

MAMCO, Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Geneva  
Press kit

Kelley Walker

*Swiss Pop*

General Idea, *Photographs (1969-1982)*

Jack Goldstein, Jenny Holzer, Sherrie Levine,  
Cady Noland/Laurie Parsons/Félix González-Torres



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May 31st—September 10th, 2017

Press conference Tuesday May 30 2017, 10 am

Opening from 6pm

MAMCO Geneva will present a major exhibition of the work of the American artist Kelley Walker (b. 1969, Columbus, Georgia). The exhibition will be on view from May 31st through September 10th, 2017, and will be installed throughout the 1000 m<sup>2</sup> of the museum's first floor.

In his work, Kelley Walker uses techniques common to Pop art, such as collage, photography, and silkscreen printing, as well as digital tools, to question today's frenetic circulation and consumption of images. The show, organized by Fabrice Stroun and Lionel Bovier, will provide a retrospective overview of one of the most innovative artists working today. It will include Walker's most notable bodies of work, specifically "Black Star Press" paintings, where layers of chocolate cover and partially obscure images similar to those used by Warhol; intricate mirrors made of handcut acrylic plexiglas, and reminiscent of the inkblot test designed by the famous Swiss psychologist Hermann Rorschach; "Brick paintings," which combine silkscreen brick patterns with collage from newspapers and magazines; as well as more recent works that explore the transformation of image to object.

This exhibition, in succession to Wade Guyton's one in 2016, will provide an opportunity to address issues concerning the image and its corporeality in recent art history.

The Kelley Walker exhibition benefits from the support of Henri Harsch HH SA.

'Swiss Pop', based on a proposal by Samuel Gross, on view on the museum's third floor, will serve as an introduction to one of the Postwar Era's first interrogations of the status of the image, both in terms of its auratic unicity and its (mostly industrial) mode of fabrication.

An exhibition of images and photographic projects by Canadian collective General Idea extend, on the same floor, this reflection on the mediatic and physical versatility of the image within the McLuhanesque society taking shape after the Second World War. The exhibition of General Idea, *Photographs (1969 – 1982)* benefits from the support of Le Laboratoire and Repro-Solution, Geneva.

Finally, works by Cady Noland, Laurie Parsons, and Félix González-Torres on the second floor, conclude this examination of American practices linked to the "Pictures Generation," appropriation, and the politics of representation (Jenny Holzer, Jack Goldstein, Sherrie Levine). It ends a cycle of exhibitions organized by Lionel Bovier aiming at providing an overview of the main stakes shared by a generation of artists that one might call the "last iconologists": in short, artists for whom the image still possesses weight, presence, and semantic power—all features that the growing digitalization of the 1990s progressively erased to the benefit, in the 2000s, of an understanding of the image as a "liquid skin," able to mutate indefinitely and to be applied on any support.

# Swiss Pop

Vern Blosum, Sylvie Fleury, Franz Gertsch, Hans Ruedi Giger, Piero Gilardi, Alfred Hofkunst, Friedrich Kuhn, Luigi Lurati, Olivier Mosset & Andy Warhol, Meret Oppenheim, Markus Raetz, Hermann Rorschach, Dieter Roth, Daniel Spoerri, Peter Stämpfli, Jean Tinguely, Rico Weber.

An exhibition organized by  
Sophie Costes, Paul Bernard, and Julien Fronsacq,  
On a proposal by Samuel Gross

**Swiss Pop is a painting by Vern Blosum, an American painter who participated in the first Pop manifestations in New York but who actually never existed. By borrowing its title from an imaginary artist, the MAMCO exhibition already announces itself as a fiction. Pop art was indeed born in Great Britain around 1956 and later developed in the United States, without any particular historical occurrence in Switzerland. The obsessions for mass culture, industrial production, youth, and glamour—fundamental characteristics of Pop as defined by Richard Hamilton—was believed never to have jumped over the Helvetic mountains, behind which the artistic debates were polarized between Concrete abstraction and neo-Dadaism in all its forms.**

Nevertheless, a recent historiography revealed that, although Pop Art is considered as an artistic language and essentially Anglo-Saxon, it was actually, and right from the start, "spoken" in many different dialects. A Swiss Pop does indeed exist, with folkloric or modernist accents, and a grammar that borrows from Surrealism, *Nouveau Réalisme*, *Arte povera*, Kinetic art, abstraction, cinema, fashion, and even science fiction.

