

MAMCO GENEVA

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PRESS KIT

Die Welt als Labyrinth

Art & Entertainment

New Images

Opening : Tuesday February 27 2018 – 6pm
10, rue des Vieux-Grenadiers, 1205 Geneva



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PRESS RELEASE

Die Welt als Labyrinth
Art & Entertainment
Nouvelles images

Opening : Tuesday February 27 2018 – 6pm
10, rue des Vieux-Grenadiers, 1205 Geneva

Press Conference Tuesday February 27 2018 – 11am

This spring, MAMCO has decided to turn back to Letterism and the Situationist International, two artistic movements from Paris which occupied a very special place on the political horizon of May 1968. The exhibition has been organized by a group and its method is to follow "the passage of a few people over quite a short period of time," rather than enter into the genealogical quarrels that constantly agitated these two artistic groups.

The title refers to an unfulfilled project for a Situationist exhibition at the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam in 1960, and shows up one of the questions that are raised by any presentation of these avant-garde movements: how to exhibit in a museum people who were systematically opposed to cultural institutions? Going further than a sabotaging of art through an unconventional register of forms and techniques, it was art as distinct social territory, governed by institutions, and determined by the market economy, that was in these movements' crosshairs.

The Imaginist Bauhaus, as its name makes clear, was born from a radical theoretical opposition to the school headed by Max Bill; meanwhile the Letterist International was trying to wipe out the Surrealist heritage, in particular as embodied by André Breton; their merger as the Situationist International led to a series of events

aimed at art criticism (Piet de Groof's action with Debord and Wyckaert against the general assembly of the AICA in Brussels), art market galleries (Jorn's and Gallizio's shows organized at the same time, in the Paris galleries René Drouin and Rive Gauche) or the museum as an institution (as in the aborted project at the Stedelijk Museum for which they demanded the "guarantee of non-submission to a museum viewpoint"). This systematic opposition was played out on every cultural front, including UNESCO, which the SI intended to take over...

Gradually, artistic approaches became subordinated to a revolutionary political combat. The exhibition *Destruction of RSG 6* in a little gallery in Odense, in Denmark, in 1963, was the only one that the Situationists agreed to put on and, in this respect, was exemplary: from now on, it would be necessary to transcend art and live out the philosophy that was expressed in Debord's painted directives. As of the 1960s, the SI excluded more and more artists before proclaiming, in a resolution, that any work of art produced by a Situationist was "anti-Situationist"! "From being the most political of artistic movements", as Laurent Chollet put it, "the SI became the most artistic of political movements."

It is these contradictions and attacks made against art that the exhibition at MAMCO aims to retrace through the evocation of a series of historical events. Furthermore, the exhibition's very title focuses on one motif that runs through the movement's productions, be they Guy Debord's films, SPUR's schemas, or Ralph Rumney's paintings: as both a pre-established journey, and a site allowing for all kinds of encounters, the labyrinth can be seen as one of the finest metaphors for the Situationist *dérive*, that "psychogeographic" experience of the urban territory, which remains the practice that is most often associated with the movement. Finally, in this universe, the exhibition particularly focuses on a few figures who did not want to give up on art; so it is that works by Giuseppe Pinot-Gallizio, Ralph Rumney, Asger Jorn, Gil Wolman and Jacqueline de Jong, all thrown out of the SI (apart from Jorn, who left of his own accord), have been given pride of place in the exhibition.

At the same time, a project based on the writings of the American artist David Robbins, about the relationship between art and entertainment since Pop art, is allowing us to adopt a different view of the collection of works from the 1980s at the museum. The exhibition has been built up around the clear inversion between the period that runs from the 1960s to the 1990s, and the one that separates us from the start of the 21st century: the desire of artists to act in the cultural industry and circuits of entertainment, has now been replaced (or else referred back to its warped reflection) by celebrities in the cinema or music industry who use artistic formats. Based on this observation of substitution, the exhibition intends to unite the states of the relationship between art and entertainment, ran-

ging from a criticism of the spectacular to the cultural horizon of celebrity, while stripping down their various mechanisms and tools.

Finally, the fact of bringing together on a floor of the museum works that have recently been acquired, bequeathed, or given to MAMCO, attests to the policy of developing the collections that was initiated in 2016. The various exhibitions transform and enrich the collection, seen as the museum's alpha and omega, and the place where its projects are elaborated. The presence of several works from the collections of the FMAC and the FCAC also pay witness to the fact that there is a desire to concert with other structures devoted to contemporary art in Geneva. The paradox of the contemporary is that inevitably it is the future of history: thus, MAMCO's collection, constituted only thanks to private funding, but year by year made a part of our public heritage, can be seen as a crucible for tomorrow's historians and a resource for future exhibitions devoted to recent history.

