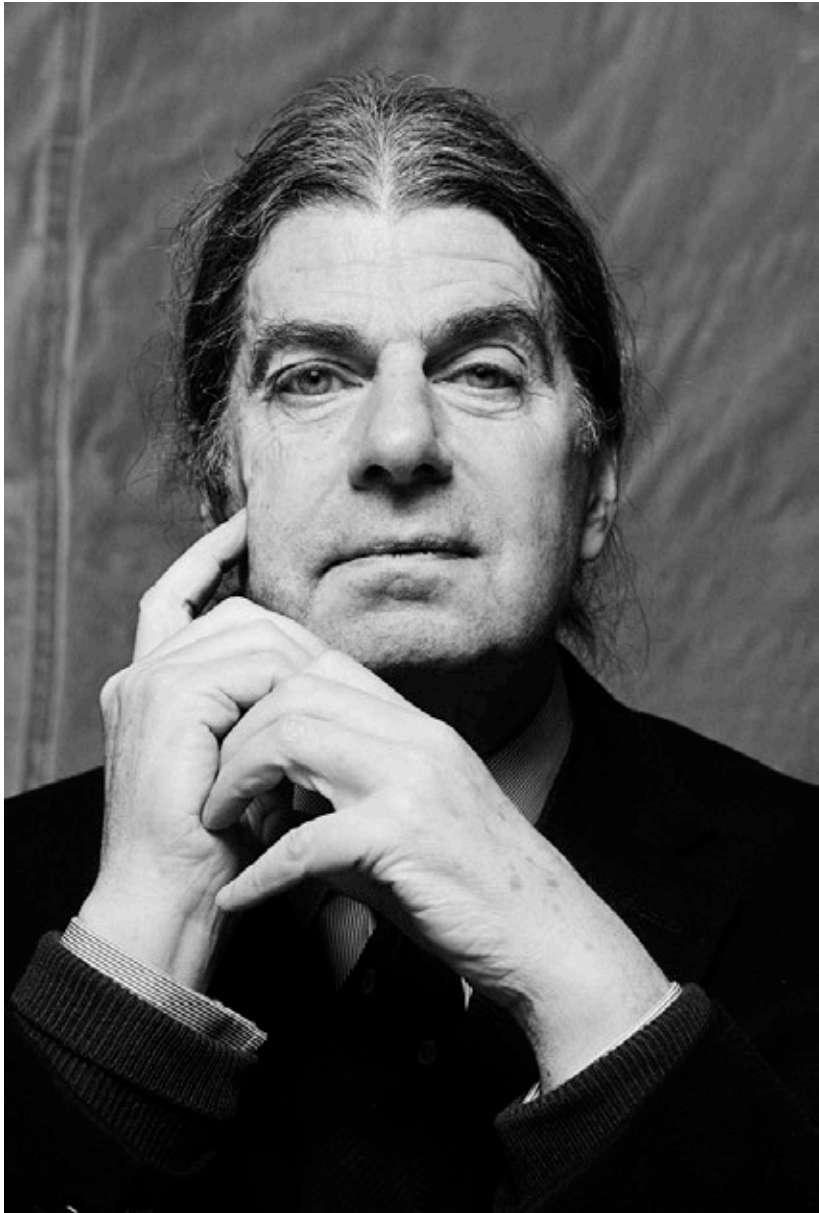


John Armleder

# 작가 약력



1948년 제네바에서 태어난 존 암레더는 동시대 가장 영향력 있는 스위스 작가이다.

50년에 걸친 그의 경력은 그 시기에 관련된 미학적 발전을 종합한다. 제네바에서 플럭서스의 학생이자 1960년대에 에카르트(Ecart) 그룹의 창립자인 암레더는 플럭서스 정신과 추상화, 레디메이드와 조각, 퍼포먼스와 방크기의 설치미술을 결합한 다양한 작품으로 알려져 있다. 화가, 조각가, 퍼포먼스 작가로서 암레더는 예술이란 무엇인지, 예술이 무엇을 할 수 있는지, 그리고 예술이 허용되는 것이 무엇인지에 대해 끊임없이 질문한다. 설치미술에서 추상화, 기하학적 구성주의 회화에서 가구 조각, 패턴이 흩어진 벽지에 이르기까지 그의 예술은 절대주의 회화, 미니멀리즘 조각, 구체 예술, 다다 레디메이드 등 여러 운동의 특성을 지니고 있다.

1980년대에 암레더는 그의 가구 조각을 신 기하학적 개념주의(Neo-Geometric Conceptualism)와 연관시켰으며, 예술과 디자인 객체를 혼합했다. 그는 항상 예술과 건축, 예술과 디자인, 예술과 기능적 객체 간의 인식된 구분을 허무는 데 관심을 가진다.

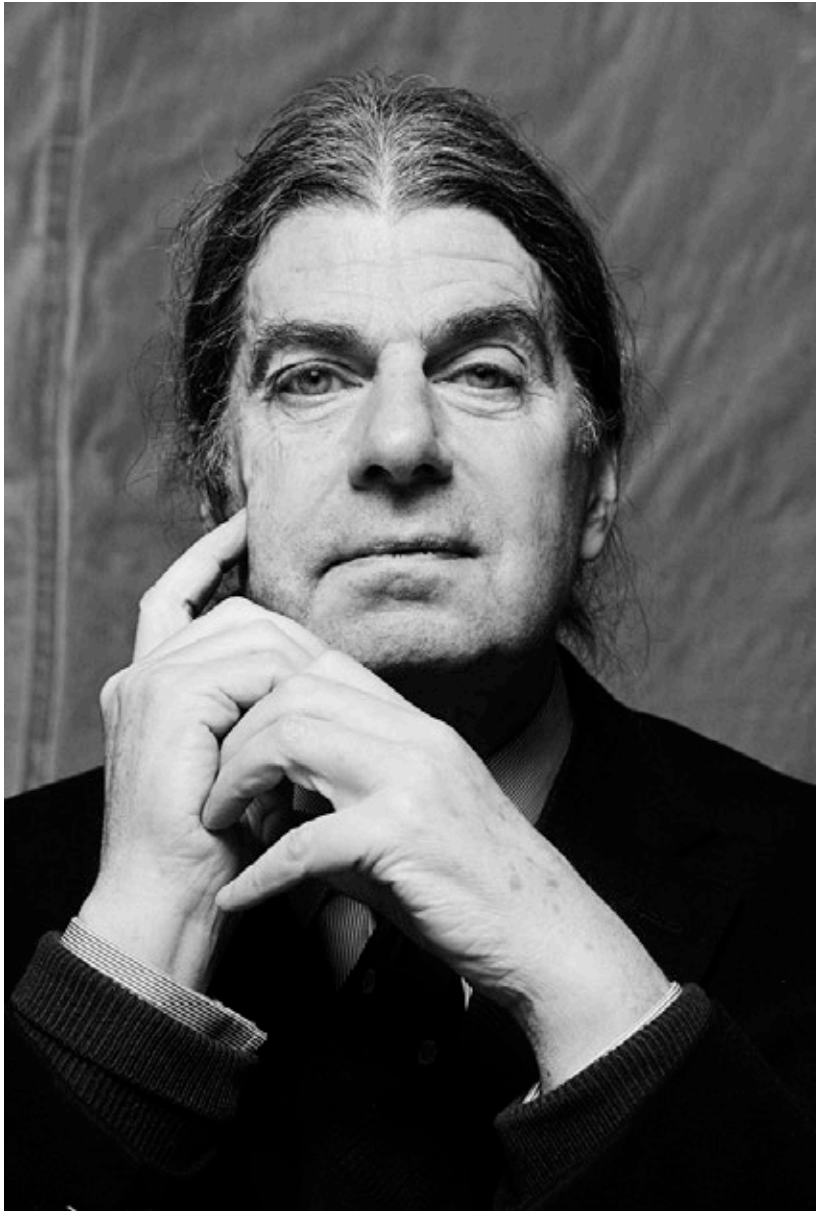
최근 프로젝트에서 암레더는 보다 개념적인 접근 방식을 탐구하며, 위임 방법과 큐레이터적 작업을 통해 저작권의 개념에 의문을 제기했다. 존 암레더의 예술은 결코 작가 자신과 같아 보이지 않으며, 어떤 정의나 레이블에도 얽매이지 않는다. 그럼에도 불구하고 그는 독자적인 어휘와 유머 감각을 발전시켜 그의 작품이 틀림없이 그만의 것임을 드러낸다.

그의 개인전으로는 MRAC 옥시타니(Sérignan, 2023); 상하이 Rockbund 미술관(상하이, 2021); 카날 풍피두 센터(브뤼셀, 2020); 아스펜 미술관(아스펜, 2019); 쉬른 미술관(프랑크푸르트, 2019); MADRE(나폴리, 2018); 무세이온(볼차노, 2018, 2016); 르 콩소르시엄(디종, 2014, 1996, 1989); 페르낭 레제 국립미술관(비오, 2014); 스위스 인스티튜트(뉴욕, 2012); 폐기 구겐하임 미술관(베네치아, 2011); 팔레 드 도쿄(파리, 2011); 현대미술관(세인트루이스, 2008); MAMCO(제네바, 2007, 2006, 1997, 1996); 뉴욕 현대미술관 MoMA (뉴욕, 2000); 파리 시립 현대 미술관(파리, 1987) 등이 있다.

존 암레더는 2011년에 메레 오펜하임 상, 2007년에는 리나르 재단(Leenaards Foundation) 상, 1995년에는 제네바 시 상을 수상했다. 그는 테살로니키 현대 미술 비엔날레(2013), 요코하마 국제 현대 미술 트리엔날레(2008), 프라하 비엔날레(2008), 제7회 리옹 현대 미술 비엔날레(2003), 제6회 루가노 조각 비엔날레(2001), 제42회 베니스 비엔날레(1986)에서 전시되었다.

# Biography

## John Armleder



John M Armleder was born in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1948 and he is one of the most influential Swiss artists of his generation.

His career spans five decades and synthesizes many of the competing aesthetic developments associated with that period. Student of Fluxus in Geneva and founder of the Ecart group in the 1960s, Armleder is known for the variety of his work, which combines Fluxus spirit and abstract painting, ready-made and sculpture, performance and room-size installations. As a painter, sculptor and performance artist, Armleder constantly asks the questions about what art is, what it can do, and what art is allowed. From room-size installations to abstract paintings, from geometrical constructivist paintings to furniture sculptures and pattern-strewn wallpapers, his art admittedly takes on attributes of Suprematist painting, Minimalist sculpture, Concrete Art and Dada ready-mades, among other movements.

In the 1980s, Armleder was associated with Neo-Geometric Conceptualism for his furniture sculptures, conflating art and the design object, as he has always been interested in breaking through perceived divisions between art and

architecture, art and design, and art and functional objects.

Recent projects have seen Armleder looking at more conceptual approaches, questioning the notion of authorship via delegation methods and curatorial undertaking. John Armleder's art never looks quite like itself, and it escapes any possible definition and label. Nevertheless he has developed a signature vocabulary and sense of humor that make his work unmistakably his own.

His solo shows include: MRAC Occitanie, Sérignan (2023); Rockbund Art Museum, Shanghai (2021); Kanal Centre Pompidou, Brussels (2020); Aspen Art Museum, Aspen (2019); Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt (2019); MADRE, Naples (2018); Museion, Bolzano (2018, 2016); Le Consortium, Dijon (2014, 1996, 1989); Musée National Fernand Léger, Biot (2014); Swiss Institute, New York (2012); Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice (2011); Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2011); Contemporary Art Museum, St. Louis (2008); Mamco, Genève (2007, 2006, 1997, 1996); Museum of Modern Art, New York (2000); Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris (1987).

In 2011 he received the Meret Oppenheim Prize, in 2007 the Leenaards Foundation Prize and in 1995 the Ville de Genève Prize. He was shown at the Thessaloniki Biennial of Contemporary Art, Thessaloniki (2013); the International Triennial of Contemporary Art, Yokohama (2008); the Prague Biennial, Prague (2008); the 7th Biennial of Contemporary Art, Lyon (2003); the 6th Sculpture Biennial, Lugano (2001) and the 42nd Venice Biennial, Venice (1986).

