



MAMCO
GENEVE

SEASON 2
SUMMER 2026 - SUMMER 2027

MAMCO x MAH
SYLVIA SLEIGH
REFAIRE COLLECTION

MAMCO x SASA
JOANNA HADJITHOMAS
& KHALIL JOREIGE

MAMCO x GTG
DEREK FORDJOUR

MAMCO x EPG
GUAN XIAO

MAMCO x KBCB (BIENNE)
MIRELLA BENTIVOGLIO

PRESS
KIT

info@mamco.ch
presse@mamco.ch

www.mamco.ch
T + 41 22 320 61 22

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	p. 3
MAMCO x MAH Musée Rath 05.06-25.10.2026 <i>Sylvia Sleigh</i> – monographic exhibition <i>Refaire collection</i> – polygraphic exhibition	p. 5
MAMCO x SaSA 05.09-15.11.2026 Joanna Hadjithomas & Khalil Joreige - intervention in the archaeological site	p. 7
MAMCO x GTG 27.01-14.02.2027 Derek Fordjour, <i>Fly Away</i> – cinematic installation	p. 8
MAMCO x EPG Temple de Châtelaine 23.04-12.06.2027 Guan Xiao – monographic exhibition	p. 9
MAMCO x KBCB (Bienne) Summer 2027 Mirella Bentivoglio, <i>Saboter le langage</i> – monographic exhibition	p. 10
Iconography	p. 12
Partners	p. 17

Previous page :

Sylvia Sleigh (1916- 2010), *Marjorie Strider*, 1977, oil on canvas, 91.4 x 61 cm,
collection Ellen + Michael Ringier, photo © Sylvia Sleigh

INTRODUCTION

A recent statistical analysis—the first in our history—showed that 21% of the artists represented in MAMCO’s collection are women (73% are men, 4% are collectives, and 2% are artists whose gender is not recorded). The findings of that exercise expose biases that are embedded not only in most museum collections, but also in the very foundations of Modern art and its institutions.

The course of art history changed dramatically in the 1970s as feminist practices came to the fore. Approached as politics of representation, the works of figures like Sylvia Sleigh and the Guerrilla Girls crystallized some of the most fundamental questions artists began to pose about the art system and the stories it told about itself. Linda Nochlin’s initial response to the title of her 1971 essay “Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?” was pointedly radical and ironically phrased: “Because art history has been written by men.” She went on to give a more detailed answer: “The injustice is even deeper, stemming from the educational and institutional system of the art world, from the vision of reality rooted in the dominant, white, male, and Western tradition.” Griselda Pollock and Roszika Parker examined the historical context behind these gender biases and this Eurocentric viewpoint in greater depth in their 1981 book *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology*, showing how women artists had been intentionally excluded from the Modern canon.

At the same time, there came a wider realization that the dominant narrative of Modern and contemporary art had also pushed artists from cultural minorities and underrepresented geographies into the shadows. Writing in 1989, Rasheed Araeen called for an alternative art history that tells the story of other artists—a philosophy that now permeates cultural diversity policies across the museum sector: “This is a unique story. It is a story that has never been told. Not because there was nobody to tell the story, but because it only existed in fragments, each fragment asserting its own autonomous existence removed from the context of collective history. It is ... a story of those men and women who defied their ‘otherness’ and entered the modern space that was forbidden to them, not only to declare their historic claim on it but also to challenge the framework which defined and protected its boundaries.”

Following a season spent reflecting on MAMCO’s role in its immediate context and clarifying its position in the cultural ecosystem it has inhabited for the past three decades, our focus for the next one—which runs from June 2026 through June 2027—turns to this plurality of art histories.

To this end, using the spaces of the Musée Rath, we will put on a solo show of Sylvia Sleigh’s works, and her distinctive “nude portraits” in particular, and explore what a museum collection based on women artists working between the early 20th century and the present day might look like. Alongside the opening of a new cultural venue housing archeological discoveries, the Site Bastion Saint-Antoine, Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige will present a project that employs archaeological methods to uncover buried narratives. A film by Derek Fordjour using choreography to highlight some of the constraints that racialized artists continue to face will be screened at the Grand Théâtre de Genève. And Chinese artist Guan Xiao will present her work at the Temple de Châtelaine, an architecturally and culturally distinctive setting that represents Western Modernism in decline.

