

MAMCO  
GENEVE

AUTUMN EXHIBITIONS 2018  
PRESS KIT

*PATTERN, DECORATION & CRIME*  
MAI-THU PERRET

10.10.2018 – 03.02.2019

OPENING : TUESDAY OCTOBER 9 2018, 6 PM

10, RUE DES VIEUX-GRENADIERS, 1205 GENEVA



## ***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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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

## INFORMATIONS AND PARTNERS

### Press contact

For all requests, information  
and visuals, please contact:

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### Informations

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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,  
which is made up of FONDATION  
MAMCO, the Canton, and City of Ge-  
neva. MAMCO would like to thank all its  
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