Die Welt als Labyrinth:

Introduction

Letterism, Letterist International, Movement for an Imaginist Bauhaus, Experimental Laboratory of Alba, London Psychogeographical Association, Situationist International, Situationist Times, SPUR

Taken from Gustav René Hocke's book about European Mannerism, *Die Welt als Labyrinth* ("the world as a labyrinth") was the title chosen by the Situationists for their project at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, in 1960. More than an exhibition, it was intended to be a "general manifestation," transforming the museum rooms into a labyrinth, while a series of *dérives* was taking place in the city. Guy Debord, who had already written in 1956 a "project for an educational labyrinth," expressed himself as follows to Constant: "We should intimately mingle atmospheric areas evoking the city, and atmospheric zones evoking the interior of a house. [...] I consider this inside-outside mix as being the most advanced point of our experimental construction."

The Dutch "manifestation" never saw the light of day, because the SI (Situationist International) refused any form of compromise, as requested by Willem Sandberg, the museum's director. Such a failure was characteristic of their radical criticism of art as a constituted social field, governed by institutions, and determined by the market economy: from the school to the gallery, taking in UNESCO (which the SI planned to take over) and museums, their struggle was on all the cultural fronts. As of the 1960s, the movement excluded more and more artists before proclaiming, in a "resolution," that any artwork produced by a Situationist was "anti-Situationist."

By alluding explicitly to this Dutch project, the exhibition at MAMCO immediately shows up the paradox in any museum presentation of these final 20th-century avant-garde movements: how to show in a museum people who were utterly opposed to cultural institutions?

For this reason, the Geneva version of *Die Welt als Labyrinth* aims at a journey covering several episodes in this story, rather than the generally dominant genealogical approach to movements with many branches. Even in its title, the exhibition is highlighting the motif of the labyrinth that ran through the period's productions: as both a preconditioned circuit and a site for encounters, the labyrinth can be seen as one of the best metaphors of the *dérive*, that "psycho-geographical" experience of the urban territory, which is one of the practices most often associated with the Situationists.

Finally, in this universe, MAMCO wanted in particular to dwell on a few figures who did not want to give up on art: the artistic production of Giuseppe Pinot-Gallizio, Ralph Rumney, Asger Jorn, Gil Wolman, and Jacqueline de Jong (all expelled from the SI, except for Jorn who left of his own accord), thus find a special place here.

The exhibition has been organized by a curatorial committee including John Armleder, Gérard Berreby, Paul Bernard, Lionel Bovier, Alexandra Catana Tucknott, Julien Fronsacq and Mai-Thu Perret, and placed under Paul Bernard's general curatorship. It has also benefitted from the scholarly advice of Luca Bochicchio, Nina Zimmer, Lucas Haberkorn, Jacopo Galimberti, Liliana Dematteis, Natalie Seroussi, Lionel Spiess, Jacqueline de Jong, Patrick Marcolini, Barbara Wolman, Swana Pilhatsch, Arno Morenz, and Ursula Lehman Brockhaus

Die Welt als Labyrinth:

Gil Joseph Wolman

The work of Gil Joseph Wolman (1929–1995)—poet, filmmaker and painter—embraced and extended the entire history of Letterism. Wolman took part in the Letterist recitals at the Tabou jazz club in St-Germain in October 1950, and, after the scandal set off by the distribution of tracts again Charlie Chaplin by a “Letterist commando” in 1952 and his disavowal by Isidore Isou, joined with Jean-Louis Brau, Guy Debord, and François Dufrène, the Letterist International.

He co-signed the declaration, published in *Potlatch* magazine in July 1954 for an art aimed at transforming life: “[...] some architectural practices, for example, or social agitation, represented for us just a means to approach a form of life still to be constructed.” In September 1956, he was the Letterist International’s delegate at the Congress for an International Movement for an Imaginist Bauhaus in Alba. Excluded in 1957, Wolman will not participate to the Situationist International and, in the 1960s, founded the Second Letterist International.

This section of the exhibition is based around his cinema and video productions. One year after inventing his *Mégapneumes*, poems with “expectoration,” he presented *L’Anticoncept*. The 60-minute film consists of a projection, as a random pulsation, of a white circle onto a weather balloon, accompanied by an unsynchronized voiceover.

Presented at Le Palais de Chaillot on February 11, 1952, its distribution was then forbidden. This complex set-up prefigured structural cinema, and particularly the *flicker films*, by offering a perceptive experience that modified the projection space. “The intensity of these rhythms is such that, during the first showing, spectators who

closed their eyes could still see the movement through their eyelids, even those who turned around could not escape from it, because the motion became one with the auditorium” (“Le cinématographe – nouvelle amplitude”, *Ur* n°2, 1952).

His exploration of “cinema in an expanded field” led him, in 1989 and 1990, to film the audience of this piece. A series of works on paper and canvas, dating from 1954 to 1963, bringing together collages and writings, erasures and overload, are presented in regard to the two filmic devices.

Gil Joseph Wolman

The image shows a close-up of a book cover. The main part of the cover is decorated with a marbled paper pattern in shades of blue and white, with some darker, almost black, veins. The pattern is dense and swirling. To the left, there is a vertical strip of a different material, likely the spine or a hinge, which is dark and has a rough, textured appearance, possibly leather or a similar material. The overall lighting is somewhat dim, highlighting the textures of both the marbled paper and the dark strip.