INTRODUCTION

Decentering is always linked to artistic geography. It depends on the context in which the question is being considered: in Switzerland, with its unique cultural landscape; at MAMCO, with its particular institutional history; and, of course, within the broader social and political circumstances of the day. In a divided world marked by armed conflict, illiberal politics, and weakening international institutions, we nonetheless maintain that museums can change: that they can absorb new narratives and function as places where the key questions of our time are both posed and worked through. What feels both necessary and genuinely achievable—a quick win, perhaps—is something more modest: assessing how attending to these differences reshapes our understanding of the works we hold in our collections. The challenge, therefore, is to look again at how we frame contemporary art historiography—how we carve it into periods, and where we place the aesthetic boundaries between movements. To put it another way, when a museum chooses to show these artists, can it not also *expose* itself to other conceptual tools, other aesthetic categories, and other ways of framing the “short-time story” it is seeking to tell?

— Lionel Bovier

MAMCO x MAH SYLVIA SLEIGH REFAIRE COLLECTION

05.06–25.10.2026
MUSÉE RATH

The exhibition dedicated to Sylvia Sleigh, part of MAMCO's off-site program, is the result of a collaboration with the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire of Geneva. It unfolds across both floors of the Musée Rath in Geneva and is organized in two parts.

The ground floor is devoted to the presentation of Sylvia Sleigh's (1916–2010) work. A British painter from Wales, it was in New York, where she settled in 1961 with her husband (the art critic Lawrence Alloway) that she produced the majority of her work. The 1960s and 1970s were marked by her focus on portraiture, both individual and group. Through her paintings, she explored questions of representation, challenging, through her choice of poses, the gendered conventions inherited from Western art history. Her works also portray the artistic and intellectual community around her (artists, writers, friends) often depicted in domestic settings, and with whom she was actively engaged: she was a member of feminist collectives such as A.I.R. and SoHo 20. Likewise, her treatment of the nude, both male and female, rejects objectification in favor of individuation. Sleigh's work thus lies at the intersection of the history of representation, the domestic, and the intimate.

The exhibition presented by MAMCO is not the first institutional exhibition of Sleigh's work in Europe: in 2013-2014 a show organized by Kunsthalle St. Gallen travelled to Tate Liverpool and the CAPC Bordeaux. But it takes place within a renewed context of critical interest in her work, particularly regarding her approach to the nude and the proximity of her work to the feminist concerns of her time. Bringing together more than 35 paintings, it is structured in sections: the first addresses Sleigh's interest in motifs drawn from art history (the odalisque, the muse, Orientalist motifs, or Renaissance painting) which she reexamines through a reversal of gender roles. What happens when a classical female nude is replaced by a contemporary male nude? This shift in perspective leads to a second section focused on self-portraiture and the artist's involvement in the feminist project *Sister Chapel*. A third section brings together her portraits of women and men from the New York art scene of the 1970s: friends and intellectuals such as the artists Marjorie Strider and Sylvia Pauloo-Taylor, the gallerists Betty Parsons and Arnold Glimcher, as well as the group portrait of A.I.R. Together, they form a community, captured in domestic environments, and shaped by friendship and shared interests. Finally, the fourth and fifth sections present nudes portraits in which Sleigh emphasizes the individuality and subjectivity of each model. These works also reveal her strong interest in ornament, patterns, and textures, as well as in the iconography of the hippie counterculture in which she was immersed at the time.

The lower level of the Musée Rath presents the polygraphic exhibition, *Refaire Collection*, offering a broader historical framework for Sylvia Sleigh's practice. The project begins from a simple observation: at MAMCO, as in all the Swiss museums, works by women artists remain a minority within collections. The issue is structural, as research, acquisition, and valuation biases tend to favor men. How, then, can a collection—its lineages and its encounters—be reimagined?

