René Daniëls, Fragments from an Unfinished Novel Martin Kippenberger, The Museum of Modern Art Syros Gordon Matta-Clark, FOOD Marcia Hafif, Inventory Richard Nonas, Riverrun (from Swerve to Bend)

Opening: Tuesday February 26, 2019 (6pm) Exhibitions visible through May 5, 2019

MAMCO Genève 10, rue des Vieux-Grenadiers 1205 Geneva



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"What do pictures want?" W.J.T. Mitchell, a central figure in the field of visual studies, has been asking the question for over twenty years. Above all, visual studies seek to establish a new form of iconology—to consider pictures not solely as objects or vehicles for meaning, but also in terms of their relationship to the society within which they were made.

The English language makes a clear distinction between "picture" and "image": "picture" refers to an image and its support, while "image" is a transferable term, from one medium to another. An image may even survive the destruction of its physical support. This is precisely what artists such as Wade Guyton, Kelley Walker, and Seth Price, or Walead Beshty, Hito Steyerl, and Laura Owens, set out to prove in the early 2000s: namely, that the image has acquired a new status, forged over the course of the twentieth century, connected first and foremost to its "technical reproducibility" and subsequently to its emerging role as an "informational surface."

Up to the turn of the twentieth century, our perception of an image was conditioned by its technique—witness the segregation of painting and photography (the former unique, the latter published in numbered editions), or abstract and figurative images. Subsequently, however, our perception of an image's "medium" expanded to encompass a much wider definition and message embracing the ensemble of practices that make its genesis and presentation possible-not only canvas and paint, for example, but also the chassis, studio, gallery, museum, and the systems underpinning the art market or its critical reception. This evolution in the concept of the image, from the abandoning of the traditional categories of "fine art" to the ontological shifts in the visual regimen, is the focus of the upcoming series of exhibitions at MAMCO.

Episode 1 : Spring 2019 Retrospectives of René Daniëls and Marcia Hafif, as well as *MOMAS Project* by Martin Kippenberger and an installation by Richard Nonas

A simultaneous presentation of two superficially opposing painterly practices by artists René Daniëls and Marcia Hafif. The retrospectives investigate how the figurative image can function as an interrogatory form, and how an abstract image can derive from lived, sensory experience, and demand a phenomenological response.

Daniëls creates works that address the context of their making and display, each picture both reflecting and challenging the practice of painting itself, while Hafif's abstract paintings of the 1960s are suffused with the glimpsed memory of Roman landscapes. Her monochromes express the artist's material investigation. Within the series of rooms devoted to the inventory of Hafif's work, a major installation in situ by Richard Nonas is anchored in the same exploration of space and perception.

Similarly, on the second floor—which features an ensemble of works from René Daniels's Bow Tie series—Martin Kippenberger's MOMAS is a reminder of the connections that may be forged (centred on a kind of institutional critique) between the Dutch painter's work and the German artist's museographical fictions.

Episode 2: Summer 2019 Walead Beshty, as well as *MOMAS Project* by Martin Kippenberger

A major exhibition of the work of Walead Besthy and a number of other solo and group shows explore the image as the outcome of a process, more "software" than "hardware." Produced by a "program," Beshty's works also examine the apparatus of their genesis and emergence, or their links to the real world, and confront one of the most distinctive legacies of Conceptual art: the understanding that art may inhere less in the object itself and more in its surroundings, in the things that bring an object to life when we "use" it, look at it, display it and interpret it.

Episode 3: Autumn 2019 Retrospectives of the work of Martin Barré and Rosemarie Castoro

Trace two radical, experimental approaches of painting, with retrospectives of the work of Martin Barré and Rosemarie Castoro.

Barré holds a special place in the history of post-war painting in Europe, not least for his use of aerosol sprays in his work of the 1960s. The show gives an insight into the career of an artist in full command of the sensitive, intellectual, chromatic and physical possibilities of pictorial form, constantly seeking and finding new ways to occupy the canvas and its surrounding space.

Rosemarie Castoro began painting in the mid-1960s. Taking Barré's spatial explorations a stage further, Castoro extends the picture space to that of the body, and architecture. Her conceptual, poetic, minimalist, gendered work combines Institutional Critique with a drag aesthetic and an examination of the legacy of modernism.