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Letterism and the Letterist International

Letterism is a multidisciplinary movement founded in 1945, in Paris, by Isidore Isou, who had just arrived from Romania. Known as being one of the ultimate avant-gardes, Letterism presented its ideas in over hundred of magazines, books, tracts, and numerous events in the streets or cellars of Saint-Germain-des-Prés. In 1947, Gallimard published Isou's *Introduction à une nouvelle poésie et une nouvelle musique* in which he presented poetry made up of an "alchemy of letters and signs," as well as a "music of sounds without instrument." In 1949, in his *Traité d'économie nucléaire*, Isou called for a *Youth Uprising*, a vital political utopia which was to culminate in the May 1968 revolt. This movement soon brought together Gabriel Pomerand, Guy Debord, Gil Wolman, Jean-Louis Brau, François Dufrène, Maurice Lemaître, Jacques Spacagna, and Roland Sabatier.

In poetry, the first "meta-," then "hyper-graphic" works appeared in the early 1950s: Isou's *Journaux des Dieux*, Pomerand's *Saint Ghetto des Prêts*, or else Lemaître's *Canailles*, amalgams of traditional alphabets and invented signs, with legible and illegible drawings.

Isou also approached cinema in his *Traité de bave et d'éternité* in 1951. This film announced the destruction of classic forms of expression through the disjunction of sounds and images and the chiselling of photograms, as an anticipation of the end of cellulose film. This piece shares with Wolman's *L'Anticoncept*, Debord's *Hurlements en faveur de Sade* and Lemaître's *Le film est déjà commencé* a scandalous reception, before becoming cult movies.

In the visual arts, Isou presented in 1952 his "integral meca-aesthetic," to revolutionize mechanics, tool-making, and the media of traditional art. In 1956, *Introduction à l'esthétique imaginaire* revealed a new formal approach: "infinitesimal or imaginary" art. Isou ended up by declaring that Letterism was a field unto itself, just like figurative or abstract art.

In 1952, a group of dissident Letterists (Brau, Debord, and Wolman) formed the Letterist International (LI). This group was set up after the attack against Charlie Chaplin at the Ritz, which Isou disapproved of.

The arrival of Ivan Chitcheglov marked the appearance of themes such as *détournement*, *dérive*, and *psychogeography* which could be found in *Potlatch*, the LI's newsletter. Debord then founded, in 1957, the Situationist International.

François Dufrène left the Letterists in 1960 to join New Realism with the "Ultra-Letterist" Raymond Hains and other "affichists." Wolman was the only of these dissidents to return, briefly, in 1962, to the origins of the movement through the founding of the Second Letterist International.

This room has been realized in collaboration with Swana Pilhatsch-Morenz and Arno Morenz.

Die Welt als Labyrinth:

"Cavern of Antimatter" / Modifications

In 1956, Giuseppe Pinot-Gallizio (1902–1964) started to develop his "industrial painting," in the experimental laboratory of Alba, along with his son Giors Melanotte. While they initially used printing techniques to apply a mixture of oil paint and resin on canvas rolls (some of which measured up to 70 metres), Pinot-Gallizio ended up offering the results by the meter, as a fabric, in the street, markets and department stores. In the catalogue of the first exhibition of this "industrial painting," in a gallery in Turin in May 1958, Michèle Bernstein wrote: "It is hard to take in at once all the advantages of this astonishing invention. In no particular order: no more problems of format, the canvas is cut up before the eyes of the satisfied customer; no more bad periods, because the inspiration for industrial painting, thanks to a cunning mix of chance and mechanics, is unfailing; no more metaphysical themes, which industrial painting would not tolerate; no more dubious reproductions of eternal masterpieces; no more opening nights. And, of course, before long, no more painters, even in Italy."

It was again Michèle Bernstein who, with Guy Debord, convinced the Parisian gallerist René Drouin to invite Pinot-Gallizio for an exhibition. Frequently postponed, it finally opened on May 13, 1959. The invitation read: "A Cavern of Anti-Matter. Attempt at the construction of an atmosphere." Pinot-Gallizio covered all of the walls, the floor, and ceiling of the gallery with strongly smelling "industrial paint," while a sound of Theremin—one of the oldest electronic musical instruments—could be heard and a model, also dressed in industrial paint, wandered around, personifying "provisional reality." Paint was no longer a work to be admired, but a synesthetic environment, an "accelerator of chromatic,

olfactory and sonic emotions." Pinot-Gallizio, who started out as a pharmacist and then an archaeologist, also saw it as an application in the field of art of new conceptions of matter, as developed by Einsteinian physics, or else the evocation of a shelter "for the fears of those who live in the prehistory of the atomic era."

On May 6, a few days before the opening of Pinot-Gallizio's cavern, Asger Jorn (1914–1973) also opened his first show in Paris of his *Modifications*, at the Rive Gauche gallery. This was an exhibition of "20 any-old pictures, partially repainted" that aimed to "show that painting's favorite food is paint." Bought second-hand, these paintings were reworked by Jorn, using a mode of operation that masterfully illustrated the Situationist thesis of *détournement*, the "loss of the importance of each separate, misappropriated element and the organisation of a different significant set."