MAMCO x MAH SYLVIA SLEIGH REFAIRE COLLECTION

05.06–25.10.2026
MUSÉE RATH

Drawing on MAMCO's collection as well as institutional and private holdings from the country, the exhibition highlights artists who, like Sylvia Sleigh, have questioned their place within art history through portraiture and the representation of the body. The selected works—paintings, sculptures, videos, drawings, and photographs—span more than a century, from 1902 (Jacqueline Marval) to 2022 (Jenna Gribbon). They address topics such as the politics of representation, iconography in art history, sisterhood, and empowerment.

With works by: Eleanor Antin, Alice Bailly, Louise Bourgeois, Louise Catherine Breslau, Aloïse Corbaz, Nicole Eisenman, Leonor Fini, Jenna Gribbon, Guerrilla Girls, Silvia Kolbowski, Marie Laurencin, Jacqueline Marval, Alice Neel, Meret Oppenheim, Pipilotti Rist, Suzanne Santoro, Joan Semmel, Kiki Smith, Suzanne Valadon, Hannah Wilke, and Irène Zurkinden.

The critical texts accompanying this section are developed in collaboration with Professor Giovanna Zapperi and her contemporary art seminar at the University of Geneva.

Project Team :

Curators: Lionel Bovier, Director of MAMCO, and Elisabeth Jobin, Curator at MAMCO

Sylvia Sleigh Expert : Andrew D. Hottle, Professor of Art History at Rowan University (New Jersey), leading specialist on Sleigh's work and scholarly advisor to the project

Academic Research and Contextual Section : Professor Giovanna Zapperi, University of Geneva, for the research partnership, with her contemporary art seminar

MAMCO x SASA
JOANA HADJITHOMAS
& KHALIL JOREIGE

05.09–15.11.2026
SITE ARCHÉOLOGIQUE
SAINT-ANTOINE

In the heart of the old town, on the Théodelinde esplanade, a new cultural space dedicated to Genevan archaeology is opening its doors. At the crossroads between a museum site and the cultural scene, the Site Archéologique Saint-Antoine (SaSA) invites visitors to rethink the relationship between heritage conservation and its promotion. For its opening SaSA invited MAMCO to propose a specific intervention by artists. The choice logically fell on Joana Hadjithomas & Khalil Joreige and more precisely on their series of works related to archeology.

Artists and filmmakers Joana Hadjithomas & Khalil Joreige (both born in 1969 in Beirut) have elaborated over the last decades a multimedia, research-based practice that confronts the inescapable course of the real and the emancipatory strength of image-making, fiction, and poetry. With their *Palimpsests*, *Time Capsules*, and *Trilogies*, exhibited at SaSA, they pursue their investigation into storytelling and the ways visual art give significance to realities that have long remained out of sight. Drawing on geological methodologies and collaborations with practitioners of rescue archaeology, the artists propose representations challenging the writing of history, the visibility of the invisible, and the vertigo induced by deep time. They state: "this body of works explores the invisible remains of cities buried beneath our contemporary towns, testifying to the impact of human presence on Earth and its traces. It is about shifts in scale and time, uncovering, recycling, and covering over again, and how manmade violence and climatic disruptions affect possible narratives."

Each work highlights a specific facet of their inquiry into subterranean worlds, through residues collected from sites in France, Greece, and Lebanon. *Palimpsests* records the visual fascination generated by acts of drilling, excavation, and construction. A scopic drift, the film combines drone footage and microscopic images, wide shots and close-ups, rapid edits, and long sequences to offer a vision of time that is both concrete and fantastical. *Time Capsules* proposes a visualization of history as a process of stratification, through the composition of uncovered core samples (rock, clay, artifacts, etc.). Here the artists devise a way to preserve and sculpt remnants that would otherwise be discarded. In the *Trilogies*, the notion of timeline is reconsidered through parallel possible narratives and various forms of representation (photography, drawing, text).

With their works dealing with archeology, Hadjithomas & Joreige unveils underground messengers and buried images to question where we stand within an ongoing cycle of ruptures, continuities and discontinuities, catastrophe, and regeneration.

Exhibition organised by Lionel Bovier

MAMCO x GTG DEREK FORDJOUR, FLY AWAY

27.01–14.02.2027
GRAND THÉÂTRE GENÈVE

MAMCO and the Grand Théâtre Genève, both of which are currently closed to the public for refurbishment, are joining forces to screen Derek Fordjour's film *Fly Away* (2020).