Mirabaud's gift: in 2019, MAMCO is free for all

Admission to the museum will be free of charge throughout 2019, thanks to a generous gift from Mirabaud, in celebration of the company's 200th anniversary.

The gift furthers Mirabaud's commitment to MAMCO as part of the company's growing involvement in contemporary art. As a partner company to MAMCO since 2017, Mirabaud supports the museum's development activities, in particular the project 'In Course of Acquisition'.

Free admission to MAMCO in 2019 reflects the museum's determination to make contemporary art accessible to the widest possible public.

We thank Mirabaud for their support in implementing this policy of outreach and sharing.

Notes to Editors

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About MAMCO

Since its opening in 1994, the MAMCO Geneva (Musée d'art moderne et contemporain), has developed an original form of museography. Mainly working with art from the 1960s, MAMCO bases its action on several principles: a conception of the museum as a "alobal exhibition" which brings together, in the continuity of a visit, temporary exhibitions and renewed presentations of its permanent collections; a variation in the types of spaces and displays, so as to evoke the history of museums (from a collector's apartment to the "white cube" or the artist's studio); a "collection" of artists' spaces" (ECART Group, Sarkis, Claude Rutault, and a Cabinet of Concrete poetry); and, finally, a regular attention to the Genevan and Swiss scenes.

Devoted to the art of our era, it places art and artists at its hearth and is addressed to all publics. It offers historical journeys through several exhibitions articulated around a main project, renewed three times a year. Established in a disused factory, purchased by the City of Geneva, the spaces of the MAMCO are spread over 3,500 m2, thus making it currently the largest museum devoted to contemporary art in Switzerland.

The industrial building in which it is situated also contains the Centre d'Art Contemporain as well as other spaces that develop their own exhibition programs. MAMCO handles a collection of over 3,500 works, and develops, thanks to its scholarly activities, a specialized centre of documentation and archives which is accessible on appointment, as well as various educational practices (aimed at both adults and children).

Fragments from an Unfinished Novel

An exhibition organized by Devrim Bayar and Paul Bernard, in collaboration with WIELS, Brussels With the support of Dick van Nievelt Stichting

Following the Zeitgeist exhibition in 2017, MAMCO continues its exploration of painting in the 1980s with a retrospective of the work of one of the most enigmatic and fascinating painters of the second half of the 20th century. Born in 1950 in Eindhoven (where he continues to live and work today), René Daniëls's meteoric career was brutally interrupted in 1987 when he suffered a stroke that left him physically impaired. The exhibition concentrates on a ten-year period from the late 1970s until the artist's stroke, through a significant body of canonical and previously unseen works. A separate section is devoted to Daniëls's more recent work.

René Daniëls emerged onto the art scene during a period characterised by a wholescale return to figurative and expressionist painting, in both Europe and the United States. Daniëls quickly established himself as one of this new, effervescent, vindictive and loudly disparaged generation of painters. His work was shown in each of the major 'manifesto exhibitions' of the 1980s: Westkunst in Cologne, Zeitgeist in Berlin, documenta 7 in Cassel, and Der Zerbrochene Spiegel in Vienna and Hamburg. A residency at PS1 in New York brought him closer to certain American practitioners of appropriation art, with whom he exhibited at the Metro Pictures gallery.

Daniëls's first works are profoundly influenced by the early punk rock concerts he filmed in Eindhoven. The movement's energy and insolence are reflected in the spontaneous, unfinished quality of his work at the time. Moving from one painting to the next at the frenetic pace of a punk band performing a set on stage, Daniëls produced pseudo-abstract variations on a restricted formal repertoire: round and oval shapes represent a planet and its satellite, vinyl discs, eyes, a skateboard, before evolving into swans, mussels, a face, a hat...

Daniëls's fast-moving execution and subject matter conjure dizzying semantic shifts in the context of an operational mode reminiscent of Surrealist practice. Similarly, the pictures' titles feature numerous double meanings and plays on words. Daniëls was a passionate follower of punk, like so many of his contemporaries, but his work was distinguished by a particular attachment to poetry and language. His drawings and paintings teem with references to Baudelaire, Apollinaire, Broodthaers, Duchamp, Magritte, and Picabia: a surprising Franco-Belgian pantheon for a non-Frenchspeaking Dutch artist whose work seems a far cry from the precepts underpinning the abstraction of Van Doesburg or Mondrian.

