking the modern aesthetic of a form of extra-western spirituality.

Féminaire

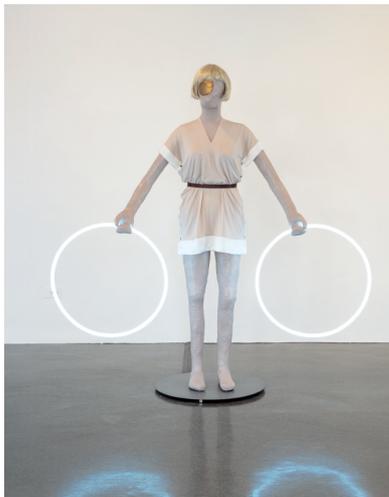
In spring 2017, Mai-Thu Perret staged an exhibition at her Los Angeles gallery under the title *Féminaire*. The show featured two differing displays: an ensemble of ceramics arranged in a grid on a wall, and a procession of female figures across a stage. Entitled *Les Guerillères* (like the 1969 novel by French feminist and revolutionary Monique Wittig) the female group is composed of stylized figures with readily-identifiable accessories (combat fatigues, Ranger Joe's military boots, machine guns). They are directly inspired by Kurdish women fighters who came together to form a resistance force at the beginning of the war in Syria, and were quickly adopted as media icons. At MAMCO the sculptures are shown facing banners that draw on motifs from abstract art and the vocabulary of classical heraldry.



Mai-Thu Perret, *Eventail des caresses (Poumons)*, 2018
Bronze, variable dimensions
Collection Mai-Thu Perret
Photo: Annik Wetter



Mai-Thu Perret, *The Crack-Up IV*, 2009
Carpet Paintings, acrylic framed in wood
240 x 180 cm
Courtesy Blondeau & Cie, Geneva



Mai-Thu Perret with Ligia Dias, *Apocalypse Ballet (The White Rings)*, 2006
Figure in steel, wire, papier mâché, acrylic, gouache, wig, neon tubes, steel base,
175 x 165 x 165 cm
The Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago, vue d'exposition
Collection Rubell Family, Miami



Mai-Thu Perret, *Little Planetary Harmony*, 2006
Aluminum, wood, plaster, latex paint, neon, acrylic on wood, interior paintings (acrylic on wood)
356 x 643 x 365 cm
Coll. Aargauer Kunsthaus, Aarau

RICHARD NONAS

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 set up each sculpture to open then close again the part of the world where it is standing. I set it up to transform a totally new story into human existence. I set up my sculptures to give shape to a changing past. To recognise the very possibility of history in a world that is fleeing 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's 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's 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.

DAN FLAVIN

In 1964, in his now-seminal article, *Specific Objects*, Donald Judd wrote: "Half or more of the best new work in the last few years has neither been painting nor sculpture." While somehow writing a manifesto for his own work, Judd was also describing works which were later to be grouped together under the term Minimal art.

The previous year, Dan Flavin (1933–1996) hung on the wall of his studio a single industrial fluorescent tube, which he entitled *The Diagonal of May 25 (to Constantin Brancusi)* dedicated to Brancusi's *Endless Column*. This minimal, radical action, laid the foundations of his future work, set in a varied series of combinations using four modules of fluorescent tubes in nine colors.

The dedication of this work places it in a series of homages to historical or political events, to artists (*Monuments for V. Tatlin*), philosophers (*Untitled, to Harold Joachim*), and friends (*Fondly to Margo*).

Flavin's most famous series, *Monuments for Tatlin*, stretched from 1964 to 1982. The works are generally organized around a principle of total symmetry, while respecting the proportional scale of the constituent parts. Most use fluorescent daylight or a cool white light. These "monuments" allude to the (unfinished) project for the *Monument to the Third International* commissioned by Lenin in 1920, in which Tatlin first viewed light as a material in its system of construction.

Flavin's art, which was unclassifiable when it appeared on the New-York art

scene, has been installed in unusual areas: in corners, corridors, or blocking visitors' progression... It shows an installation mastery to such an extent that the artist did not want his work to survive him, considering that he alone was capable of installing it.

The light from the fluorescent tubes passes over the material limits of the object, sculpting space, wiping out the angles of the exhibition space, enveloping the spectators in its colored field, while keeping up an intimate dialogue with the architecture, for which several works have been especially conceived.

Since the end of the 20th century, Flavin's work set a precedent, and luminous installations so widely present in contemporary art derive from the route he opened up between painting and sculpture.