## Selected Artworks



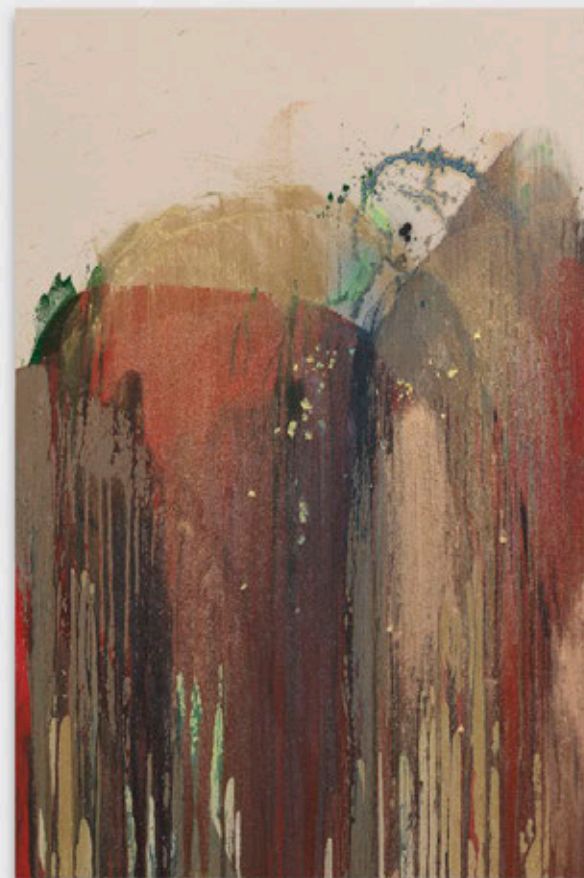
MASSIMODECARLO

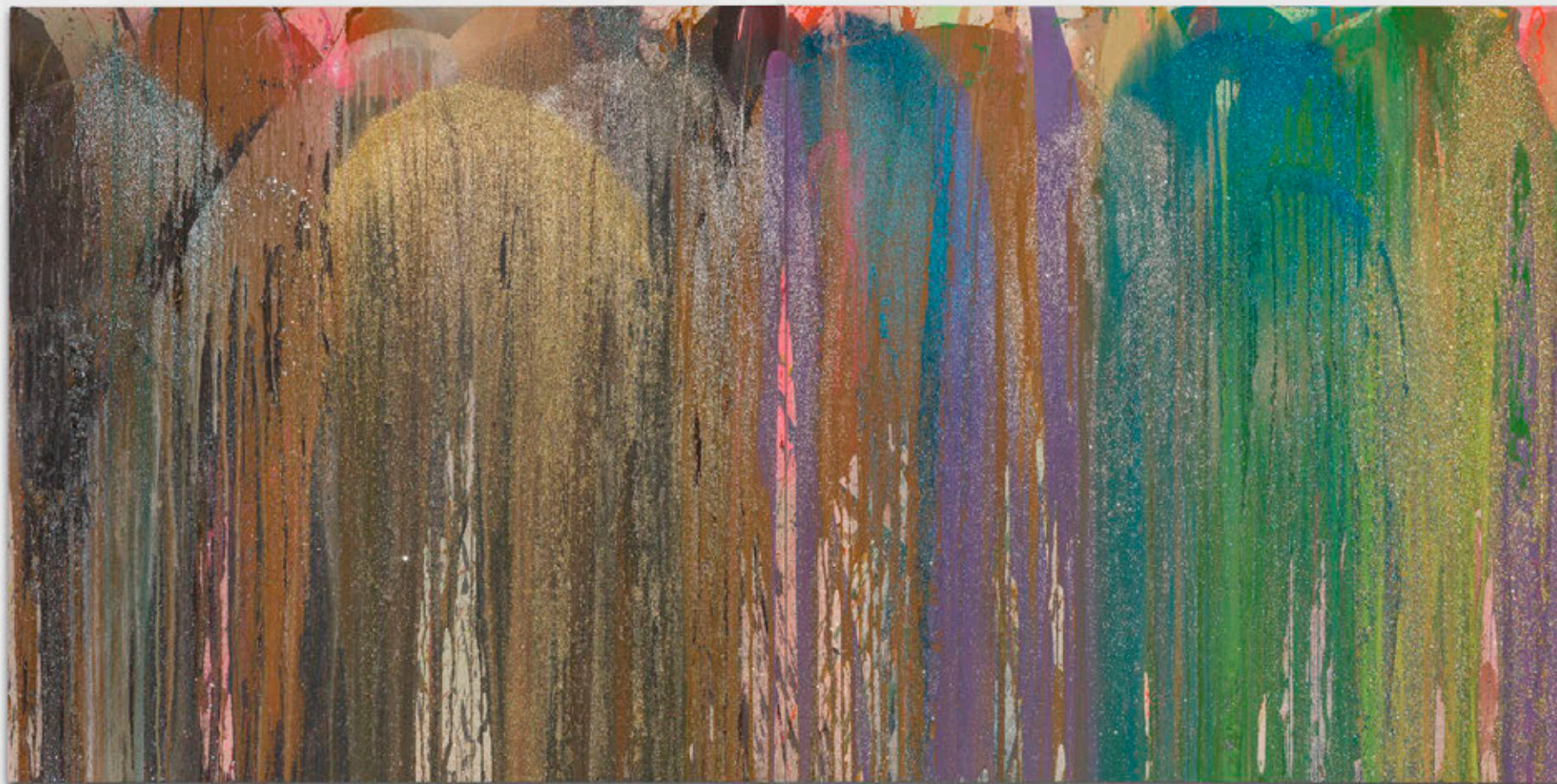
**JOHN ARMLEDER**

*All Over Again, 2023*

Mixed media on canvas

165 × 110 × 4 cm / 65 × 43 × 1 2/3 inches





**JOHN ARMLEDER**

*Onosma Fastigiata*, 2021

Mixed media on canvas

150 × 300 × 4 cm / 59 1/8 × 118 1/8 × 1 1/3 inches



MASSIMODECARLO

**JOHN ARMLEDER**

*Ooooze*, 2021

Mixed media on canvas

225 × 250 × 4 cm / 88 1/2 × 98 1/3 × 1 1/2 inches



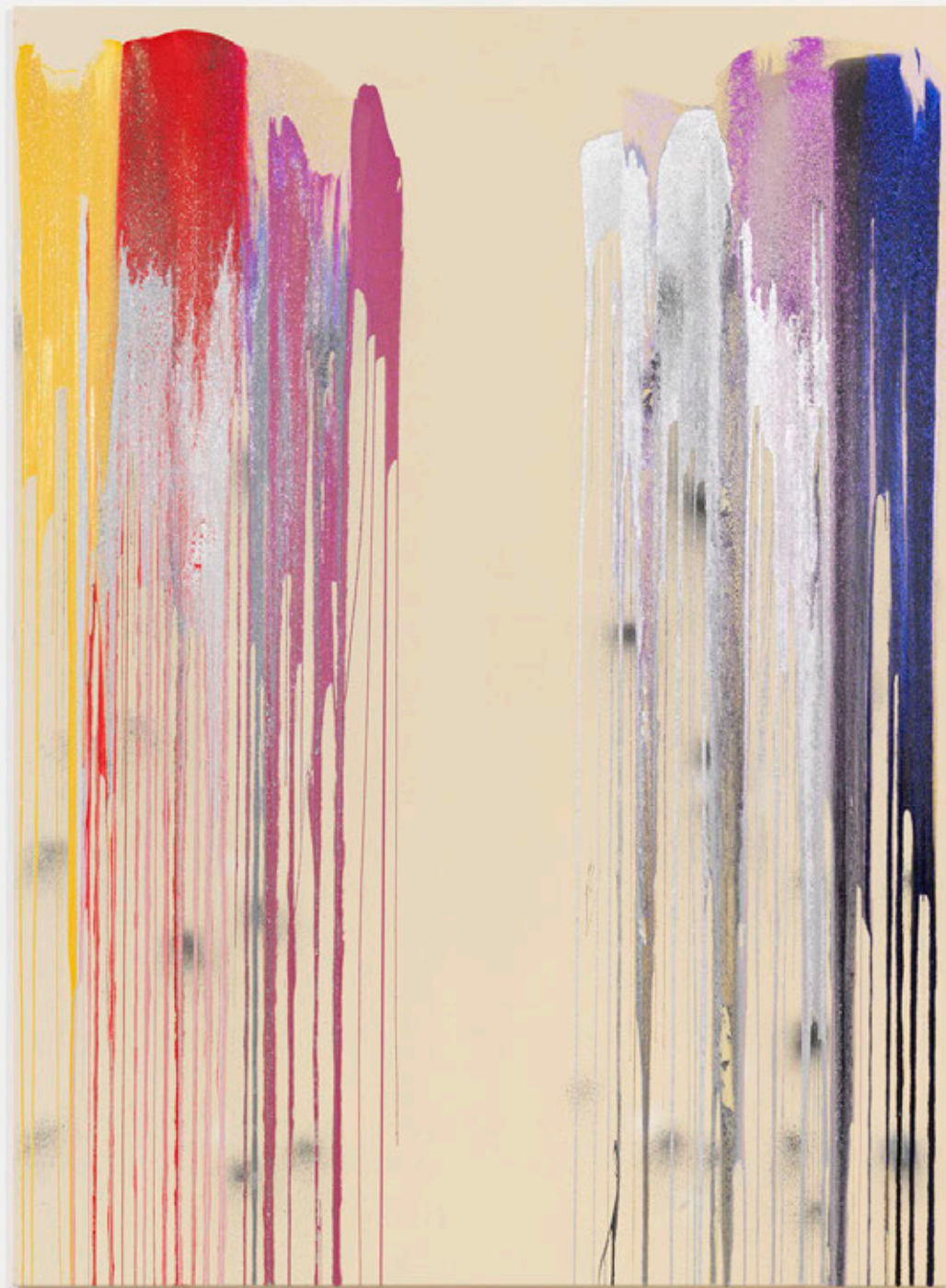
MASSIMODECARLO

**JOHN ARMLEDER**

*Dust*, 2015

Mixed media on canvas

350 × 250 × 4 cm / 138 x 79 x 1 1/2 inches



MASSIMODECARLO

**JOHN ARMLEDER**

*de M & G H, 2015*

Mixed media on canvas, opera sib tubas plated in silver and gold

250 × 230 × 40 cm / 98 1/2 × 90 2/3 × 15 3/4 inches

Canvas: 250 x 150 cm / 98 1/2 x 59 inches





MASSIMODECARLO

**JOHN ARMLEDER**

*Mind Breath I*, 2015

Specchio Piuma ultra light mirror panel, serigraphy

60 × 40 × 3.5 cm / 23 5/8 x 15 3/4 x 1 3/8 inches







**JOHN ARMLEDER**

*Medium Green, Woodland Scenics, Realistic Trees (FS), 2014*

Mixed media on canvas, six chairs

480 × 900 cm / 189 × 354 1/3 inches



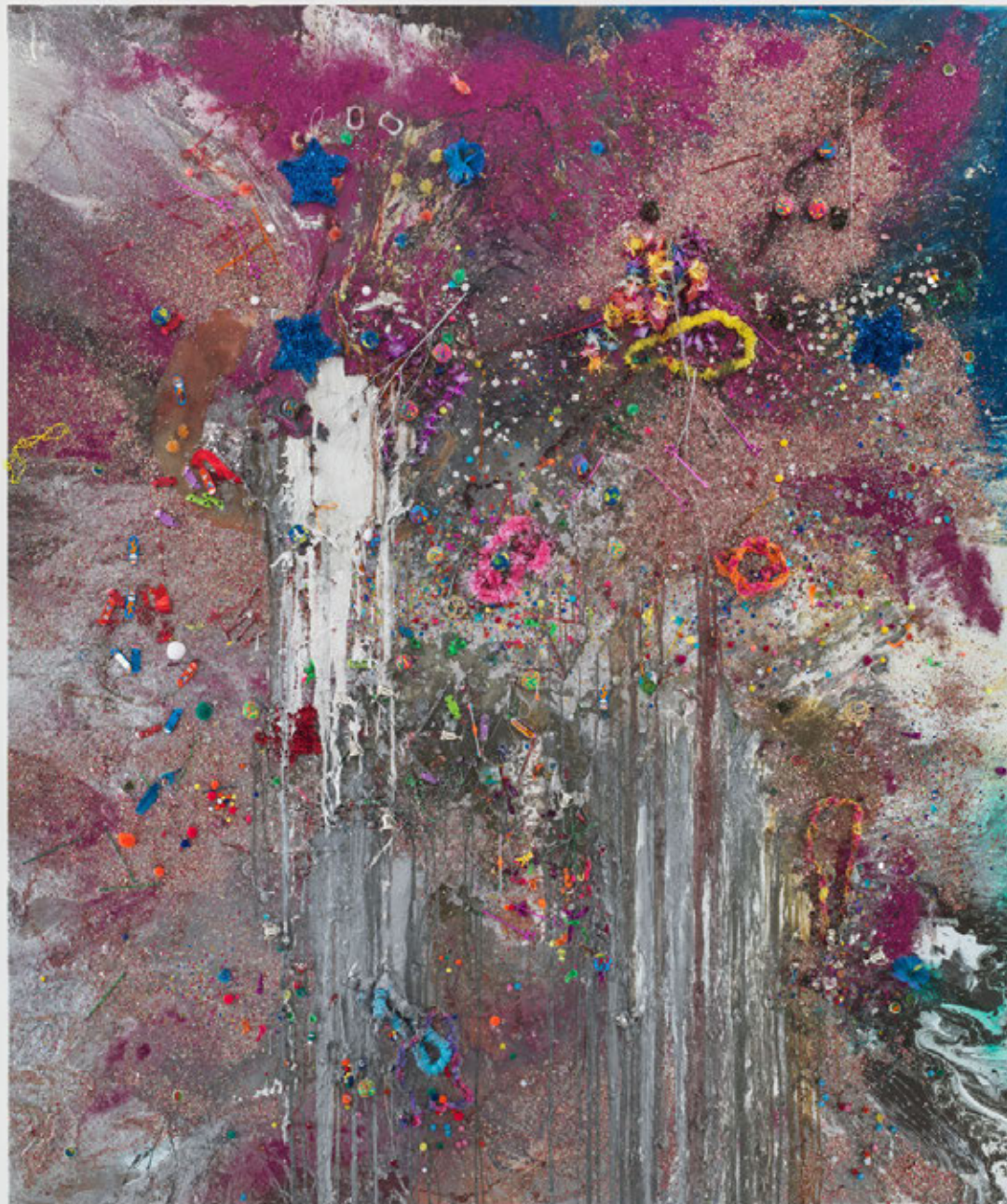
MASSIMODECARLO

**JOHN ARMLEDER**

*On to a Bridge*, 2014

Mixed media on canvas

325 × 275 cm / 128 x 108 1/4 inches



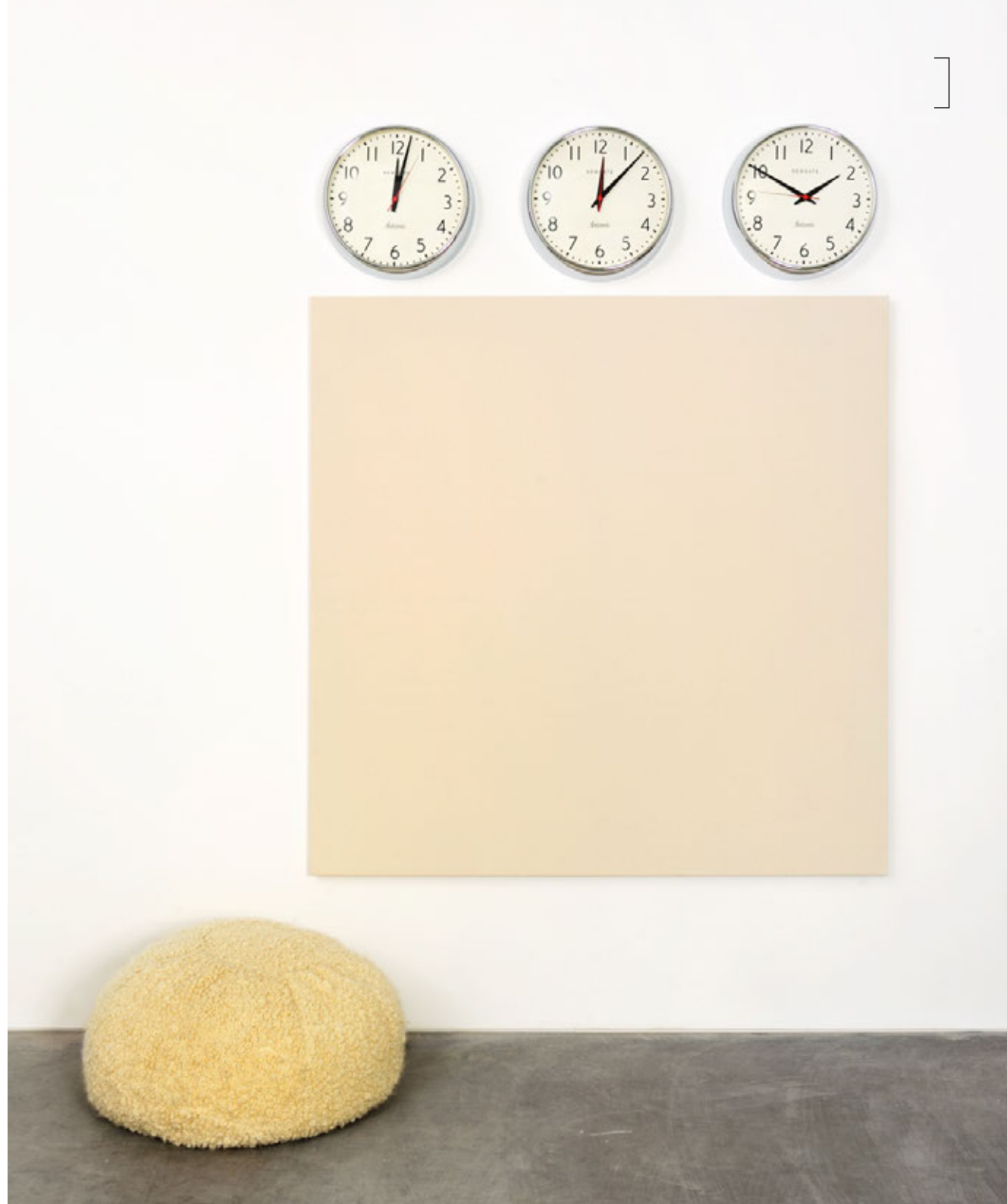
MASSIMODECARLO

**JOHN ARMLEDER**

*FS Richoux/Annabell's*, 2013

3 clocks, pouf, canvas

240 × 186 × 100 cm / 94 1/2 x 73 1/4 x 39 1/2 inches



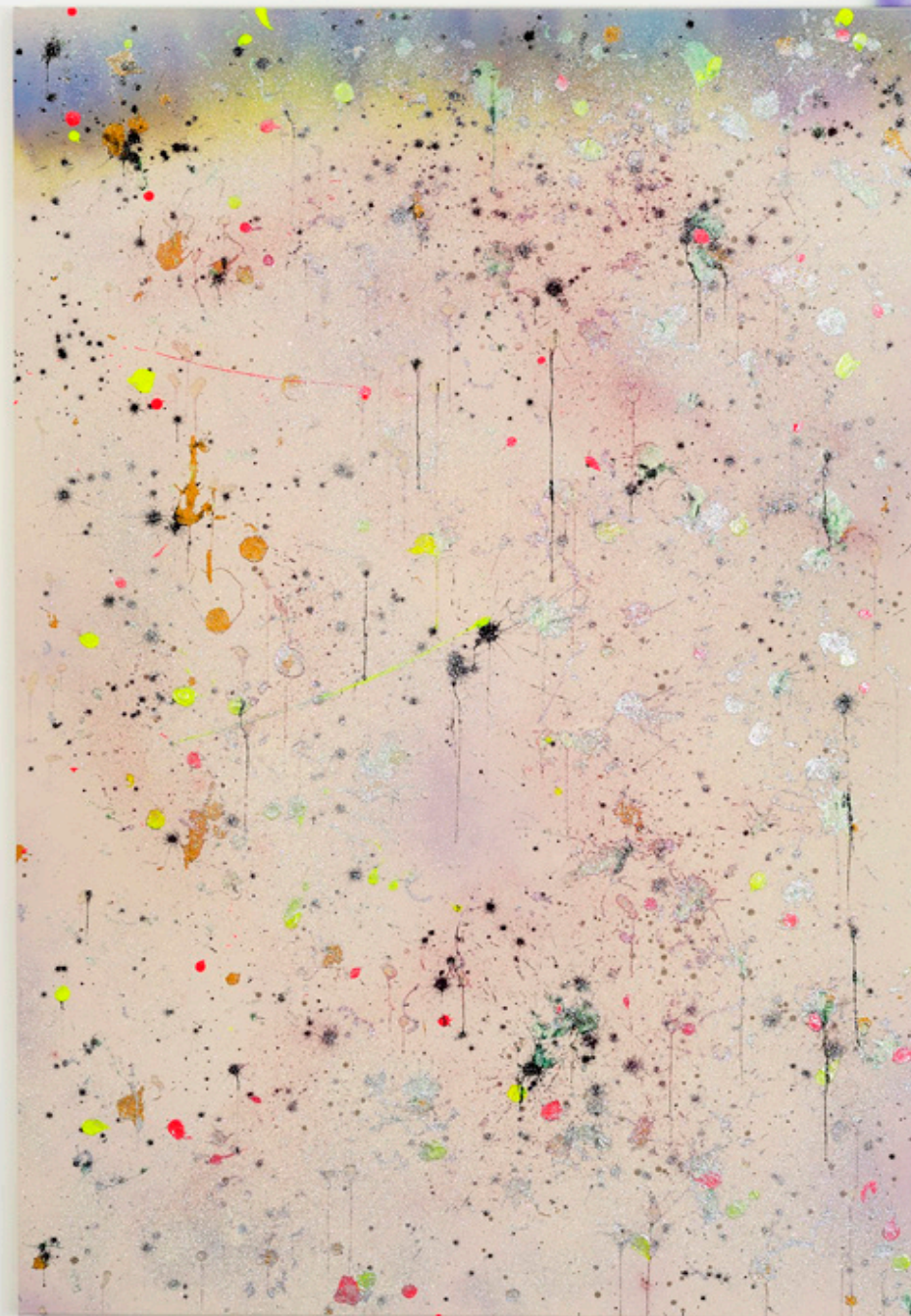


**JOHN ARMLEDER**

*Richoux/Harry's*, 2013

Spray paint on canvas

225 × 150 cm / 88 1/2 x 59 inches





MASSIMODECARLO

**JOHN ARMLEDER**

*FS Richoux/Ikeda, 2013*

Cactuses, towels and canvas

249 × 210 × 56 cm / 98 x 82 1/2 x 22 inches





**JOHN ARMLEDER**

*Untitled, 2008*

Acrylic on canvas, Christmas trees

242 × 270 × 110 cm / 95 1/3 × 106 1/3 × 43 1/3 inches



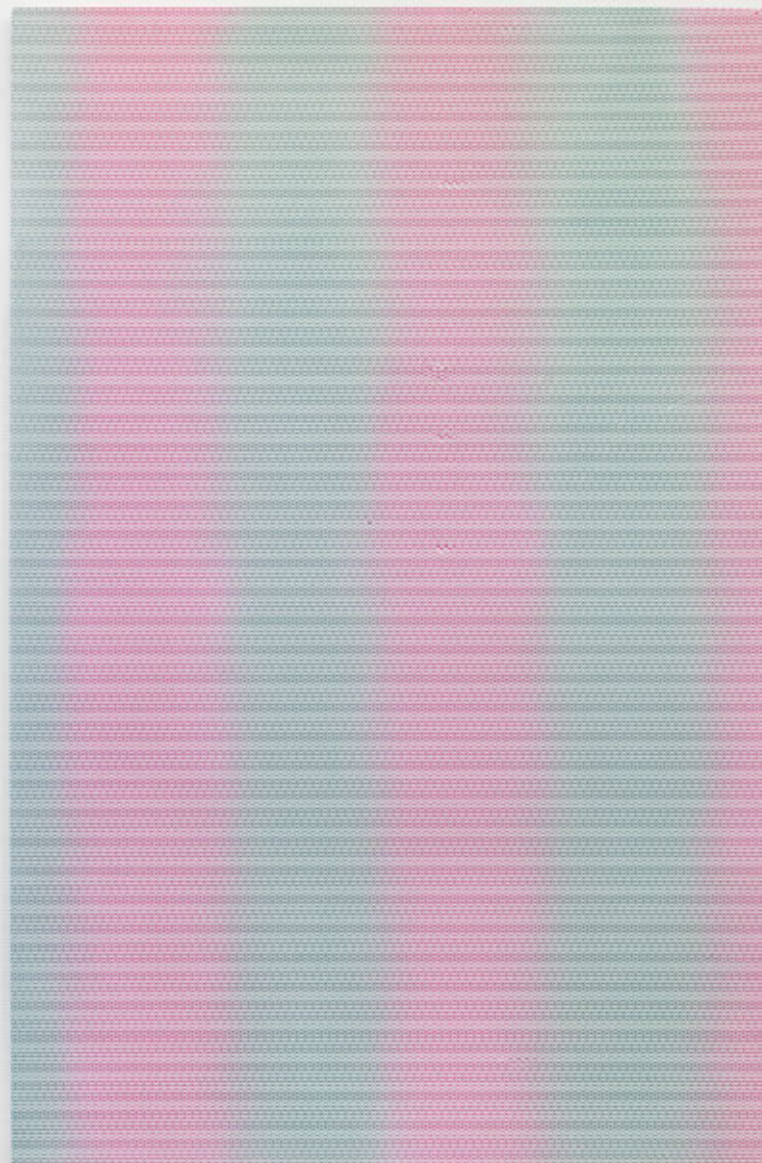
MASSIMODECARLO

**JOHN ARMLEDER**

*Untitled*, 2008

Acrylic on canvas

225 × 150 × 4 cm / 88 2/3 x 59 x 1 2/3 inches



MASSIMODECARLO

**JOHN ARMLEDER**

*Heteropoda venatoria*, 2005

Acrylic on canvas

120 × 120 cm / 47 1/4 x 47 1/4 inches



MASSIMODECARLO

**JOHN ARMLEDER**

*Untitled*, 2004

Mixed media on canvas

250 × 170 cm / 98 1/2 x 67 inches





MASSIMODECARLO

**JOHN ARMLEDER**

*Untitled (Chutes d'eau), 2002*

Glass, wood, electrical system, acrylic on canvas

259 × 353 cm / 102 x 139 inches





**JOHN ARMLEDER**

*Untitled (FS)*, 1998

22 neons (neon tubes, electric connections, cables)

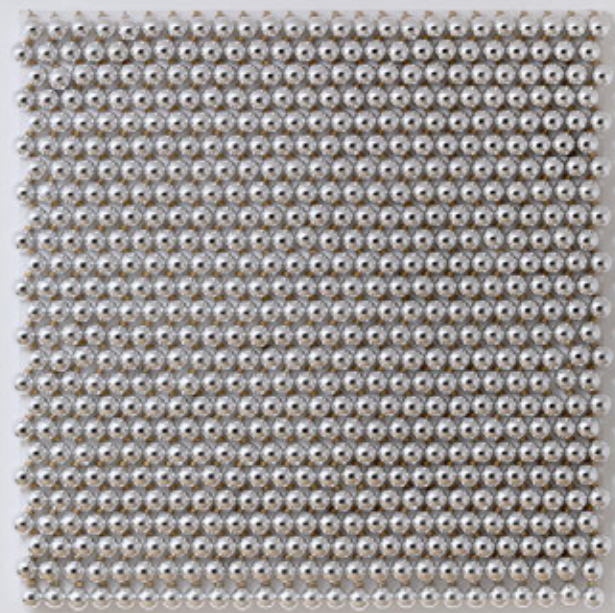
42 x 325 x 160 cm circa / 16 2/3 x 128 x 63 inches

**JOHN ARMLEDER**

*Jingle Bells*, 1998

Christmas ornaments on canvas

100 × 100 × 5 cm / 39 1/3 x 39 1/3 x 2 inches





MASSIMODECARLO



**JOHN ARMLEDER**

*FS 271, 1992*

Wood, mirrored plastic laminate, two mirrored disco balls, spotlights

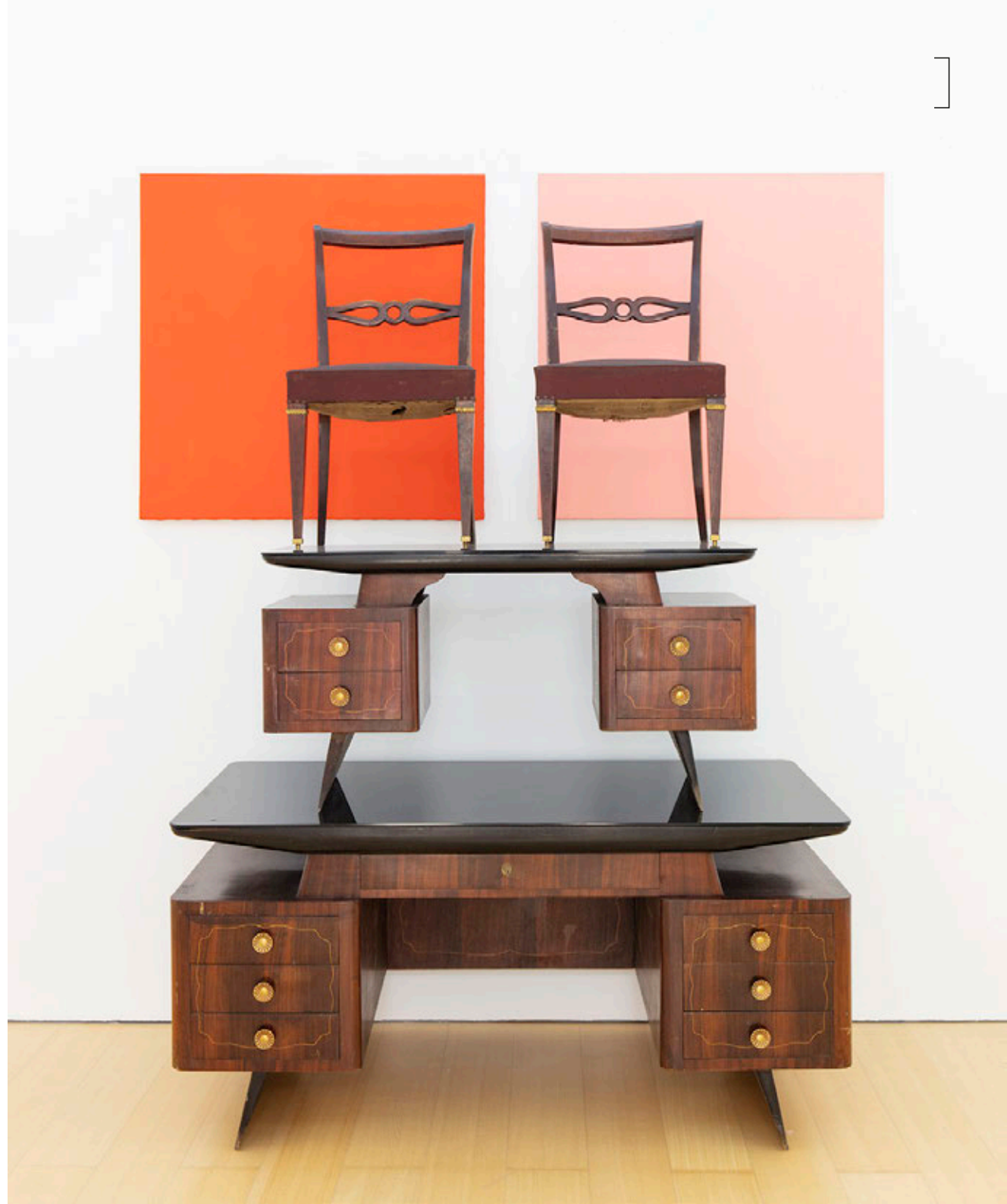
205 × 220 × 80 cm / 80 1/2 × 87 × 31 1/2 inches

**JOHN ARMLEDER**

*Furniture Sculpture 254, 1991*

Desks, chairs and acrylic on canvas

262 × 215 × 80 cm / 103 1/6 × 84 5/8 × 31 1/2



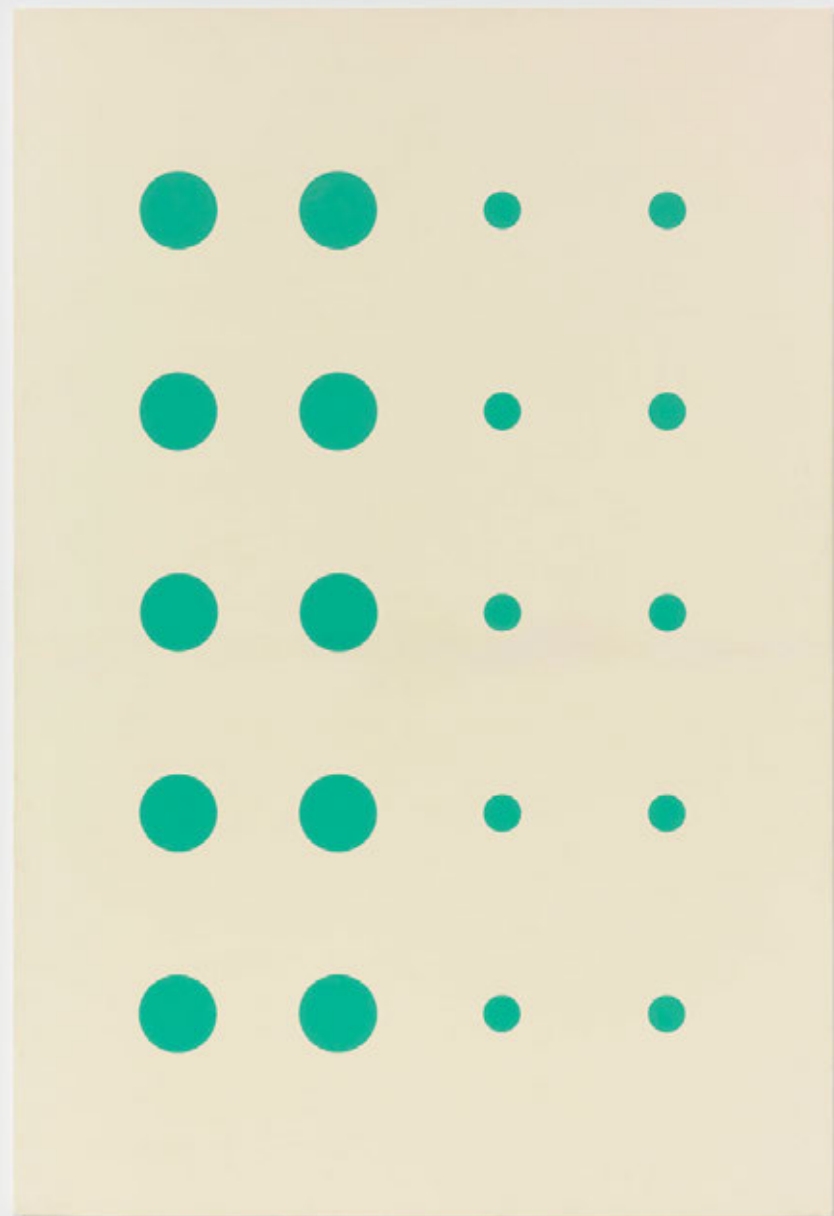
MASSIMODECARLO

**JOHN ARMLEDER**

*Sans titre*, 1991

Acrylic on canvas

250 × 170 cm / 98 1/2 x 67 inches



**JOHN ARMLEDER**

*Furniture Sculpture 45*, 1983

Acrilico su tela, toletta /

Acrylic on canvas, dressing table

170 × 102 × 35 cm / 67 × 40 5/32 × 13 3/4 inches



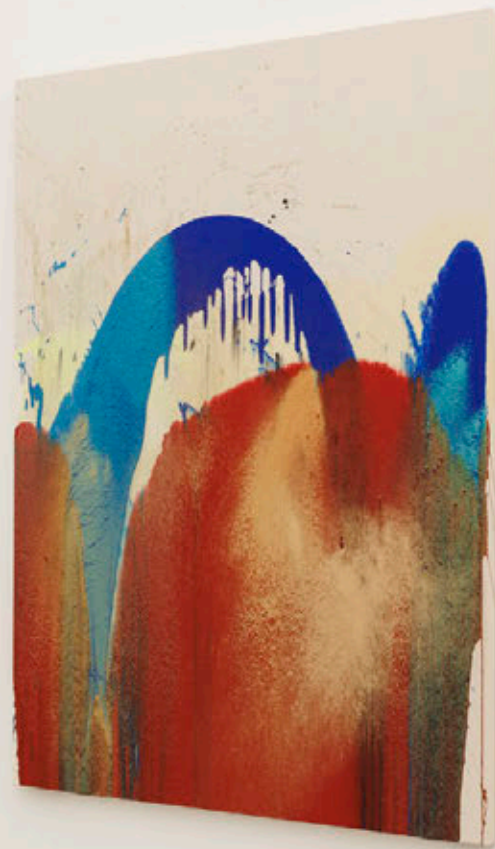
## Selected Installation Views















2023 - *Yakety Yak*, MRAC Occitanie, Sérignan, F





2023 - *Yakety Yak*, MRAC Occitanie, Sérignan, F







2023 - *Yakety Yak*, MRAC Occitanie, Sérignan, F

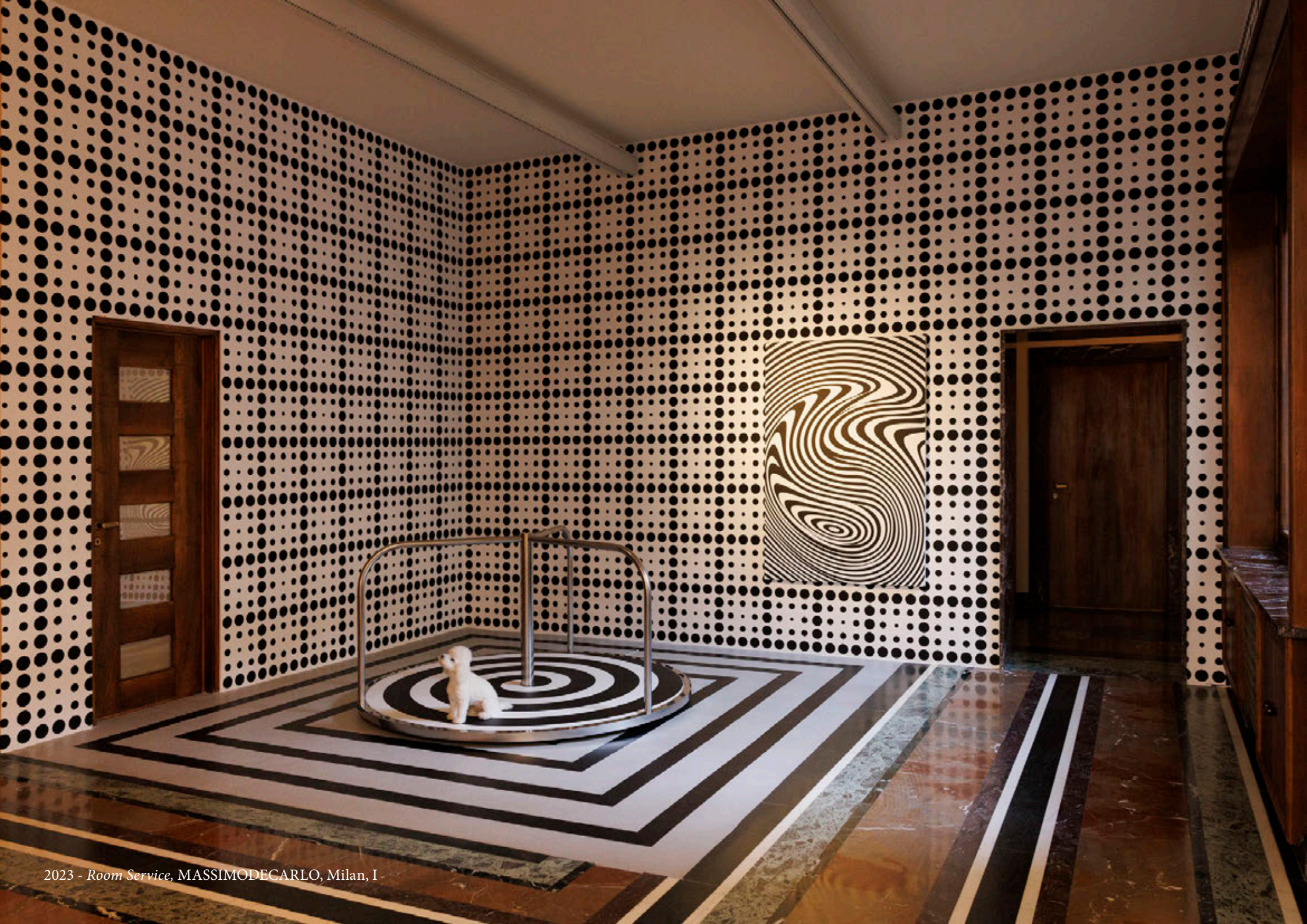






2023 - Room Service, MASSIMO DE CARLO, Milan, I









2021 - *Again, Just Again*, Rockbund Art Museum, Shanghai, PRC



2021 - *Again, Just Again*, Rockbund Art Museum, Shanghai, PRC





2021 - *Again, Just Again*, Rockbund Art Museum, Shanghai, PRC





2020 - *It never ends*, Kanal Centre Pompidou, Brussels, B



















2019 – *Spoons, moons and masks*, Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, US





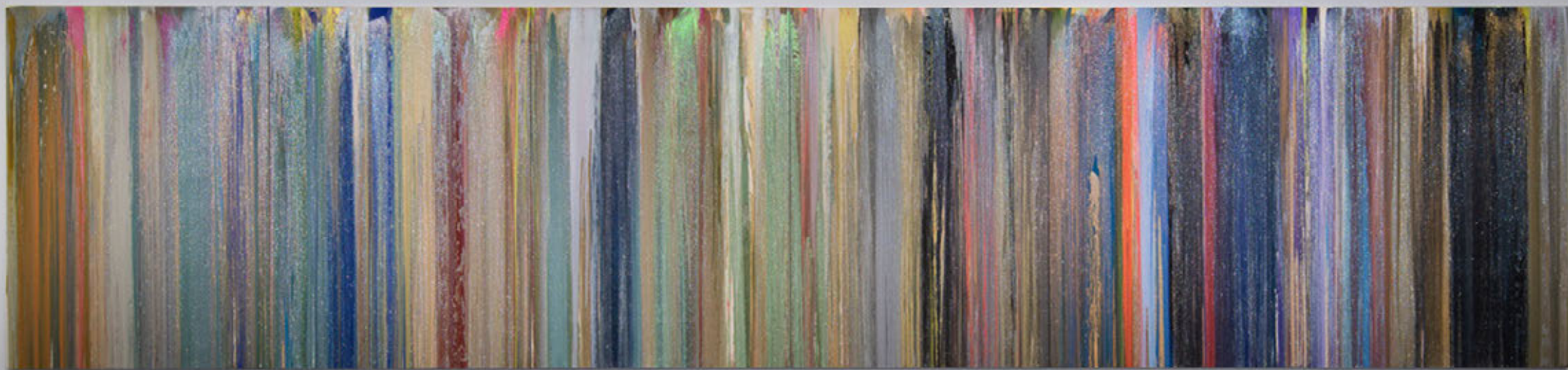
2019 – *Spoons, moons and masks*, Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, US







2019 – *Spoons, moons and masks*, Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, US



2019 – *Spoons, moons and masks*, Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, US





2019 – *Spoons, moons and masks*, Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, US





2019 – John M Armleder, Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, D





2019 – John M Armleder, Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, D





2019 – John M Armleder, Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, D

















2018 – *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*, Museion, Bolzano, I









2018 – *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*, Museion, Bolzano, I





2018 – John Armleder, 360°, Madre - Museo d'arte contemporanea Donnaregina, Naples, I



2018 – John Armleder, 360°, Madre - Museo d'arte contemporanea Donnaregina, Naples, I





2018 – John Armleder, 360°, Madre - Museo d'arte contemporanea Donnaregina, Naples, I





2018 - John Armleder, 360°, Madre - Museo d'arte contemporanea Donnaregina, Naples, I





2018 – John Armleder, 360°, Madre - Museo d'arte contemporanea Donnaregina, Naples, I



2018 – John Armleder, 360°, Madre - Museo d'arte contemporanea Donnaregina, Naples, I





2018 – *John Armleder, 360°*, Madre - Museo d'arte contemporanea Donnaregina, Naples, I

















2017 – *Better, Quasi*, MASSIMODECARLO, Milan, I



# MASSIMODECARLO



JOHN ARMLEDER  
RCHX

June 6 - July 8 2017



[MDC]

























































2015 - *Let it Shine, Let it Shine, Let it Shine. It's Xmas again!*, La Rinascente, Milan, I





2015 - *Let it Shine, Let it Shine, Let it Shine. It's Xmas again!*, La Rinascente, Milan, I





2015 - *Let it Shine, Let it Shine, Let it Shine. It's Xmas again!*, La Rinascente, Milan, I



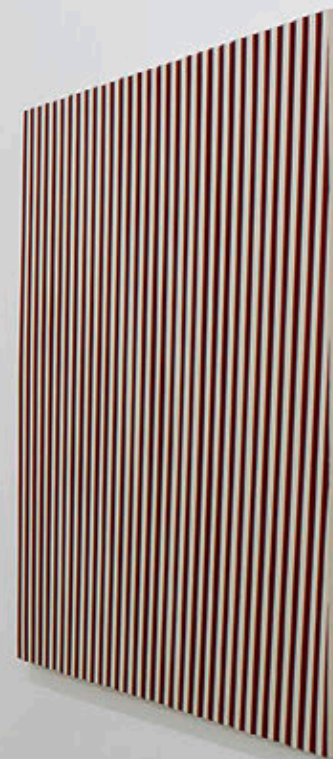
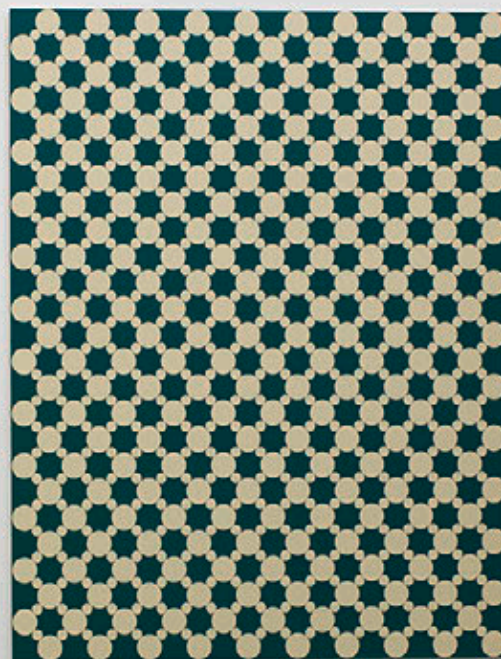
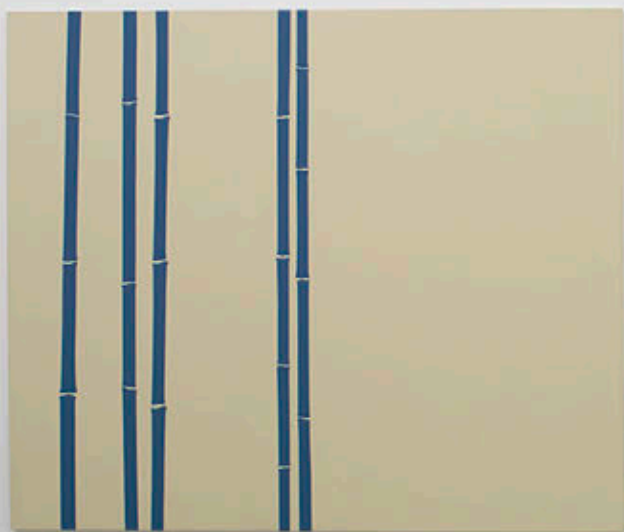
















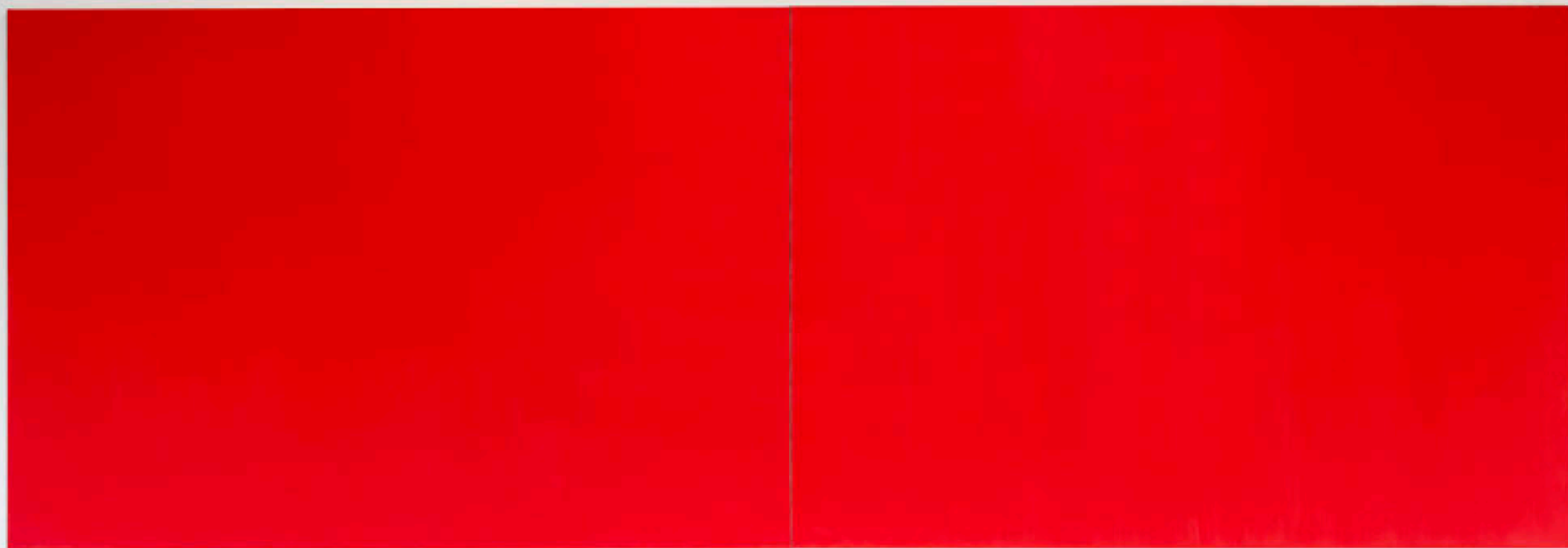
2014 - *Où sont les sauces*, Le Consortium, Dijon, F





2014 - *Où sont les sauces*, Le Consortium, Dijon, F









2014 - *Ring Bell Twice*, Galerie Elac, Renens, CH









2014 - *Ring Bell Twice*, Galerie Elac, Renens, CH





2014 - *Ring Bell Twice*, Galerie Elac, Renens, CH



2014 - *Ring Bell Twice*, Galerie Elac, Renens, CH





2012 - *Selected Furniture Sculptures 1979-2012*, Swiss Institute, New York, US









2012 - *Selected Furniture Sculptures 1979-2012*, Swiss Institute, New York, US





2007 - *Too Much Is Not Enough*, The Rose Art Museum of Brandeis University, Waltham, US











2006 - *Amor Vacui, Horror Vacui*, Mamco, Genève, CH





2006 - *Amor Vacui, Horror Vacui*, Mamco, Genève, CH





2006 - *Amor Vacui, Horror Vacui*, Mamco, Genève, CH





2006 - *Amor Vacui, Horror Vacui*, Mamco, Genève, CH





2004 - Unlimited, Art Basel, Basel, CH





2004 - Unlimited, Art Basel, Basel, CH



2004 - *About Nothing. Works On Paper 1964-2004*, Kunsthalle Zürich, Zurich, CH





2004 - *About Nothing. Works On Paper 1964-2004*, Kunsthalle Zürich, Zurich, CH







1995 - John Armleder, MASSIMODECARLO, Milan - Bocconi, I





1995 - John Armleder, MASSIMODECARLO, Milan - Bocconi, I





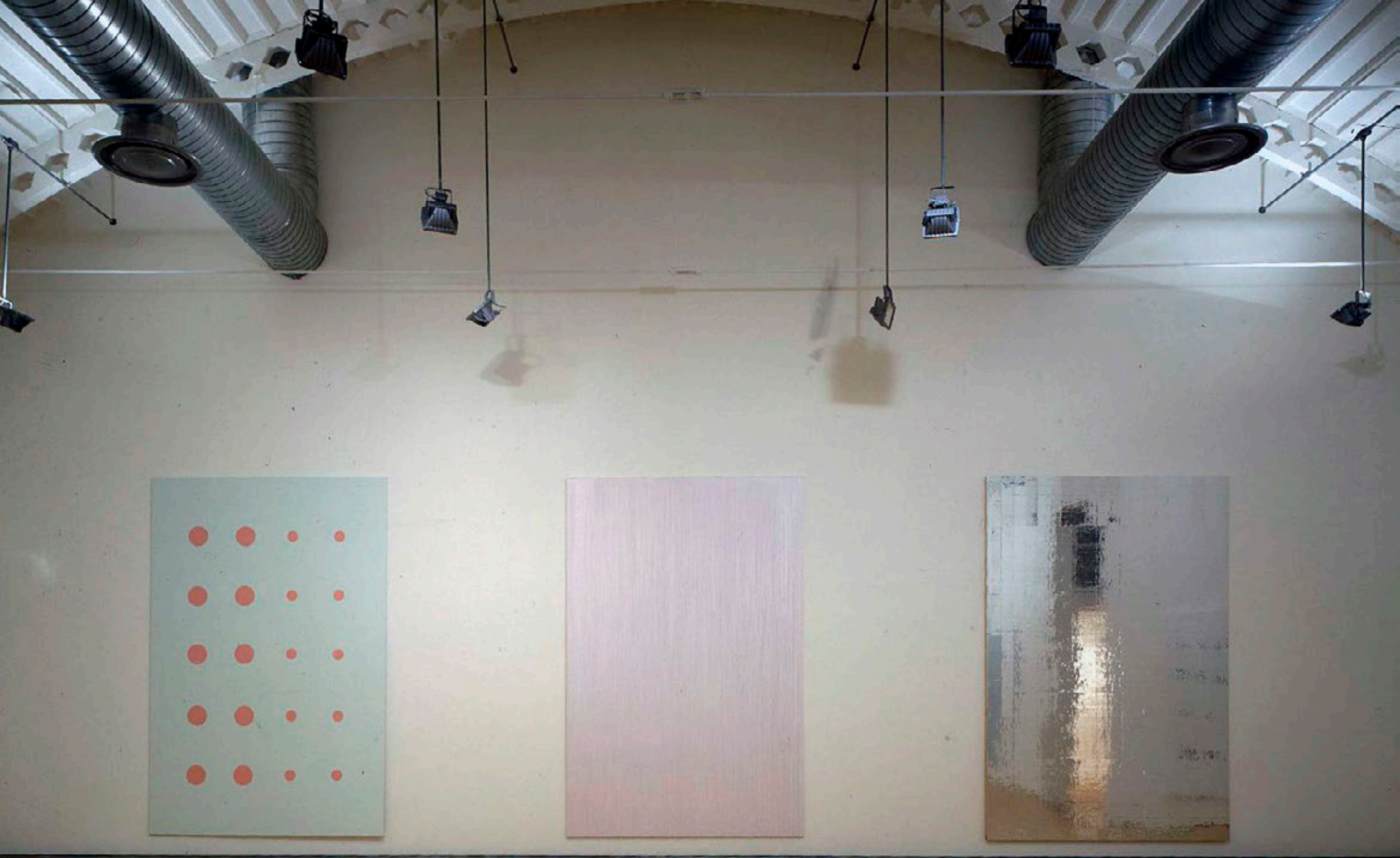
1995 - John Armleder, MASSIMODECARLO, Milan - Bocconi, I