Fly Away is staging a central character—an African American jockey—accompanied by musicians playing in near darkness. The film grew out of a performance devised with choreographer and puppeteer Nick Lehane for the 2020 exhibition *Self Must Die* at New York's Petzel Gallery. It is set to a score that shifts between dramatic oboe (that would not be out of place in a Schoenberg composition) and a festive steel band. It depicts a puppet, dressed in horse-racing attire, performing a sequence of everyday actions—running, falling, making awkward gestures, and trying but failing to exude gravitas—with only a coffin and some confetti as props. The piece ends with a funeral jazz tribute to the jockey, who attempted to escape the constraints of white control, echoing Derek Fordjour's own attempt to operate within the arena of commerce while recognizing that freedom—particularly for a Black person in America—still has limits.

Since the 2010s, Derek Fordjour, born in 1974 in Memphis to Ghanaian parents, is building a practice around large-scale collages: layer upon layer of newspaper, cardboard, and glitter form the groundwork of his compositions. After applying successive coats of paint, he tears and reshapes the layered surface, producing an appearance that is simultaneously built-up and worn away. His exhibitions reveal a practice shaped by memory, drama, and catharsis. For his first major institutional solo show, held in 2020 at the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, visitors were invited to enter a makeshift shelter caught in the midst of a storm. His more recent exhibition *Nightsong*—presented at the David Kordansky Gallery in 2025 and described as a “giant music box in the dark”—was conceived as a tribute to Black American music.

Exhibition organised by Julien Fronsacq

Artistes : Derek Fordjour (USA) et Nick Lehane (USA)
Technical : Film, installation, single-channel digital video, color, sound
Dimensions : 32 minutes and 27 seconds, image ratio 16:9
Puppet Design : Robert Maldonado
Production Manager : Caren Celine Morris
Oboist : Stuart Breczinski
Lighting and Set Design : Marika Kent
Sound Design/Dramaturg : Christopher Darbassie
Movement Consultant : Joseph Lymous
Theatrical Design and Consultant : Seth Kelly
Costume Design : Rebecca Zammit
Props Design : Pablo Diaz
Props Coordinator : Maggie Ellis

MAMCO x EPG
GUAN XIAO

23.04-12.06.2027
TEMPLE DE CHÂTELAINÉ GENÈVE

The MAMCO invites Guan Xiao to present an exhibition in the Temple of Châtelaine, an unconventional venue for contemporary art. Built in 1959 by architects André and Francis Gaillard, this modern, almost brutalist building features a main hall measuring 15 × 15 meters, preceded by a vestibule and surrounded by a garden. This unusual space provides a singular setting to discover the work of an artist such as Guan Xiao.

Born in Chongqing in 1983, trained and based in Beijing, Guan Xiao emerged in the mid-2000s. Since her 2015 exhibition in Shanghai, she has developed series blending tradition and technology: hybrid assemblages, *gēndiāo* (traditional root sculptures in dialogue with oversized painter's palettes), and installations combining sculptures with kaleidoscopic wallpaper patterns evoking photographic studios. These works, now internationally acclaimed, have entered the collections of Cologne's Museum Ludwig and were featured in the 2015 New Museum Triennial, alongside artists associated with the so-called "post-Internet" generation.

Guan Xiao's work thrives on contrasts: archaic and industrial, natural and synthetic, intimate and spectacular. Rather than resolving these oppositions, she sustains them to sketch a non-binary world where artifacts and living beings coexist in a fertile tension. Drawing on Eastern mythologies and philosophical currents, she examines both archetypes and stereotypes, building her works upon rich semantic interplays.

Exhibition organised by Julien Fonsacq

MAMCO x KBCB MIRELLA BENTIVOGLIO

SUMMER 2027 KUNSTHAUS BIEL CENTRE D'ART BIENNE

The *Cabinet de Poésie Concrète* is a unique subcollection devoted to Concrete poetry that MAMCO created in 2017. The museum will draw on those holdings as it prepares an exhibition on Mirella Bentivoglio for the Kunsthaus Biel Centre d'art Bienne (KBCB). The show is being organized at the invitation of KBCB director Paul Bernard, who spent many years working on that collection.