FABIO MAURI

The exhibition is organized by Lionel Bovier and made possible thanks to the long-term loan of works by Fabio Mauri in the collection of the Mattioli-Rossi Foundation.

Fabio Mauri (1926–2009) was a well-known literary figure and a close friend of Pier Paolo Pasolini, Umberto Eco, and Italo Calvino: the archetypal post-war Italian artist/intellectual. Based in Rome, he developed a unique body of work throughout the second half of the 20th century, allied to contemporary art movements (New Realism, Spatialism, Pop art, Arte Povera) and yet resistant to any of these classifications.

Mauri discovered the world of publishing from an early age: his father was one of the first to import American comics to Italy, in the 1930s, and Mauri soon began to manipulate imagery drawn from the print media (Italian comics, known as *fumetti*, and press photographs). Profoundly affected by the war, he traced the slide from fascism to other forms of ideological conditioning, and quickly grasped the significance of mass media for society in the 1950s and 1960s. In 1957, he began work on his series *Schermi*: canvases depicting empty screens, open to the projections of the public. His distinctive approach to monochrome—the quest for the absolute or “Degree Zero” in painting (a focus for many artists of the period) - was characterized by the prominent role of the media in his work, as a set of symbolic forms and as a material in its own right. Mauri’s work explores collective memory and the political suppression of the trauma of World War II, together with the language and tools for the making of fiction, especially cinematic fiction, which he saw as a formidable structure for the diffusion of propaganda.

In the 1970s, Mauri moved from painting to performance. With Italy in the grip of powerful political tensions, he produced *Che cosa è il fascismo* in Rome in 1971 (Stabilimenti Safa Palatino), and projected a film by Pasolini onto the filmmaker’s own body, for a 1975 performance at Galleria d’Arte Moderna in Bologna. Fabio Mauri’s practice has enjoyed renewed international acclaim in recent years. His work is all the more relevant in today’s political climate, with far-right movements on the upsurge in both Europe and the United States. Mauri confronts society’s efforts to shake off the yoke of history, and the role of the media in the dissemination of far-right ideologies.

FRANZ ERHARD WALTHER

Franz Erhard Walther, born in Fulda (Germany) in 1939, has since the 1950s been developing work that examines the role of spectators in the grasping of a piece, and also its status. As the creator of the famous *1-Werksatz (First Work Set)* which is made up of 58 objects to be put into motion, he has turned public participation into one of the drivers of his art.

Fünf Nesselüberklebte Holzplatten. Unmassformen (1963), a five-part mural work, is contemporaneous with the birth of *Werksatz* (1963-1969), a period during which Walther was still a student at the Kunstakademie in Düsseldorf. There can already be found here his essential choice of materials, with the covering the of five panels by fabric which, as of 1963, was to become the actual material of all the objects in *First Work Set*. Thanks to this new material for painting and sculpture, the artist took a step forwards in terms of the classic use of matter, which also implied a change of procedure: sewing was now to become his sole production technique.

Fünf Nesselüberklebte Holzplatten. Unmassformen can be displayed on a wall according to a variable geometry. While it is still part of the pictorial world, given its relationship with hanging, this piece, which is run through with emptiness, also greaves over such concerns in at least two ways: when it comes to the image, or the wholeness of a picture, of which only spaces, fragments, or leftovers are presented. Such pictorial be-reavement is also graphic, given that the

practice of drawing was a foundation point for Walther: the three fabric ribbons, which come down from the wall and which make up *Drei Bänder* (1963), are lines outside the page which bring into their identity the artist's material conversion, which is fundamental for him. And which, just like the five mural panels, embody a proto minimalism.

More recently, *Skulptur und Bild nicht zu trennen* (1986) is a mural set-up that reaches out towards the spectator. As opposed to the two pieces from 1963, colour, which is a highly important factor in Walther's work, is clearly present, his choice always being a carefully personal one. While being neither really a painting, nor a sculpture strictly speaking, this vertical arrangement, going with the human stature, can integrate an artist. He or she can then activate it in at least two ways: by standing up in one of the two alcoves, and by putting on the cotton jacket hung on one of the panels to their right. He or she is then wearing the same colour and is transformed into a part of the piece. Their actions (*Handlung*), which here come down neither to a real performance nor a happening, allow them to spread out the meaning and outreach of the piece by becoming embodied as a site and a tool for the work. In this way, Walther has deeply renewed the framework of art and greatly anticipated, as early as 1963, the relational practices that would occupy the artistic limelight many years later.