1995 - John Armleder, MASSIMODECARLO, Milan - Bocconi, I





1992 - *John Armleder*, MASSIMODECARLO, Milan, I





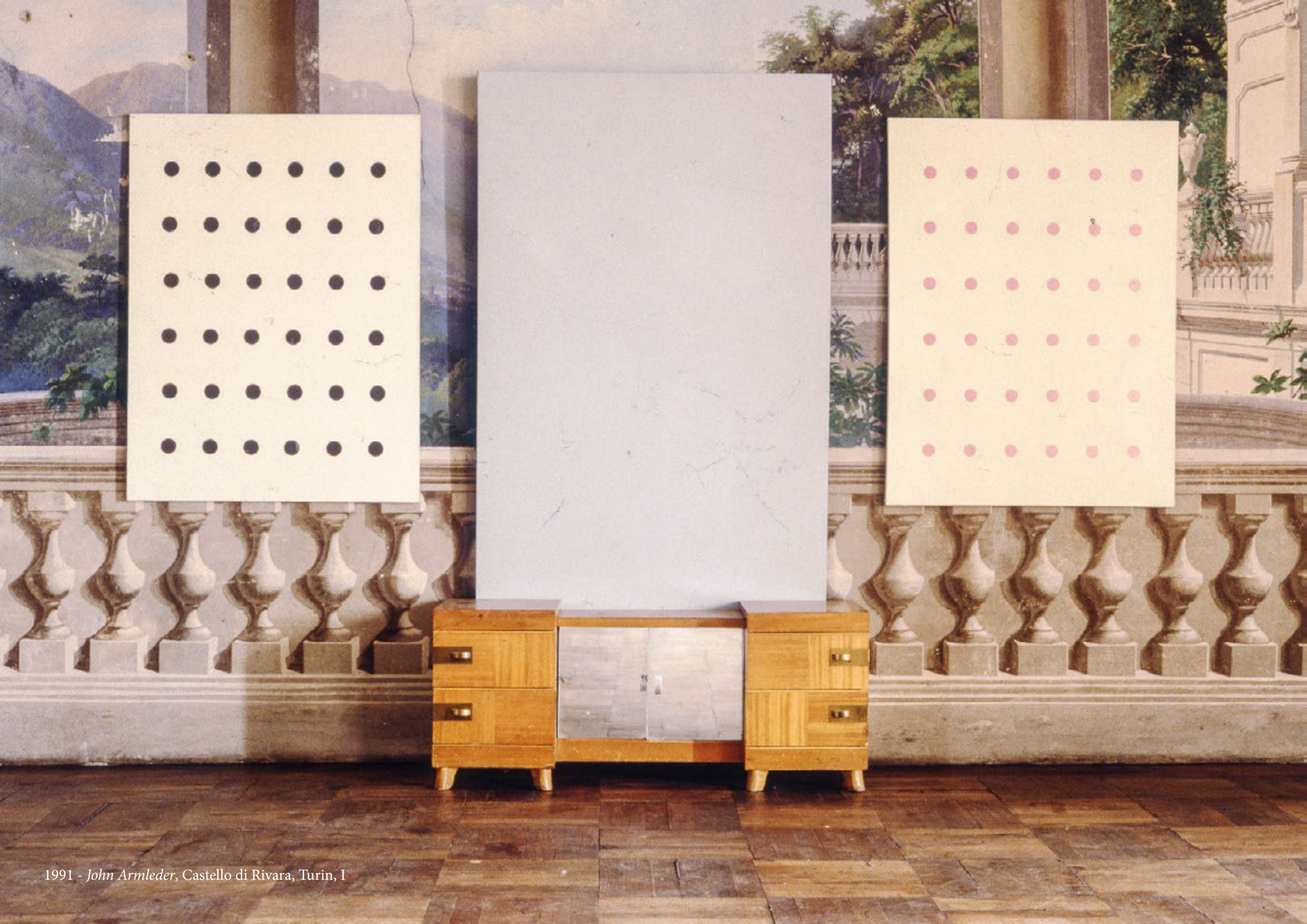
1992 - John Armleder, MASSIMODECARLO, Milan, I





1991 - John Armleder, Castello di Rivara, Turin, I





1991 - John Armleder, Castello di Rivara, Turin, I





1991 - John Armleder, Castello di Rivara, Turin, I





1991 - John Armleder, Castello di Rivara, Turin, I





1989 - John Armleder, Le Consortium L'Usine, Dijon, F





1989 - John Armleder, Le Consortium L'Usine, Dijon, F





1989 - John Armleder, Le Consortium L'Usine, Dijon, F



# Solo Exhibitions

## John Armleder

### 2024

*On ne fait pas ça*, MASSIMODECARLO, Milan, I  
*ENCORE TROP*, Centre d'Édition Contemporaine, Genève, CH

### 2023

*Oculus*, Noire Gallery, Turin, Italy  
*Yakety Yak*, MRAC Occitanie, Sérignan, F  
*Experiences*, Kunsthalle Marcel Duchamp, Cully, CH  
*Pour la planète*, Palais Galerie, Neuchâtel, CH

### 2022

*Solid Coated*, Mehdi Chouakri, Berlin, D  
*John Armleder – Furniture Sculptures*, Galerie Andrea Caratsch, St. Moritz, CH

### 2021

*John Armleder*, Vera Munro Gallery, Hamburg, D  
*John Armleder*, Almine Rech Gallery, Shanghai, PRC  
*John Armleder*, Rockbund Art Museum, Shanghai, PRC  
*John Armleder*, MASSIMODECARLO Pièce Unique, Paris, F

### 2020

*Clown's Way*, MASSIMODECARLO, Hong Kong, PRC  
*It Never Ends*, Kanal Centre Pompidou, Brussels, B  
*The John Armleder and Rob Pruitt Show*, MASSIMODECARLO, VSpace  
*White Plate, White Cup*, Galerie Jean Brolly, Paris, F  
*Iso-cèle*, in collaboration with Rectangle, Hôtel Manos Premier, Brussels, B

### 2019

*John M Armleder*, Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, D  
*Spoons, moons and masks*, Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, US  
*Quicksand II*, Musée d'art moderne et contemporain (MAMCO), Geneva, CH  
*Sh/Ash/Lash/Splash*, David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, US  
*CA.CA.*, Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, D

### 2018

360°, curated by Andrea Viliani, Silvia Salvati, Madre - Museo d'arte contemporanea Donnaregina, Naples, I  
*Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*, Museion, Bolzano, I  
*John M Armleder*, Almine Rech Gallery, Paris, F  
*Déjà*, Galerie Andrea Caratsch, St. Moritz, CH  
*Sans Titre*, Gare Cornavin - passage Montbrillant, Genève, CH

### 2017

*John M Armleder*, curated by Nicolas Trembley, Almine Rech Gallery, New York, US  
*John Armleder*, David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, US  
*Stockage*, Istituto Svizzero di Roma, Rome, I  
*Better, Quasi*, MASSIMODECARLO, Milan, I  
*À rebours*, La Salle de Bains, Lyon, F  
*Split!*, curated by Andrea Viliani, Museo e Real Bosco Di Capodimonte, Naples, I

### 2016

*John M Armleder*, Athens School of Fine Arts, Mykonos, GR  
*Endless*, Museion, Bolzano, I  
*Fish*, Galerie Elisabeth & Klaus Thoman, Wien, A

### 2015

*Charivari*, MASSIMODECARLO, Milan, I  
*John M Armleder*, Académie Conti, Vosne Romanée, F  
*It's that Time of the Year, Too*, Galerie Mehdi Chouakri, Berlin, D  
*John Armleder – OUT!*, Galerie Andrea Caratsch, Zürich, CH  
*Let it Shine, Let it Shine, Let it Shine. It's Xmas again!*, curated by Cloe Piccoli, La Rinascente, Milan, I  
*Art Basel Unlimited*, Basel, CH

### 2014

*John Armleder*, Musée National Fernand Léger, Biot, F  
*Scramble*, Galerie Elisabeth & Klaus Thoman, Wien, A  
*Ring Bell Twice*, Galerie l'Elac, Renens, CH  
*Où sont les sauces?*, Le Consortium, Dijon, F



# Solo Exhibitions

## John Armleder

*Draws A Crowd, Leaves No One Neutral*, Burning Bridges, New York, US

*John M Armleder*, Galerie Richard, New York, USA

*La Bruche du Haricot*, Almine Rech Gallery, Bruxelles, B

*Installation Mit Frühen Arbeiten*, Vera Munro Galerie, Hamburg, D

*X'mas Show I*, Galerie Mehdi Chouakri, Berlin, D

*Omega Zone*, Galerie Graff Mourgue D'Algue, Genève, CH

### 2013

*John Armleder*, Nahmad Contemporary, New York, US

*John M Armleder*, Dairy Art Centre, London, UK

*Overload*, Galerie Andrea Caratsch, Zürich, CH

*John Armleder 1987-2012*, MASSIMODECARLO, London, UK

*John Armleder 2013*, MASSIMODECARLO, London, UK

*Pantan*, Galerie Andrea Caratsch, St. Moritz, CH

*John M Armleder. XXV*, Galerie Anselm Dreher, Berlin, D

*Ailleurs*, Galerie Graff Mourgue D'Algue, Genève, CH

### 2012

*Fungus Emulsion*, Galerie Mehdi Chouakri, Berlin, D

*Selected Furniture Sculptures 1979-2012*, curated by Gianni Jetzer, Swiss Institute, New York, US

*Away*, Galerie Andrea Caratsch, St. Moritz, CH

*24 Years Ahead*, Galerie van Gelder, Amsterdam, NL

*John M Armleder*, Mead Gallery, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, UK

*Late*, Galerie Elisabeth & Klaus Thoman, Wien, A

*Décor*, Fondation Tuck, Château de Verz-Mon, Rueil-Malmaison, Paris, F

### 2011

*Three Statement in Painting - Francis Alÿs, John Armleder, Valérie Favre*, Galerie Peter Kilchmann, Zürich, CH

*Away*, curated by Sandro Rumney, Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice, I

*John M Armleder - Load*, Galerie Andrea Caratsch, Zürich, CH

*I'm Late, I'm Late, I'm Running for a Date*, Galerie Andrea Caratsch, Zürich, CH

*Volta*, Turnhalle altes Schulhaus, St. Moritz, CH

*late*, Galerie Elisabeth & Klaus Thoman, Wien, A

*John M Armleder*, Newlyn Art Gallery, Newlyn, UK

*Aztlan*, Galerie Collet Park, Paris, F

*All of the Above. Carte blanche à John M Armleder*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, F

*Boule de Feu Volcanique, 18 Sculptures*, Galerie Pierre-Alain Challier, Paris, F

*About Nothing and Early Drawings*, Art View, Paris, F

### 2010

*John M Armleder leuchtet ein*, Kunstmuseum, Sankt-Gallen, CH

### 2009

*Sunny-side up, over easy and soft boiled*, Galerie Elisabeth & Klaus Thomas, Innsbruck, A

*Oliver Mosset New Paintings*, Galerie Andrea Caratsch, Zürich, CH

*Bijoux de Famille*, Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris, F

*John M Armleder - EXTRA CONTENT Elad Lassry*, MASSIMODECARLO, London, UK

### 2008

*Paint Happens*, Galerie Andrea Caratsch, Zürich, CH

*Scrambled and Poached*, Simon Lee Gallery, London, UK

*Again*, Galerie Andrea Caratsch, Zürich, CH

*Over*, Galerie Andrea Caratsch, Zürich, CH

*John Armleder*, MASSIMODECARLO, Milan, I

*Par Ailleurs*, Château des Adhémar, Centre d'Art Contemporain, Montélimar, F

*Kurfürstendam*, Mehdi Chouakri Gallery, Berlin, D

*Reality Bag*, Trois Pommes, Zürich, CH

*John M Armleder*, Laboratorio Kunsthalles, Lugano, CH

*Design: Carte Blanche à John Armleder*, Musée d'Art Contemporain, Saint Etienne, F

*John Armleder*, Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney, AUS

*John Armleder*, Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, AUS

*John Armleder*, Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, AUS



# Solo Exhibitions

## John Armleder

*John Armleder (with Michel Aubry)*, Parvis, Centre d'art contemporain, Ibos / Pau, F

*Just Next (with Gerwald Rockenschaub)*, Vera Munro Galerie, Hamburg, D

*John Armleder/Jaques Garcia*, Centre culturel Suisse, Paris, F

*John Armleder (with Olivier Mosset)*, Contemporary Art Museum, St. Louis, USA

### 2007

*Onamatterpoetic*, Mamco, Genève, CH

*Too much is not Enough*, curated by Raphaela Platow, The Rose Art Museum of Brandeis University, Waltham, US

*I'm OK, you are OK - John M Armleder: Recent Paintings*,

*Furniture Sculptures and Wallpaintings*, Mongin Art Center, Jongno-gu, Seoul, ROK

*Pourtant, elle tourne!*, Galerie Anselm Dreher, Berlin, D

*Plain Sideral*, Galerie ColletPark, Paris, F

*About Nothing. Works on Paper 1962 - 2007*, South London Gallery, London, UK

*John Armleder*, Villa Arson, Nice, F

### 2006

*Encore*, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Galeries du Cloître, Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Galerie Art & Essai, Rennes, F

*Amor Vacui, Horror Vacui*, curated by John Armleder, MAMCO - Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain, Genève, CH

*Too much is not Enough*, curated by Martin Engler, Kunst Verein Hannover, Hannover, D

*Tate08 Series: John Armleder*, Tate Liverpool, Liverpool, UK

*About Nothing. Works on paper 1962-2007*, Institute of Contemporary Art University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, USA

*123456789101112131415161718192021222324252627282930313233343536*, Y8, Sivananda Yoga Center, Hamburg, D

*Furniture Sculptures*, Galerie Mehdi Chouakri, Berlin, D

*Puddle Paintings*, Art & Public, Genève, CH

*Match. John Armleder (with Claus Jensen)*, Kunstmuseum, Esbjerg, DK

### 2005

*John M Armleder / Everything*, Caratsch de Pury & Luxembourg, Zürich, CH

XXX, MASSIMODECARLO, Milan, I

*Anything*, Galerie Anselm Dreher, Berlin, D

*John Armleder. Art & Design*, Saint Saphorin, Lavaux, CH

*John Armleder*, Le Spot, Le Havre, F

### 2004

*Triplo evento*, curated by Alessandro Rabottini, GAMeC Galleria d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Bergamo, I

*Voltes IV*, GAMeC Galleria d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Bergamo, I

*About Nothing. Works On Paper 1964-2004*, curated by Parker Williams, Kunsthalle Zürich, Zürich, CH. Catalogue

*Super Nova*, Edition Copenhagen, Copenhagen, DK

*John Armleder*, Incognito, Paris, F

*John Armleder*, Kunstverein Ruhr, Essen, D

*Riverside Wall*, Galerie Medhi Chouakri, Berlin, D

*Instant Replay*, Kunstraum HBK, Braunschweig, D

*Nothing*, Galerie Mehdi Chouakri, Berlin, D

*John M Armleder*, Collaboration Galerie Mehdi Chouakri & Jochum and Tissi, Berlin, D

*Ace Gallery*, New York, USA

*John Armleder*, Rocket Gallery, London, UK

*John Armleder*, Gallery 360°, Tokyo, J

*John Armleder*, Cosmic Galerie, Paris, F

### 2003

*Ion*, Galerie Vera Munro, Hamburg, D

*Voltes, New Neons and Mirrors*, de Pury & Luxembourg, Zürich, CH

*John Armleder, Peintures, Serigraphies*, Eric Linard Editions Galerie, La Garde Adhemar, F

*John Armleder*, Anselm Dreher Galerie, Berlin, D

*John Armleder*, Gallery 360°, Tokyo, J

*John Armleder*, Gallery Javier Lopez, Madrid, E

*John M Armleder*, Ace Gallery, New York, US

*John Armleder (with Sylvie Fleury)*, Sketch Gallery, London, UK



# Solo Exhibitions

## John Armleder

### 2002

*John Armleder*, MASSIMODECARLO, Milano, I  
*John Armleder's Painting Show*, Galerie Susanna Kulli, Sankt-Gallen, CH  
*John Armleder*, Galerie Sollertis, Toulouse, F  
*Seven - New Wallpaintings*, de Pury & Luxembourg, Zürich, CH  
*John Armleder*, Sollertis, Toulouse, F  
*No Pain, Just Gain*, Galerie Chouakri Brahms, Berlin, D  
*Recent Works*, Galerie Specta, Copenhagen, DK  
*Waugh! Waugh! Waugh! Waugh! Waugh! Mondo Fantasio, Supplement*, Pirhana, Galerie Edition Mäderi, Basel, CH  
*John Armleder*, Gallery 360°, Tokyo, J

### 2001

*John Armleder*, Galerie Issert, Saint-Paul-de-Vence, F  
*John Armleder*, Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Salzburg, A  
*John Armleder*, Galerie Edition Kunsthandel GMBH, Essen, D  
*Seven. New Wall Paintings*, De Pury & Luxembourg, Zürich, CH  
*John Armleder*, Edition Franz Mäder Galerie, Basel, CH  
*No Pain, Just Gain*, Chouakri Brahms Berlin, Berlin, D  
*Waugh! Waugh! Waugh! Waugh! Waugh! Mondo Fantasio, Supplement*, Pirhana, Galerie Edition Mäder, Basel, CH  
*Peinture Murale*, Magasin - CNAC, Grenoble, F  
*Enter at your own Risk II*, Kunstraum Innsbruck, Innsbruck, A  
*John Armleder*, Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney, AUS  
*John Armleder*, Gallery 360°, Tokyo, J  
*Modulor 105624-0*, Galerie Anselm Dreher, Berlin, D  
*John Armleder*, Galerie 20.21, Essen, D  
*John Armleder (with Georg Miller)*, Galerie Trabant, Wien, A  
*Disco (with Alicia Larocha)*, Design Lab, Miami, US

### 2000

*John Armleder*, Galerie van Gelder, Amsterdam, NL  
*Projects 72: John Armleder/Piotr Uklanski*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, US  
*John Armleder*, Chateau de Fraissé, Fraissé des Corbières, F  
*Enter At Your Own Risk I*, Galerie Mehdi Couakri, Berlin, D

### 1999

*Mondo Tiki II*, Galerie Tanit, München, D  
*John Armleder*, The Box, Turin, I  
*John Armleder*, Anselm Dreher, Berlin, D  
*John Armleder*, Ace Gallery, Los Angeles, USA  
*Mirror Dome Installations: Part II*, Ace Gallery, New York, US  
*John Armleder*, Artspace, Auckland, NZ  
*Oeuvres 1967/1997*, Brownstone, Corrèard & Cie, Paris, F  
*Mondo Tiki*, Galerie Tanit, München, D  
*John Armleder*, Atrium UBS, Genève, CH

### 1998

*Arbeiten auf Papier 1967-1995*, Galerie Susanna Kulli, Sankt-Gallen, CH  
*Wall Paintings 1967-1998*, Casino Luxembourg - Forum d'Art Contemporain, Lusseburg, LU  
*John M Armleder*, MASSIMODECARLO, Milan, I  
*John Armleder*, Mehdi Chouakri, Berlin, D  
*At Any Speed*, Staatliche Kunsthalle, Baden-Baden, D; "Holderbank", Aargau, CH  
*Mirror Dome Installations*, Ace Gallery, Los Angeles, US  
*John Armleder*, Galerie Erna Hécey, Luxembourg, LU

### 1997

*Peintures Murales 1967-1997*, La Box, Bourges - Le Parvis, Centre d'Art Contemporain, Ibos, F. Catalogue  
*John Armleder*, Gilbert Brownstone & Cie, Paris, F  
*Ecart*, MAMCO, Genève, CH

### 1996

*John Armleder*, curated by Fondazione Ratti, Villa Carlotta, Tremezzo, I  
*Wall Paintings*, Galerie Art & Public, Genève, CH  
*John Armleder*, Galerie Tanit, München, D  
*John Armleder*, Galerie Sollertis, Toulouse, F  
*John Armleder*, Galleria 1991, João de Graça, P  
*John Armleder*, Galerie Art & Pubic, Genève, CH  
*John Armleder*, ECAL, Lausanne, CH  
*John Armleder*, Galerie Susanna Kulli, Sankt-Gallen, CH

# Solo Exhibitions

## John Armleder

*John Armleder*, Territorio Italiano, Piacenza, I  
*John Armleder*, Galeria 360 Degrés, Tokyo, J  
*John Armleder*, Jean François Dumont, Bordeaux, F*Ne dites pas non!*,  
 MAMCO, Genève, CH  
*John Armleder*, Galerie Nordenhake, Stockholm, S  
*John Armleder*, Le Consortium L'Usine, Dijon, F

### 1995

*John Armleder*, MASSIMODECARLO, Milano, I  
*Air de Paris*, Jean François Dumont, Paris, F  
*John Armleder*, Maison des Jeunes, Neuchâtel, CH  
*L'Oeuvre multiplié*, Cabinet des Estampes, Genève, CH  
*Andrée Sfeifer-Semler*, Kiel La Maison, Douai, F  
*John Armleder*, Schloss Wolfsberg, Ermatingen, CH

### 1994

*John Armleder*, Galerie Art & Pubic, Genève, CH  
*John Armleder*, Centre d'Art Contemporain, Le Capitou, F  
*John Armleder*, Galerie Sollertis, Toulouse, F. Catalogue  
*Les Assiettes*, Daniel Baumann & CPLY, Thônex, CH. Catalogue  
*John Armleder*, Coop Gallery, Sydney, AUS  
*John Armleder*, Abbaye de Saint-André, Meymac, F

### 1993

*Travaux sur Papier 1966-1993*, Galerie Marika Malacorda, Genève, CH. Catalogue  
*John Armleder*, Galerie Gilbert Brownstone, Paris, F  
*John Armleder*, Wiener Secession, Wien, A. Catalogue  
*John Armleder*, Villa Arson, Nice, F  
*John Armleder*, Daniel Newburg Gallery, New York, USA  
*John Armleder*, Galerie Catharine Issert, Saint-Paul-de-Vence, F  
*John Armleder*, Galerie Vera Munro, Hamburg, D  
*John Armleder*, Centre Genevois de Gravure Contemporaine, Genève, CH

### 1992

*John Armleder*, Galerie Sollertis, Toulouse, F

*John Armleder*, Centre Genevois de Gravure Contemporaine, Genève, CH  
*John Armleder*, Genève Centre Culturel, Dax, F  
*Pour Paintings 1989-1992*, Centraal Museum, Utrecht, NL  
*Works on Paper 1966-1992*, Centraal Museum, Utrecht, NL  
*John Armleder*, MASSIMODECARLO, Milano, I

### 1991

*John Armleder*, Paolo Vitolo Arte Contemporanea, Rome, I  
*John Armleder*, Galerie Porte-avion, Marseille, F  
*John Armleder*, Galerie Marika Malacorda, Genève, CH. Catalogue  
*John Armleder*, Tda Tresor d'Art Gallery, Gstaad, CH  
*John Armleder*, John Gibson Gallery, New York, USA  
*John Armleder*, Daniel Newburg Gallery, New York, USA  
*John Armleder*, Galerie van Gelder, Amsterdam, NL  
*John Armleder*, curated by Giorgio Verzotti, Castello di Rivara, Turin, I  
*John Armleder (with Olivier Mosset)*, Aoyama Gallery, Morita, J

### 1990

*John Armleder*, Louis Ferdinand Centre d'Art Contemporain, Chateauroux, F  
*John Armleder*, Galerie Sollertis, Tolouse, F  
*John Armleder*, Toulouse Galerie Tanit, Köln, D. Catalogue  
*John Armleder*, Galerie Daniel Buchholz, Köln, D. Catalogue  
*John Armleder*, Galerie George Dezeuze, Montpellier, F  
*John Armleder*, Galerie Vera Munro, Hamburg, D  
*John Armleder*, Galerie Catherina Issert, Saint-Paul-de-Vence, F  
*John Armleder*, Galerie Jean-Francois Dumont, Bordeaux, F  
*John Armleder*, Galerie Susanna Kulli, Sankt-Gallen, CH  
*John Armleder*, Musée Rath, Genève, CH. Catalogue  
*John Armleder*, Galerie Toni Gerber, Bern, CH

### 1989

*John Armleder*, MASSIMODECARLO, Milan, I  
*John Armleder*, Le Consortium L'Usine, Dijon, F  
*Painting & Sculpture*, John Gibson Gallery, New York, US  
*John Armleder*, Galerie Marika Malacorda, Genève, CH



# Solo Exhibitions

## John Armleder

### 1988

*John Armleder*, Hoffman Borman Gallery, Los Angeles, US  
*John Armleder*, Galerie Tanit, München, D  
*John Armleder*, Daniel Newburg Gallery, New York, USA  
*John Armleder*, John Gibson Gallery, New York, USA  
*Peintures, Furniture-Sculptures*, Galerie des Beaux-Arts, École des Beaux-Arts, Nantes, F  
*Grammo Fine-Arts*, Antwerpen, Grammo Fine-Arts, Antwerpen, B  
*John Armleder*, Galerie van Gelder, Amsterdam, NL  
*John Armleder*, Stichting Nieuwe Muziek, Middelburg, NL  
*John Armleder*, Galerie Anselm Dreher, Berlin, D  
*Quarante Cercles et Puzzle*, Salon Brunswick, Galerie Malacorda, Genève, CH  
*John Armleder (with Olivier Mosset)*, Galerie Catherine Issert, Saint Paul de Vence, F

### 1987

*John Armleder*, Galerie Daniel Buchholz, Köln, D  
*John Armleder*, Kunstverein, Düsseldorf, D  
*John Armleder*, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris, F  
*John Armleder*, Pat Hearn Gallery, New York, USA. Catalogue  
*John Armleder*, Galerie Tanit, München, D  
*John Armleder*, Piero Cavellini, Milano, I  
*John Armleder*, Galerie Vera Munro, Hamburg, D  
*John Armleder*, Galerie nächst St. Stephan, Wien, A  
*Peinture & Furniture-Sculpture*, Galerie Jean-François Dumont, Bordeaux, F  
*John M Armleder*, Kunstmuseum Winterthur, Winterthur, CH  
*John Armleder*, Nationalgalerie Berlin, Berlin, D  
*Furniture Sculpture*, John Gibson Gallery, New York, USA  
*John Armleder*, Musée de Peinture et de Sculpture, Grenoble, F  
*Arbeiten auf Papier 1967 bis 1987*, Galerie Susanna Kulli, Sankt-Gallen, CH  
*Furniture-Sculptures & Paintings*, Galerie Leger, Malmö, S  
*John Armleder*, Galerie Joost Declercq, Gent, B  
*John Armleder*, Galerie Marika Malacorda, Genève, CH  
*John Armleder (with Alberto Garrutti)*, Galleria ARTRA, Milan, I

### 1986

42a Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte La Biennale di Venezia - Padiglione Svizzero, Venice, I  
*John Armleder*, Lisson Gallery, London, UK. Catalogue  
*John Armleder*, Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, Genève, CH  
*John Armleder*, John Gibson Gallery, New York, US  
*John Armleder*, Galerie Tanit, München, D  
*John Armleder*, Galerie Bama, Paris, F  
*Neue Arbeiten*, Galerie Susanna Kulli, Sankt-Gallen, CH  
*John Armleder*, École Nationale d'Art Décoratif, Limoges, F  
*Dessins préparatoires et travaux récents*, Galerie Rivolta, Lausanne, CH  
*John Armleder*, Galerie Catherine Issert, St. Paul de Vence, F  
*John Armleder*, Galerie Toni Gerber, Bern, CH

### 1985

*John Armleder*, Ecart/Malacorda, Genève, CH  
*John Armleder*, John Gibson Gallery, New York, US  
*John Armleder*, Galerie und Lager Rudolf Zwirner, Köln, D  
*John Armleder*, Galerie Media, Neuchâtel, CH

### 1984

*John Armleder*, Galerie Marika Malacorda, Genève, CH  
*John Armleder*, Künstlerhaus, Stuttgart, D  
*John Armleder*, John Gibson Gallery, New York, US  
*John Armleder*, Galerie Claudia Knapp, Chur, CH

### 1983

*John Armleder*, Kunstmuseum, Solothurn, CH.  
*John Armleder*, Galerie Grita Insam, Wien, A  
*John Armleder*, Le Coin du Miroir, Dijon, F  
*Installation et Travaux Récents*, Galerie Rivolta, Lausanne, CH  
*Neue Arbeiten*, Galerie Susanna Kulli, Sankt-Gallen, CH

### 1982

*John Armleder*, The Corridor Gallery, Reykjavik, IS  
*John Armleder*, Galerie Toni Gerber, Bern, CH  
*John Armleder*, Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, Fribourg, CH

# Solo Exhibitions

## John Armleder

*John Armleder*, Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, Fribourg, CH

*John Armleder*, Galerie Marika Malacorda, Genève, CH

*Nylistasafnik*, The Living Arts Museum, Reykjavik, IS

### 1980

*891 und Weitere Stücke*, Kunstmuseum Basel, Basel, CH

*891*, Galerie Marika Malacorda, Genève, CH

### 1977

*Here Comes my Face*, Galerie Marika Malacorda, Genève, CH

### 1976

*Six Artistes Genevois Contemporains*, Palais de l'Athénée, Genève, CH

### 1975

*Quelques Objets Volants*, Galerie Gaëtan, Carouge, CH

### 1973

*Ayacotl*, Galerie Ecart, Genève, CH

*Rainbows in Heaven et autres dessins*, Palais de l'Athénée, Genève, CH

### 1967

*Linéaments 1*, with the group Luc Bois, Genève, CH



# Selected Collections

## John Armleder

### AUSTRIA

Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, Wien  
Sammlung Ludwig/Museum Xx. Jahrhundert, Wien

### CHINA

Long Museum, Shanghai

### DENMARK

Kunstmuseum, Aarhus  
Louisiana Museum, Humlebaek

### FRANCE

Centre National d'Art et de la Culture Georges Pompidou, Paris  
FNAC - Fond National d'Art Contemporain, Paris  
FRAC - Fonds Regional d'Art Contemporain Bourgogne, Dijon  
FRAC - Fonds Regional d'Art Contemporain Bretagne, Châteaugiron  
FRAC - Fonds Regional d'Art Contemporain Pays de Loire, Carquefou  
FRAC - Fonds Regional d'Art Contemporain, Nord-Pas de Calais  
FRAC - Fonds Regional d'Art Contemporain, Alsace  
FRAC - Fonds Regional d'Art Contemporain, Aquitaine  
FRAC - Fonds Regional d'Art Contemporain Grand Large - Hauts-de-France  
FRAC - Fonds Regional d'Art Contemporain, Artothèque du Limousin  
Le Consortium, Dijon  
Les Abattoirs de Toulouse, Toulouse Artothèque de Caen, Caen  
Musée de Peinture et de Sculpture, Grenoble  
Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris  
Musée des Beaux Arts, Lyon

### GERMANY

DaimlerChrysler Contemporary, Berlin  
Kunstsammlungen zu Weimar - Neues Museum, Weimar  
Städel Museum, Frankfurt  
Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart  
Weimar Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin  
ZKM Museum für Neue Kunst & Medienmuseum, Karlsruhe

### ICELAND

Nýlistasafnið - The Living Art Museum, Reykjavik

### ITALY

Capodimonte Real Bosco Museum, Naples  
Museion Foundation - Modern and Contemporary Art Museum, Bolzano  
Trevi Flash Art Museum Of Contemporary Art, Trevi

### LEBANON

Aishti Foundation, Beirut

### SWEDEN

Moderna Museet, Stockholm

### SWITZERLAND

ETH Sammlung, Zürich  
Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, St. Gallen  
Kunstmuseum, Basel  
Kunstmuseum, Zürich  
Kunstmuseum, Lucerne  
Kunstmuseum, Solothurn  
Mamco, Geneva  
MIGROS Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zürich  
Musée d'art et d'histoire, Geneva

### THE NETHERLANDS

Museum Voorlinden, Wassenaar

### USA

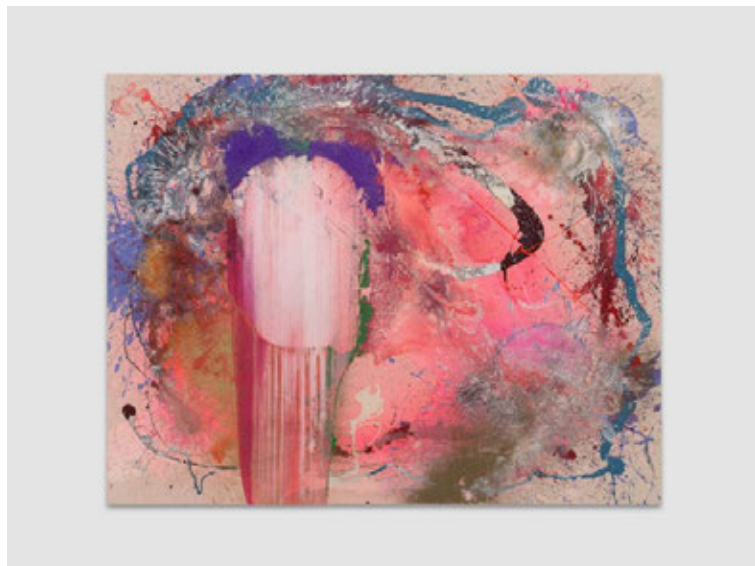
Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York  
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles  
MoMA – Museum of Modern Art, New York  
Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, California  
The Marciano Collection, Los Angeles  
Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach, Florida

## Selected Press



## Armleder come Dalí

L'artista svizzero torna da Massimo De Carlo sfidando nuovamente, e ironicamente, le convenzioni del mondo dell'arte



«Bunnaha Shan» (2023) di John Armleder. Foto Annik Wetter. Cortesia di MASSIMODECARLO

ADA MASOERO | 19 marzo 2024 | Milano

Era stato lui, **John Armleder**, il protagonista della mostra con cui **Massimo De Carlo**, ancora nella sede di via Ventura a Lambrate, nel 2017 festeggiava il trentennale della sua fortunata galleria, diventata da tempo una potente e influentissima multinazionale dell'arte. Quella non era la prima e non sarebbe certo stata l'unica tappa di un viaggio che ha visto più volte il gallerista milanese e l'artista svizzero fianco a fianco nelle diverse sedi della galleria nel mondo, in mostre collettive e personali.