It should be added that, at the same time as the "two complementary scandals" created by Jorn's and Pinot-Gallizio's exhibitions, Constant was exhibiting his models at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam and Debord was shooting *Sur le passage de quelques personnes à travers une assez courte unité de temps*: the month of May 1959, thus comes over as the zenith of the early period of the SI, based on the transcending of art.

Special thanks to Liliana Dematteis, Archivio Gallizio and Stefano Pezzato, of the Centro Pecci.

Die Welt als Labyrinth:

« Caverne de l'antimatière » / Modifications



Pinot Gallizio while cutting industrial painting in Munich in 1959, for his exhibition at the van de Loo gallery

Die Welt als Labyrinth:

SPUR / Situationist Times

SPUR ("trace," or "lead" in German) was the name chosen in January 1958 by a group—or rather a community—of Munich artists: three painters (Helmut Sturm, Heimrad Prem, and Hans Peter Zimmer), a sculptor (Lotar Fischer), and a "political agitator" (Dieter Kunzelmann). In a Germany going through a profound crisis (haunted by Nazism, caught between the blocs of the Cold War, while being socially reactionary), SPUR saw itself as an "insurgent reaction" against the Christian-Democrat State.

They met Asger Jorn at his exhibition at the Van de Loo gallery in October 1958. The Danish artist then introduced them to CoBrA, initiated them into *détournement*, and incited them to work in a broader cultural territory, through the distribution of multiples, tracts, and magazines. In their first manifesto, co-signed by Jorn and launched from a church tower in November 1958, they stated: "Whoever wants to create culture must also destroy culture," and "We stand up for Kitsch, dirt, primitive mud, and chaos." In their works, this was expressed by a figuration with an Expressionist spirit, in which can clearly be seen the influence of Die Brücke's primitivism, but also of Dubuffet, De Kooning, or even Pollock, whose drip paintings seemed to them to be "polyfocal spaces." While these productions remained individual, their collages and publications were either anonymous or signed together.

With Jorn as their intermediary, SPUR joined the International Situationist during their 3rd Congress, which was held in Munich in April 1959, as a "German section." SPUR was then excluded from the IS in January 1962, after it had hardened its position towards artists. While, for Raoul Vaneigem "the elements used to destroy the spectacle must themselves absolutely

cease to be works of art," the members of SPUR, who defended the principle of "Gesamkunstwerk" ("total artwork"), wanted to remain within the field of art, the only place where effective action remained possible.

A few months after its exclusion, SPUR was put on trial for pornography and blasphemy, incriminating several issues of their magazine. Initially condemned, the members of SPUR received the support of several Situationists, such as Debord who wrote a letter to the judge, but above all from Jacqueline de Jong (*1939).

This Dutch artist, who had quickly sympathized with the group, had already defended the Germans at the time of their exclusion. She herself was excluded not long after from the IS, and as a reaction founded the *Situationist Times*, the first issue of which was devoted to the exclusion of SPUR and its trial. Each issue of the *Situationist Times* had a theme (for example, n° 3 was devoted to topology, and contained a compilation of texts and images about labyrinths and knots). Jacqueline de Jong, just like the members of SPUR, continued her artistic activities at a distance from the IS. Adopting an increasingly figurative register, her paintings in the 1960s still revealed certain Situationist obsessions (mutation, the labyrinth, the *dérive*...).

Special thanks to Jacopo Galimberti, Axel Heil, Jacqueline de Jong, and Nina Zimmer for the realization of this room.

Die Welt als Labyrinth:

Destruction of the RSG-6

Three years after the failure of their exhibition project at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, and even though almost all the Situationist artists had now been expelled from the IS, JV Martin (1930–1993), Guy Debord (1931–1994), and Michèle Bernstein (*1932) organized what was to remain the sole exhibition put on in the name of this "movement": *Destruction of the RSG-6*, in June 1963 at the EXI Gallery, in Odense (Denmark).

This show was primarily motivated by strategic thinking: occupying the Scandinavian territory, while Jorgen Nash, Asger Jorn's brother who had been excluded from the IS, was putting on a large number of projects under the name of "Situationist Bauhaus." The departure point for this "manifestation," as it was described, was a brochure published by the British group Spies for Peace, which revealed the covert construction of atomic-bomb shelters reserved for members of the British government—in particular RSG-6 (or *Regional Seat Government n°6*) in Warren Row. With a print run of 4,000 copies and widely distributed, the brochure showed how, in the middle of the Cold War, the British establishment had adopted a strategy to protect itself during a possible nuclear attack, while abandoning the rest of the population.