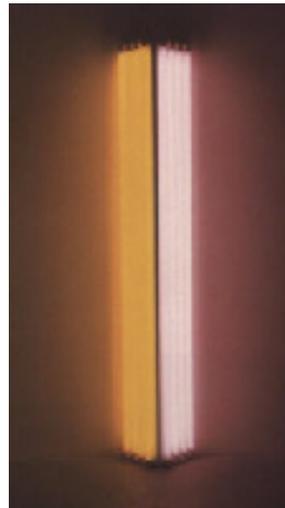
Richard Nonas, *Riverrun (from Swerve to Bend)*, 1994-2013
37 steel bars and 2 wooden wall pieces
20 bars of 180 x 15 x 15 cm each; weight 316 kg each, 17 bars of 180 x 14 x 14 cm each; (weight 275 kg each)
Collection the artist, long-term loan to MAMCO



Fabio Mauri, *The End*, 2006
Iron, graphite, PVC, 40 X 40 X 10 cm
Fondation Mattioli-Rossi, long-term loan to MAMCO



Gianni Piacentino, *Dull Violet Inclined Window Object, I*, 1967-1968
Coated polyester and painted wood,
Dimensions: 130 x 60 x 25 cm
Private collection, long-term loan to MAMCO



Dan Flavin, *Untitled (Fondly to Margo)*, 1986
Ed. 1/3, yellow and pink fluorescent lamps
243.8 x 243.8 x 21.6 cm
Mattioli-Rossi Foundation, long-term loan to MAMCO

MAIL ART ESPACE ECART

The post-Fluxus activities of the Genevan artists' group and the Ecart gallery/publishing house have found, since 2017, a site of re-emergence, thanks to a partnership between MAMCO, HEAD – Geneva, and the Print Room of the Musée d'art et d'histoire—and the complicity of John M Armleder. The museum space devoted to Ecart provides the possibility to show the ongoing inventory process, reactivate works from the 1970s, and host artistic projects or performances.

The current exhibition, stemming from Ecart's archives, presents a series of works and documents associated with Mail art, a system of postal communication set up by artists as an alternative to institutions and galleries. Letters, collages, and editions, but also stamps and artists' books, thus circulated among an informal, international network, whose paternity is often attributed to the American Ray Johnson (1927–1995). His exchanges with the Canadian David Zack (1938–1995), which are presented here, attest to a desire to desacralize and democratize art works through Mail art.

In the 1970s, the Ecart gallery became a place of exchanges and encounters for Mail art practitioners. In 1974, David Zack produced the *CV Nut Art Show*, an exhibition in which he presented his abundant correspondence, accompanied by a catalogue in the form of an envelope. The gallery's program also featured other correspondents, such as the American Anna Banana (*1940) or the Hungarian Endre Tót (*1938)—for whom Mail art provided the possibility to elude the censorship of the Eastern Bloc. Finally, the Ecart group was invited to present a project at the Venice Biennale in 1976, where it invited dozens of artists from the entire

world to send in their contributions using post cards.

These postal exchanges were also opportunities to use and develop rubber stamps, thus allowing the artists to parody bureaucratic practices. In 1974, in an attempt to draw up a repertory of this phenomenon, the French-Canadian artist Hervé Fischer (*1941) published an anthology, which he presented during an exhibition tour. Fischer's visit to Geneva encouraged the Ecart group to produce with him a second volume of newer rubber stamps. As their production had now become exponential, this work was never to be completed, even if a volume of 310 pages, presented here on pallets, was actually printed.

The exhibition gathers together these different projects, thus reconstructing a fragment of Zack's show, displaying a series of artists' rubber stamps, contributions by Tót, and a documentation on the *Venetian Tools Project*. At the end of the exhibition, the book "Tampons d'artistes. Volume II" will be bound and distributed. This exhibition has been organized by Lionel Bovier and Elisabeth Jobin. It is part of the research project "Ecart. Une archive collective," conducted by HEAD – Geneva, in partnership with the MAMCO, whose objective is to valorize and index the Ecart Archives.