**Dal 21 marzo all'11 maggio prossimo**, il lavoro di **John Armleder** (nato nel 1948 a Ginevra, dove vive e lavora) occupa con una retrospettiva gli spazi d'autore della galleria di Milano, in Casa Corbellini-Wassermann (1934-1936, capolavoro di Piero Portaluppi, in viale Lombardia 17), con la personale «**On ne fait pas ça**», «questo non si fa», con la quale ancora una volta l'artista sfida le convenzioni del mondo dell'arte, seppure con la consueta dose d'ironia: a conferma, la famosa foto che lo immortalava vestito con un completo formale ma con piccoli astici che fuoriescono dalle tasche o gli si posano sui capelli (lunghe, scriminatura centrale e coda, come usava nel '68), come in un'evocazione irridente di Salvador Dalí e del suo «Lobster Telephone».



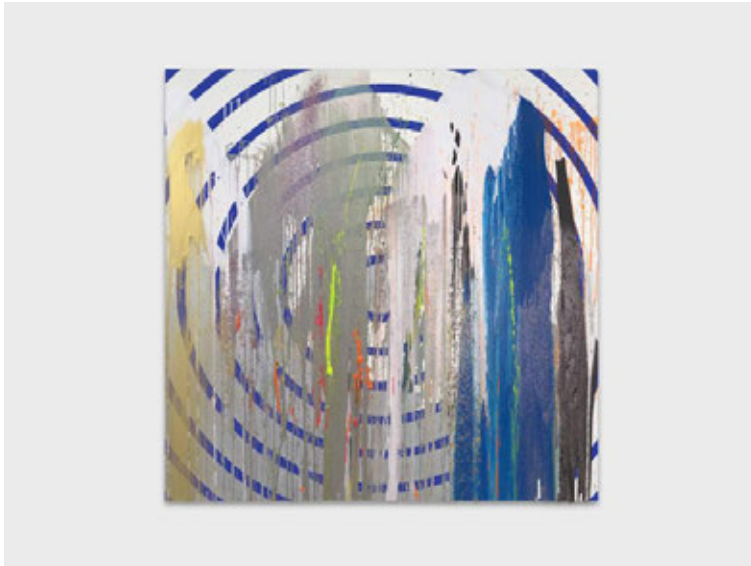
«Sans Titre» (1996) di John Armleder. Foto Andrea Rossetti. Cortesia di MASSIMODECARLO

Perché chi, come lui, si è formato guardando a quell'insieme eterogeneo di «guastatori» che nei primi anni '60 dava vita a «Fluxus», per poi fondare a sua volta nel 1969 con altri artisti dissidenti il gruppo ginevrino «Ecart» (scarto, deviazione), non potrebbe muoversi altrimenti,

fedele sempre al convincimento che l'artista altro non sia che «*un danno collaterale dell'arte*». A Milano vanno in scena suoi lavori degli anni tra il 1994 e il 2023, molti dei quali, come «Ciliata (FS)», 1994, in omaggio al «maestro» Marcel Duchamp, è un readymade vivente: vivente perché un copertone da trattore si trasforma in una fioriera, abitato com'è da piccoli, vivi fiori ornamentali.

In altri casi l'«*objet trouvé*» è un sua grande tela precedente, come accade in «Old Potrero, 2023», dove un suo grande dipinto a bersaglio del 1985, investito dalle cascate di colori proprie dei suoi più recenti «pour painting», con uno sberleffo diventa altro da ciò che era, mimando queste opere a colata o a pozzanghera in cui sembra voler riattualizzare e reinventare, con materiali anche eterodossi, la gestualità dell'Action Painting americana. Oltre agli schizzi, non potevano mancare le sue sculture fatte di mobili assemblati, con cui «arreda» le stanze novecentiste di Casa Corbellini-Wassermann, affidando, com'è sua abitudine, all'osservatore il ruolo di interprete e di co-autore delle opere.

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«OLD POTRERO (1985)» (2023) di John Armleder. Foto Annik Wetter. Cortesia di MASSIMODECARLO



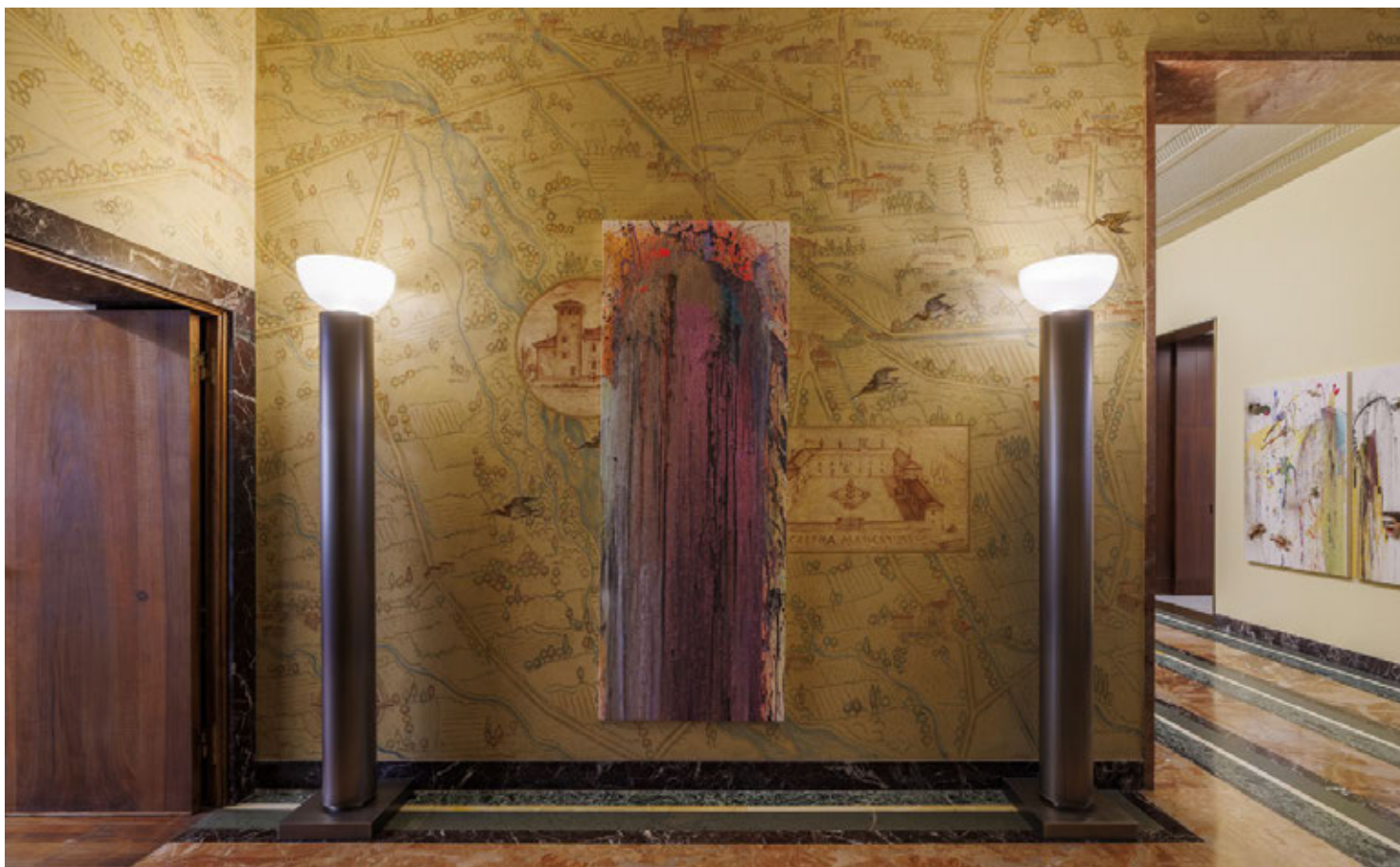
Magazine > Exhibitions > John Armleder "On ne fait pas ça" at Massimo De Carlo, Milan

## John Armleder "On ne fait pas ça" at Massimo De Carlo, Milan

19.04.2024

READING TIME 3'

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*John Armleder "On ne fait pas ça" at Massimo De Carlo, Milan, Mousse Publishing, 2024*

“On ne fait pas ça” is a solo exhibition by Swiss artist John Armleder. The exhibition brings together works from various strands of Armleder’s lifelong practice. His relentless fascination and savvy juxtaposition of “high” and “low” art, decoration and kitsch, as well as geometry and abstraction, place Armleder’s work on the cusp of humour and reverence.

Armleder challenges conventions of art, its formulation, and presentation. Influenced by the Fluxus movement of the 1960s and associated with the Geneva-based Groupe Ecart, Armleder draws inspiration from the ethos of American composer and artist John Cage. “On ne fait pas ça” presents a retrospective of his work spanning 1994 to 2023, encompassing Armleder’s iconic *furniture sculptures* to his latest *pour* and *puddle paintings*.

The title of the exhibition, “On ne fait pas ça”—“we do not do this” in French—was serendipitously chosen, in accordance with Armleder’s profound embrace of chance and spontaneity in his process. Bits of conversations, snippets from books, films, songs, or any captivating encounter may spark Armleder’s inspiration. Chance, risk-taking, and the willingness to challenge established conventions form integral aspects of the Swiss artist’s practice. In a 2011 interview with ARTFORUM, Armleder elucidated his approach, stating, “I decided that it was ok to make works that looked like things that had been made before: If they were things that I liked, that was enough reason to make them. After all, this is an age- old way of making art. You look at something you like, and you try to do the same thing in your own, possibly better way.”

In a nod to Marcel Duchamp, Armleder often incorporates found objects and creates works akin to readymades. Notable among these is *Ciliata (FS)*, 1994, where a tractor tire is repurposed as a vessel for a potted plant, echoing influences from urban gardening. This “living” readymade encapsulates Armleder’s talent for infusing commonplace objects with fresh intent.

Similarly, Armleder breathes new life into his own creations, as seen in *OLD POTRERO*, 2023 (1985) originally conceived as a *target painting* in 1985, now transformed into a vibrant

*pour painting*. This act of reinvention highlights the artist’s fluidity of expression and his ongoing dialogue with his earlier works.

While some of Armleder’s works serve to furnish Casa Corbellini-Wassermann, including notable pieces like the sculptural work *Sans Titre*, 1996, the pet beds with pedestal, part of the installation *Woofly*, 2023 (in collaboration with 43Mousse) and one of his famous furniture sculptures *Blue John (Fluorine)*, *FS*, 2003, etc., it is his pours and splashes that take centre stage in the exhibition. Reflecting the dynamism of 1950’s and 1960’s American action painting, Armleder’s recent series experiments with diverse materials, resulting in visually compelling compositions. Through his *pour* and *puddle paintings*, Armleder invites viewers to engage with the interplay of various mediums and textures, relinquishing control to the unpredictable reactions of the materials themselves.

In a statement from 2014, Armleder articulated his belief that “the artist is a collateral damage to the art.” He emphasises the viewer’s role as the ultimate interpreter and co-creator of meaning, positioning the artist merely as a conduit for artistic expression. This sentiment continues to inform Armleder’s practice, underscoring his commitment to letting his work speak for itself.

In “On ne fait pas ça,” Armleder invites us into a world where art transcends mere narratives, embodying the essence of an artist who deftly navigates the interplay between chance, intention, and interpretation.

at Massimo De Carlo, Milan  
until May 11, 2024



# hestetika



MASSIMODECARLO\_John-Armleder

John Armleder – On ne fait pas ça da MASSIMODECARLO  
Milano

*John Armleder "On ne fait pas ça" da MASSIMODECARLO, Milano, Hestetika Magazine, 2024*

MASSIMODECARLO Milano presenta “On ne fait pas ça”, mostra personale dell'artista svizzero John Armleder.

Manipolando i contrasti tra decorazione e kitsch, geometria e astrazione, il lavoro di Armleder si posiziona al confine tra umorismo e profondo rispetto per il mondo dell'arte.

Armleder sfida le convenzioni dell'arte, della sua formulazione e della sua presentazione.

Influenzato dal movimento Fluxus degli anni Sessanta e associato al Groupe Ecart di Ginevra, Armleder si ispira all'etica del compositore e artista americano John Cage. On ne fait pas ça presenta una retrospettiva del suo lavoro che va dal 1994 al 2023, dalle iconiche sculture di mobili di Armleder ai suoi più recenti “pour painintgs”.

## IL TITOLO

Il titolo della mostra, On ne fait pas ça – “questo non si fa” in francese, è stato scelto in modo serendipico, in accordo con il solito metodo di Armleder ad accettare la casualità e la spontaneità nel suo lavoro. Frammenti di conversazioni, di libri, film, canzoni o qualsiasi altro incontro accattivante possono istigare l'ispirazione di Armleder. Il caso, l'assunzione di rischi e la volontà di sfidare le convenzioni stabilite sono aspetti integrali della pratica dell'artista.

In un'intervista del 2011 per ARTFORUM, Armleder ha chiarito il suo approccio, affermando:

“ Ho deciso che era giusto fare opere che assomigliassero a cose già fatte: se erano cose che mi piacevano, era una ragione sufficiente per rifarle. Dopo tutto, questo è un modo antico di fare arte. Si guarda qualcosa che piace e si cerca di fare la stessa cosa nel proprio modo, possibilmente migliore”.

In omaggio a Marcel Duchamp, Armleder incorpora spesso oggetti trovati e crea opere simili ai readymade. Tra queste, spicca Ciliata (FS), 1994, in cui un copertone di trattore viene riutilizzato come contenitore per una pianta in vaso, riecheggiando le influenze del giardinaggio urbano. Questo readymade “vivente” illustra il talento di Armleder nell'infondere agli oggetti comuni un'intenzione nuova.

Allo stesso modo, Armleder infonde nuova vita alle proprie creazioni, come nel caso di OLD POTRERO, 2023 (1985), originariamente concepito come un dipinto a bersaglio nel 1985, ora trasformato in uno dei suoi “pour painintgs”.

Questa costante reinvenzione evidenzia la fluidità espressiva dell'artista e il suo continuo dialogo con opere precedenti.

Mentre alcuni lavori di Armleder servono ad arredare Casa Corbellini-Wassermann, tra cui pezzi notevoli come l'opera scultorea Sans Titre, 1996, il letto per animali domestici con piedistallo Woofly, 2023, e una delle sue famose sculture d'arredo Blue John (Fluorine), FS, 2003, eccetera, sono i suoi “pour painintgs” e schizzi ad essere al centro della mostra.

*John Armleder “On ne fait pas ça” da MASSIMODECARLO, Milano, Hestetika Magazine, 2024*

Dimostrando il dinamismo dell'action painting americana degli anni Cinquanta e Sessanta, la serie recente di Armleder sperimenta materiali diversi, dando vita a composizioni avvincenti.

Attraverso i suoi dipinti a colata e a pozzanghera, Armleder invita gli spettatori a confrontarsi con l'interazione di vari mezzi e texture, lasciando il controllo alle reazioni imprevedibili dei materiali stessi.

In una dichiarazione del 2014, Armleder ha espresso la sua convinzione che “l'artista è un danno collaterale all'arte”. Sottolinea il ruolo dello spettatore come interprete finale e co-creatore di significato, ponendo l'artista come mero tramite dell'espressione artistica. Questo sentimento continua a informare la pratica di Armleder, sottolineando il suo impegno a lasciare che il suo lavoro parli da solo.

In On ne fait pas ça, Armleder ci invita in un mondo in cui l'arte trascende le semplici narrazioni, incarnando l'essenza di un artista che naviga abilmente nell'interazione tra caso, intenzione e interpretazione.

## L'ARTISTA

John Armleder è nato a Ginevra nel 1948, dove attualmente vive e lavora.

Studente di Fluxus a Ginevra negli anni Sessanta e fondatore del gruppo Ecart, il percorso artistico di Armleder si è poi associato negli anni Ottanta al concettualismo neogeometrico. Rinomato per l'ampiezza della sua produzione artistica, Armleder fonde senza soluzione di continuità lo spirito di Fluxus con la pittura astratta, le sculture ready-made, le performance e le installazioni di grandi dimensioni. La carriera di John Armleder, che abbraccia cinque decenni, è una sintesi dei diversi e talvolta contrastanti movimenti estetici che hanno caratterizzato quel periodo.

Come pittore, scultore e artista performativo, Armleder si impegna in una continua ricerca sulla natura dell'arte, esplorandone le possibilità, i limiti e i confini. La sua esplorazione artistica si estende su un ampio spettro, che va da installazioni di grandi dimensioni a dipinti astratti contemplativi, da composizioni geometriche costruttiviste a sculture di mobili ornate da carte da parati con motivi. Nel suo variegato corpus di opere, l'arte di Armleder riflette le influenze di una miriade di movimenti, tra cui la pittura suprematista, la scultura minimalista, l'arte concreta e la giocosa irriverenza dei readymade dadaisti.

Le sue opere sono presenti nelle collezioni permanenti di molti musei, tra cui il Centre Pompidou di Parigi, il Museum of Modern Art di New York, il Long Museum di Shanghai, Cina, il Getty Research Institute di Los Angeles, il Kunstmuseum di Basilea, Svizzera, la Fondazione Museion – Museo d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Bolzano e il Moderna Museet di Stoccolma, Svezia.

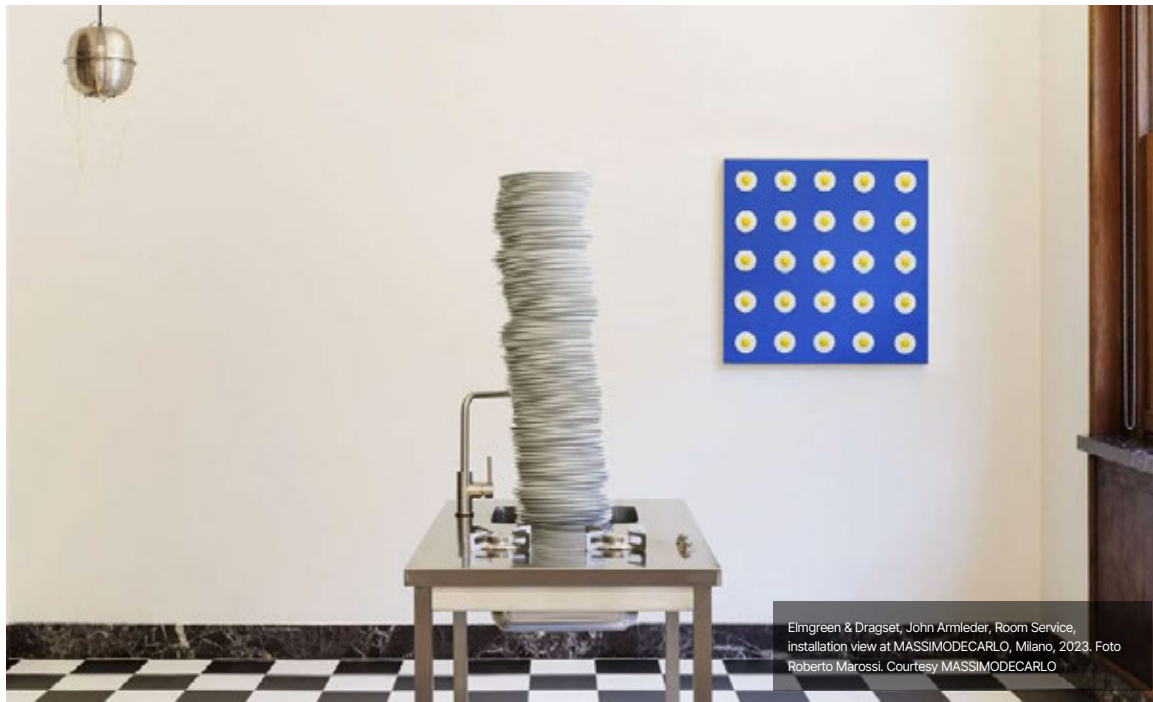


# La mostra psichedelica di Elmgreen & Dragset e John Armleder a Milano

Il duo scandinavo e l'artista svizzero reinventano gli spazi di Casa Corbellini-Wassermann instillando un certo disagio nella dimensione domestica e giocando con la percezione

di Agnese Torres 25/04/2023

TAG MILANO MOSTRE

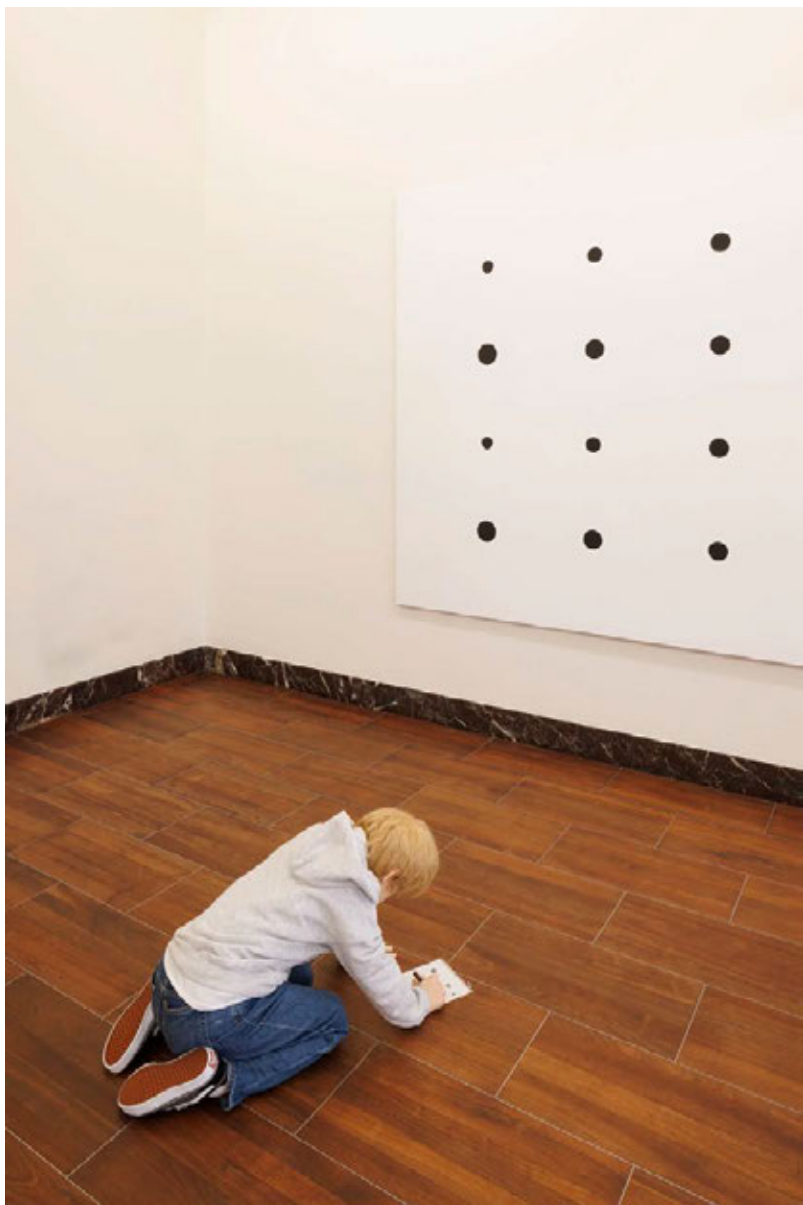


La mostra allestita negli spazi di [MASSIMODECARLO](#) è un viaggio psichedelico attraverso lo spazio domestico borghese tradizionale rappresentato dall'elegante appartamento progettato da Piero Portaluppi, che in occasione di *Room Service* diventa la tela su cui prendono forma le audaci sperimentazioni artistiche di **Elmgreen & Dragset** (Michael Elmgreen, Copenhagen, 1961; Ingar Dragset, Trondheim, 1969) e **John Armleder** (Ginevra, 1948).

Le sette stanze di Casa Corbellini-Wassermann che ospitano la mostra – ingresso, soggiorno, studio, fumoir, sala da pranzo, cucina e camera da letto – sono infatti ulteriormente spogliate della loro funzione originale e trasformate in non-luoghi che sfidano la percezione dello spettatore in un'atmosfera stranianti, in cui arte e quotidianità, immaginazione e realtà si fondono enigmaticamente. In mostra si trovano in egual misura opere inedite e lavori incisi nella produzione precedente degli artisti, che animano la galleria attraverso un serrato dialogo e numerosi rimandi stilistici e tematici, come l'iperrealismo, l'astrazione geometrica, il ricorso a [ready-made](#) e il rapporto tra spazio e individuo, pubblico e privato. Le loro affinità sono allegoricamente rappresentate nel "soggiorno" dell'appartamento, dove si trova la scultura iperrealista del duo svizzero, *The Drawing* (2023), in cui un bambino chino su un foglio è intento a ricopiare a penna un quadro di Armleder (*Untitled*, 1992).



Elmgreen & Dragset, John Armleder, Room Service, installation view at MASSIMODECARLO, Milano, 2023. Foto Roberto Marossi. Courtesy MASSIMODECARLO



Elmgreen & Dragset, John Armleder, Room Service, installation view at MASSIMODECARLO, Milano, 2023. Foto Roberto Marossi. Courtesy MASSIMODECARLO

## LA MOSTRA ROOM SERVICE DA MASSIMODECARLO

Tutto ciò che durante la nostra vita abbiamo imparato sullo spazio domestico, sulla casa –intesa come luogo confortevole e sicuro – e sugli ambienti borghesi viene abilmente decostruito dagli artisti e restituito allo spettatore in una nuova veste, a tratti scomoda.

Ci si trova infatti alle prese con sentimenti contrastanti, dal divertimento allo spaesamento, e con un senso di disagio provocato da opere di grande impatto come *Room Service* (2023) di [Elmgreen & Dragset](#), da cui la mostra prende in prestito il nome. Di fronte a una porta chiusa con il cartello “PLEASE DO NOT DISTURB” appeso alla maniglia, un neonato in un porte-enfant innesca una serie di riflessioni su tematiche spinose come la famiglia, la natalità e l’abbandono. La mostra prende però vita solo quando abitata e così lo spettatore, vagando per le sale della galleria, si trasforma in una altrettanto misteriosa figura, forse la versione adulta del bambino di *The Drawing*. Tra oggetti abbandonati, bicchieri rotti, porte che non si possono aprire, scolapasta che diventano lampade e strumenti per l’igiene domestica che diventano sculture, i tre artisti danno vita a un ambiente immersivo che culmina nell’ex camera da letto. Un ambiente le cui pareti sono ricoperte da un motivo optical creato da [Armleder](#) nel 2005, composto da pois bianchi e neri su sfondi viola e bianchi e reso ancora più alienante da due installazioni cinetiche firmate dal duo scandinavo – *Social Media (White Poodle)* e *Wheel of Fortune* (2023) –, che distorcono la percezione dello spazio circostante e del ruolo dello spettatore all’interno di esso.

## L’ARTE DI ELMGREEN & DRAGSET E JOHN ARMLEDER

L’idea di *Room Service* nasce dall’ammirazione e dall’interesse che da anni Elmgreen & Dragset nutrono nei confronti del lavoro di John Armleder, inizialmente studioso del movimento artistico Fluxus, poi fondatore del gruppo Ecart e infine aderente al concettualismo neo-geometrico negli Anni Ottanta. Affascinati dalla versatilità degli oggetti di uso comune e sempre impazienti di spingersi oltre i confini dell’arte, Elmgreen & Dragset e John Armleder sono inoltre accomunati dalla fascinazione per lo spazio domestico, declinato in modi sempre diversi nel corso degli anni.





artnet<sup>news</sup>

People

## 'I Always Agree With Whatever People Say About My Work': Why John Armleder Isn't Stressed About All the Shows He's Opening This Summer

The artist is the subject of major retrospectives in Geneva and Aspen, as well as other shows around the globe.

Naomi Rea, July 11, 2019



John Armleder, Brioni Fall Winter 2015 Campaign Photo by Collier Schorr Courtesy of David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles.

John Armleder is having a busy summer. Both the Modern and Contemporary Art Museum in Geneva and the Aspen Art Museum are offering up retrospective looks back on the Swiss artist's storied career. Meanwhile, despite mounting health concerns, the 71-year-old Armleder is still making new work, some of which is being shown at David Kordansky Gallery Los Angeles, and at the Shirn Kunsthalle in Frankfurt. Together, these exhibitions constitute the largest ever reassessment of Armleder's oeuvre.

Long before Armleder became a founder of the influential Groupe Ecart, which introduced Andy Warhol to Europe, he spent seven months in prison as a conscientious objector refusing to take part in Switzerland's mandatory military service. Then, after studying at the Swiss École des Beaux-Arts, he joined an enthusiastic group of young artists and played a pioneering role in the development of the Fluxus movement of the late 1960s.

The Swiss artist represented his country at the Venice Biennale in 1986, and the following year he participated in documenta 8 in Kassel. The avant-garde musician John Cage and his "chance operations" influenced Armleder in many ways, from his iterative performance work of the 1970s and '80s through his iconic furniture sculptures and the pour paintings and puddle paintings of later decades.

Armleder had a near-fatal brain tumor removed in 2009 and he had just come out of the hospital after some resulting complications when we spoke recently about his world view, and the big season coming up.



Jon Armleder, *Passion Z* (2019). Photo by Annik Wetter, courtesy of David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles.

**Welcome back. I know you have been out of commission for a while. How are you feeling?**

I am perfectly OK. It's behind me for now. You never know what's going to happen. It was an outcome from this thing years ago which was very critical. I shouldn't be on this planet anymore but somehow the other planets didn't want me so they sent me back.

**You have a busy summer ahead of you with these four shows, two of which are career retrospectives. What do you think about the selection of works that have been made to represent the trajectory of your career thus far?**

Once you get to my age you have no idea of where the trajectory went and where it was supposed to go. So I always like working with the people who put up the shows. They have their idea, their reading, and we work together on it, and it's just one more reading. So I think it's OK.

**What do you hope comes out of this reassessment of your career? Is there anything you think remains to be said about your work that hasn't been said already?**

There is no end to what you can say about anything. I don't think I'm in a peculiar position, it's just what happens. It's somehow bound to be that, when you've been around so long, things come and go and are reassessed in a new context.

Today, compared to when I was younger, there is more of everything, and I think everything is much faster and more immediate. So that offers a very different perspective on what you do, which is interesting. It doesn't mean it changes much, because as I like to say, the more things change, the more they are the same.

**What do you think about the way the world has changed—the world in general and the art world specifically—in your time?**

What is surprising is that it hasn't changed much, what is also surprising is that memory loss is extremely present. If you think about it, World War II was yesterday, and we think of it like it was five centuries ago. And it doesn't stop people becoming more and more so-called "populist."

This is a big danger of our time, and it must be reflected in our art as well. It is amazing how people forget about the danger of collective society when they don't remember the mistakes they made yesterday, and they're ready to repeat them again. So in that sense I think we live in a very scary time.

**This is perhaps more evident to someone like you, who came out of a generation of artists that were coming from this post-war period where there was a feeling of liberation and freedom, right?**

Absolutely. Yeah, exactly. I'm a postwar kid, meaning: I'm a semi-hippie, semi-anarchist, semi-left-wing guy, who thought we were making a new world. And of course it didn't happen in that sense, although we had a few festive moments, but they were moments. It is amazing how memory obliterates so many things. And now again we are afraid of migrants in Europe, and we forget that not so long ago we were all migrants.



**Do you think that art still has the same role to play in society as it did when you first started making work?**

The first thing is we are not exactly sure of what role it was playing, so it is difficult to know if it is the same or not. There is more of everything. So a young artist today has a much harder time than we did to frame their decisions, and their past, and all that they care about, because there is so much of everything, and things are so equivalent. In my days there were no art fairs, and then there were a couple of art fairs; there was only ten or so museums that showed living artists. There was two biennales or three...Today there's a lot of everything.



John Armleder, detail of *Quibble* (2018). Photo by Annik Wetter, courtesy of David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles.