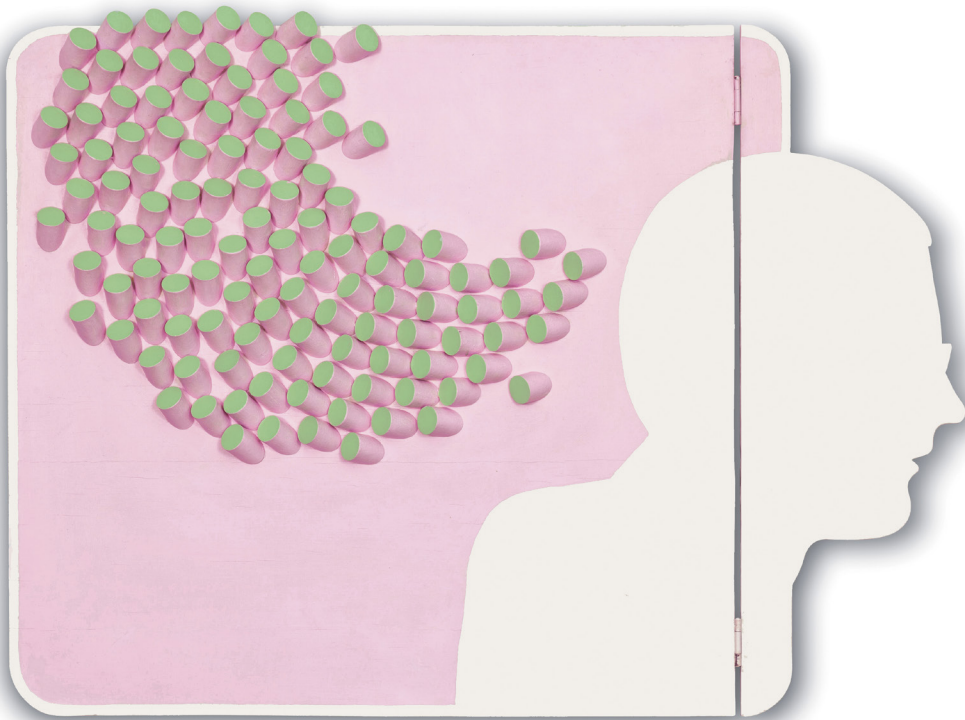
From a meal's leftovers to garbage bags, artists such as Gilardi, Spoerri, Kuhn, Weber or Hofkunst use sophisticated techniques for the rehabilitation of common things. This transfiguration of the banal foreshadows a new correspondence of art and life. Moreover, one observes that mass media, fashion, the automobile, or advertisement, all appear in a more or less obvious manner within the works of Giger, Oppenheim, Stämpfli, Gertsch, Roth, Raetz, or Lurati. This fetishist relation to merchandize also

affects the relations that some artists entertain with Pop Art heroes. By making Warhol sign a lemon-yellow monochrome, Mosset brings a touch of glamour to the mutest painting. On the other hand, by covering the Claes Oldenburg's iconic work *Bedroom Ensemble* with fake fur, Fleury calls upon a haptic impulse and the charm of the artificial.

But the exhibition also reveals a more somber side, and an inclination towards death becomes manifest in Tinguely's *La Vittoria*. In front of the Duomo in Milan, a gigantic golden phallus consumed itself in a few minutes amidst fireworks and smoke. Behind the jubilation accompanying such an affront, this work also celebrates self-destruction in an excess of vitality.



Vern Blosum, *Swiss Pop*, 2014. Private collection



Markus Raetz, *Relief zweiteilig*, 1965-1966, acrylic paint on wooden pannel, Collection Banque Pictet, Geneva

## Press Office

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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 as well as April 14, 2017.

Regular admission: CHF8.–  
Reduced admission: CHF6.–  
Group admission: CHF4.–

## Partners

MAMCO is overseen by FONDAMCO, which is made up of Fondation MAMCO, the Canton, and City of Geneva.

FONDAMCO would like to thank all its partners, both public and private, and in particular JTI and Fondation de Famille Sandoz as well as Fondation Coromandel, Fondation Lombard Odier, Fondation de bienfaisance du Groupe Pictet, Fondation Casino Barrière de Montreux, Fondation Valeria Rossi di Montelera, Mirabaud, Phillips, and Sotheby's.

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