Ecart's archives Website
www.archivesecart.ch



Exhibition view
Photos Annik Wetter–MAMCO, Geneva



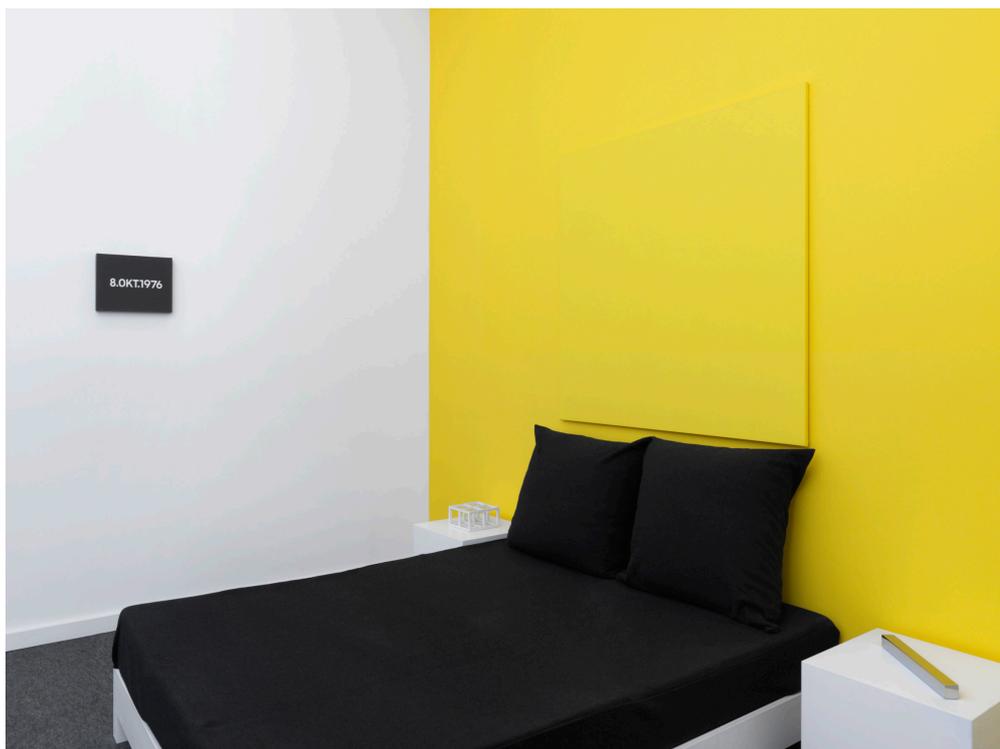
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THE APARTEMENT

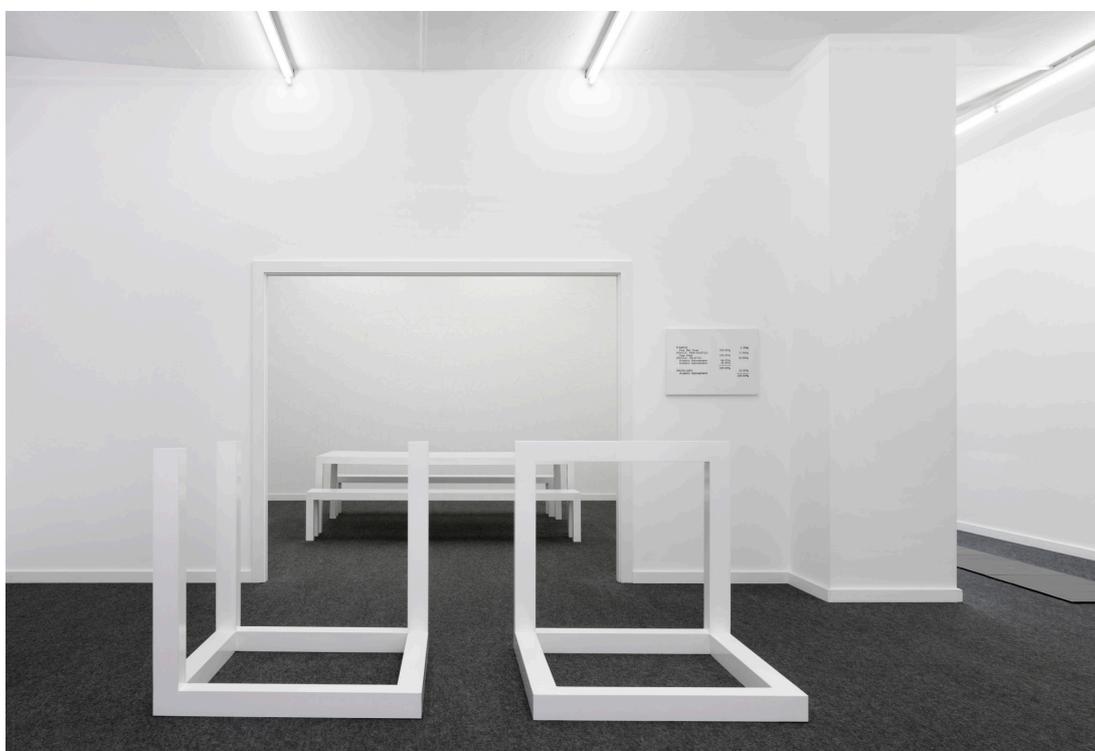
The "Apartment" is no ordinary exhibition space. Located on the museum's third floor, it is a reconstruction of the Paris apartment where, from 1975 to 1991, Ghislain Mollet-Viéville worked to promote Minimal and Conceptual art. Calling himself an "art agent," Mollet-Viéville initially organized his living and work space to conform with the protocols of the works in his collection, before deciding to yield to the consequences of their "dematerialization" and move to a new apartment with no visible works. This meant his collection could be entrusted to MAMCO when it opened, in 1994. In 2016-2017, the private Foundation of the museum acquired a large part of it.