**If there's one thing that has come to define the yearly cycle of the art world now, it is this relentless onslaught of fairs. I know that you've been coming to Art Basel since 1980 and have observed that shift. What do you think about it?**

It is reflective of the whole scene. Art fairs are like the internet: They make everything available in one go. The only thing is that, since people like them, they tend to reproduce them, and they end up not even going to museums and galleries anymore because they have everything in a sort of a slide display one time, and they don't even have time for doing the other things.

On the other hand, what's interesting is that many galleries do all the activities and art fairs, which leaves them extremely free to do whatever they want in their gallery spaces. Then the galleries are either just storages, or they do shows that they otherwise would have never done because they don't think of them in a commercial way at all, because that activity has been displaced to the art fairs. So like everything it brought restrictions on one hand, but also freedom on the other.

**I think one conversation that people are having a lot more about the art market these days is about the escalation of prices and the increasing consideration of art as an investment. How do you think that is going to play out?**

The truth is I'm not sure it's so different. If you look at the Renaissance in Italy, people were fighting to get an artist in their compound exactly as they are today to get an artwork which is credited in the press or the news. So, it is different because these quantities are different, and it's a wider society which is concerned. Before it was a little group of people, then when I was young it was a slightly bigger group, and now it is a huge group of people.

But still, if you think about society in general, it is a minority. The art market concerns so few people if you think about the whole set of people on this planet. I mean who on the street knows about an art fair?

**There have been a lot of questions in the museum world about how to diversify and expand audiences, and some are questioning the museum format itself. What do you think museums and exhibition spaces should be doing to invite more people in to experience art?**

Well, the first thing is that formats which were reserved for so-called kunstvereins or kunsthallen before are now available to museums. Of course a museum is better known for the fact that it offers a collection and does exhibitions of that collection. A kunstverein has no collection usually, so that makes it different. The thing is that the museum has a function of reflecting its time and the discussions there are in that time, meaning others which were not in the given frame are more in the program today than they ever were, meaning non-white, non-male artists. It is about time. It took so long for that to happen. In my days it was just little groups of people who could voice their position on that but there was no real direct effect. I think today people in major established museums have discussions about that so that's one thing I must say that I believe the discussions which are going around have a real effect that hopefully will change their perspectives.



Installation view, "Ecart at Art Basel" at MAMCO, Geneva. Photo by Julien Gremaud, courtesy MAMCO.

**Whenever you have in the past had a curatorial hand in your own shows you've used that opportunity to invite other artists into your exhibitions. Why do you feel it's your responsibility to share your platform with artists who might not have made it on their own?**

Certainly the booth we have at the Basel art fair was always about showing artists which were not, for one reason or another, represented in the gallery scene. A lot of them have turned out to be major players in the art world, whereas we don't know who others are anymore. And that's just normal.

But I always liked the position I had at the Basel art fair. I don't know how they let me in for so long because on top of the fact that I'm not a commercial gallery, I don't even have a gallery anymore. We used to have a cooperative gallery in the '70s, but now we don't even have a permanent space. The other thing is of course that when I sell artwork, which strangely we do quite often, we give the total amount of the money to the artist, or with someone like [the late] Gustav Metzger, to the estate.

Some galleries say "that doesn't work, it's going to break our whole system" because they capitalize on sales, but they're just happy to keep me there as an exotic figure I guess. They're happy to have a counterpoint which is in a

way not so effective because it's just a table and a few artworks so it doesn't count. Many artists just hate art fairs, but I never thought it was better or worse than the other things we attend.

**It's interesting to hear you say that you don't think it's better or worse because I know that in your career you have been seen as a kind of disruptive force in the art world, with wanting to challenge distinctions between high and low art, for example. Do you still think that way?**

Certainly. I mean I come from that John Cage, Fluxus, Happening kind of thing anyway so that never really leaves you. I am as happy today to show on the sidewalk as in a museum or whatever. I see it like that. The thing is, I'm not obsessive. I mean maybe when you're younger you're more aggressive in making your point. I'm old enough, I almost died a couple of times, so I see things maybe in a different kind of perspective. I always knew that we do art to change the world, but the world changes by itself without art. It's important as a human being in society to recognize that people can do without you so easily.

**Who are the artists you are enjoying most these days, whether historical figures or new names?**

It's difficult to say. There's so many. Also because I'm older, and because I'm no longer teaching, and I am a bit handicapped by my health situation, I see fewer of the younger artists than I used to maybe 15 years ago. I had the chance to live with two fantastic artists, Sylvie Fleury and Mai-Thu Perret, and that probably changed my life because they brought me visions that maybe I would have never had if I hadn't lived with them. Today of course there is a limit to the brain and I always say that maybe I don't have a brain anymore. There's so much you can record and it's sort of difficult to speak definitively in the kind of way you would do when you're in your 20s or 30s.



John Armleder, installation view of *\*\*\*TBC Untitled* (2019). Photo by Lee Thompson, courtesy of David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles.

**Is there anything that you your own work might spark in someone else, perhaps a call to action or a vision? And with the new work that you have been making, do you see it as a response to these worrisome new currents in society?**

I comment very badly on my own work. It's difficult because as soon as you say things like that you end up being sort of a priest, which would disturb me. But I think that whatever you do helps your awareness, and if it helps your awareness you share it, and sharing is the basic reason for why you put your work into a public situation. People who own your work give it whatever meaning it has for them, and I have no idea what that meaning might be in their case. And after all we're here for a brief time on this planet and for better or worse your work hangs around longer and it will be read in a different way with a vocabulary you just don't have. But I try to make my work as open as possible, and I always agree with whatever people say about the work, whether it's my text not. As a matter of fact, you may know that I have written a lot about my work under other names, or even have had conversations with people who were in fact me, so I can say two different things about the same thing or contradictory things about the same thing.



**Naomi Rea**  
Associate Editor, London



## Grand Inclusivity: Two Surveys of Swiss Avant-Garde Master

Shows up now in New York and LA showcase the life's work—before and after his near-fatal tumor—of John Armleder



Installation view of John Armleder at David Kordansky Gallery. Fredrik Nilsen, Courtesy David Kordansky Gallery

In May 2009, the artist John Armleder had a brain tumor removed.

“I said ‘maybe I should stay at the hospital,’” he recalls, though he can’t remember why he had that impulse, after he’d been patched up. Had he not, he wouldn’t have been at the hospital when the hematoma, which became infected and left him in the ICU for 14 months, became engorged, and he would have died.

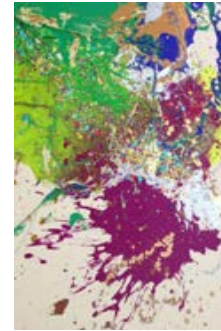
“It’s better not to have these things happen, obviously,” he said recently, surrounded by large canvases of his work. “But when they do, they’re fruitful—they teach you something about life you could not otherwise experience.”

In the intervening years, the performance artist, painter and sculptor—who has dabbled as curator and publisher and spends his time between New York City and Geneva—has made pieces wildly divergent from the furniture sculptures for which he became well-known and critically acclaimed in the 1990s. But if you’ve followed his work, you’ll know that’s not because of his near-death experience. He’s been switching gears in as dramatic a fashion since the 1969, when he founded his influential publishing house, Groupe Ecart, which was later credited with introducing Europe to Andy Warhol.

If you hurry, you can catch Armleder’s recent canvases—joyful splashes of neon colors and glitter—adorning the walls of the Almine Rech Gallery on New York’s Upper East Side and interspersed with his drawings and select found object works. Or, you could check out the sprawling space appointed by David Kordansky Gallery in Hollywood, where another survey of the pioneering artist also happens to be on view more than two thousand miles away.

“The inspiration for the show at Almine Rech was to propose a sort of survey,” said Nicolas Trembley, the curator. “The gallery was the right format to show [Armleder’s] historical drawings, shown for the first time in New York City.”

The exhibit, with works spanning the last half century, somehow manages to convey the avant-garde spirit of Armleder, even as only one or two examples of many of his phases are on display. There is a drawing the artist made at age 15, not far from the abstract, bright paintings that seem to celebrate his victory over ill health.



Detail on a recent abstract work on view at Almine Rech. Guelda Voien



Installation view of John Armleder at Almine Rech. Matt Kroening, Courtesy Almine Rech Gallery and the artist

“You can really see the influences in those works, from modernism to Russian avant-garde,” Trembley said. “His practice is... Much more avant-garde than what people think.”

The L.A. Show, meanwhile, manages to show entirely separate facets of Armleder’s work, with the same whimsical variety.

“Interior decorator run amok.” is the feeling Kurt Mueller, a director at David Kordansky, would say best sums up the Armleder show there. “‘Grand inclusivity.’ ‘Too much is not enough.’ ...I think that captures the spirit of our show.”

From a diptych of two dog beds, to an assemblage of Pierre Cardin lamps, to an installation of plants, to the wall painting of an almost cartoon-like octopus (which appears almost like an accident, as its cut off at the side), the Kordansky show is as playful as Armleder’s career has been, heaping together his utterly disparate milieux seamlessly.

“David has followed John’s work for a very long time,” Mueller said. “He’s someone we’ve always respected and admired and he hasn’t had a show in Los Angeles in 20 years.”

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The son of a prominent Genevan hotelier, Armleder is the first to point out that he’s been lucky, and not just in his recent scrape (to put it lightly) with mortality. He said it was fortuitous that his brother was willing to take on the responsibility of running the family business when they were younger, so he could pursue his craft. At the time, that choice felt firmly Bohemian; Armleder is as surprised (and pleased, and grateful) as anyone at his successes.

One figure who had an exacting influence on the artist was the avant-garde musician John Cage. His use of so-called chance operations—the emphasis on randomness in life and in art, as taught in Eastern thought—has recurred in Armleder’s work. But Cage’s influence was also personal, an inspiration that had nothing to do with what would eventually develop into a shared aesthetic.

Installation view of John Armleder at Almine Rech. Matt Kroening, Courtesy Almine Rech Gallery and the artist  
“I met him when I was 12 years old,” Armleder said. “Geneva was a small city, with a fantastic music scene.” As such, he was able to attend a workshop with Cage around that age and converse with him. Six years later, in Cologne, Armleder was attending a performance by the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, with whom Cage frequently performed, when Cage spotted Armleder on the street and reintroduced himself, identifying him completely out of context.

“I had gone from being 12 years old, to nearly a grown man, and he recognized me by the back of my head,” Armleder said. The two became acquaintances over the years, although Armleder hesitates to call it a friendship. Nonetheless, the impact was lasting. In his performance works, for which he became well-known in the 1970s and 80’s, a flavor of Cage’s emphasis on chance was often apparent. Armleder’s authorship, emphasizing the performative aspects of his practice, was more in play in setting up the Kordansky show, Muel-ler said, while the New York exhibit was practically erected without his input.

“Working with Armleder is really easy,” said Trembley. “He gives a lot of freedom and anyway keeps saying that he loves to discover his shows at openings. He had not much to do so was very happy!”

The result is two aligning shows that in no way overlap but that serve as a sort of cooperative exploration of both Armleder’s work and the sensation of avant-garde art production through time. Luckily, you can experience one without the other, depending upon on which coast you reside.

The works of John Armleder are at Almine Rech until February 23 and at David Kordansky in Los Angeles until February 25.



## Forbes

### ‘As Conceptual As It Gets’: Fluxus Pioneer John Armleder Discusses His Bi-Coastal Retrospective



John Armleder stands between two of his “dot” paintings, at the Almine Rech Gallery in New York City. Photo: David Alm

“Intentions -- I never have any, and if I had one, I’d be inclined to forget about it,” said the artist John Armleder Tuesday afternoon as he was putting the finishing touches on a retrospective of his work dating back to the early 1960s, opening Wednesday, January 18th at the Almine Rech Gallery on Manhattan’s Upper East Side. Rather, the Swiss-born painter, sculptor and performance artist added, each person who experiences his work will experience it in his or her own way, based on who the viewer is, where they live, whatever “baggage” they may bring -- and, of course, wherever the exhibition itself may be.

The New York show, which was curated by Nicolas Trembley, an art critic and expert on Armleder’s work, complements another Armleder retrospective that opened last week at the David Kordansky Gallery in Los Angeles, whose soaring ceilings and spacious galleries stand in contrast to the far more intimate Almine Rech Gallery. Both provide an ideal setting to experience Armleder’s work, but in vastly different ways. Armleder wouldn’t want it any other way.



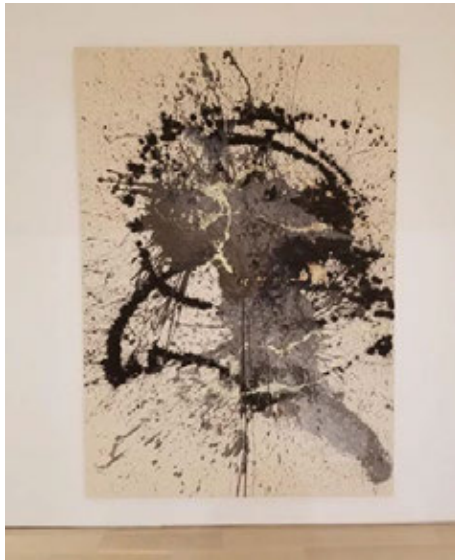
John Armleder, January 13 - February 25, 2017, David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, Installation view. Photography: Fredrik Nilsen. Courtesy of David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

“If you’re a composer of music and write a script, and then if someone plays it -- whether the composer himself or someone else -- it becomes a totally different event,” he said, glancing at the large, abstract paintings that adorn the walls of the Almine Rech Gallery’s main room. “The filter is always language or culture. So whatever you do, when you do it two minutes later, it’s already changed. The world, the context has changed.”

Now 68, Armleder was a pioneering and highly influential member of the Fluxus movement that arose during the 1960s and ‘70s. Defined precisely by its lack of definition, Fluxus was initially comprised of a loosely affiliated group of interdisciplinary artists such as Joseph Beuys, Yoko Ono and Nam June Paik, and took much



John Armleder, *Jena*, 2016. Mixed media, 225 x 280 cm. Photo courtesy of Almine Rech Gallery and John Armleder



John Armleder, *While*, 2016. Mixed media on canvas, 215 x 150 x 6 cm, at the Almine Rech Gallery. Photo: David Alm

of its inspiration from the creative ethos of Dadaists, like Marcel Duchamp, and the experimental composer John Cage. While Armleder upholds the Fluxus philosophy that a given work is never fixed, either during its creation or after it's "done," however, even that label is insufficient to describe the entirety of his career, which privileges viewer subjectivity and eschews authorial control over anyone else's experience of his work.

On display at both galleries are several of Armleder's "dot" and "pour" paintings -- works that, taken together, juxtapose maximum control with controlled chaos -- as well as his "puddle" paintings, which all but eliminate control altogether. "I combine different strategies of making paintings," he said of the former two groups, which he often combines as diptychs that contrast their aesthetics, and ultimately undermine their ability to, as Armleder puts it, "make sense." "By putting them together I obliterate, or void, them of their rightful meanings," he said.

To create a puddle painting, Armleder buys whatever paints he can find at a paint store, whether their colors match or not, and whether or not their chemical properties are compatible, and literally pours them together into puddles on a canvas. There, the puddles start to dry into bubbles, and the chemicals interact until the bubbles explode. The results surprise, and delight, Armleder as much as anyone else.

The largest, and likely the most whimsical, piece in the New York show will be familiar to anyone who has walked that city's streets: a pair of three-step platforms erratically populated with bunches of flowers, still wrapped in plastic, as if waiting for a buyer to take them home along with a carton of milk. "It just happened,"



Installation view, Almine Rech Gallery, 2017. Photo: David Alm

Armleder said. "I walked along and saw what you call a 'bodega,' and saw the flowers, and saw it as a sculpture that I could do." When a reporter asked him what it would look like when it was finished being installed, he replied, "Oh, it's done. This is it."

Also on display in both the New York and Los Angeles shows are several of Armleder's "furniture sculpture" works that combine paintings with found domestic objects -- sofas, chairs, even a set of Venetian blinds. "The painting is very often discussed as being a window," Armleder said. "So you have a blind, which is a closed window in a way, but there's no window, no view behind, which is exactly like a painting as a window because you never look behind the canvas. You have this idea that the view of the world is on the surface of the painting, not through the painting."

Surfaces have long interested Armleder. Turning from the set of blinds, he pointed to a blank white wall in the back of the gallery. "Here again you have a wall painting," he said, describing it as one of his earliest such works, from the early 1970s. "It's just clear varnish, which is shiny."

Indeed, the wall did have a slight sheen, unlike another of his original wall paintings from the same era: "You just paint the wall the color that was originally used to paint the wall, just one more coat," Armleder said of the latter work, clearly amused by its anti-aesthetic implications. He chuckled, adding: "That's as conceptual as it gets."



## John Armleder on Why Art is More Important Than Artists

The artist has concurrent shows in New York and Los Angeles.



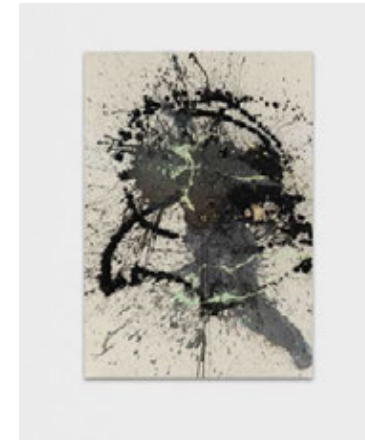
John Armleder at Almine Rech gallery, New York. Photo: Henri Neuendorf.

Known for an aesthetic that is distinguished by the absence of a characteristic style, John Armleder's work spans several different mediums, ranging from painting and sculpture to design, performance, and installation, and is loosely connected by a non-hierarchical and democratic understanding of art based on the themes of appropriation, humor, and chance.

Leaning on the fluxus movement of the 1960s, Armleder was an influential member of the Geneva-based Groupe Ecart, which emerged from the eponymous Galerie Ecart performance venue in the 1970s and 1980s. He was greatly influenced by the radical American composer, artist, and philosopher John Cage, who is best known for his unorthodox conceptual songs, works that Armleder has sought to translate into the visual arts over the course of his five decade career.

Armleder has two concurrent US exhibitions on view right now at the David Kordansky Gallery in Los Angeles (through February 25), which just announced its representation of the artist, and the Almine Rech gallery in New York (through February 23). The Los Angeles show focuses on recent works, whilst the New York exhibition presents a survey of his work. The two concurrent bi-coastal shows are indicative of the recognition that Armleder is finally receiving in the US, something that he has long enjoyed in his native Europe.

Ahead of the opening of his New York exhibition, which is curated by Nicolas Trembley, the leading scholar of Armleder's work, the 68-year-old artist sat down with artnet News at the Almine Rech Gallery on the Upper East Side to talk about his work, his beginnings, and why art is more important than artists.



John Armleder *White* (2016). Photo: Annik Wetter, courtesy of the Artist and Almine Rech Gallery © John M

### You emerged from the fluxus movement of the 1960s. Can you describe your early days as an artist?

It's difficult to describe, it seems like a century ago, but it also seems like yesterday. I had contact with the fluxus artists, but of course I'm a generation or two after those guys. I met them because of my interest for John Cage, the composer, who gave a course with some of the fluxus guys, which I followed in New York in the late 50s. That's how I got interested in what they were doing and met some of them very early. In the late 60s I decided with friends that we're not artists, and that we should open a gallery, which was called Ecart. We opened the gallery in '72, and we showed quite a few of the fluxus artists in the gallery, and also performed with quite a few of the fluxus people; but we also performed the scripts of the fluxus people for many years and I still do that as a matter of fact.

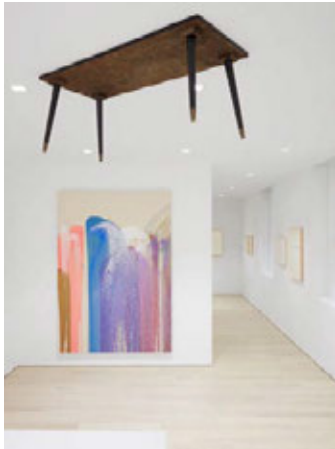
### How has your work developed since then?

The worst person to listen to about the work is the artist. I think the art should work on its own, the people who look at the works invent the works again, and the artist is just a side effect. So it's very difficult for me to say this or that, and I don't think it's really my style to try to control the understanding or the focus of the work and say that it's about this rather than about that. The one thing I could say, maybe, is that I'm an artist who comes up with new things or new forms, or new strategies for producing the work. I just go on doing different types of strategies, rather than an artist who evolves from one genre to another or from one period to another. If you want to take references of another oeuvre like mine; I'm not at all a Picasso kind of style, who went from one type of work to another, I'm more like a Picabia kind of person, who did one different thing after another and never stopped doing different things.

### You once said, "I have no genre." So how would you define yourself as an artist?

Well, that's already some kind of a definition isn't it? Obviously I believe that I'm a visual artist, I've been interested in painting and doing three dimensional objects since I was a kid. My interest in art

was also about painting, whether it's classical art or modernist art. As a kid I was very quickly impressed by abstraction, early abstraction of the 20th century, and that has never left me, and you can see here in the show in New York. Some pieces here are direct references to that.



Installation view John Armleder at Aline Rech, New York. Photo: Matt Kroening, courtesy of the artist and Almine Rech Gallery © John M. Armleder.

**Do you think that other artists restrict themselves by occupying a narrow niche and visual language?**

No, it's a different way. I know some artists that I respect a lot who basically follow the same strategy for doing their work all their life, like Robert Ryman doing the white paintings again and again: that's one path; it's just a different one than mine. But I don't think one is more narrow than another. On the contrary, for an onlooker who follows the history of an artist, if the line is very visible [and] it's easier to follow, there's more hints about what the work is about, if it's about something. In my case it's probably much more difficult. But it's also very enjoyable because people know you for this and for that.

Art being a product which is taken over by society, there's fashions; for a time people thought I was only about dot paintings, or pour paintings, or furniture sculptures—they may only know one part of what I have done, and I like that a lot.

**What's the common theme that ties together the different parts of your practice? Is there a common conceptual framework that links your work?**

I would hope not. Again, it's a Duchampian way of seeing it. I think the onlooker is the one who builds the relationship, who understands how things fit together, and if they don't fit at all and they completely escape my perception, all the better.

One always believes that the artist knows more, or understands the work he is doing better than the onlooker, or the people who take care of the work, and I think it's not true. The artist has a very restric-

tive understanding of his own work because he's so close to it, and he remembers the moments when he was making it, and the anecdotes, which are just episodes. It's not at all a universal understanding. So what binds it all together? It's obviously time, space—areas. And all that would be wiped out by new time, new spaces.

Like I often say, if you look at works under the spotlight today, they may have been painted at a time when people had no electric lights. It's a totally different context. But on the other hand you could say that things have not changed that much at all.

**Who are some of the artists that have influenced you?**

All artists have influenced me. And when I walk on the street a building or a tree influences me as much as any other artist. If you want to find closer linkages, the composer John Cage and the people around him. When I was young I was extremely impressed by the constructivists, Russian abstraction and Dutch abstraction, so that is very strongly present too.



Installation view John Armleder at Aline Rech, New York. Photo: Matt Kroening, courtesy of the artist and Almine Rech Gallery © John M. Armleder.

**Your New York survey exhibition looks back at work from the past, whilst the Los Angeles exhibition featuring current works looks more ahead. Which do you prefer? To look at your work from the past or to look to the future?**

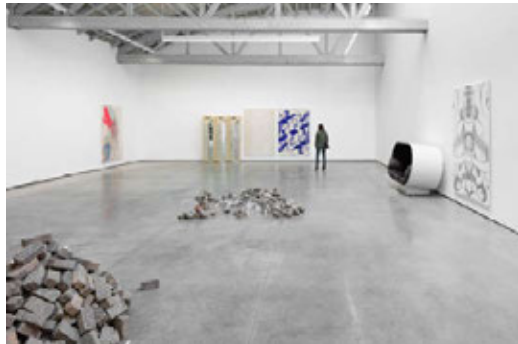
I tend to equalize things. I wouldn't say that I prefer one thing to another. A show is done with other people, and they are collaborations and so the intentions are always different. New York is not Los Angeles and vice versa, and the spaces are extremely different. The show I did at Kordansky was the first one person show I did with this gallery, I had a show with Almine Rech in Brussels (in 2014), with new work, only painting, which was produced in Brussels. Circumstances influence a lot; you don't really know what it will be about and you don't control everything—although I'm certainly not a control freak in any way. I wouldn't say one is more important than the other. It's an opportunity to see the different things that I've done. The LA exhibition gives a different image than the show in New York, but both make sense. I'm the kind of person who wouldn't want to impose things on people, and it was the wish of the different operations who had ideas about what they wanted to do. If they're not comfortable with it then I'm not comfortable either.



**You often mention that the artist should step back and let the work speak for itself. What's behind this reasoning?**

I think we are passersby. In my case, I escaped death not so long ago, against all odds. The art, whether you want it to or not, remains, it sticks around. It's one of the things that scared me the most when I was in my bed and was supposed to be leaving. I thought "all that mess I produced and now my kid"—I have a son—"or my friends would have to take care of it, it's not fair." Like if I knew better how to take care of it myself.

If you read the papers there are hundreds of things happening at the same time, and it's only a fraction of what is really happening. As an artist you get so involved in what you're doing that for a moment you think that it's the only thing in the world—and it's nothing—it's just a hiccup. One amongst a thousand hiccups. So I would never tell people this or that about myself, or about others, or say that this is more important than something else. I'm unable to do that.



Installation view, John Armleder at David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles. Photo: Fredrik Nilsen, Courtesy of David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, CA.

**If you weren't an artist, what would you be?**

Probably an artist! When I was a kid I had a brother who was much more artistically minded than I was, although he was into writing and so on. My family was raised in a hotelier tradition, for five generations they owned a hotel. So my brother when we were fairly young said, "You want to be an artist? Okay go ahead and be an artist. I'll take care of the hotel and you can be an artist." He was very protective and fatherly in a way. So if I hadn't been an artist, and if my brother was not so nice to make way for me, I'd possibly be doing what my family is doing. And when you do what your family is doing, do you know why you do it? No. You do it because you are framed in that tradition, and you have a perception about that. So maybe it would have happened that way, or perhaps totally different, who knows?

"John M. Armleder" runs through February 23, 2017 at Almine Rech, New York.

"John Armleder" runs through February 25, 2017 at David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles.



201 at some point maybe that will change, because Esther is right, galleries are paying for a lot of production and giving a lot of structural support. Even so, I would not want to be a curator in an institution just to become a part of art history. I think we all do what we do because we want or have to do it.

LG: A gallery for me means a specific relationship with someone that involves a lot of trust, and at the same time the feeling that when you are not there, something is happening. Even if you, the artist, are lying on the ground and having bad ideas, someone somewhere is talking about you or thinking about you. It is a rather romantic idea.

NZ: The gallery provides a context, a profes-

sional infrastructure. Some older galleries tell me that things used to be more experimental.

LG: I'm always wary of saying that "things were more experimental in the old days." I think with Esther it was always a combination of being on top of things and being aware that the artists are also driving things and asking questions. When I first would visit Esther, it felt like there was someone steady at the wheel but the artists were constantly causing trouble. Maybe that's still true. I don't think galleries can be radical or conservative without their artists. It really depends on how they work with people.

ES: There was a big change in the 1960s in what the art market was offering, and we

had to therefore rethink the role of the gallery. Now we are not only buying and selling. Our activities are vast. Part of that is to create a structure where we can help an artist produce the work they want to make.

NZ: When we opened our gallery, a lot of people came and saw that some artists used a new aesthetic. At some point people understood that something was happening and it made them curious. We could not explain everything, but there were questions being created and a new aesthetic language that was interesting.

LG: I like the idea of "interest" or a "quality of interest." It is different from shock or intellectual inquiry or confusion. It means a certain curiosity expressed in a particular form.

## John Armleder: Better, Quasi

Text by Barbara Casavecchia

Gallerie Massimo De Carlo  
Via Ventura 7  
Milan, Italy  
Through December 16  
massimodecarlo.com

"The artist is art's collateral damage." Pauses, smiles, tees-tasting.

"The artist is art's collateral damage." Large smile, silence, tee-sipping.

My conversation with John Armleder took place in between these two Zen-like aphorisms, repeated like inverted commas at the beginning and end of our chat. Quite apropos, in fact, for the ever self-replicating ritual of the interview (possibly same questions, possibly same answers), as well as for the subject we were discussing: his solo show, *Better, Quasi* ("quasi" means "almost" in Italian), an exhibition based on repetition, replication, and possibly improvement. Armleder compressed in it three decades of works, as if to embody a timeline whose starting point is January 1987, the date of his first Milanese show curated by Massimo De Carlo, at a time when MDC was still working with the gallerist Piero Cavellini and sharing his space in Via Brera. It is represented by three of the original "furniture sculptures" (one piece of found furniture and one abstract painting made by the artist) assembled by Armleder back then. All three items have been "repeated" in 1:1 scale for the occasion; to say "replicated" would be inaccurate since the new versions are rendered in different materials, whose choice was left to their manufacturers. For instance, a round Constructivist red and black painting inserted in a wooden gueridon (*Untitled*, 1987) is now a fluff of mauve synthetic fur emerging from a brass and copper cylinder (*Arrêt-sur-tout*, 2017). To write "executed" or "interpreted," as if played after a score, could be even better: Armleder is a self-confessed fan of John Cage and Erik Satie, whose musique d'ameublement (1917; composed not to be attentively listened to, but to blend with the background noise, as if it was sonic wallpaper) he often quotes as a source for his own sculpture d'ameublement. It was Cage who first published Satie's piano piece, *Vexations*, and organized its first public performance in New York in 1953 by following precisely the composer's instructions: Play the score 540 times in a row, for an entire day. And it was Cage who somehow brought Armleder into the art world, way before he got involved

with Fluxus and founded the Geneva-based Ecart group. "I met him when I was 12 or 13 years old, in Germany. I never studied music, but once I had to choose whether to go to a Wagner festival, or to a contemporary music one listing Cage and Stockhausen—that was my pick. After his concert, Cage gave a lecture that I found terribly serious, maybe because of the overall German mood. So, when the Q&A time came, I raised my hand and asked why he didn't tell any of those funny Zen stories he was so fond of. So he did, over and over again, and we both started laughing. At the end of the conference, Cage came to over me, and since I was so young, he asked me what I wanted to do later. "I want to be a painter," I said. Years on, in Cologne, when I was 18 or 19 and was walking down a street I heard someone calling me from behind. It was Cage, who asked me, first thing: "So, are you a painter now?"

Boasting about lineage and originality is not in the style of Armleder. "I've never believed in the 'original' and always found surprising that so many people invest a lot in the paternity of something, or claim to have invented it before, or totally identify with it. When I started using furniture, I went to second-hand shops, seldom looking for a specific piece. I like the fact that furniture and wallpaper are mostly non-descript and that we associate them with a room rather than a museum or a white cube. Something you can stay at home with and enjoy, like other good things in life: surviving, love stories, food."

Armleder is an exquisite connoisseur of the formal repertoire of modern and contemporary art, design, and visual culture at large, but restrains from framing his works as enquiries around taste and beauty. "Taste is a social agreement, like language, and it changes at the same speed. When I was young, for instance, people detested the idea of decoration, while today it overlaps with art quite easily. When the so-called "change" occurs, things need to be replaced and often brought back. I think it is all rooted in ownership, attribution, and value, like a copy of Raphael being suddenly recognized as a Great Masterpiece by the Master-in-person at an art historical museum. The way we look at it changes instantly. Personally, I've always found fascinating that—when you look at an art piece—someone standing next to you sees something totally different."

Here, this idea is played out in many different ways: as a matter of fact, the same view-

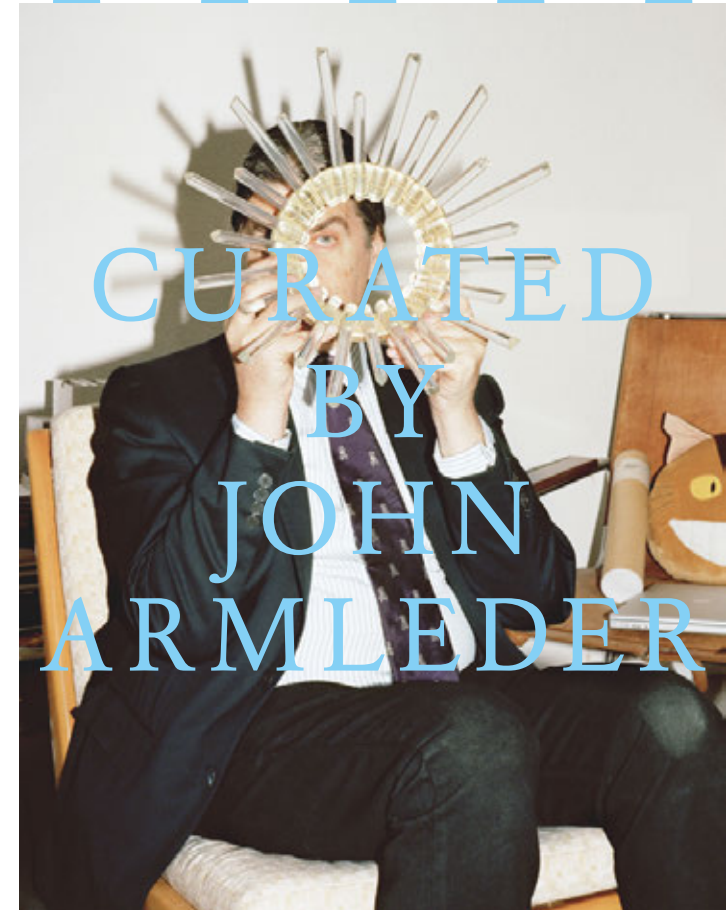
er can see the same thing hanging next to its doppelgänger and looking totally, concretely different. Or the same "splash" wall-painting repeating itself on a wall (*Untitled*, 2017), like a cartoonish pattern, or a half wall-painting in the shape of a record (*Untitled*, 2017) being completed by its own reflection, so that the eye is tricked into perceiving it as a full circle. Or again, the two monumental wall-paintings of cats (*Untitled*, 2017): one red, one green, one head up, one upside down reflecting themselves in the broken mirrors of the central "catwalk"—pun intended, I guess. The wall at the back of the gallery is covered in shiny adhesive silver wallpaper acting like a Werhollan mirror, but also, quite literally, as a "silver lining," which goes hand in hand with the optimistic title of the solo—looking back and looking forward.