This unprecedented alliance of punk and Surrealist polysemy allowed Daniëls to embrace a broad range of subject matter, from acerbic commentaries on the art world (its rivalries, gossip and violent, heated debates) to a more dreamlike, meditative introversion. Time and again, allusions break the surface: to his own life or the quiet landscapes surrounding his home town. Stylistically, Daniëls employs multiple layers of paint to explore effects of transparency and opacity. His paintings are poised between surface and depth, the internal and external-a technique explored with virtuosity in the Mooie Tentoonstellingen series ("Beautiful Exhibitions"): the so-called "bow tie" paintings, begun in 1984 and shown here on the museum's second floor.

Fragments from an Unfinished Novel

René Daniëls is well-known today for his "bow tie" paintings, the name given to the *Mooie Tentoonstellingen* ("Beautiful Exhibitions") series, produced between 1984 and 1987. A single motif is repeated throughout: three trapezoidal surfaces are arranged to suggest a perspective view of a gallery lined with pictures. This enigmatic series was the primary focus of Daniëls's exhibition at the Bern Kunsthalle in 1987, shortly before his stroke. As in his other paintings, the simple-seeming motif conceals multiple layers of meaning.

The title (in fact, a sub-title) by which the series is known seems too ordinary by far: we detect a hint of irony. As with some earlier works (*The Most Contemporary Picture Show*, *La Muse Vénale…*), Daniëls's choice of words subverts any hint of depth, and any possibility of simple, straightforward contemplation, at one and the same time. In this sense, the exhibition views seem to embody a form of institutional critique, both mirroring and caricaturing the ways in which pictures become fetishized in a formal, exhibition context. As such, the paintings echo the deconstruction of the *white cube* enacted by artists and critics alike, in the 1970s.

In some paintings, a microphone or a piano are glimpsed in the middle of the exhibition space while the artist lurks at the back, waiting to "take the stage." The pictures stand as a reminder of how the art system of the 1980s with its burgeoning commercial market and blockbuster exhibitions—fostered the emergence of the artist as show-person and performer, a concept revisited in the exhibition *Art & Entertainment* at MAMCO in 2018. Indeed, the bow tie makes its very first appearance in Daniëls's work in a painting showing the artist as a kind of smartly dressed stage magician (shown here on the first floor).

But always in Daniëls's work, the art-world critique is balanced by a more personal, poetic

flip side. Some spaces are highly reminiscent of the archetypal settings favoured in the art of memory. In some bow tie pictures, for example, we encounter memories of past works arranged as curious visual puzzles. This cartography of memory is developed in the *Lentebloesem* ("Spring flowers") whose branching forms connect disparate words, in a manner reminiscent of the associative logic of memory.

The presence of keyholes metaphorizes the essential mystery of these paintings while at the same time instating the viewers as voyeurs of a kind, searching for a definitive meaning that continually eludes us. The painting Mémoire d'un oubli ("A memory of a forgetting") exemplifies this dialectic between transparency and opacity: above two trapezoidal forms, the word PORTE ("door") appears twice, the right way up and upsidedown, one on top of the other. We stand before Daniëls's two-way doors, simultaneously on the threshold of the painting and about to step outside it altogether. Lastly, one should note how Daniëls upends his bow ties vertically, transforming them into look-outs or vantage points. In the simple act of turning a motif on its side, we feel the painting itself may be scrutinising us in turn.

Fragments from an Unfinished Novel



René Daniëls, *Untitled*, 1982 Oil on canvas, 121.3 × 95.9 cm coll. Joel Wachs



René Daniëls, *Fl*eece, 1987 Oil on canvas, 150 × 200 cm Private collection



René Daniëls, *Lentebloesem*, 1987 Oil on canvas, 100.3 × 120.1 cm Fondation René Daniëls



René Daniëls in his studio in Eindhoven ca. 1981. Photo: Pieter Heijnen



Fragments from an Unfinished Novel



René Daniëls, Coco*anut*s, 1982 Oil on canvas, 200 x 140 cm coll. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam



René Daniëls, De slag om de 20e eeuw (The battle for the 20th century), 1984 Oil on canvas, 100 x 120 cm coll. ABN AMRO. Photo: Tom Haartsen



René Daniëls, *In de Wolken (de geniale zones)*, 1983, Oil on canvas, 190 x 240cm coll. JH Van Abbe, Zurich