This selection of 25 works is representative of the work of the first-generation Minimalist artists such as Carl Andre, Donald Judd, and John McCracken, and of their Conceptual counterparts — Joseph Kosuth, Sol LeWitt and Lawrence Weiner, for example. If the former explore a lexicon of elementary, logical, and radical forms that keep at bay any anthropomorphism and narrative features, the latter mainly offer protocols for execution, turning the collector into an agent on whom the works' material existence depends. Both have dispensed with pedestals, frameslighting, and all other *mise-en-scène* props, in favor of an immediate intellectual and sensory experience.

Compared with MAMCO's other galleries, the "Apartment" sets the works the challenge of a domestic setting. For visitors this means the opportunity to experience them on more intimate terms, in a space where they are invited to step outside the conventions, whether attending a lecture, a special event, or simply pausing to read and to linger a while in the company of works that have been talking among themselves for several decades now.



Exhibition view of L'Appartement
Photo: Annik Wetter – MAMCO, Geneva



Exhibition view of L'Appartement
Photo: Annik Wetter – MAMCO, Geneva

A COLLECTION OF SPACES

MAMCO's fourth floor re-opens after a few weeks of renovation works, in a brandnew configuration gathering artists' spaces. On one hand are artworks which have entered the museum's collection, and on the other, new spaces dedicated to archives and curated in collaboration with artists.

Claude Rutault's Inventaire (1989-1994) gathers the entirety of his definitions/methods, represented by raw canvases, canvasespainted in white or painted over in gray, as a way to record their current state of realisation—respectively non-realised, realised, or cancelled. This ensemble, first presented at MAMCO in 1994 and integrated since within the museum's collection, is a form of seismograph of Rutault's practice. It is now re-installed following the artist's wish, and an outside wall allows the update of any of the works. *Sarkis' L' Atelier depuis 19380*, set up at the MAMCO since 1994, is the only environment which still bears witness to the wooden "cabins" that characterized the museum when it first opened. The artist considers this space as a "travel studio" which, once or twice a year, he occupies to resume his work. What is on display in this space is however not the fabrication of a particular piece, but rather the sedimentation of his work. Some works are thus hung, displaced, sometimes removed, put in dialogue with one another, as if part of a maintenance ritual. Surrounding the studio the presentation of other projects from the artist of which the museum keeps an important number in its collection. These two historical artists' spaces adjoin rooms dedicated to the Ecart Archives and the Concrete Poetry Cabinet of Maurizio Nannucci and Gabriele Detterer.