Armleder's exercises in levity, humor, and visual pleasure are as elegant and precise as ironic, even more so since he gracefully pretends to have very little to do with it. When he was invited to stage a large exhibition at the Centre Culturel Suisse in Paris in 2008, he handed it over to Jacques Garcia, an interior decorator and master of grand goût, free to create the lavish mansion of an imaginary collector at his own will, filled with George Condo and Helmut Newton, but also with Armleder's glittery painting placed atop a fake fireplace. "When I first met Garcia, he immediately understood what I had in mind: "Basically, what you want me to do is a show you don't have the money for and where you just come to the opening," which is pretty much the ideal situation, for me."





Graff, J. & Bellini, A., 2014. *Curated by John Armleder*, Kaleidoscope



PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATHILDE AGIUS

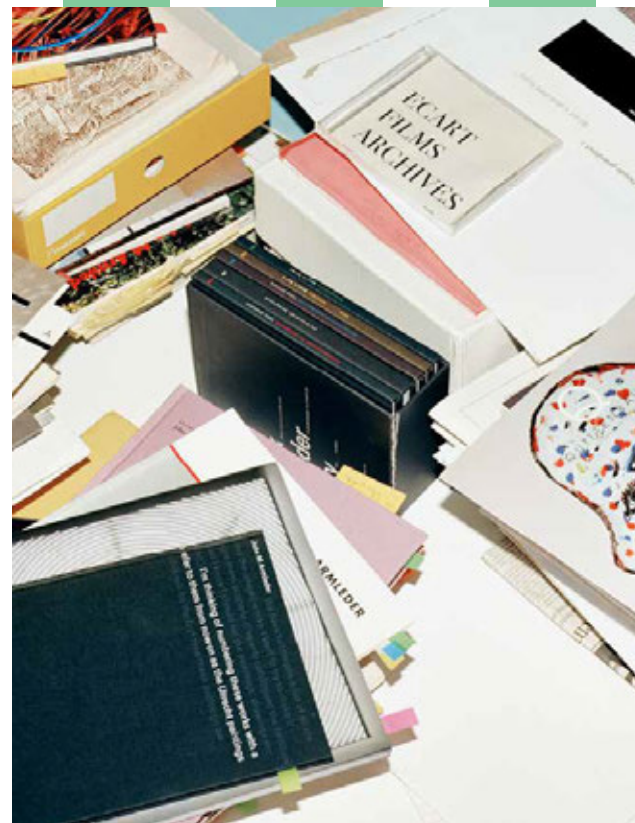


JOHN ARMLEDER













Graff, J. & Bellini, A., 2014. *Curated by John Armleder*, Kaleidoscope

Since debuting in the late sixties as the member of a now-legendary art collective in Switzerland, John Armleder doesn't believe in the notion of the author, nor in the distinction between artist and curator, instead pursuing an organic practice based on collaboration, participation, exchange and a "permanent creation" attitude towards life.

INTERVIEW BY ANDREA BELLINI Ecart is a group of artists, an independent space and a publishing company you founded in Geneva with Patrick Lucchini and Claude Rychner in 1969. But your activity and your friendship with the Ecart founders started some years before, when you were active under the name "Bois" or "Max Bolli" group.

JOHN ARMLEDER We were essentially a group of friends, all teenagers, and we were studying drawing with Luc Bois and doing sports with Pierre Laurent, a rowing instructor. These two teachers were our mentors.

AB In a certain sense the Max Bolli Prize can be considered as your very first curatorial project: a trophy awarded to boats that sank or came last in official regattas.

JA We hadn't any manifesto, we did not share any theoretical position... We were just teenagers and we were marginal in the traditional community of Geneva's old clubs. At the end of the year, there was always a general meeting where prizes were awarded to those who rowed for the longest, those who won regattas, etc. In a rowing club, the boat is a fetish. There is a respect for the material; there

is a distinct lifestyle. We were against the hierarchy of sports success, which seemed almost similar to military success. We thus created an anti-prize, which rewarded those who did wrong, those who were breaking boats.

AB You were developing a strong collective identity and at the same time you were working on the possibility of a group artistic practice. In French, *écart* means "deviation"—your art works were conceived as so many deviations from the group's everyday life and activity. For example, if we consider the Max Bolli prize, it seems that from the very beginning you were interested in the Fluxus principle of the equivalence of life and art.

JA Exactly. We had in mind Robert Filliou's "permanent creation" attitude towards life.

AB You were very young, fourteen or fifteen years old at the time—how did you learn about contemporary art and the Fluxus movement?

JA I had a particular interest in music, and when I was very young I went to a festival in Donauessingen, where I met John Cage who was giving a conference. During the conference I asked him something and after the speech he came and asked me

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what I wanted to become, and I said “a painter.” I immediately wondered why I had said that. Eight years later, while I was walking in a small pedestrian street, a person behind me called me. It was Cage. He recognized me although I had quite changed, and asked me if I had become a painter.

AB Indeed, Cage has had a great influence on your early curatorial and artistic practice.

JA Yes, when we founded Ecart in 1969, we organized a series of happenings, some of them based on Cage scripts. I think I had three shocks in my life. The first was when I was very young; my mother used to take us to museums when we were traveling. She would always lose me, perhaps because I was already fascinated with visual arts. I was about four years old when we visited Fra Angelico's *The Annunciation* (1438–45) in a small monastery in Florence; I cried in front of the angel's polychrome wing. Later we also visited Giotto, which I loved, probably because for a child it looked like comics.

My mother was American but always lived in Europe. She wanted us to see the promised land, because America was extraordinary in her eyes. I was eight years old when we traveled there. We visited the Museum of Modern Art in New York where she lost me again; when she found me, I was in front of Kazimir Malevich's *Suprematist Composition: White on White* (1918), mesmerized at only eight. At that moment I told her: “Look, Mom, this is modern art, this is what I want to do when I grow up.”

AB And the third shock?

JA ... was John Cage.

AB These really are your roots.

JA Yes, I think so. Early on, I read Allan Kaprow's *Assemblages, Environments and Happenings* (1966), in which he talks about Fluxus and the projects he did around 1957 at the Reuben Gallery in New York; it caught my attention then. I do not remember if Cage came this way or vice versa. This is also how I found myself in contact with the Fluxus people.

AB From the very beginning, it seems, for Ecart group there was no difference between the collective practice of art and the organization of an exhibition.

JA This is totally true. For us, everything was really coherent and organic.

AB And talking about your curatorial activity, “Linéaments 1” in 1967 should be considered as your very first show, still as Bois.

JA It was a call for a public participation. It was a sort of a statement: “a few young artists invite visitors to share an experience for a month.”

AB While you were working on collective installations, you asked the audience to participate in the project. You were already developing the Ecart group's main principles, like the disappearance of individual signatures and an active relation with the public.

JA Yes, I remember, for example, I made a big installation, a collective sculpture, with Bois, Rychner, Tische and Wachmuth. It was a sort of total installation of sound, light and movement. The idea was to put spectators in the middle of an entire environment.

AB The second show you organized with Ecart was the “Ecart happening festival” in 1969.

JA We practically lived in the basement of my family's hotel, the Richemond, for fifteen days and organized a festival. We gathered every night with people who came and we explained the next day's theme, but we were also telling them that anyone could come with any project that we would help to implement.

AB Then in 1972 you opened a gallery space on Rue Plantamour and you started organizing solo shows around the group members, right?

JA At first we, Patrick Lucchini, Claude Richner and myself, mostly showed works of artists working with the Ecart group, then we started to invite other people. We had very few resources, and we quickly realized that we needed to print to disseminate our activities. But at the time, printing was complicated, expensive, and a pain to produce. We decided that the only possible way was to open a print shop ourselves. To finance this project, we printed commercially for other people, notably my family's hotel, galleries in Geneva, restaurants, etc., which funded our own business. It has always been this way — a self-sufficient system.

AB How did you learn about the printing process?

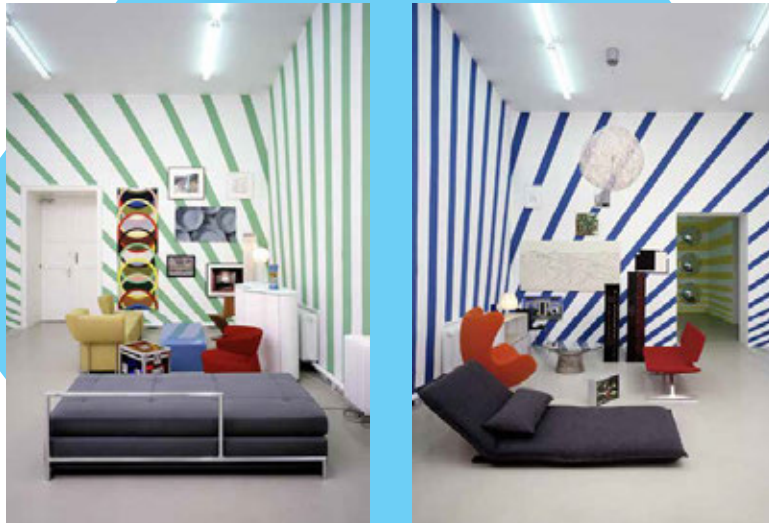
JA We had a workshop outside of the gallery only in 1972, when we set up our first print shop. But we first started printing in the same basement where we had our happenings. We learned how to print on the job. There was a print shop next door where we asked for their advice, about what to do and not to do. Then we would go back to the basement and do exactly what we should not do; we thought that it would work anyway. So we developed that kind of printing very instinctively. It was attractive for





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## Ne Dites Pas Non 1997–2006



Created for an exhibition at the Mamco—Musée d'art moderne et contemporain in Geneva in 1997, Armleder's *Ne Dites Pas Non* was an installation occupying three adjacent rooms, where large wall paintings were combined with an arrangement of borrowed furniture pieces and works selected from the museum's collection. On other occasions, such

as the exhibition "Too Much is Not Enough" held at the Kunstverein Hannover (2006) and The Rose Art Museum of Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts (2007), Armleder invited the curators to recreate this piece, amused by the surprises resulting from giving up some artistic control: "I am a chance freak: paradise through randomness."

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## Voids: A Retrospective 2002



Put together by a unique curatorial team composed of John Armleder, Gustav Metzger, Mai-Thu Perret, Mathieu Copeland and Clive Phillpot, "Voids: A Retrospective" took place at the Kunsthalle Bern in 2008 and at the Centre Pompidou in Paris in 2009, bringing together nine examples of empty exhibitions

Robert Irwin, Stanley Brouwn, Bethan Huws, Maria Eichhorn and Roman Ondák. These artists have attempted the extreme gesture to exhibit without showing an object or making any intervention, contemplating emptiness as a means to confront nothingness and absence, the invisible and the ineffable, destruction and negation.

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the artists we exhibited, as we were not only able to produce publications, but it was also a meeting place where we spent time drinking tea. It gave artists the opportunity to suddenly create a small book, which at the time was not an easy thing to do.

AB When you were at Rue Plantamour, you also started a sort of cooperation and mutual assistance with Adelina Von Fustenbergh, who created the Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève in 1974.

JA We were neighbors, and saw each other constantly. We then did several projects together. In 1977 we did a project with the Ecart performance group and some other guests like Carlos Garcia. Later, I did a solo show at the Centre d'Art Contemporain with Martin Disler and Helmut Federle.

AB And then in 1981 you curated for the "Teu-Gum Show" for the Centre. It was a curious show, one that put together Jean Fautrier, Olivier Mosset, Genesis P. Orridge, Max Bolli and Walter Robinson.

JA "Teu-gum" is the word "*muguet*" (lily of the valley) written backwards; *muguet* is the flower we give on 1 May in Switzerland. Half of the exhibition was a rerun of the "Times Square Show" curated by Walter Robinson in New York, which took place in a house in ruins. I knew Walter and I asked him if it was possible to do something similar. Almost everything had disappeared, but he offered to send me some of the works which he had kept. For the other half of the show, I then added some works by chance. For instance, Fautrier's work was included because I bought a work at a flea market and did a kind of composition with it. I met Gustave Mescher some time before in Frankfurt—he was not making art any more, and suddenly he decided to start again.

AB How did you feel about being artist and curator?

JA I never really saw the difference; for me it was completely equivalent, and it still is. I never really believed in the "author." I think that we are collective beings; our intelligence is the result of an exchange, a conversation or a negotiation, which is of course defined by the time or place in which we live. Nowadays, I think that we can escape the place where we live, much more so than when I was young.

AB How did you choose artists for your shows?

JA We chose artists that we were interested in and our friends. I did an exhibition with unsigned paintings that I found in resales. They were, therefore, anonymous paintings, which is funny because

when people asked us who made them, we would answer that we had no idea; but they thought that we did not want to tell them. It was an issue related to the market that started to take a new form.

AB Tell me about the show "Peintures Abstraites" (Abstract Paintings) you curated in 1986. Was this a response to the success of figurative paintings in the '80s?

JA It is again about opportunities. I think that in the early 1980s, there was a renewed interest in paintings on canvas. Then began "bad painting" and Neo-expressionism, notably in Italy, Germany and the US. In the 1970s, they were considered to be commodities, and so it was looked down upon somehow. But all of a sudden it came back, and as I was very good friends with painters such as Olivier Mosset and Helmut Federle, I thought that looking at painting again was great, but that abstraction was a genre of painting that we still did not look at enough. Between the three of us, Olivier, Helmut, and I, we discussed and decided on the paintings. In the end, I was more responsible for finding the paintings here and there among collectors, and I chose to invite emerging artists like Gerwald Rockenschau, who at the time was not known at all.

AB Can you tell me something about the two shows Marc-Olivier Wahler asked you to curate in New York and in Paris?

JA I consider it a sort of double exhibition, first at the Swiss Institute in New York, then at the Palais de Tokyo, titled "None of the Above" (2004) and "All of the Above" (2011), respectively, which are each a line to be checked while filling out a form; it is the same idea on principles of equivalence. When Marc-Olivier asked me to do this exhibition in New York, I told myself that we could gather a few things, with the idea that it is not necessary to be able to see in order to see things. So we invited people and asked them to make miniature works, no bigger than, let's say, a cell phone. Today, the artist list is quite impressive, because in the meantime the world has changed, and artists become famous instantly.

AB I saw the show; I remember the space was empty and there was a little Maurizio Cattelan sculpture climbing a window.

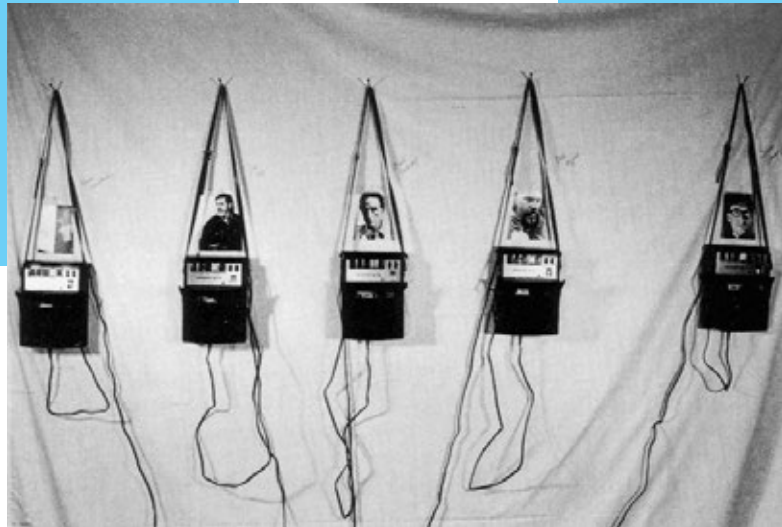
JA Cattelan's piece has a long story. It was a figure of me that was originally made with my students in Braunschweig. My work there was to organize

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# Ecart 1969–1980



In the late 1960s, John Armleder founded an art collective in Geneva called Ecart, with Patrick Lucchini and Claude Rychner. The Ecart Group published artists' books, presented exhibitions and performances and opened a bookstore/gallery that is considered to be "one of the most important alternative spaces in Europe in the 1970s" (Ken Friedman).

Ecart worked with many artists including Dick Higgins, Lawrence Weiner, Annette Messager, Daniel Spoerri, Giuseppe Chiari and Maurizio Nannucci. An exhibition dedicated to Ecart was curated by Lionel Bovier at the Charles H. Scott Gallery in Vancouver in 2012, followed by the publication *Ecart (1969–1980)* published by JRP|Ringier in 2013.

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# Yellow Pages 2004



John Armleder has undertaken several projects in collaboration with Team 404, his class at the Hochschule für Bildende Künste Braunschweig, Germany, including the inaugural exhibition of Basel's art space New Jerseyy, "Clinch/Cross/Cut" (2008). One of these collaborative projects was "Yellow Pages," an exhibition hosted at the Mamco in Geneva in 2004 as well as a book co-

published by JRP|Ringier and Ecart Publications. The book was conceived as an improbable Yellow Pages directory containing original contributions of over 500 artists, including Corrie Colbert, Sylvie Fleury, Thomas Hirschhorn, Odili Donald Odita and Michael Snow. The drawings from the book were exhibited at the Mamco onto a mural by John Armleder.

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projects around the world. With the students, especially foreign students, we would gather our networks to find a space to organize an exhibition and invite artists. Then we would manage to find money, to fund the trips, and so, each time, it was self-produced. The exhibition in which the Cattelan was shown happened when I started working in Braunschweig, in a large hall on the ground floor that does not exist today. It was a little town and so we asked every garage to let us borrow some of their cars; four or five garages each lent us about ten cars for the duration of the show. I then asked students to do projects themselves or with invited artists such as Maurizio, but also Ugo Rondinone and Olivier Mosset. They each sent a project to realize; some of them came in person to make them. Maurizio asked that we make a figurine like a Garfield glued to the back of a car, but that looked like me. So, one of the students made a figurine but it did not look like me at all. He then came with Sylvie Fleury, whose aunt used to make figurines for Caran d'Arche in train station windows around Switzerland, and she made the figurine. We first showed it in Braunschweig, and as I kept it, we also showed it at the Swiss Institute where you saw it.

AB "None of the above" was kind of funny.

JA Because you could not see a thing and a lot of people did not get it. In 2011, Marc-Olivier asked me to do another exhibition at the Palais de Tokyo; there, I remember an opposite situation: the works are present but no one can see them because they are present. It was inspired by two things. I went to Egypt as a child and I remember the Egyptian Museum in Cairo that had a room with sarcophagi standing in front of one another, so that I could not see those in the back. But it was not easy to see those at front either; the presence of the ones behind was just as effective as the ones at front. Another experience happened in temples in Asia, where after you pass a first door, you pass by religious figurines on the sides, which filter you but that again you cannot see. When Marc-Olivier asked me to do a project, I wanted to do something in that direction. So I used this strategy and asked to build platforms on different levels for the pieces. I invited many artists and again, the exhibition's economy was really simple: no need to look for impossible pieces, they had to choose what was available. Again, an exhibition that was built on availability rather than a list of names.

AB The exhibition system was interesting and surprising, mostly because there did not seem to be a hierarchy between the works; they did not contradict one another.

JA There are several possible interpretations. But the structure that I chose is the opposite of being formatted and limited—it opens all possibilities. Years before, I had hung works for Pierre Huber at Art Basel, where the entire booth was covered in mural paintings; I chose a lot of works to hang on the wall the way I wanted to, and it created a general confusion. It was interesting because the invited artists were enthusiastic to exhibit their works under these conditions, which they could have rejected in another context. I do not know why, but I am very happy when I am pushed to make a mistake.

AB As you were saying, you have more freedom as an artist-curator than a professional curator. Artists seem to have a positive attitude towards your distinct curatorial practice.

JA Absolutely, I may provide some opportunities that other people do not. However, some artists work as traditional curators. When I do a show, like when I make a painting, I want to forget everything I think I know—create space, rather than closing it. How does an artist have more agency to make mistakes than a professional curator? As if someone who has an art history background does something wrong, the mistake is more noticed; but if the artist does it wrong, we say it is a signature, a conscious choice.

AB What kind of exhibition do you really not like?

JA Well there are many things I have prejudices against, like everyone else. It happens when I see a show that I'll consider it a bad one, but afterwards I realize that there must be something interesting that I have missed. Unfortunately I did not see Vittorio Sgarbi's exhibition at the 2011 Venice Biennale that no one liked, so I cannot say anything bad about it.

AB Essentially you are saying that is impossible to fail at an exhibition.

JA Fundamentally yes, it's impossible. I do not think one can fail in anything; a complete failure is too ambitious. Curatorial practices contribute to knowledge, provide evidences for knowledge. We say that the world is an artist and that art is life. I think that it is the same for curators; we are all curators from the start. The curator's advantage is that he or she enters a system of knowledge that is inherently collective.





## Villa Magica 2002–



A Geneva-based record label founded in 2002 by John Armleder with his son Stéphane Armleder (aka The Genevan Heathen) and artist Sylvie Fleury, Villa Magica Records has since released music by, among others, Christian Marclay, Genesis P-Orridge and Thee Majesty, Gerwald Rockenschau, Jordan Wolfson, Steven Parrino and Olivier Mosset and, since 2007, has partnered with art historian and contemporary art

editor Lionel Bovier to curate, in conjunction with artists Stéphane Kropf and Benjamin Valenza, the Artists Records sector of Art Basel. In addition, Villa Magica has been responsible for an annual, now traditional XMas Party in Geneva—continuing a thematic thread that the artists holds dear, as he's used Christmas trees and decorations in several projects, including "Mr. I" at Graff Mourgue d'Algue (2014, image above).

## None of the Above 2004

## All of the Above 2011



"None of the Above" was an exhibition curated by John Armleder at the Swiss Institute in New York in 2004. Here, Armleder asked forty-seven artists for works that were either extremely small or immaterial. In 2011, as part of the "Carte Blanche" series at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris, Armleder curated "All of the Above," inviting around 20 artists, including Sylvie

Fleury, Robert Longo, Mathieu Mercier and Jim Shaw, to present a work on a stage platform. Whatever the nature of the works, placed on this stage they became subject to a frontal viewpoint and a visual superimposition making the whole effect oscillate between chaotic entanglements, groundbreaking meetings, and mixtures of genres.



As a student in 1962, John Armleder owns a herbarium and decides to take a lily and crush it—it is too big—between two pieces of wood. A bit later, he gives a presentation on hummingbirds, whose remarkable feature is their capacity to hover in mid-air and fly backwards. At that time he also trains regularly, rowing on Lake Léman with Patrick Lucchini and Claude Rychner. The group, first known as Max Bolli, then as Bois, later becoming Ecart, walk around town observing rooftops and leading unofficial and ephemeral happenings in the snow. In 1969, Ecart launches an exhibition, screening and publication program in the basement of Geneva's Richemond Hotel, with a happening titled *White Flights of the Imagination*. Different activities based on the color white are carried out by ten or so participants behind a transparent plastic drape.

Since then, John Armleder sets up his exhibition for the Ecart booth at Art Basel every June. Just like at Chez Quartier, he is a regular—sitting at a table, looking at the passersby and talking with clients.

One afternoon at the gallery, the neighboring storefront has just changed their window display, and the competition looks fierce. On view are samples of their electric heaters, which, the day before, they hung up using metal wire and a blind as background. After putting away the Christmas trees, we go to get what's left of the last Hawaiian Christmas party decorations for the following part of the exhibition: bamboo boards and the braided leaves of eleven nipa palms.

We bring everything back to the gallery, put it in a pile in the middle of the space and go to pick up John Armleder at the Chez Quartier tea room, which we also call *le bureau* (the office). Sitting on the bench in the gallery, he decides to set up four nipa palms high up on the left wall, the bamboo board on the center wall, and the rest of the nipa palms on the right wall. The balancing board at the center falls off the wall, so we nail it to the wall halfway, as the other half sinks to the floor. The seven remaining nipa palms are hung on the wall just like the others, with nails, starting from the bottom, in a to-and-fro movement from right to left. Armleder plays a Hawaiian music compilation that he made to go with the exhibition. Afterwards, we go drink a coffee at Ailleurs, a bistro across the street, to think of a title; *ailleurs* (elsewhere) would be perfect.

The series of exhibitions "Mr. I" at Graff Mourgue d'Algue in Geneva has been going on for almost a year now. The next step involves the nails used for the previous exhibition: they've been hammered every which way to hold the nipa palms and look a bit tangled. The constellation on the right wall turns out particularly well. With the artist group Bois, John Armleder made the first version of this work in 1967, so its caption will read: *Untitled*, 1967–2014.

A few months prior, John Armleder made an installation of paintings hung in a row at Galerie Andrea Caratsch in Zürich, some of which have motors of various movements



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# John Armleder: Jacques Garcia 2008



Questioning the notion of appropriation using ornamentation as a conceptual medium, for this bold project at the Centre Culturel Suisse in Paris, John Armleder has given the production entirely over to the renowned French interior decorator Jacques Garcia, following the principles of delegation which he holds dear. In the

Centre's main exhibition space, the designer created a meticulously detailed neo-bourgeois apartment, containing an entrance hall, dining room, lounge and bedroom, with chinoiserie and assorted ornamentation set beside work by Armleder as well as George Condo and Helmut Newton.

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# About Nothing 2007



An installation of hundreds of works on paper produced by the Swiss artist John Armleder over three decades, "About Nothing" was an exhibition held at the Kunsthalle Zurich in 2004 and at the South London Gallery and the ICA in Philadelphia in 2007. Co-curated by the artist and Beatrix Ruf, the exhibition presents an expansive and experimental view

of drawing itself, with works hung wall-to-wall and floor-to-ceiling to create a temporary, site specific work in its own right. The exhibition was accompanied by a massive catalogue bringing together nearly 600 drawings, featuring essays by John Armleder, Beatrix Ruf and Parker Williams, the long-term alter ego of the artist.

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and speeds, covering the entirety of the walls vertically and horizontally. The composition alternated between puddle paintings, drip paintings, drippings and mirror panels.

Domenico Battista arrives at Chez Quartier; he has recently started painting again, and presented a painting at the Ecart booth last year.

For his performance titled *From Here to There* (the 2004 a bit different than the 1967 one), John Armleder inverted two drum kits, from right to left. Last month in Lausanne, with Christian Marclay, he did a performance program that opened with John Cage's *4:33* (1952). Each with a mop in hand, they performed George Brecht's *Three Broom Events* (1961). Throughout the program, Armleder and Marclay interpreted a new version of *From Here to There*, moving drum kits and a number of musical instruments from one side of the room to the other.

In the 1970s, John Armleder creates Leathern Wings Scribble Press, a publishing house dedicated to his work. Among other publications, a book titled *Le premier livre de la méduse* (1973)—of which there is only one copy—gathers portraits of Pierre Laurent (also known as *la méduse*), one of the members of Max Bolli with whom Armleder rowed all the way to Lausanne in 1964 for the Swiss National Exhibition to see Max Bill's golden sculptures, Jean Tinguely's installation and visit Piccard's bathyscaphe for an underwater tour. Auguste Piccard is the inventor of the first bathyscaphe, a free-diving self-propelled deep-sea submersible. He is also known as having inspired Hergé for the character of Professor Cuthbert Calculus (*Professeur Tournesol*) in *Tintin*.

At the end of last summer, we are on the terrace of the café Ailleurs watching a plump bird coming and going between the tables, before stopping, counting the clients and starting over again. He has a gimpy leg that goes off to the side. John Armleder points out that the bird is the one keeping the café, so naturally he goes around to every client. The owner confirms that the bird has been coming every day for years now—his name is Johnny.

John Armleder has thrown a Christmas party in Geneva every year for the past fifteen years, inviting friends and colleagues from the international art scene to join him in celebration. In 2013, like every year, he welcomes visitors from behind his record booth. There, he sells Christmas music compilations—some interpreted by a Hawaiian orchestra—and other records produced by Villa Magica Records. Sylvie Fleury, John Armleder and Stéphane Armleder created this label in response to a popular standard in the English-speaking musical industry, which requires its artists to put out a Christmas album, alongside their own albums, as a commercial stunt. Villa Magica offers artists an alternative, aiming to produce only Christmas albums, allowing, for example, Steven Parrino to make an album of devilish music as, John Armleder explains, both the devil and Santa Claus share the same dress code. Villa Magica's name comes

from the house in which John Armleder and Sylvie Fleury lived, previously the home to a magician named Professor Magicus. This year, the holiday decorations incorporate the Christmas trees that appeared in the "Change de couleurs devant vos yeux" exhibition in Geneva a few months earlier. The trees are then hung from the ceiling in a bunch; some are piled up to look like a bush onto which thin silver Mylar strings are then knotted.

For the first edition of the "Art Môtiers — Art en plein air" in 1985, which occurred all over the picturesque Swiss town and its surroundings, John Armleder decided to decorate a pine tree in the local forest with the residents' decorations, a task that was carried out by the organizers, as he was unable to travel to the site; to this day, has never seen the tree.

As someone who is very sensitive to the beauty of B-movies, John Armleder has also organized numerous film programs, my favorite being probably the one showing *Nude on the Moon*, the 1961 film by Doris Wishman and Raymond Phelan. It was shown on a television set placed on a sculpture made of, among other things, scaffolding elements and plants, in the context of Armleder's retrospective at the Mamco (Museum for Modern and Contemporary art of Geneva) in 2007.

Last week, John Armleder was in Paris to visit the studio of Jean Carzou, one of the most prolific and celebrated artists of the 1960s in France. For two exhibitions at Galerie Richard in New York in June and in Paris in October, John Armleder has decided to show a set of his own "puddle paintings" in combination with a selection of Carzou's abstract works from the 1940s, a lesser-known period, as well as a sculpted metal relief.

On last year's agenda was also a discussion with Mai-Thu Perret on abstract painting at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal. Armleder wore his clown tie for the occasion.

Armleder has also been a writer, sometimes under the alias Parker Williams. In addition to his prolific writings on art, he has also published concert reviews for *Migros Magazine*—a weekly popular magazine founded and distributed by the socially oriented Swiss supermarket chain. Among these reviews, I recall one he wrote about John Cage's concert at the Fondation Maeght in Saint-Paul-de-Vence, France, in 1970.

Currently, Armleder is continuing his series of works on the brain, replicating a collection of 19th-century anatomical models of animal brains, in metal, silver, gold and clear glass. The arrangements are preferably in piles—at times odd, absurd, and moving.

It's 2014, and John Armleder and I are sitting at a hotel terrace in Los Angeles, looking at the flat wheel of a lawn chair while rain of pollen glistens before our eyes. The hum of a deafening helicopter is getting close, then a finger points to the sky: a hummingbird.



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**JOHN ARMLEDER** (b.1948; lives and works in Geneva and New York) is one of the most important and influential Swiss artists of his generation. He has had solo exhibitions at prestigious public institutions such as Dairy Art Centre, London; Tate Liverpool; Kunstverein Hannover; Mamco, Geneva; Kunsthalle Zürich; Casino Luxembourg; Le Consortium, Dijon; Secession, Vienna; Villa Arson, Nice; Kunstverein Düsseldorf; Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris; Kunstmuseum Basel; and GAMeC, Bergamo. In addition to representing Switzerland at the 1986 Venice Biennale, the artist participated in Documenta 8 the following year. His works have been shown in group exhibitions at MoMA New York; Le Centre Pompidou, Paris; Punta della Dogana/Palazzo Grassi, Venice; Kunstmuseum St. Gallen; CAPC, Bordeaux; Kunsthalle Wien; Museum Ludwig, Cologne; Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Basel.

## Authors

Former editor-in-chief of *Flash Art International*, curatorial advisor to MoMA PS1, director of Artissima and co-director of the Castello di Rivoli, **ANDREA BELLINI** is the director of the Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève, where he has organized exhibitions of Pablo Bronstein, Marina Abramovic, Gianni Piacentino and Robert Overby.