In the way of the failed Dutch project, the Danish exhibition was seen as the "construction of an atmosphere," rather than a display of works. The gallery was thus structured into three sections: the first one, set up like a bunker, "contained the minimum that is required to guarantee the temporary maintenance of life—with an absence of light, the incessant wailing of sirens, women curled up on the floor, and two assistants in nuclear suits handing out

the latest pill"; the second section brought together a series of effigies of statesmen "ready to take the responsibility for a nuclear war" (De Gaulle, Kennedy, Franco, Khrushchev, and Adenauer) which the public could shoot at with a rifle; finally, the third section presented a series of intentionally parodic pieces. For example, Martin displayed his "thermonuclear" paintings, maps in relief covered with plaster simulating zones of destruction and entitled *The World 4 Hours and 30 Minutes after the Start of the Third World War* or *Vive Marx and Lumumba! Bernstein's Victories*, presented in the same section, were made up of little figurines of soldiers stuck on canvases, forming a series of battlefields commemorating the Paris Commune, the Spanish Republicans, or the Jacquerie. Finally, Debord's *Directives* reproduced on canvas "slogans [...] written on walls": *Dépassement de l'art, Réalisation de la philosophie, Tous contre le spectacle et Abolition du travail aliéné* (*Transcending Art, Implementation of Philosophy, All Against the Spectacle, et Abolition of Alienating Work*).

Overall, the works and the exhibition made explicit the revolutionary conceptions that drove on the IS in a "unified vision of art and politics": art would no longer be an end in itself, but a way to communicate political action and to overthrow society.

With the exception of three of Debord's *Directives*, which are now in private collections, all of the pieces in this exhibition were destroyed during an accidental fire in JV Martin's studio in 1965, although the precise circumstances remain uncertain. The "thermonuclear" painting presented here was in fact redone by the artist several years after the Danish "manifestation."

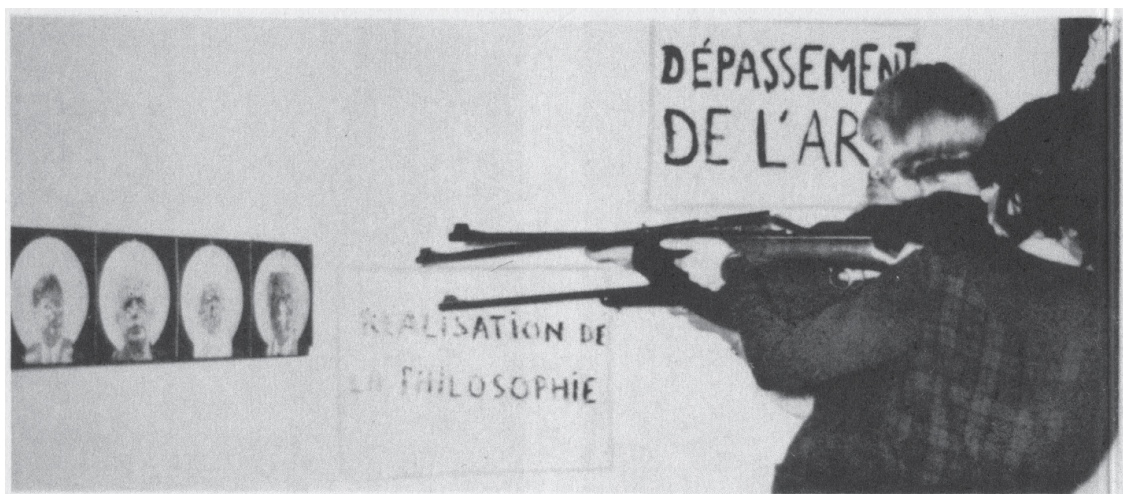
Special thanks to Lucas Haberkorn, Axel Heil, and Mehdi El Hajoui.

Die Welt als Labyrinth:

Destruction of the RSG-6



Work on paper, 1963, collage and performance's relic
Charles de Gaulle (French President), on a shooting target
Destruction de RSG6, Galerie Exi, Odense (Danemark), 1963



Exhibition view of *Destruction of RSG-6*, Exi Galery, Odense (DK) 1963
(with *Directives* n°1 and n°2 of Guy Debord, 1963)

Destruction of the RSG-6



J.V. Martin, *North America after WW III* (reconstruction), 1965-1966
Collection Museum Jorn, Silkeborg

Die Welt als Labyrinth:

Ralph Rumney

Ralph Rumney (1934–2002) is one of the most enigmatic figures in this exhibition. In the 1950s, he developed a pictorial practice bringing together Tachist gestures and the use of gold leaf. In 1957, he founded the "London Psychogeographical Committee" and thanks to his "psychogeographical knowledge of Venice" (*Internationale Situationniste*, number 1, 1957), he devised a strange work, akin to a photo-story (*The Leaning Tower of Venice*).

Rumney refused to distinguish artistic productions from urban experience, painting and *dérive*. This monographic presentation required a singular treatment and would never have seen the light of day without the complicity of Mai-Thu Perret, John M Armleder, and Gérard Berréby—who was kind enough to give us the text below.