René Daniëls, *Sans titre*, 1987 Oil on canvas, 105 × 120 cm coll. SMAK, Gand. Photo: Dirk Pauwels



The Museum of Modern Art Syros

Organized by Sophie Costes and Samuel Gross, in collaboration with Swiss Institute, Rome, the exhibition was first presented at Fondazione Sant'Elia, Palerme, with the generous support of Fondation genevoise de bienfaisance Valeria Rossi di Montelera

The MOMAS (Museum of Modern Art Syros) of Martin Kippenberger (1953-1997) was created in 1993 and existed until 1996 in an unfinished, abandoned building on the island of Syros in the Cyclades, Greece. This museum was "founded" when Kippenberger, invited there by his friend Michel Würthle, spotted by the sea the skeleton of a piece of concrete architecture. He turned it into an institution with neither walls nor collections-a non-museum. The selfproclaimed director of a self-founded site, Kippenberger invited artists to make propositions for the MOMAS which was more of a museum of projects than a museum of works."If I am not given the possibility to put on an exhibition in a museum, then I'll create my own museum, faraway, on the edge of the art world. I'll invite my friends and colleagues and send out invitations. The invitation cards are to be the sole concrete proofs of the activities of this museum," stated Kippenberger concerning the MOMAS. Cosima von Bonin, Hubert Kiecol, Stephen Prina, Christopher Wool (who

produced the signage), Lukas Baumewerd, Michel Majerus, Michael Krebber, or Heimo Zobernig were some of the artists invited to participate in a site destined to receive a very reduced public (ten people at most). The MAMCO owns almost of all of the plans and the model of the MOMAS. This series, rounded off by archives and documents, coming in particular from Kippenberger's Estate, were presented in Palermo in the summer of 2018 (by Samuel Gross) as part of Manifesta, the European Biennial of Contemporary Art. It is now shown at MAMCO. Kippenberger and the MOMAS are, in any case, a permanent presence in the MAMCO: at its entrance, a compass rose, inserted in the floor, and on which can be seen a froa, an animal which was deified by Kippenberger, welcomes the public and indicates the distance that separates them from the MOMAS (2,254 km).

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The Museum of Modern Art Syros



Martin Kippenberger, *The Museum of Modern Art Syros,* exhibition view Fondazione Sant'Elia, Palermo, 2018



Martin Kippenberger, *The Museum of Modern Art Syros,* exhibition view, Fondazione Sant'Elia, Palermo, 2018



Martin Kippenberger, *Momas Hiking*, 1997 on hotels paper 118.50 x 104.50 cm (framed) ed. 80, coll. MAMCO



Martin Kippenberger, *MOMAS Projekt III*, 1993, watercolor, graphite, ink, chalk, stickers printed on digital print

29.7 x 42 cm each element, frame included coll. MAMCO, donation Martin Kippenberger



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FOOD

An exhibition organized by Sophie Costes, with the support of Gordon Matta-Clark Estate

The restaurant "FOOD" opened in New York City in October 1971 at 127 Prince Street, at the corner of Wooster. Thanks to the commitment of Carol Goodden and Gordon Matta-Clark, during the three years of its existence, FOOD was a meeting place, providing food and work for artists, and a truly original collective experience. On Sunday evenings, there was the Special Guest Chef Night: Rauschenberg served there a Chili of his own invention and the Matta Bones can be included among the legendary dishes of this restaurant, which also highlighted Cajun cooking, and one of his emblematic recipes, the Gombo. "FOOD" was a place for culinary communion, where nourishment became a creative, festive event. Matta-Clark regularly experimented with unusual cooking techniques ("Photo-Fried," "Agar-Agar" ...) and all the ephemeral events that he organized led to parties, such as the Brasero placed on the platform of the Dumpster Duplex, the second version of Open House, in October 1972.

While this experience brought together around its two founders other figures of the

New-York underground (Tina Girouard, Suzanne Harris, Rachel Lew, the members of the Anarchitecture group, and contributors to the magazine

Avalanche), the renown of Matta-Clark's work has now crystallized attention around him. It was in particular during the refurbishing of the restaurant that he made his first "cuttings": "One of the first times that I can remember using cuttings as a way to redefine a space was at the restaurant 'FOOD,' launched during the first days of SoHo ... We put on shows and created a theater of food. The first version of this space was not practical enough for our needs, when the restaurant became a business. So I had to spend the second summer redesigning the site. I did it by cutting up what had already been constructed and turning it into work spaces. I then attended to the walls and other partitions that divided up the inner space. This was perhaps the last time that I used cutting, the process of cutting-up for practical purposes."