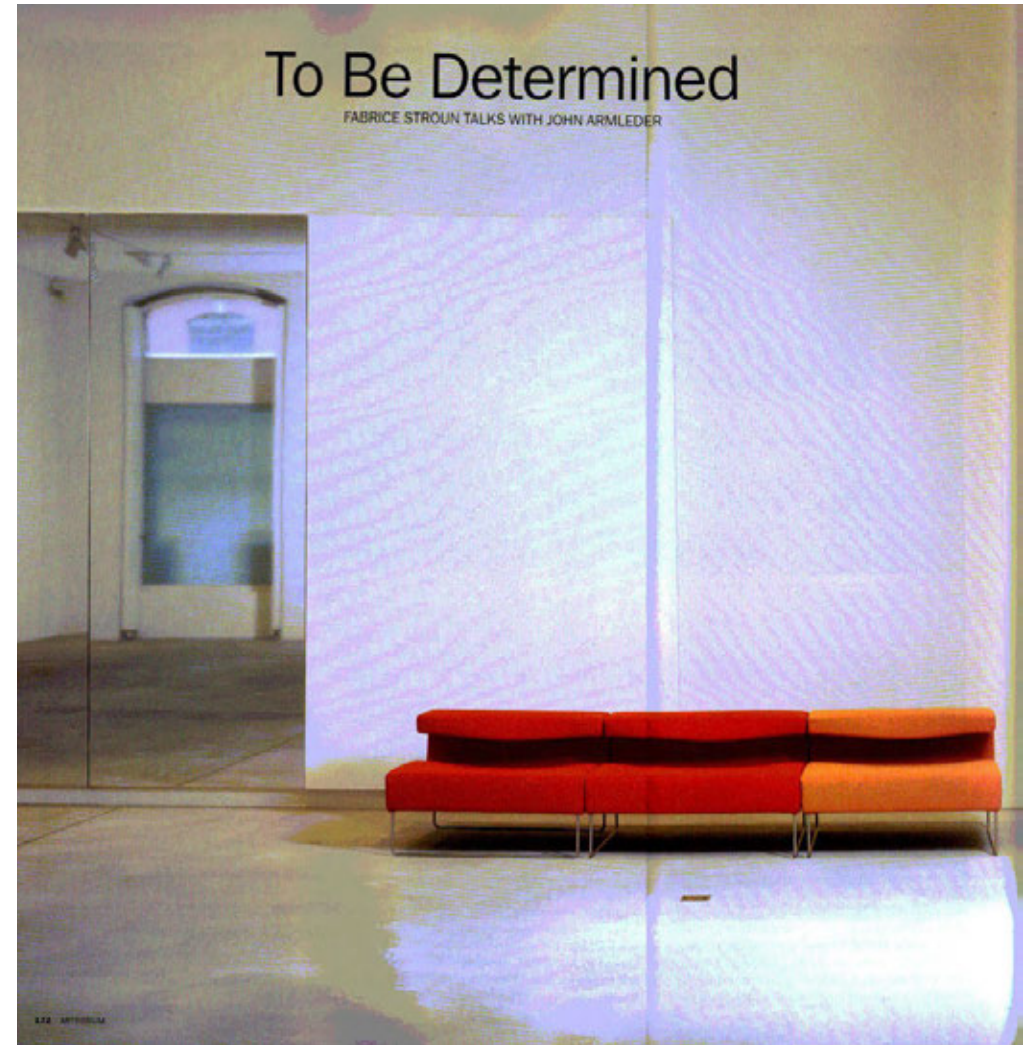
## Current and Forthcoming

Galerie Richard in New York is currently hosting "John M Armleder — Jean Carrou, "a duo exhibition from 5 June through 23 August, 2014, due to have a part two at Galerie Richard in Paris in the fall. In addition, John Armleder's work is currently on view in the group exhibition "Conceptual and Applied III: Surfaces and Pattern" at Daimler Contemporary, Berlin, until 2 November.

**JEANNE GRAFF** is a Swiss curator. She is the co-founder of 1m3 in Lausanne, Graff Morgue d'Algue in Geneva, Clifton Palace in New York, as well as a member of the band Solar Lice. After having organized a series of four shows with John Armleder at Graff Morgue d'Algue, she is currently working on an exhibition of his work due to take place in Basel.











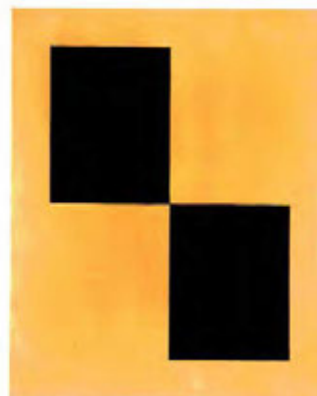
Opposite page: John Armleder, *Dine*, 2003, girso on canvas, Mylar, Patricia Unguile peals.  
Above: John Armleder, *Zaká Wyle II*, 2008, electric guitar, acrylic on canvas.

John Armleder's art never looks quite like itself. Drawing on what he calls a supermarket of forms, the artist, over the course of a forty-five-year career, has produced works that could pass for Suprematist paintings, Minimalist sculptures, high-design furnishings, and any number of other easily categorized objects—albeit wryly reoriented, physically or conceptually, as if to delay the moment of recognition. Indeed, sometimes his art isn't itself, as in his sprawling exhibitions that liberally incorporate others' works. Yet such tactics speak less to strategies of reference or appropriation than to Armleder's conviction that agency—of both artist and audience—is activated precisely in this ever more subtle process of self-differentiation. In the gap between the thing as such and the thing as type, between the specific and the general, Armleder's work finds room to move, instigating the singular mode of participation that he has been developing since his early engagements with Fluxus. Here, critic and curator Fabrice Stroun talks to the artist about a practice that no one, not even Armleder, has been able to pin down.

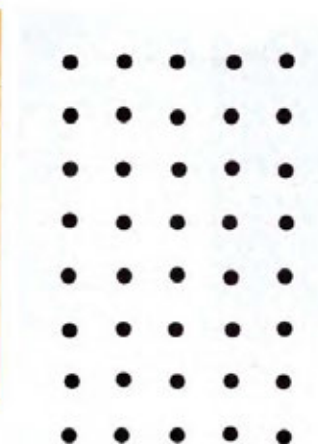
Below: John Armleder, *98 (F)*, 2006, armchairs, rug.



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John Armleder, *Untitled*, 1994, lacquer and varnish on canvas, 39 x 32".



Above: John Armleder, *Untitled*, 1986-87, acrylic on canvas, 118 x 78 1/2".



Right: John Armleder, *Untitled*, 1978, lacquer, oil, crayon on paper, 64 1/4 x 32 1/4".

**FABRICE STROUN:** Over the years, numerous labels have been applied to your work: Fluxus, citationism, neo-geo, and many more, each focusing on a different facet of your practice. Some commentators have even pegged you as a forerunner of the "relational art" and design-as-art moment. To what do you attribute your work's capacity to resonate with such different, and sometimes even contradictory, contexts of reception?

**JOHN ARMLEDER:** I've actually always liked it when my work is included in some new movement, even if the label is restrictive and even if the movement itself is just a fad, because the claim makes the work change. Not physically, of course—but the understanding of it, for me as well as for others. Whenever that happens, a new horizon suddenly opens up—I find myself in a situation I never would have sought on my own. If there were no one to feed on what I do and effect these kinds of unexpected changes, it would all become very sterile to me. It's a dynamic process: From one moment, one context, one milieu to another, everything shifts.

That said, though I may like it when people see my art in such disparate ways, I don't dwell on it. I have never spent much time considering what other people think about my work, because I myself don't

quite know what I think about it, and whatever it is I think about it changes over time. Most important, I've never believed that what I think about my own work has anything to do with the work itself. An artwork's success, in a way, depends on its capacity to co-opt an existing situation and to be co-opted in return. I'm therefore quite happy to see people recreate my work for their own use and to adapt it to their own frames of reference.

**FS:** You're talking about the distance that separates you from your own production and a concomitant desire to let others take charge of that production. This impulse can seemingly be traced back to the 1960s, when you formed the collective *Groupe Ecart* in Geneva with your childhood friends Patrick Lucchini and Claude Rychner and began to create aleatory works that, in the spirit of Fluxus, distributed authorship among all participants, whether

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—John Armleder

under the guise of making multiples and books or scripting actions that could be configured in any number of ways. But do you think that your work has certain formal qualities—or a lack thereof—that have allowed people to use it to so many effects? In the '80s, for example, critics spoke of the "generic" qualities of your neo-Suprematist abstractions, wherein simple geometric forms and, often, flat colors recall the paintings of the Russian avant-garde.





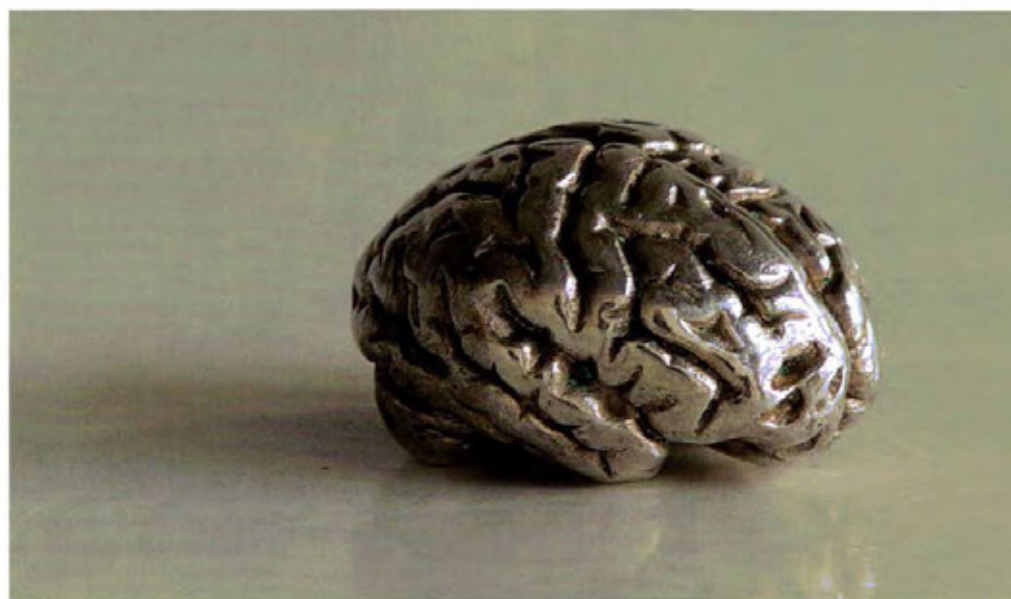
Groupe SCULPTURE. 1976, street action (stills from documentary footage by André Toul).



John Armleder, *Why Not Stop? (Part One)*, 1968-77, stills from a color film in Super 8, 12 minutes 53 seconds.



John Armleder, *Performance Piece*, 1970, stills from a color film in Super 8, 3 minutes 29 seconds.



One of one thousand sterling silver pendants, each 1 1/2 x 2 x 1 1/2", produced for John Armleder's *Puma Reality Bag* project, 2008.

**JA:** Well, if an artwork were completely generic, or neutral, it wouldn't exist at all. It's a nice idea—a utopian construct. But if you're interested in making work that *does* exist, you're forced to align yourself with some sort of precedent, so you're inevitably going to be constrained, to some degree, by preconceived ideas. As I've often said, my ideal would be not to be able to recognize my own work, because that would mean that there's more to it than those preconceived ideas, more than what I already know. By the same token, if I knew everything about a work from the start, it would become almost pointless to make it. It would be just about me, an ectoplasmic mirror, and that would be very boring.

**FS:** Could you describe your relationship to the repertoire of abstract forms that you have used throughout the years, particularly those inherited from modernism?

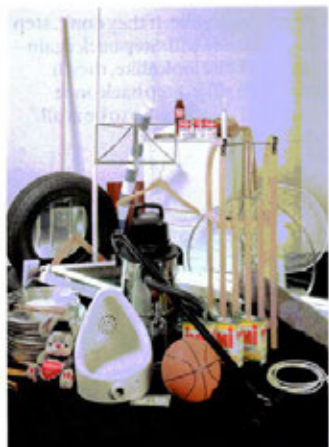
**JA:** When I started working in the late 1960s under the banner of Ecart, there were several new move-

ments cropping up every month, so you ended up totally confused because there were so many forms being invented. Paradoxically, you began to have a feeling that maybe everything had already been done. In a way, Fluxus freed me from this problem altogether. I decided that it was OK to make works that looked like things that had been made before: If they were things that I liked, that was enough reason to make them. After all, this is an age-old way of making art. You look at something you like and you try to do the same thing in your own, possibly better way.

I've always considered geometric abstraction a reservoir, a palette that has been made available by modernity (granting that modernity, of course, is multifaceted and encompasses more than one discourse). My main attraction to these forms initially was their availability. I never considered them to be sacred or mysterious—quite the contrary. It seemed to me that modernity provided us with signs that

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Above: John Armleder, *Don't Do It!*, 1997-2000, mixed media, dimensions variable. Installation view, Sammlung DaimlerChrysler, Stuttgart, Germany, 2000. Photo: Dieter Wurster.



Above: John Armleder, *Furniture*, 2006, sculpture, 2H (End Asist), 2006, lamps, paintings, sofa: painting, 9' 10" x 13' 10", sofa: 29 1/2 x 55 1/2 x 28 1/2".

Below: John Armleder, *Untitled*, 1987, chair, lamps, oil on canvas, dimensions variable.



were meant to be used, whether for understanding the world or for constructing an art piece.

**FS:** Did you have a specific agenda in mind when you decided to reuse this material?

**JA:** When I first made those para-Suprematist works in the mid-1970s, I was interested in a symbolic language that I wanted to put back into play, because what it stood for—a new society, revolution, and so on—seemed to me to be still valid. We come across forms in a kind of cultural or historical supermarket. Memory, collective or not, makes these forms available, and availability produces meaning. Meaning, as it emerges, then defines our engagement, our politics.

Of course, I wasn't naive. I was well aware that five thousand people had done this same fantastic or not-so-fantastic thing before me for all sorts of different reasons. When you use a form that is already known for something, you should take advantage of the fact that it's already known. You should also try to validate the form's original meaning by showing that the meaning is still relevant, although perhaps not for the same reason. Simply stated, the form becomes effective merely because you are reusing it. It's a kind of recycling. I gather that one central issue is rather silly: *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*. All that we know, or presume to know, is being continuously reconfigured. There are no settled definitions. Each move we make changes our tastes and ideas. Things look alike. If they don't, step back, and they will. Step back again—they won't just look alike, they'll actually be alike. Step back once more, and they'll cease to be at all. This is where we ought to be, sometimes.

**FS:** One thing that I find striking is that, in contrast to the vast majority of works by other artists who have revisited twentieth-century modernism, yours seems devoid of nostalgia.

**JA:** People feel nostalgia for modernism, I think, partly because when we look back at that era, we imagine that its actors had an immediate grasp of the time in which they were living, an awareness of the stakes and the import of what was happening. But of course that is never the case. And as far as we're concerned, given how radically everything has changed, the beginning of the twentieth century might as well have happened a thousand years ago. We think of modernism as being characterized by an obsession with "tomorrow," but we're now living in that tomorrow. We're right in the middle of the science-fiction scenario that people used to imagine. In fact, we've surpassed it in many ways.

**FS:** While you continue to produce paintings, sculptures, drawings, etc., the current reception of your art tends to place emphasis on your large self-curated exhibitions, which often include other people's work

as well as your own. The first one of these shows that I saw left a strong—I would even say formative—impression on me. It was a two-part exhibition at MAMCO [Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain, Geneva] in 1997, which occupied three consecutive rooms on the first floor of the museum. How did you arrive at this structure?

**JA:** One part of the show, "Don't Do It," was about standards in contemporary art. The titular work was in the first room: Found objects were piled up in a corner, a repository of things that had been used as readymades since Duchamp. The second room contained dot paintings by other artists. My only direct contribution was a dot wall painting on which all the other works were hung.

**FS:** Some of the paintings were older than the dot paintings you yourself have been doing since the '80s, while others were the work of much younger artists.

**JA:** It could just as easily have been any other dot paintings by any other artists. I used what was available in the museum's collection. I wasn't trying to be comprehensive. None of these large-scale shows have really been about anything other than, perhaps, a way of doing things; here, my intention was to create what you might call a pseudointelligent platform. Dumping ready-made objects in a room as if they're meant to be thrown out. That's what I'd call a pseudointelligent idea—something that's sort of trying and failing to be smart.

The third room appeared to be slightly more sophisticated, although it really wasn't. It contained a set of monitors showing static shots of paintings, filmed in real time, that were somewhere else in the museum.

Many exhibitions evince a kind of intelligence that is very academic. But the ideas behind the MAMCO show were voluntarily dumb. My thinking was that a pseudointelligent idea might trigger an original response more readily than work that proceeds from these very academic premises.

**FS:** You have remade this pile of ready-made junk a number of times since then. Can you describe how it's done? Like many of your works, it involves a process of delegation.

**JA:** I make a list of obvious possible objects (a bicycle wheel for Duchamp, a rack of neon lights evoking Dan Flavin's store-bought fixtures, and so on), and the curator, gallerist, or collector who shows the work adds whatever they think should be part of it, and then it's piled up in a corner. Of course, there's a certain irony in the fact that I display the objects like a mound of trash even as I designate them as art. Maybe that's part of the appeal of ready-made objects. Personally, I always liked this notion that a discarded or devalued object is saved and then presented in a way that elevates it to a much higher status than it

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—John Armleder

had when it was functional. In the first couple of versions, the objects that were collected did wind up getting thrown away, but the more recent avatars were frozen, so to speak, and became sculptures. There are some of these that I've never seen. There's one in the hands of a collector who wants to add a few things to it. I don't know exactly what. It will still be an artwork by me, yet with elements I will probably never see.

**FS:** What you're talking about here is a transfer not only of authorship but of meaning. This is very clearly the case with, for instance, your furniture sculptures—where you combine monochrome or abstract paintings with found furnishings, so that a chair, say, becomes sculptures while the paintings may function as decorative pieces of furniture. Or the furniture may be mounted on the wall alongside the painting, so that the objects are radically reoriented—along with our own viewing position. We can see this transposition of meaning not only in your use of found, preexisting objects, but also in your own production, as for instance in your production of fabricated objects and curated projects.

**JA:** Well, take the carpets, which are woven copies of my paintings. They were the last things I ever wanted to do. I thought it was the dumbest idea you could have. Nothing gets lower than a carpet, no? One can walk on a carpet, which one tends not to do on a painting... But around 1988 I finally went through with it. The models I used for the first two were poor-quality pictures of previous canvases of mine, taken from a catalogue, where the colors were wrong and the design blurred. The fabricators had to approximate the colors as best they could and invent whatever they needed to complete the piece—I didn't help. Carpets have standard sizes, so they also adapted the painting to the size of the carpet. I showed the carpets as sculptures on very low pedestals, then on the wall as paintings, then as conventional carpets on the floor. That kind of redefinition interests me.





John Armleder, *No Dites pas non! (Don't Say No!)*, 1996, mixed media. Installation view, Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain, Geneva, 1997. Photo: Smart Kallioinen.

**FS:** This brings us to the notion of display, a concern that is central to your work and that was more obviously thematized in the other chapter of the MAMCO show, "*Ne Dites pas non!*" [Don't Say No!], which comprised a single eponymous work.

**JA:** In that part of the show, I used a single platform rather than three. The idea was to have the same topography and the same inventory in each of the three rooms. So, for instance, if there was a bed in one room, there would be a bed in the next room in the same place; if there was a geometric abstract painting in one room, there would be one in the next; etc. Although this was a "multiple situation," these were not multiples. The consistent arrangement nevertheless produced a totally new image in each room—so much so that when you moved from one space to another, you forgot almost immediately that you had just seen exactly the same setup. There was just a vague feeling of déjà vu.

This elusiveness stemmed mainly from the fact that the objects themselves were all completely different from one another. Many of the components were very broadly defined. One of the elements was simply "a light source," which ended up taking the form of an ornate designer lamp in one room and a nondescript, run-of-the-mill fixture in another; the third light source was a Dan Flavin neon sculpture. So the specifications were precise but vague at the same time. That's a dialectic that intrigues me. I tend to think in terms of how far you can go in either direction. Whenever you look at anything, it's always with a mixture of vagueness and precision, especially if you're talking about art.

**FS:** It seems to me that these kinds of shows could almost be considered sketches or studies for your much larger recent installations. In 2006, two retrospectives of your work were organized simultaneously, one at MAMCO and one at the Kunstverein

Hannover [Germany], with the latter traveling to the Rose Art Museum outside Boston.

**JA:** Well, the Geneva exhibition specifically played with the idea implied by your question—the notion that you can explain one work through the existence of another, earlier work. I showed new pieces, but we made a real effort to cover all periods of my career, going all the way back to 1967. Some of the Ecart projects had never been completed—they had existed only as scripts up to that point. We completed them specifically for the show. This created a real sense of perspective. You could see there was a connection between one thing and another, and sometimes what seemed like a new work was actually an old one and vice versa. This inability to distinguish new from old suggests that whatever work you produce at the beginning of your career is not yet finished, and whatever appears to be new has been done before, whether by you or another artist. If you understand



Above: View of John Armleder, *"Too Much Is Not Enough,"* 2006, Kunstverein Hannover, Germany. Photo: Raimund Zakowski.

Right: View of *"Too Much Is Not Enough,"* 2006, Rose Art Museum, Watham, MA. Photo: Charles Mayer.

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View of "John Armleder:  
New Paintings," 2009, Galerie  
Andrea Caratsch, Zurich.  
Photo: Stefan Stranzburg.

that, then you're not going to try to say, "This is about now and about my art today." It's about you tomorrow and the next day and so on. If you're lucky, the work becomes a springboard for something else—something that hasn't yet happened. There is such freedom in the production of art, and so much potential to open up avenues that artists, and people in general, might not have been previously concerned about. That is why it's a privilege to do what we do.

The Hannover exhibition was densely installed, so it was immediately clear to viewers that in many cases one work would have to be read literally through another work. There were wall paintings that served as backdrops to other two-dimensional works, with scaffolding pieces—steel armatures hung with garlands of flowers—sculptures, and videos in front of them. Then, as an additional layer, I sprinkled cartoons on the topic of art and the (mis-)understanding of art, mostly from the *New Yorker*, throughout the whole show. You know, all these funny drawings where people in a museum are looking at a pipe or a radiator as if it were a sculpture and so on. So whoever was looking at the artworks was also looking at a spoof of modernist and contemporary art. Presented under glass, the cartoons could be seen as artworks themselves or, because of their small scale, as wall labels of a sort explaining whatever else was in the room. The many misunderstandings such a situation could generate became, in a way, the content of the show.

**FS:** There's always an element of humor in your work. In fact, this has been an unusually sober exchange, considering that in past interviews you have often

made use of fictional personae for comic relief. Some exhibitions seem to express this aspect of your practice more directly than others. For instance, your 2009 exhibition at Andrea Caratsch gallery in Zurich, "John Armleder: New Paintings," was extreme in its almost slapstick nonaction: It simply prolonged the gallery's previous exhibition of Olivier Mosset's most recent canvases. Certainly, the collaborative spirit of Ecart has animated many of your projects, as other producers have been brought into your shows in a number of ways. In addition to the curated shows, I could mention your numerous collaborations over the years with Sylvie Fleury and Mosset (sometimes separately and sometimes, under the name AMF, together) or your 2008 show at the Centre Culturel Suisse in Paris, where you simply handed the space over to the interior designer Jacques Garcia to use as he saw fit. But in the exhibition at Caratsch, the notion of collaboration was arguably stretched to the point of absurdity, since, without any intervention whatsoever, the works were now attributed to you.

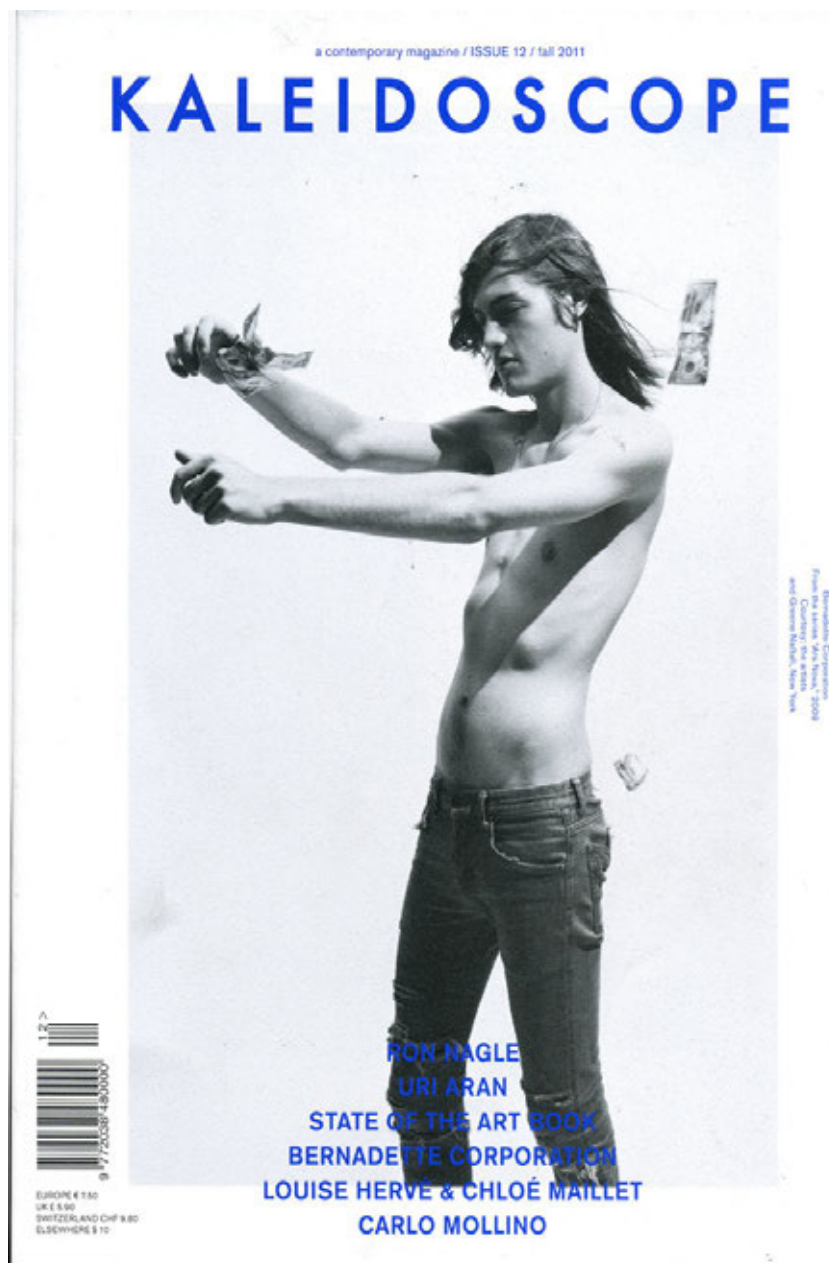
**JA:** One of the things that was great about the Fluxus artists is that they were undecided as to whether an artwork was a joke or something that demanded some kind of veneration. This vacillation is central to my understanding of my own work and of art in general. If you view something as completely serious or as completely ironic, you're missing it altogether. Of course, the Caratsch show may come off as an inside joke—for example, a savvy visitor might get a kick out of the fact that Olivier was involved in similar games in the 1960s when he was part of BMPT. But the insider's aspect of it doesn't really interest me. You could have someone coming in who knows

neither my work nor Olivier's and who hadn't seen his previous show. It's not as if you have the option of explaining it to that person—it would be arrogant to slam the conceptual premises in somebody's face. But that viewer's perception is still valid and real and makes as much sense as any other.

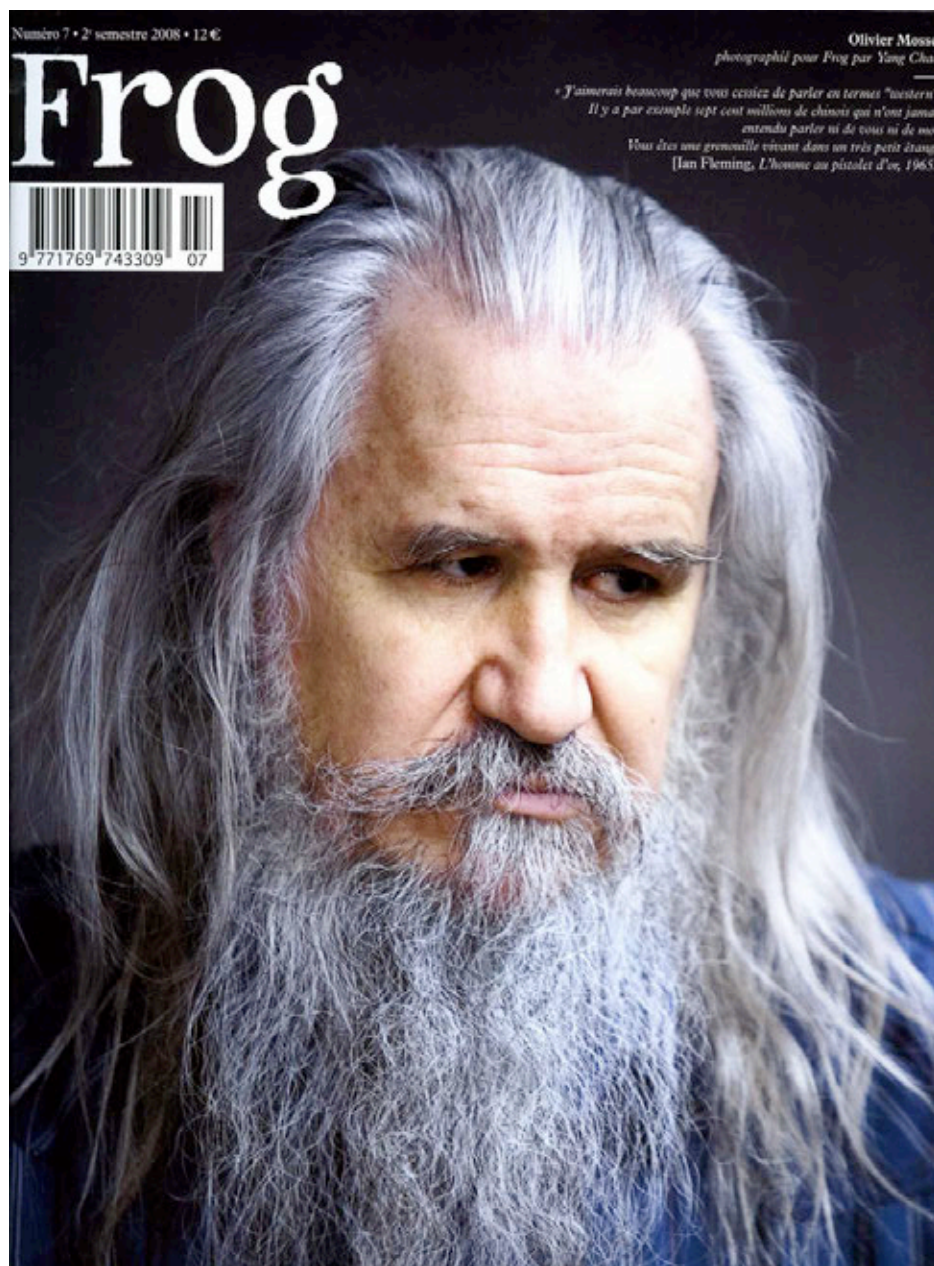
**FS:** I'm having a hard time imagining you addressing such an unknowing spectator. Isn't the show addressed instead to a viewer who is privy to your conceptual gestures—someone like me?

**JA:** No. When I do a show, it's first and foremost for myself. I want to change the view I have of my work, or in fact to change my work altogether, to retract all of my unneeded contributions to a group of works that I single out for view. I also do it, maybe, for the person running the space, in that case Andrea Caratsch. Secondly, that show may have been for Olivier, and then for the person who's clueless, and only then for viewers like you, who know a lot about contemporary art.

I don't mean to suggest that I believe in the existence of an innocent, pure spectator, and furthermore, I'm not discounting the idea that it may be important that I, and the people directly involved, share a good understanding of why I made certain decisions. It brings about a tangible shared knowledge, whether publicly articulated or not. But even if someone is not aware of the ins and outs of my gesture and what it might mean, some knowledge is still transmitted somehow—awareness can be achieved through other means than those we tend to describe as *knowing*. Everybody's experiences incorporate and resonate with those of other people. Culture, by definition, is a collective beast. □







# John Armleder.

O n pourrait penser, qu'avec cette pièce, tu as presque tout réglé : la question de la valeur, de l'auteur, de l'originalité.

Mon ambition n'a jamais été de régler quoi que ce soit et, comme tu le sais, l'imaginer que la plupart des choses sont réglées depuis toujours. Donc, en fait, c'est du tourisme.

Interview  
par  
Stéphanie Moïsdon, l'ouverture aujourd'hui de l'exposition, quelle est celle qui revient le plus : est-ce que c'est celle de l'auteur, celle du décoratif, ou les deux ?

C'est un peu un télescope. La première question est celle de l'auteur et à partir de ce moment-là, on se demande comment les choix se sont mis en place. L'auteur, chez beaucoup de personnes, ils ne le voient pas, ils ne savent pas en quoi je le suis, ils n'y pensent même pas. Mais ils n'abordent que rarement la question de sa légitimité. Ils n'imaginent pas que l'œuvre pourrait éventuellement nier l'apologie de l'authenticité. Si on veut, c'est possible de voir cette entreprise comme une critique de la notion d'auteur. Mais tout autant de la part de Jacques Garcia, qui joue ici ses propres canons stylistiques, ce qu'on attend de lui. Alors qu'en fait, il a une palette d'intérêts complètement différents, ce qui est peu connu.

— Quelle est la fonction de la double ponctuation dans le titre ? Il y a d'emblée un jeu de langage dans cette histoire qui indique étrangement les rapports d'équivalence. Pourtant, ce n'est pas son principe de collaboration, c'est ça l'originalité ou le caractère un peu inédit de l'opération. Ce n'est pas une co-production non plus.

Non, parce que personnellement ou trivialement, je prends Jacques Garcia en tant que signature comme d'autres prennent le pissenot, dont on ne connaît pas l'auteur d'ailleurs. Les deux points c'est bel et bien pour signifier que l'objet de l'exposition c'est Jacques Garcia sans lui demander la moindre interprétation de son rôle dans l'objet de l'exposition. Mais d'autres verront bien sûr le fait qu'il y a souvent pas mal de points dans mes tableaux et que par ailleurs je supprime de ma deuxième initiale le point que l'on imprime sur le carton en général • John M. Armledcr •. Il fallait bien rattraper tous ces points perdus.