At the age of twenty, Ralph Rumney was already well-known in avant-garde London. There, he founded *Other Voices*: "This review is not a literary garden. It is a pressure cooker". In 1956, he exhibited at the Galleria Apollinaire in Milan. Then, with Asger Jorn, at the Galerie Taptoe in Brussels. In 1957, in Cosio d'Arroscia, Ralph Rumney took part in the creation of the Situationist International. He suggested to the group a "psychogeographical" exploration of Venice—which consisted in creating original urban routes related to the states of mind they provoke. In 1959, he put on the exhibition *Place* at the ICA in London.

The first person to be expelled from the movement, the notions of *dérive*, *détournement*, and *psychogeography* still remained physically bonded to him all his life. "If you want to be an artist, you won't become one by producing paintings. It's by living an artist's life." The break with Guy Debord was to be total. But his friendship with Asger Jorn never faltered.

His encounter with Pegeen Guggenheim, Peggy's daughter, whom he married, led to the introduction of gold leaf into his painting. It is a sumptuous material, reflecting its natural appeal. "I discovered that you can get a multitude of tones from gold leaf. All the colours are reflected..." Ten years after their first meeting, Pegeen suddenly committed suicide: "When something happens during your existence, you adapt it to something you can live with. I don't think I'm an exception to that rule." Creative, self-destructive, always a *Consul*, in other words a drinker, he lived without ever accepting any compromise with boredom. "Flee from ruins and do not weep among them."

—Gérard Berréby

Die Welt als Labyrinth:

Movement for an imaginist Bauhaus Alba's experimental laboratory

In 1953, Asger Jorn was in Chésièrès, in the Vaud canton, on convalescence after a serious lung disease. He wrote to the Milanese painter Enrico Baj, whom he had not yet met: "Dear Friend... We are going to rise up violently against those artists who believe that painting should be submitted to the service of architecture, and we want to impose the viewpoint that, on the contrary, architecture should be submitted to art ... I am declaring war in the name of all experimental painters." Here, Jorn had in his sights the new design school, the Hochschule für Gestaltung of Ulm, of which Max Bill was about to become director, inspired by his experience at the Bauhaus. Then, through this correspondence between Baj and Jorn, was born the "International Movement for an Imaginist Bauhaus" (MIBI).

Baj, who had already launched with Sergio Dangelo the manifesto for the "Movimento Arte Nucleare" in February 1952, invited Jorn in the spring 1954 to Albisola, a small Italian town on the west coast of Liguria. There, the Futurist poet and sculptor Tullio d'Albisola regularly welcomed avant-garde artists to the Mazzotti ceramics factory. In the summer of 1954, Jorn and Dangelo then set about organizing the first MIBI experience, the "International Meeting of Ceramics," with CoBrA artists (Karel Appel, Guillaume Corneille, Jorn), as well as Surrealist (Roberto Matta), and "nuclear" artists (Baj, Dangelo). Others, such as Emilio Scanavino, Franco Garelli, or Lucio Fontana, who regularly frequented this ceramic factory, also took part in the project.

In 1955, Jorn produced the second MIBI experience: a series of popular ceramics, painted freely by children, which he published in his collection of essays *Pour la forme* (1958). In Albisola—where, as of

1957, he conceived his total art work, now known as the "Jorn House Museum"—Jorn met the painter Giuseppe Pinot-Gallizio and the young philosophy student Piero Simondo. In 1956, they created together the "Experimental Laboratory for an Imaginist Bauhaus" in Alba, a town in lower Piedmont where Pinot-Gallizio lived and worked.

It was on these premises that, in July 1957, the representatives of the MIBI, the Letterist International (with Guy Debord), and the London Psychogeographical Institute (with Ralph Rumney) met in Cosio d'Arroscia, near the French border, and founded, in a climate of anarchist creativity, the Situationist International.

This room has been realized in collaboration with Dr. Luca Boichichio; special thanks to Liliana Dematteis.

Die Welt als Labyrinth:

Mouvement pour un Bauhaus Imaginiste
Laboratoire expérimental d'Alba



Karel Appel, *Visage*, 1954
Glazed ceramic
Private collection

Art & Entertainment

Alex Bag, Gretchen Bender, Joseph Beuys, Jennifer Bolande, Maurizio Cattelan, Cosey Fanni Tutti, Sylvie Fleury, Nicolas Garait-Leavenworth, General Idea, Gilbert & George, Rodney Graham, Robert Heinecken, Pierre Huyghe, IFP, Alex Israel, Alain Jacquet, Larry Johnson, Mike Kelley & Paul McCarthy, Silvia Kolbowski, Jeff Koons, Mark Leckey, Allan McCollum, Adam McEwen, John Miller, Philippe Parreno, Donna-Lee Philips, Richard Prince, Pruitt & Early, David Robbins, Martha Rosler, Julia Scher, Cindy Sherman, Michael Smith, Elaine Sturtevant, Jacques Toulorge (readymades belong to everyone®), Andy Warhol, John Waters, Christopher Williams

"Art & Entertainment" is a project based on the writings of the American artist David Robbins about the relationship between art and the notion of "spectacle." The exhibition has been constructed around the striking inversion that occurred between the period that runs from Pop art to the 1990s and the one that separates us from the early 21st century: the desire of artists to intervene in the cultural industry and the circuits of entertainment is today being replaced (or at least reduced to a deformed, mirror image) by celebrities in the film or music industry who are using artistic formats. Based on this observation of a substitution, the exhibition aims at bringing together the steps in the relationship between art and entertainment, ranging from criticisms of the "spectacle," to the horizon of celebrity culture, while taking in the dismantling of its mechanisms and tools.