Mirella Bentivoglio (1922–2017) was an artist, author, collector and curator known for her collaborative and critical approach to visual poetry. In the 1970s, she organized some of the first women-only group shows. Among them was *Materializzazione del linguaggio*, a visual poetry exhibition held alongside the 1978 Venice Biennale. The show served as a call for language to be feminized and its codes to be reappropriated. It held up a mirror to the politically charged Italian society of its day—a time when the feminist cause was amplified by radical intellectuals such as Carla Lonzi, who openly called for a *Rivolta Femminile* (“Women’s Revolt”).

Bentivoglio challenged the foundations of patriarchal culture from the margins, wielding language as her weapon. She operated from the premise that this language and this alphabet shape who we are but are riddled with bias, having been fixed and codified by men over the centuries, with the masculine set as the default. Bentivoglio and her female peers broke this structure apart, rearranged it and claimed it for themselves. Whether driven by activist, aesthetic, or conceptual aims, they set about dissecting language, stripping words of their meaning and clearing the ground for new codes to emerge. It was an act of sabotage in the fullest sense, because many of these artists fought this battle with both pen and body, using their own image to give form to the new systems they sought to build.

Mirella Bentivoglio: Sabotages situates the artist’s work within the intellectual and political context in which it emerged. The exhibition is divided into two parts: one dedicated to Bentivoglio herself, the other to the circle of artists around her.

The first part of the exhibition groups Bentivoglio’s works by theme—self-portrait, wordplay, negation, conjunction and symbols. It reveals how, across objects, books, and works on paper, she re-indexes language and its letters. She takes words apart on the page with a quiet irony to expose their double meanings; she rearranges them as ideograms; she turns poems into sculptures. Bentivoglio harbored a particular fascination for the letters “E” and “O” (the coordinating conjunctions “and” and “or” in Italian), which she treated in isolation to explore their full potential as unifiers, incorporators, and connectors, and as facilitators of choice and separation. In other works, she gave the letter “O” standalone physical form, turning it into an egg—the necessarily feminine source from which language springs.

MAMCO x KBCB
MIRELLA BENTIVOGLIO

SUMMER 2027
KUNSTHAUS BIEL
CENTRE D'ART BIENNE

The second part of the exhibition moves beyond words to examine writing itself, revealing how artists have invented symbolic scripts or used visual poetry to expose the many ways women have been silenced—an issue addressed directly in several works by Tomaso Binga. The subversion of writing also runs through the practices of Betty Danon, Elisabetta Gut and Maria Lai, while Irma Blank followed a different path, developing a private, self-reflective script. The process of dismantling and reinventing language has often opened up space for new codes to emerge, from Ketty La Rocca's gestural vocabulary to Paula Claire's symbolic writings and Anna Torelli's harmonic sequences. And in the work of Ilse Garnier, the sign ultimately took on bodily form.

"The new forms of poetry are the re-appropriation of what [women], together with men, have elaborated from the primary sources of existence: language; sterilized by the male hemisphere in the codes of the scission." These remarks, from Bentivoglio's introduction to the catalogue for her 1978 exhibition, underscore her belief—one shared by the women artists she championed—that social change demands a complete reorganization of the patriarchal, visual, and linguistic systems that underpin society. Their work shows how alphabets and languages weighed down by gender injustice can be sabotaged with precision, grace, spirituality or humor. In their hands, language becomes the raw material for a process of (de) construction, the starting point for new beginnings.