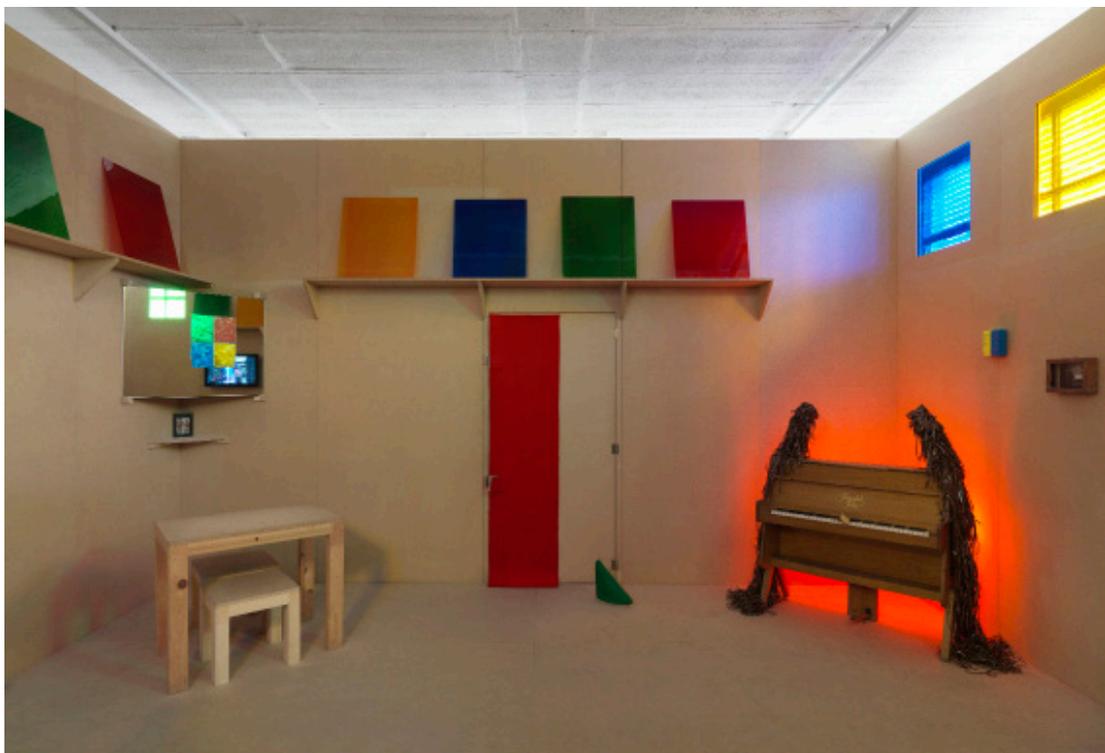
The *Concrete Poetry Cabinet* is dedicated to an international artistic and literary movement which widespread from Europe to South America as well as in Asia. As early as the 1950s, artists such as Augusto and Haroldo De Campos, Bob Cobbing, Eugen Gomringer, Jiri Kolar, Ferdinand Kriwet, Robert Lax, Franz Mon, Seiichi Nii-kuni, Dieter Roth, Gerhard Rühm, Emmet Williams, or Henri Chopin, produced poems, books, and sound pieces by using information technologies available at the time (typewriter, Verifax copier, Letraset, offset, etc.). The Cabinet is made of 30'000 artworks and documents brought together by Zona Achives, which under the auspices of Maurizio Nannucci, is one of the biggest private collection on Europe.

This gathering of artists' spaces on the fourth floor of the museum is intended both to offer a representation of the singularity of the MAMCO collections—through the emphasis on protocol, score and collaboration with the artist as nodal points of the collection's politics—, and to allow ephemeral, performative and living forms to find a place in its midst. This articulation between archives, collections, and performative formats is also a proposition which is new for the museographic field and its codified practices.

Sophie Costes, Curator in charge of MAMCO collections, worked on the redeployment of Sarkis' studio and, with artist Emilie Parendeau, of Rutault's inventory ; Paul Bernard, Curator at MAMCO, was in charge of the organization of the Concrete Poetry Cabinet; and the Ecart display was organized by Lionel Bovier. The Concrete Poetry Cabinet and the Ecart space are generously supported by Fondation Leenaards.



Cabinet de poésie concrète, Vue de l'exposition au MAMCO, 2017
Collection Zona Archives, Florence. Photo : Annik Wetter – MAMCO, Geneva



Sarkis, *L'Atelier depuis 19380*, 1994-2017. Vue de l'exposition au MAMCO, 2017
Collection MAMCO, Photo : Annik Wetter – MAMCO, Geneva

INFORMATIONS AND PARTNERS

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The Museum is open Tuesday through
Friday from noon to 6pm, the first Wed-
nesday of the month until 9pm, and -Sa-
turday and Sunday from 11am to 6pm.
Closed on -Mondays.

Regular admission: CHF 15.–
Reduced admission: CHF 10.–
Group admission: CHF 5.–

Partners

MAMCO is overseen by FONDAMCO,
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Fondation Valeria Rossi di Montelera,
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