The exhibition thus allows us to pick up the threads of criticisms of the "society of the spectacle," between the appearance of Letterism and May 1968, and to highlight in this way the collection of 1980s works conserved in the museum. While the idea for Andy Warhol was still to espouse the contours of the post-war consumer society, the concept of the "commodification" of art preoccupied the next generation. David Robbins illustrated this perfectly in *Talent* (1987), his series of portraits of artists on the 1980s New York scene as a group of future "stars," while the "becoming brand" of artists was to be explicitly explored by Jeff Koons, Gretchen Bender, Philippe Thomas, IFP, or else Richard Prince.

In the 1990s, Pierre Huyghe, Philippe Parreno, or Christopher Williams, while exploring the modes of production of images inevitably crossed through by commercial references,

abandoned the head-on or cynical criticism of the previous decade. It was also that the society they lived in was able to absorb—the better to eliminate—the forms of contestation that had run through cultural production since the 1970s: this "new spirit of capitalism," in the words of Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, chimed with Guy Debord's attacks used as advertising slogans, while "management discourse" turned creativity into a new identity metaphor.

As one of the latest step in the socio-cultural development of the Western world, the "democracy of pleasure" we have been experiencing since the turn of the 2000s, provides a glimpse of a paradoxical merger between entertainment, a form considered to be base, and art. While in the modern era, artistic conceptions have been based on the acquisition of a specialized language, or even the rejection of idiomatic elements from the past, "high entertainment," as David Robbins calls it, can immediately be assimilated, has been conceived for the public's satisfaction, and is easily communicable. The room conceived by Nicolas Garait-Leavenworth, as the closure of the exhibition, is devoted to this new formation that intentionally escapes any systemic description. The visitors will thus have explored the different stages of this over-turning, coming across works which examine the figure of the artist, his/her role and place in society, along with observations about the irruption of the "spectacle," consumption, and the market in the cultural field.

This exhibition has been organized by Paul Bernard and Lionel Bovier.



Maurizio Cattelan, *We Are the Revolution*, 2000
Polyester resine, wax, pigment, felt, clothes rack, 189.9 × 47 × 52.1 cm
Collection Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zürich



David Robbins, *Talent*, 1986
Alan Belcher, Jenny Holzer, Michael Byron, Larry Johnson, Cindy Sherman, Allan McCollum, Joel Otterson, Clegg & Guttman, Steven Parrino, Thomas Lawson, Jeff Koons, Gretchen Bender, Robert Longo, Robin Weglinski, Ashley Bickerton, Peter Nagy, Jennifer Bolande
18 silver pictures, 20 × 25 cm
Private collection, long term loan MAMCO
Photo Bruno Voidey

New Images

Donations, Bequests, and Acquisitions 2016–2017

Mitchell Anderson, John M Armleder, Sebastian Black, Kim Seob Boninsegni, Vittorio Brodmann, Miriam Cahn, Sylvain Croci-Torti, Daniel Dewar & Gregory Gicquel, Andreas Dobler, Helmut Federle, Sylvie Fleury, Günther Förg, Christian Floquet, Vidya Gastaldon, Vidya Gastaldon & Jean-Michel Wicker, Liam Gillick, Wade Guyton, Fabrice Gygi, Marcia Hafif, David Hominal, Zak Kitnick, Imi Knoebel, Louise Lawler, Sherrie Levine, Tobias Madison & Emanuel Rossetti, Allan McCollum, John Miller, Amy O'Neill, Steven Parrino, Greg Parma Smith, Mai-Thu Perret, Guillaume Pilet, Charlotte Posenenske, Seth Price, Stephen Prina, Louise Sartor, Lewis Stein, Rudolf Stingel, Ramaya Tegegne, John Tremblay, Kelley Walker, Franz-Erhard Walther, James Welling, Sue Williams, Seyoung Yoon, Rémy Zaugg

The assembling in a single exhibition space, of works that have recently been acquired or donated to the MAMCO, demonstrates how a new politics of development for its collections has been implemented since 2016. In fact, the exhibitions transform and enrich the collection, seen as the alpha and omega of the museum, the true center for the elaboration—and the horizon—of its projects.

As the museum does not benefit from an acquisition budget, it is mainly donations, thanks to the generosity of both artists and collectors—and above all the museum's board members—that allow for the growth of its collections. The annual contribution from MAMCO's Friends Association, and in particular its Circle, nevertheless allow for the planning of an important acquisition each year, and standing partners, such as the Fondation Coromandel, or else the project conducted at artgenève with the Mirabaud & Cie bank, have been set up to remedy this lack of means. Finally, it should be mentioned that in 2016 and 2017 the museum received two important bequests: the former collection of Claudine and Sven Widgren and several major works coming from the Marika Malacorda estate. Thus, over 500 pieces, worth about 5,000,000 CHF, entered MAMCO's collections during this period. The corpus of Minimal and Conceptual works united by Ghislain Mollet-Viéville and presented in the Apartment, on the third floor of the museum, has not been included in this sum, since it has been acquired by the MAMCO's private - Foundation.