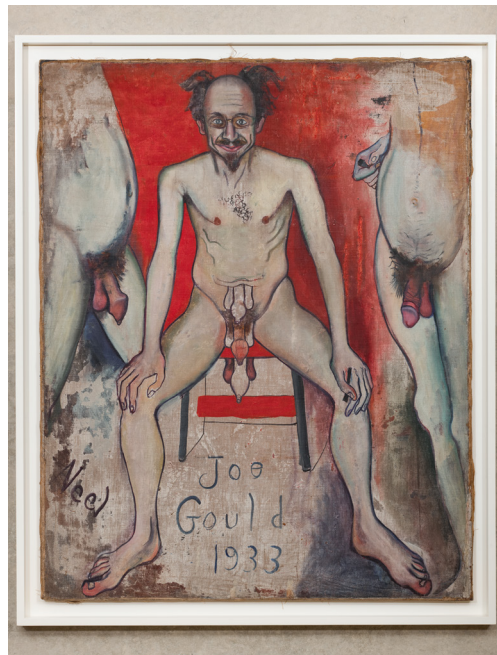
With Annalisa Alloatti, Cathy Berberian, Tomaso Binga, Irma Blank, Paula Claire, Amelia Etlinger, Luisa Gardini et Anna Papparatti, Ilse Garnier, Elisabetta Gut, Annalies Klophaus, Janina Kraupe-Świdarska, Christina Kubisch, Ketty La Rocca, Maria Lai, Giustina Prestento, Betty Radin, Neide Dias de Sá, Giovanna Sandri, Alba Savoi, Greta Schödl, Mary Ellen Solt, Wendy Stone, Chima Sunada, Salette Tavares, Anna Torelli (list to be completed)

Exhibition organised by Elisabeth Jobin, with research support from from Zoé Touzanne

ICONOGRAPHY
SEASON 2
SUMMER 2026–SUMMER 2027



Sylvia Sleigh (1916-2010)
Marjorie Strider, 1977
Oil on canvas, 91.4 × 61 cm
collection Ellen + Michael Ringier
photo © DR



Alice Neel (1900-1984)
Joe Gould, 1933
Oil on canvas, 99,1 × 79,1 cm
photo © DR



Nicole Eisenman (1965–)
Golum, 2004
Watercolour and pencil on paper,
70.7 × 109 cm
photo © DR

ICONOGRAPHY SEASON 2 SUMMER 2026 – SUMMER 2027



Joana Hadjithomas & Khalil Joreige
Histoire d'un photographe pyromane, Wonderful Beirut #1, 1998 - 2012
Colour photographic print under diasec, 70 × 105 cm, ed. 1/5
Coll. MAMCO, artwork acquired thanks to the Association des Amis du MAMCO, an anonymous donor and the bank Mirabaud & Cie



Saint-Antoine Archaeological Site (SaSA)
photo © Nicole Zermatten, Ville de Genève



Joana Hadjithomas & Khalil Joreige
Unconformities
Exhibition view
Centre Pompidou, Paris 2017
photo © DR

ICONOGRAPHY
SEASON 2
SUMMER 2026-SUMMER 2027



Derek Fordjour
Fly Away (2020)
coll. MAMCO, gift of Nicolas Mourot
photo © Richard Termine



Derek Fordjour
Fly Away (2020)
coll. MAMCO, gift of Nicolas Mourot
photo © Richard Termine

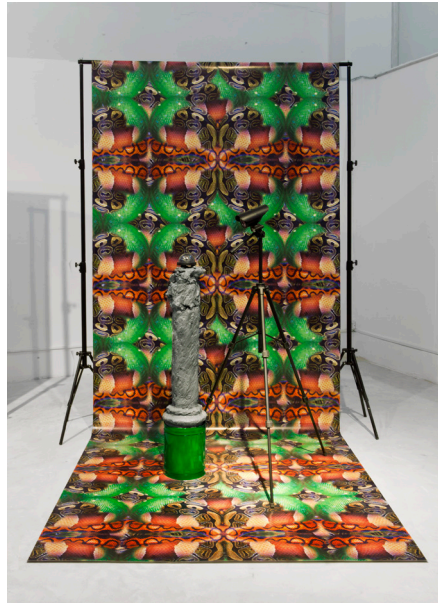


Derek Fordjour
Fly Away (2020)
coll. MAMCO, gift of Nicolas Mourot
photo © Richard Termine