FOOD has become an urban legend, with Matta-Clark, for a while, thinking of selling the concept to Leo Castelli.

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FOOD



Gordon Matta-Clark, FOOD, exhibition view, MAMCO, 2017 Photo : Annik Wetter – MAMCO, Geneva



Gordon Matta-Clark, FOOD, exhibition view, MAMCO, 2017 Photo: Annik Wetter – MAMCO, Geneva



Inventory

An exhibition organized by Lionel Bovier and Sophie Costes

Marcia Hafif (1929–2018) entered the realm of abstraction in the early 1960s, in Rome. She no longer saw painting as a means of representing the outside world but considered each picture as an object in its own right, describing her work as "concrete." She took a methodical approach to the problems of line/ ground and color/form. Her artistic influences were shaped in large part by the Ferus Gallery in Los Angeles (1957–1966), directed by Walter Hopps and Edward Kienholz, and she was a partial follower of a new direction in abstract painting spearheaded by Clement Greenberg as a reaction to the decadence of Abstract Expressionism. Her paintings were based on regular, geometric forms, anonymous execution, the use of two contrasting colors rather than contrasts of light and shade, and a refusal of pictorial illusion and threedimensionality.

In Rome, she discovered a highly stimulating art scene in which film played a vital, foundational role. Everyday life intervened constantly in the genesis of her works, and the osmosis between her Californian influences and the register of colors and forms she encountered in Rome (in architecture, urban signage, design, and film) is clearly visible. The result is abstraction that flirts with figuration.

On her return from Italy, Marcia Hafif experimented with Conceptual art for a short period, focusing on photography, film, and sound installations. She described the experience as "a way to stop painting" and break her "dependence to a single artistic medium."

In New York, in 1971, she painted a monochrome work, defining it as a "painting with a single figure." This experimental phase was short-lived and unproductive, however; through the daily practice of drawing on largeformat supports, she paved her way for her return as a painter. In Beginning Again, an article published in Artforum in 1978, she chronicles her return to the fundamental questions of what constitutes the very act of painting, and her unfashionable attachment to the medium, which distanced her from the trends of the day. Hafif's painting is often characterized as "radical," but it is also, and equally, an ode to the pleasure inherent in the application of paint, an uncompromising exploration of the effects of pigments on a given surface: "more painting and less talk."

Following earlier exhibitions of works produced during the Roman years, MAMCO proposes a survey of Marcia Hafif's work, with a selection of drawings, collages, photographs, and paintings covering her output as a whole.



Marcia Hafif, 115., 1966 Acrylic on canvas, 100 x 100 cm coll. Marcia Hafif Estate, New York, long-term loan to MAMCO



Marcia Hafif, Cadmium Orange, 1992 (Splash paintings series) Oil on canvas, 147 x 147 cm court. Galerie Hubert Winter, Vienne and Marcia Hafif Estate, New York



Marcia Hafif, *1., juin* 1962 Oil on canvas, 204 x 170 cm coll. Marcia Hafif Estate, New York, long-term loan to MAMCO



Marcia Hafif, *Sans titre*, 1962 Graphite on paper, 100 x 70 cm coll. Marcia Hafif Estate, New York, long-term loan to MAMCO

Riverrun (from Swerve to Bend)

An exhibition organized by Lionel Bovier and Sophie Costes

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 install each sculpture to reopen and close the part of the world where it is placed. I install it to transform a new real story into human existence. I install my sculpture to give shape to the changing past. To recognize the very possibility of history in a world that runs 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' 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' 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.

Riverrun (from Swerve to Bend)



Richard Nonas, *Riverrun (from Swerve to Bend),* exhibition view, MAMCO, 2018 Photo : Annik Wetter – MAMCO, Geneva



Richard Nonas, *Riverrun (from Swerve to Bend),* exhibition view, MAMCO, 2018 Photo: Annik Wetter – MAMCO, Geneva



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Monday: closed Tuesday–Friday: 12-6pm Saturday–Sunday: 11- 6pm MAMCO is overseen by FONDAMCO, which is made up of FONDATION MAMCO, the Canton, and City of Geneva.

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