The process that leads to the acceptance of a gift is no different than that of an acquisition: the point is to evaluate the work's relevance to the collection and to its development's perspectives, as well as its potential for being regularly exhibited.

The presence of several pieces from the collections of the FMAC (*Fonds municipal d'art contemporain*) and the FCAC (*Fonds cantonal d'art contemporain*) also attest to a will for concertation with other heritage structures devoted to contemporary art in Geneva, all becoming a part, in the end, of the same public domain.

This exhibition is based on the principle of showing only enrichments coming from the years 2016 and 2017, and is structured around different periods, so as to highlight the decades these efforts have been focused on. It then becomes easy to see the complements added to the historiography of the 1960–1970 era and the 1980s, two nodal points in the museum's collections, as well as the desire to readjust the representation of the 1990s and 2000s. Finally, the last room brings together artists present on the contemporary Swiss scene, to which MAMCO is particularly attentive.

The paradox of the contemporary is that it will inevitably be history's future: thus, the MAMCO's collections, acquired entirely thanks to private means, but year by year joining our public heritage, become a crucible for tomorrow's historians and a resource for future exhibitions devoted to the recent history of art.

This exhibition has been organized by Lionel Bovier and Sophie Costes.

New Images

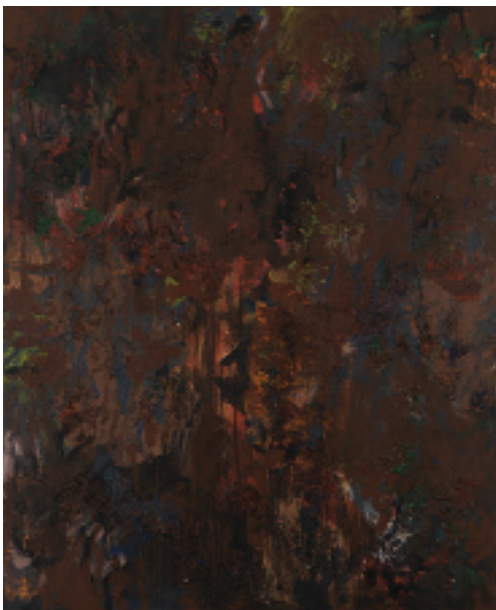
Donations, Bequests, and Acquisitions 2016–2017



Sherrie Levine, *Untitled (Krazy Kat : 5)*, 1988
Caséine on wood (birch), 47 × 40 cm
Collection MAMCO, donation Fondation MAMCO



Miriam Cahn, *Sans titre (13 + 14 + 18.07.2003)*, 2003
Oil on canvas, 105 × 90 cm
Collection MAMCO, acquired work with the support of Blondeau & Cie



John Miller, *Sans titre*, 1987
Oil on canvas, 183 × 147 cm
Collection MAMCO

A Collection of Spaces

MAMCO's fourth floor re-opens after a few weeks of renovation works, in a brand-new 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, canvases painted 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 post-Fluxus activities of the Ecart group have found a location for their re-emergence in Geneva, thanks to the HEAD Geneva, the Print Room of the Musée d'art et d'histoire and the complicity of John Armleder. They are exhibited through a new operatory mode which allows at once to resume the archives' inventory work and to update projects from the 1970s. This is the case, for instance, with

a Dick Higgins' score, successively interpreted by the Ecart Group, and today by the museum.

Finally, the *Concrete Poetry Cabinet* is dedicated to an international artistic and literary movement which widespreads 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 the MAMCO collections, worked on the re-deployment of Sarkis' studio and, with artist Emilie Parendeau, of Rutault's inventory; Paul Bernard, Curator at the MAMCO, was in charge of the organization of the Concrete Poetry Cabinet; and the Ecart display was organized by Lionel Bovier and David Lemaire, Curator at the MAMCO.

The Concrete Poetry Cabinet and the Ecart space are generously supported by Fondation Leenaards.

A Collection of Spaces



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

L' Appartement

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, the private Foundation of the museum has begun to acquire 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, frames, lighting, 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.

L' Appartement



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



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

MAMCO GENEVE

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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 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 Geneva. MAMCO would like to thank all its partners, both public and private, and in particular: JTI and Fondation de Famille Sandoz, Fondation de bienfaisance du Groupe Pictet, as well as Fondation Coromandel, Fondation Lombard Odier, Fondation Valeria Rossi di Montelera, Loterie Romande, Mirabaud & Cie SA, Richemont, Sotheby's and Chemiserie Centrale.

The exhibition «Die Welt als Labyrinth» is supported by the Fondation Jan Michalski pour l'écriture et la littérature.

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