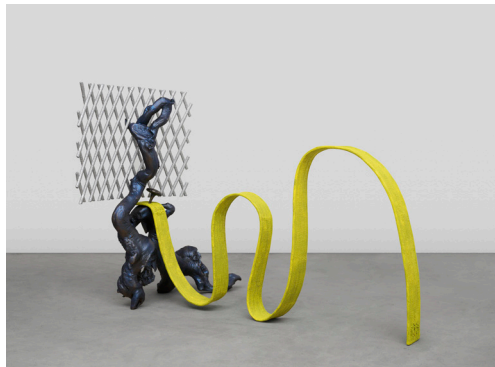
ICONOGRAPHY

SEASON 2

SUMMER 2026–SUMMER 2027



Guan Xiao (1983–)
The Documentary: Geocentric Puncture,
2014
Digital printing on vinyl resin
coloured, metal webcam tripods,
camera lenses, 230 × 280 × 210 cm
photo © New Museum, New York

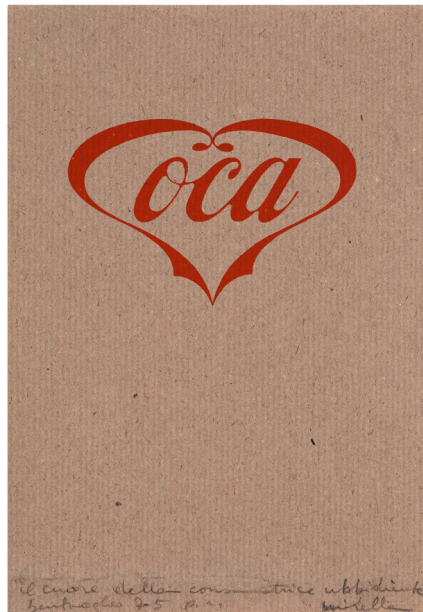


Guan Xiao (1983–)
PVC Highway, 2025
Brass, aluminium and acrylic
144 × 210 × 145 cm
photo © Yang Hao,
court. David Kordansky Gallery



Temple de Châtelaine
photo © MAMCO Genève

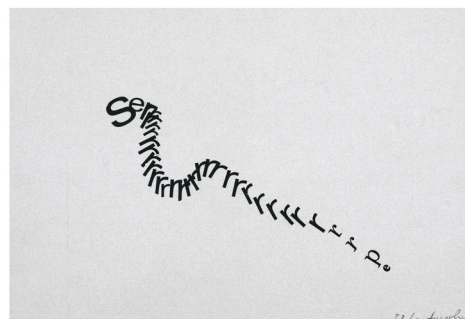
ICONOGRAPHY
SEASON 2
SUMMER 2026-SUMMER 2027



Mirella Bentivoglio (1922-2017)
Il cuore della consumatrice ubbidiente,
1975
Printscreen print on cardboard,
65 × 50 cm, signed and not numbered
coll. Gramma_Epsilon Gallery, Athens
photo © DR



Mirella Bentivoglio (1922-2017)
Untitled, 1984
Marble book, 25 × 32 cm
144 × 210 × 145 cm
cour. Repetto Gallery, Lugano
photo © Daniele De Lonti



Mirella Bentivoglio (1922-2017)
Serpe (dedicato al linguaggio), 1971
Artwork on paper,
coll. Gramma_Epsilon Gallery, Athens
photo © DR

PARTNERS 2026-2027

EXHIBITION PARTNERS SEASON 2

Eglise protestante de Genève
Fondation du Groupe Pictet
Fondation Leenaards
Fondation Philanthropique de la Famille Sandoz
Grand Théâtre Genève
Kunsthaus Biel Centre d'art Bienne
Musée d'art et d'histoire de Genève
Site archéologique Saint-Antoine
Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation

MAIN SPONSORS

JTI
Fondation Leenaards
Fondation VRM

SPONSORS

Fondation Lombard Odier
Mirabaud & Cie
Fondation Coromandel
Lenz & Staehelin
Fondation Philanthropique
de la Famille Sandoz

DONORS

Fondation du Groupe Pictet
Fondation Bru
FSEA, Fondation suisse pour
l'édition d'art

PARTNERS

Sotheby's
Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation

HOTEL PARTNERS

Hôtel D Genève
Four Seasons Hôtel des Bergues

MEDIAS PARTNERS

Genève Tourisme
TV5 Monde Plus
Suisse Tourisme