— En rentrant dans l'exposition j'ai repensé à ce graffiti répliqué dans ton exposition au Mamco • Oh et puis non ! • qui me rappelait le graffiti de Debord : • Ne travaillez jamais. • Est-ce que tu admettes ce parallèle ?

Le • Oh et puis non ! • que je cite m'a surtout intrigué, je ne sais pas de quoi il s'agit. De prime abord, il y a un renoncement, je n'en suis pas certain, mais ce que l'on sait, quand on renonce, c'est qu'il y a un appel du vide. Donc, en général un effet de remplissage, en surabondance. Il y a quelque chose de cet ordre qui se joue dans cette exposition. Je pense aussi que dans l'effet de soustraction du graffiti, il y a une surabondance, il y a un effet de surinformation. Cette idée de mettre en jeu plus que l'on ne peut connaître est une chose qui m'intéresse moi, mais qui intéresse aussi Jacques Garcia. Et il se trouve que ça intéresse Guy Debord, que Jacques Garcia a très bien connu, contre toute attente. Quand on pense à l'image répertoriée, véhiculée par Garcia on ne l'associe pas forcément au situationnisme. Or Garcia était un des rares amis de Debord.

— Depuis hier, et ma discussion avec Garcia, la situation a

*complètement changée. On parlait de décor, de goût et soudainement le fantasme de Debord hante cet espace.*

Ça tombe bien en mai 2008.

— C'est assez opportuniste.

Mais toutes les expositions révèlent l'opportunisme.

— Et la question du travail, il y a toujours un fond de moralisme dans la manière dont les gens approchent ton œuvre et ce genre de méthodes de délégation en général. Surtout en ce moment, en pleine période de valorisation du travail et du mérite.

On me pose la question, effectivement étayée par des valeurs morales qui ne sont pas mises en jeu, abordées, discutées dans un projet pareil, parce que je crois que cette question est par nature disqualifiée. Ce serait absurde de voir cette exposition-là en niant le labeur. Il n'y a jamais eu autant de travail dans une de mes expositions précédentes. Le fait que je ne la réalise pas est secondaire. On a toujours, à tort d'ailleurs, donné trop de crédit à l'imagination des artistes. L'imagination est quelque chose d'intact, d'abstrait, il n'y a pas d'effort à faire, au sens musculaire, pour autant qu'on le sache. Et là, c'est un cas parfait d'un compositeur qui livre une partition et qui donne à un instrumentiste la carte blanche pour jouer l'œuvre. On n'a jamais considéré un compositeur comme un paresseux. Moi, je suis bien sûr paresseux car c'est une composition assez paresseuse que je propose. La paresse est un travail permanent.

— Comme Duchamp l'a valorisé ?

Oui mais si tu dis ça, les gens, à l'époque du ready-made pensaient qu'il y avait un manque d'engagement, au sens de l'effort. Moi je crois qu'à partir du moment où l'on décide quelque chose, on est confronté aux conséquences de cette décision, comme de répondre à tes questions par exemple. C'est un autre type d'effort. La responsabilité morale que l'on a, c'est celle de mettre en jeu quelque chose qui active du sens, je ne dis pas « qui livre du sens », mais qui permet aux gens, en partageant cette expérience, de changer leur constitution. De manière physique, comme quand on sort du fitness. Ce changement peut être pour le meilleur ou pour le pire, on ne se fait pas forcément du bien en allant fitness, c'est la même chose dans une exposition. La responsabilité d'un artiste, c'est d'offrir des instruments de torture qui sont efficaces.

— Toi qui connais bien la question, pour l'avoir pratiquée, que penses-tu du display entre ta peinture, les statuettes sur la cheminée, et les bâches dorées qui renvoient aux dorures de la peinture. Quand tu découvres cela, car tu ne savais rien de cet espace avant l'ouverture, qu'est-ce que tu y vois ?

J'y vois exactement ce que tu as décrits. J'ai tendance à voir les choses comme elles sont, ni plus ni moins. Le fait est que je suis terriblement jaloux de cette réussite. Je ne suis pas sûr que les gens, à part quelques intimes, lisent cela de manière fondamentale. C'est un épiphénomène et qui est complètement intégré. Et c'est un dégât collatéral au niveau du sens. Je pense qu'il y a d'autres de mes toiles dans les intérieurs de collectionneurs qui sont présentées de cette manière et qui vivent actuellement en d'étranges compagnies. Que ce soient les masques africains ou précolombiens, sur des cheminées ou ailleurs. Je crois que c'est une conséquence logique. Mais je pense qu'un mur blanc dans un musée avec un banc à 3,50 m avec quelqu'un qui essaye de lire un cartel à côté, c'est tout aussi exotique que ce display.

— Celui-là aurait la vertu d'être fait d'une manière assez désinvolte.

C'est bien probable ! La vertu de ce qu'on a fait est bel et bien fondée sur le naturel, contrairement à ce que l'on pourrait croire. On accusera toujours quelqu'un comme Jacques Garcia, voir moi, mais avec le prétexte conceptuel, d'être dans l'artifice. Alors qu'en fait, ce sont les gestes les plus naturels que l'on puisse imaginer. Après tout, un enfant dans sa chambre, va prendre deux trois objets qui n'ont rien à voir, les disposer dans un coin, les regarder et trouver que ça rentre dans l'harmonie du monde. Les expositions sont des extraits de ces situations, elles voudraient avoir une vision plus abstraite ou plus éthérée du même geste, mais dans le fond elles participent exactement de la même mécanique.

— Je sais que tu fais de ton mieux pour n'avoir ni attentes ni déceptions particulières. Mais là, c'est un peu inévitable. Quand tu découvres cet espace, quelle est la marge de certitude, de surprise, d'étonnement, de perplexité ?

La première impression, c'est que c'est exactement ce que j'attendais d'une certaine manière. C'est un aller-retour. Je suis surpris, parce que normalement ça aurait dû aller de travers, pas comme un échec. Mais entre le temps réduit, les moyens du centre, il y a avait peu de raisons de décider Jacques Garcia à accepter. J'ai compris au moment où il a dit oui que ça l'intéressait réellement, que ça allait se faire, dans un sens réel et non pas celui du leurre, c'est à dire qu'il n'allait pas faire un modèle. Là j'ai été surpris. Mais quand tu fais quelque chose où tu n'y es pour quasi rien, je voudrais bien vraiment pour rien, tu ne peux être que globalement surpris, dans le sens d'une substance qui serait la surprise brute. Ensuite, j'ai été surpris qu'il y fasse si chaud.

— Jacques Garcia me parlait hier de toi comme d'un client, tu précises qu'il s'agit en fait d'un client imaginaire ? Quelle est la part de négociation, de commerce ?

Dans la conversation en général, on est toujours en situation de négociation. Rien qu'en se parlant, on est le client de l'autre, pour obtenir des réponses par exemple. La vérité, c'est qu'au départ, Jacques Garcia me voyait comme le commanditaire du projet, ce que je suis mais seulement au niveau de la partition. Ensuite, il a compris quelque chose, car il a été très pointu dès le départ dans la compréhension du projet. Et il s'est rendu compte que si j'étais vraiment le client, il devrait collaborer avec moi et que donc, peu à peu, le décor se rapporterait à moi en tant que personnage. Et devrait s'adapter à ce que je représente. Ce qu'il fait d'habitude dans ses décorations d'intérieur. Pour éviter cela, il a glissé vers quelqu'un qui n'existe pas, parce qu'il a senti que je voulais qu'il fasse un espace qui ne soit pas une narration. Il l'a fait de manière un tout petit peu perverse aussi, car il se trouve, que ce client, par hasard, aurait une peinture de moi dans son appartement, une photo de lui, un tableau de sa mère. C'est un peu ambigu dans la construction. Mais je pense qu'il a bien compris que c'est une sculpture abstraite.

— Ce client a par ailleurs quelques penchants érotiques marqués.

Tu sais, je trouve que la plupart des gens, quand ils se mettent à décorer, développent toujours une certaine sensualité. A part ceux qui furieusement l'annihilent. Chez lui cette sensualité est assez affirmée. On sait, que d'une certaine manière, ça ne m'intéresse pas dans la représentation, c'il y en a une, dans mon œuvre, parce qu'en principe, il n'y en a pas. Cela ne m'a ni surpris, ni gêné, ni encombré, d'une manière ou d'une autre. Ça m'a divertit.





# John Armleder

**M**ai-Thu : Partout, partout où tu l'emmènes, il est venu skier et il a décidé de faire un reportage sur les gens de la station de ski, il est chinois, heu, d'origine anglaise et il a interviewé, il allait vers les gens sur les remontées mécaniques pendant qu'on skiait pour leur poser des questions.

Stéphanie : Quoi ?

Eric : Ta portes ça et ça enregistre.

Stéphanie : C'est moi qui porte !

Eric : Ta portes, je photographie...

Stéphanie : D'accord.

Mai-Thu : Moins, je me cache, hein.

Eric : Heu, le micro c'est ça mais ça enregistre...

Stéphanie : Est-ce que c'est, est-ce que c'est pas plutôt John qui doit l'avoir ?

Mai-Thu : C'est John qui parle.

Stéphanie : Y'a un grand démontage, il a dit qu'il venait pour le démontage, on va devoir démonter.

John : Oui.

Stéphanie : Putain, je suis entrain d'essayer de me dépêtrer avec ça, ça commence bien ! [Rires]

Eric : Tu n'as rien à faire...

Stéphanie : J'ai rien à faire...

Eric : Tu, tu as juste à appuyer sur une touche parce que...

Stéphanie : Je vous suis c'est ça ? J'appuie sur rien du tout ?

John : Non, non il faut poser une question à tous, tous les visiteurs.

Stéphanie : D'accord.

John : La même. Voilà, il faut arriver à la même réponse.

Stéphanie : Tu crois qu'ils vont m'embêter avec le sac ?

John : Pourquoi t'embêter ?

Stéphanie : Non parce qu'ils disent qu'il faut pas trop de...

John : Oui, mais avec moi...

Stéphanie : Ah bon.

[Bruit de pas]

Eric : On commence par quel étage ?

Mai-Thu : Le quatrième.

Stéphanie : Mais par celui-là ?

Mai-Thu : Parce que là, c'est la visite guidée.

Stéphanie : Bah oui. Surtout pour commencer par là. [Rires]

John : Ah !

Stéphanie : Oh ! Et puis Non. [Rires]

John : C'est la meilleure pièce de l'exposition.

Stéphanie : Tu aurais dit à quelqu'un que cet étage là, c'est l'exposition que quelqu'un d'autre aurait pu faire.

John : Ça, je le dis pour à peu près toutes mes expositions.

Stéphanie : Toutes tes expositions, d'accord.

John : [Rires] Mais... c'est comme une exposition toute faite, dans un cas libre d'exposition, vaguement rétrospectif, c'est comme une tête de chapitre et en même temps avec l'idée que l'on ne pourrait pas faire les autres expositions.

Stéphanie : [Perplexé] C'est-à-dire ?

John : S'il n'y avait pas les autres étages, ce serait un peu...

Mai-Thu : Je trouve cette expo ennuyeuse en fait mais j'aime beaucoup celle-ci.

John : Ouais, elle fait un peu années 80 en plus.

Mai-Thu : On peut, on peut...

John : J'ai vu quelqu'un qui l'a détestée.

Mai-Thu : ... que ce soit assez petit, rangé...

John : Quand j'ai vu le premier étage, je me suis dit ça y est ! Enfin le quatrième.

Mai-Thu : Moi, j'ai entendu pas mal de gens qui ont dit qu'ils ont détesté cet étage, parce qu'ils trouvent que c'est très années 80.

John : Et d'autres qui n'ont aimé que ça.

Mai-Thu : Moi j'ai adoré le fait que...  
 John : Hum hum  
 Stéphanie : Et pourquoi ce serait un peu plus ennuyeux ?  
 John : Je sais pas.  
 Mai-Thu : Parce que les autres sont un peu plus spectaculaires et il y a de la mise en scène avec des peintures murales.  
 Stéphanie : Ouais. Là, y'a de la mise en scène ?  
 John : Oui, il y a même plus, finalement, qu'ailleurs, parce que si tu regardes à côté, il y a toutes les déclinaisons d'accrochages possibles et de... de mise en scène d'accrochage de l'œuvre individuelle, la contradiction, la mise en mosaïque qui annule le... le principe de base de l'œuvre individuelle, enfin tout ça... Mais, bon. Alors qu'est-ce que vous voulez faire ?  
 Stéphanie : Mais on continue, on se promène.  
 Eric : Rien on va faire l'exposition avec toi. [Rires]  
 Stéphanie : Mais par contre vous parlez un peu fort parce qu'autrement...  
 Eric : Tu sais que la première exposition, une des premières expositions d'art contemporain que j'ai vu c'était ton exposition au Consortium avec heu... non pas Rottweiler mais Gossweiler...  
 John : Ouais.  
 Eric : ... qui n'était pas un mauvais chien d'ailleurs...  
 John : [Rires]  
 Eric : ...et heu... et y'avait beaucoup de pièces comme ça et alors je me souviens assez...  
 John : Tu dois en voir une, dans la dernière salle de cet étage, qui était dans l'exposition.  
 Eric : C'est vrai ? Parce que je me souviens vaguement de photos comme... mais je me souviens pas du tout de cet élément là, donc je pense que celle-là ne devait pas y être.  
 John : C'était pas celle-là, non, non. Celle-là elle a eu toutes sortes d'avatars, c'est-à-dire que la table, le plateau table a été exposé seul dans une exposition de peintures abstraites, je crois au musée de Lucerne, les chaises ont été faites séparément, elles viennent d'un magasin d'occasion, je sais plus si c'est Fribourg ou de Bâle, de Bâle je crois, et exposées séparément. En triptyque plus tard, sur deux niveaux, elles ont tout vu. [Rires] Le, le plateau aussi, il était exposé de manière horizontale, donc on l'aura vu en photographie de temps à autre.  
 Stéphanie : « Oh ! Et puis non », c'était un graffiti que tu avais vu dans la rue c'est ça ?  
 John : Ouais, c'était un graffiti qui était... au tout début quand j'habitais à la villa Magica, il y avait ce graffiti dans le mur et il est venu quelqu'un ici qui prétend que c'est quelqu'un qui a fait ces graffiti là en réaction au sien.  
 Stéphanie : Ah bon ?  
 John : Donc il y a eu une espèce de...  
 Eric : Est-ce, est-ce que l'auteur du graffiti s'est manifesté et a réclamé un peu d'argent ?  
 John : Malheureusement pas. C'est-à-dire qu'il a réclamé de l'argent et il a dit : « Oh ! Et puis non. »  
 [Rires]  
 Eric : Il y a une œuvre qui est cachée là-bas.  
 John : Et la pièce qui est là par terre, que tout le monde ne voit pas et beaucoup, beaucoup de gens se prennent le pied dedans, ça, ça date de 69 et c'était dans le festival de Cannes. Et c'est en fait, évidemment, une pièce qui pourra être refaite pour les premières fascinations de Serge Lemoine mais c'était une chaudière qui était découpée donc il y a une porte en hublot dans la chaudière et ils l'ont posée juste par terre...  
 Eric : Mais, parce que...  
 John : Donc j'y suis pour rien.  
 Eric : 69, parce que tu sais, il y avait les premières pièces de Judd qui étaient aussi des volumes comme ça avec une espèce de...

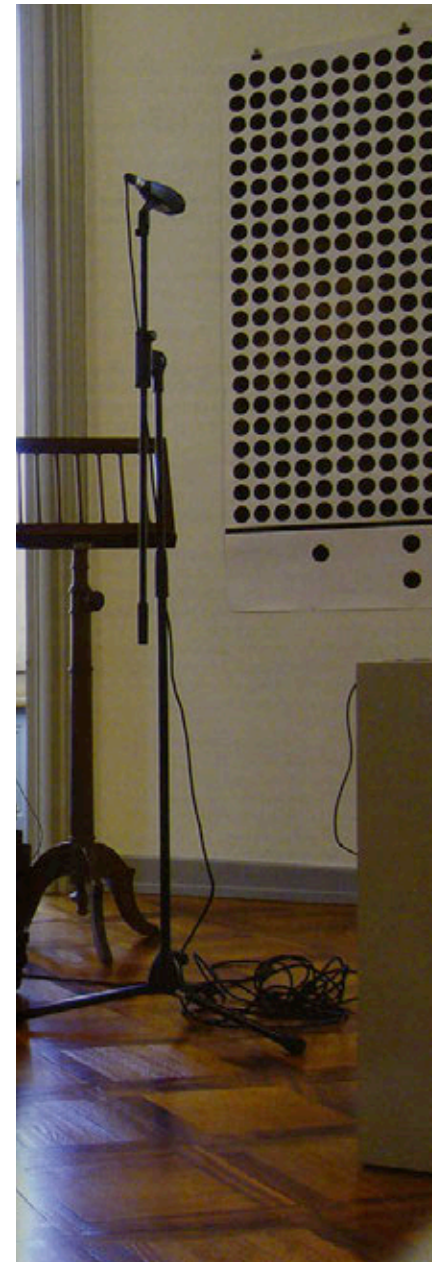
John : ...un truc bombé.  
 Eric : Je pense que si heu, heu, comment s'appelle-t-il ? C'est Bob Morris qui faisait des trucs en, en...  
 Mai-Thu : Serra non ? Les machins, les machins tordus...  
 John : Ou sinon en plomb, tu veux dire ?  
 Eric : En plomb tu veux dire ?  
 Mai-Thu : Ouais, ouais en plomb.  
 Eric : C'est comme si on avait mis un morceau de plomb sur un... c'est formidable ça, j'espère que ça enregistre parce que c'est très très érudit comme blague. [Rires]  
 Stéphanie : J'espère aussi.  
 John : Que ce soit érudit ou qu'on se soit rencontré ? [Rires]  
 Inconnue : Bonjour  
 Mai-Thu : Moi j'adore cet escalier.  
 Stéphanie : Moi aussi.  
 Mai-Thu : J'ai toujours adoré la photo en... je suis tellement contente de le voir, c'est la première fois que je le vois en vrai.  
 Stéphanie : Moi, c'est une salle que je trouve très, très réussie. Ce qui est bien c'est qu'on fait un entretien où il n'y aura pas d'images, donc on saura jamais de quelle salle il s'agit ! [Rires]  
 Mai-Thu : Il faut rester près d'eux sinon on sera juste connement...  
 Stéphanie : Oui, oui. Hey, Eric ! Ça sert à rien !  
 Eric : Il y a cette pièce qui ressemble à un Graubner et je disais à John...  
 Stéphanie : Oui il faut mettre l'enregistreur sur John en fait, c'est très clair...  
 Eric : Oui, mais il tourne pas.  
 Mai-Thu : Attends.  
 Eric : Voilà, là il tourne et si on faisait ça ?  
 Mai-Thu : C'est pas ça, « enregistreur » ?  
 Eric : Non, mais c'est bon là.  
 John : Et pourtant, elle tourne.  
 Eric : Et pourtant, il tourne.  
 Mai-Thu : T'es sûr qu'il enregistre pas, qu'il est... ?  
 Eric : Bon, si on marche...  
 John : On recule et on... tout ce qu'on... Alors là, par exemple, c'est ce que Christian appelle un nuage...  
 Eric : Un nuage ?  
 John : Oui. C'est l'accrochage. Il l'a fait par terre et pendant tout le montage il a fait semblant de s'intéresser au reste mais il ne s'est intéressé vraiment qu'à ça.  
 Eric : C'est vrai ?  
 John : Ah, il adore faire ça. Et puis c'était super mignon parce qu'en plus de ça, il plaçait chaque truc puis tout d'un coup je lui dis : « Mais dans le fond c'est trop bien comme ça on va mettre complètement à côté. » Puis il arrive vers moi : « Alors là bravo ! Là tu me souffles. J'y croyais pas du tout. » [Rires]  
 Eric : Et ça veut dire que c'est lui qui a fait l'accrochage ?  
 John : Mouais, enfin à deux dios.  
 Eric : Là, pour ces nuages ?  
 John : Essentiellement lui, oui. Ce nuage. Alors pendant ce temps j'ai fait l'univers, j'ai fait le barrage à côté. [Rires] Et là, effectivement il y a la proposition, les trois possibilités. L'œuvre dans laquelle tu pénétrés, elle n'a pas un accrochage classique. Ça, les gens aiment beaucoup, la pièce de Zack Wilde. Elle est très bien, pour les tours guidées c'est idéal, enfin si moi je le fais avec des commentaires parce que je peux leur déclarer qu'un apiculteur quand il voit ça, il sait de quoi on parle, heu, celui qui sait qui est Zack Wilde va reconnaître sa guitare, heu, celui qui aime Picabia verra une cible, etc. quoi.  
 Eric : Quand j'ai visité l'expo, je sais plus comment elle s'appelle ?  
 Au centre Culturel Suisse en ce moment, à Paris, qui est superbe avec tu vois les deux tableaux de Lohse, les œuvres de Mosset,



heu, etc. Michel Ritter m'a dit ce truc très drôle : « Je crois qu'on peut dire une seule chose : Das ist sehr schön. »  
 John : [Rires] Et c'est dans quelle langue ?  
 Eric : Mais ça, je savais pas mais je l'avais déjà vu en, c'est un motif que j'ai déjà vu, le motif de pois...  
 John : Ouais, il y a des autres toiles de cette époque où c'est une peinture murale comme ça. C'est un peu une sorte de Picabia quand même. Et ça, les gens aiment beaucoup, étrangement.  
 Eric : Celui-là ?  
 John : Oui. Alors qu'est-ce que c'est...  
 Eric : Il y a cinq ans personne n'aurait aimé ce tableau.  
 John : Ouais.  
 Eric : Alors ça je ne sais pas ce que c'est. C'est trouvé aux puces ?  
 John : Non, non, non, c'est peint par moi. Avec des couleurs fibreuses et c'est un indice de pénétration de la circulation à Genève en 1995.  
 Eric : Comment ça un indice de pénétration ?  
 John : Eh bien c'est quand tu arrives de Vevey, c'est la quantité de voitures qui rentrent et puis après qui partent dans la ville, au Mont Blanc, la rive gauche, la rive droite...  
 Eric : [Rires]  
 John : C'est vrai que parfois quand tu circules, il y a des gens qui comptent les voitures dans des petites huttes...  
 Eric : C'est très impressionnant je trouve moi. Depuis l'utilisation des cartes... c'est content ?  
 John : Ah oui oui. Beaucoup de choses qui ont été faites à plusieurs mains, c'est très excitant puisque en fin de compte même si tu peux l'imaginer, tu le ferais jamais quand même, parce que malheureusement tu as deux mains.  
 Stéphanie : Eric ! Il y a donc qu'un étage tu sais.

Eric : Oui, mais là c'était très beau, là.  
 Stéphanie : Oui, mais tu vas voir.  
 Eric : C'est très beau partout évidemment, regarde moi ça, quelle fantaisie !  
 Mai-Thu : Tu vas voir elle est incroyable cette pièce. Au début je croyais que c'était une table de jeu.  
 John : Mais c'est la couleur de tableau noir, non, d'une table de ping-pong, tu as peut-être raison, je sais plus. Américain donc.  
 Mai-Thu : Bon c'est aussi le fait d'avoir la bande blanche sur le côté qui renforce le côté table de ping-pong.  
 John : Et l'armoire, elle était fabriquée dans une série...  
 Eric : Tu l'as volée à Mucha ?  
 John : Non, à Colette.  
 Eric : Ah. [Rires]  
 John : Mais pas Colette le magasin, Colette l'artiste. Tu te rappelles celle qui se mettait dans les vitrines avec des habits de parachute. C'est une artiste américaine qui habite aussi à Munich qui vaut son pesant de toiles de parachutes. Il y a eu une série d'expositions dans les années 70, je pense. Un peu le genre qui se mettait en scène. Elle était dans les vitrines de magasins souvent. Et elle avait fait une exposition chez Dany Newberg où elle avait fait des vitrines agencées avec des objets, beaucoup, beaucoup de trucs aussi, des tissus, des choses comme ça, toujours en blanc. Une espèce de fille un peu inquiétante, quand même.  
 Eric : Il y a une tache de peinture quelque part...  
 John : Voilà, qui remonte.  
 Eric : Absolument. Je me souviens très bien la manière dont elle était exposée à Fréjus, si c'était celle-là mais je pense que c'était celle-là, avec des espèces de trucs qu'il y a d'ailleurs toujours dans la cave chez nous à Dijon au Consortium et une espèce de...





John : Oui, qui est en bas.  
 Eric : Ah d'accord.  
 John : C'est ce qu'on appelle un arbre, en France on appelle ça un arbre à singes non ? On nous apprend ça. Un arbre à singes, c'est un truc de jeux d'enfants au parc, où les enfants grimpent au truc.  
 Mai-Thu : J'ai pas entendu ça, l'arbre à singes.  
 Eric : Ah en bas, le truc du bas ! Un arbre à singes. Nous on a les cages à poules.  
 Stéphanie : Non, non, il y a l'arbre à singes Eric. Ça se fait aussi.  
 John : C'est français. C'est français.  
 Eric : C'est pas pareil...  
 Stéphanie : Tu trouves ça au Luxembourg par exemple.  
 Eric : Tout ça est interdit maintenant. Ça je ne connaissais pas.  
 John : Tu l'avais jamais vu avant non ?  
 Eric : Non.  
 John : Ça c'est la première que j'avais faite c'était chez Massimo. Il y en a une aux États-Unis et il va y en avoir une nouvelle ici mais qui n'est pas encore faite. Et une à Wolfsburg parce que monsieur Brüderlin veut en exposer une à côté dans l'ex-ville.  
 Stéphanie : Ah.  
 Eric : Toujours le danger.  
 John : Oui ! Enfin ceci dit Max Bill n'est plus là, donc bon.  
 Stéphanie : Tu t'opposes jamais à ce genre de choses de toute façon ?  
 John : Non, bah non.  
 Stéphanie : Au contraire.  
 John : [Rires] Vous voyez, ça a été touché donc tout le monde se demande comment il faut restaurer, moi je trouve qu'il faut le laisser comme ça.  
 Mai-Thu : Sinon tu peux le couper dans un autre ça se verra pas, et Didier peut prendre les machins comme ça, les émettre...  
 John : ... C'est ce qu'il va faire...  
 Mai-Thu : Moi j'ai cru que c'était la vis tu vois, c'est pas ça.  
 John : Non, c'est collé, c'est des trucs pour piquer des fleurs.  
 Eric : Ah ouais des mousses.  
 John : Des mousses. Vous savez, si vous en retrouvez qui ont cette forme là, c'est bien pour les acheter ou les restaurer.  
 [Rires]  
 Eric : C'est la version, c'est la version, comment dire heu, heu, végétale de celui avec les lampes ?  
 John : Exactement.  
 Eric : Avec les espèces de lampes...  
 John : ... Que tu vas voir tout à l'heure.  
 Eric : Ce qui est bien en fait, c'est qu'à chaque étage, à chaque fois qu'on parle de quelque chose, quelqu'un dit « Ah mais c'est à l'étage en dessous ! »  
 John : Ouais. [Rires] On a ratisé large tu sais.  
 Eric : Arrête de tripoter cet enregistreur !  
 Mai-Thu : Mais j'ai peur qu'on n'entende rien si il est fourré dans la poche.  
 Eric : Mais si, c'est un micro bidirectionnel ! Non, ça marche.  
 Mai-Thu : Et puis voilà. John tu peux nous dire pourquoi les Remote ça peut être *Random* et pas *Remote* ?  
 John : Hein ?  
 Mai-Thu : Pourquoi ça s'appelle *Random*, le titre ? T'as fais exprès, enfin exprès, c'est pas la question que je veux poser mais... [Rires]  
 John : Je m'en souvenais plus, je ne sais plus du tout pourquoi ça s'appelle *Random*...  
 Eric : Non parce que justement c'est vraiment le truc qui m'a agacé dans tout ce que j'ai lu autour de l'exposition c'est que les gens marchent tellement bien à cette...  
 Mai-Thu : A cette combine !



Eric : ... attitude : « Oh si je le faisais pas quelqu'un d'autre le ferait. » Et en même temps c'est très tentant d'y croire sauf que quand on sait, ils ont, enfin tu vois : qu'ils essayent ! Si c'est aussi tentant, facile.

John : Mouais...

Mai-Thu et Stéphanie : Tu peux pas parce que la place est prise.

John : La place est prise. Voilà.

Stéphanie : La place est pas vide, c'est-à-dire que...

John : Il faut m'éliminer pour prendre la place.

Stéphanie : Tu ne peux pas savoir, t'es pas dans un récit d'anticipation.

John : C'est ce que certains artistes essayent de faire avec leurs rivaux. [Rires] Ouais l'idée, c'est en fait d'évacuer le fait que l'artiste est singulier et il est porteur d'une énergie de quelque chose de singulier. C'est la place qui est singulière et puis en fait il y a eu un appel d'air qui fait que je suis tombé dedans. Mais un autre aurait pu tomber dedans ou devrait tomber dedans, c'est ça que je veux dire qui est inévitable. Mais je suis pas porteur de quelque chose.

Mai-Thu : C'est un point de vue très très abstrait quand même ?

John : Non je ne crois pas. En fait c'est très pragmatique.

Mai-Thu : C'est un point de vue pragmatique et juste mais quand tu le donnes aux journalistes du *Journal de Genève* ou je sais pas quoi, ils disent John Armleder c'est n'importe quoi. Donc je dis, je fais n'importe quoi, alors que clairement...

John : Oui et puis ça les excite parce qu'ils se disent qu'il est modeste. Il faut savoir que ça n'a rien avoir avec ça en fait.

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Mai-Thu : Fais gaffe parce que là c'est apocalyptique ! [Rires]

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Mai-Thu : La mission était là, elle m'a pris et je suis rentré au service de l'art...

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Mai-Thu : 63-76 ! *Pièce nocturne* dit-il.

John : Alors *Pièce Nocturne* dit-il. C'est parce que celui qui l'a acquise m'a dit « Tu l'appelles *Pièce Nocturne* n'est-ce pas ? » Je dis, « dit-il » parce que c'est lui qui l'avait dit. Et en fait ce sont des espadrilles qu'on utilise enfin des chaus... comment on appelle ça ?

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Stéphanie : Et la lampe ?

John : C'était la lampe qu'on utilisait quand on se déplaçait pour faire des petits voyages à pieds. Ici. Donc c'est un peu bizarre parce que ça donne l'impression que c'est autobiographique. Mais heureusement là il y a les autres pour lesquelles je suis pas. Ça c'est le pied de Audrey Hepburn.

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John : Ouais exactement.

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John : Exactement. Bah c'est pour ça que je l'ai fait pour les enfants. Je mettais des trucs, on faisait une photo, je rajoutais des trucs etc.

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Stéphanie : C'est un peu dégoûtant, surtout celle-là.

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John : Mais il va reconnaître la salle du Consortium. T'avais vu l'exposition *Jour et Nuit* ? Tu l'avais vue ?

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Eric : Oui, à l'Orangerie de Meudon.

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John : Oui.

Eric : C'est incroyable. Il faut montrer ça absolument ! Dans les écoles d'art, en première année, c'est le seul truc que les gamins connaissent de Beuys parce que c'est le premier truc qui apparaît

Eric : ... attitude : « Oh si je le faisais pas quelqu'un d'autre le ferait. »

Et en même temps c'est très tentant d'y croire sauf que quand on sait, ils ont, enfin tu vois : qu'ils essayent ! Si c'est aussi tentant, facile.

John : Mouais...

Mai-Thu et Stéphanie : Tu peux pas parce que la place est prise.

John : La place est prise. Voilà.

Stéphanie : La place est pas vide, c'est-à-dire que...

John : Il faut m'éliminer pour prendre la place.

Stéphanie : Tu ne peux pas savoir, t'es pas dans un récit d'anticipation.

John : C'est ce que certains artistes essayent de faire avec leurs rivaux. [Rires] Ouais l'idée, c'est en fait d'évacuer le fait que l'artiste est singulier et il est porteur d'une énergie de quelque chose de singulier. C'est la place qui est singulière et puis en fait il y a eu un appel d'air qui fait que je suis tombé dedans. Mais un autre aurait pu tomber dedans ou devrait tomber dedans, c'est ça que je veux dire qui est inévitable. Mais je suis pas porteur de quelque chose.

Mai-Thu : C'est un point de vue très très abstrait quand même ?

John : Non je ne crois pas. En fait c'est très pragmatique.

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Christian : Mais c'est vrai. Mais ça fait des semaines comme ça. Ils font la queue. Non, c'est un événement très étonnant pour nous.  
 John : Il y a un moment émouvant. Tu vois qui est Hans Rudolf ?  
 Christian : Bien sûr.  
 Mai-Thu : Le monsieur avec les bâtons de ski ?  
 John : Ouais avec les bâtons. Je savais pas qu'il avait la Parkinson. Il est très malade. Et il est quelque part dans la maison.  
 Mai-Thu : Oui, il est dans la maison.  
 John : Il était devant un tableau, c'était tellement bizarre, en plus de ça. Tu sais le Barnett Newman mécanique et il était juste...  
 Eric : Faut qu'on se dépêche parce que tu nous promets quand même huit étages en dessous et puis...  
 Christian : En tout cas on fermera pas avant vous.  
 Eric : Ah non mais John part à Londres donc heu...  
 John : Ouais tu dis ça comme si tu parlais pas à Dijon. [Rires]  
 Eric : Et moi je pars à Lyon donc heu...  
 John : Ah.  
 Mai-Thu : Aymeric, l'ami de Marie-Jo a eu la varicelle la semaine passée puisqu'il l'a attrapé de sa fille, je pensais à ça en fait.  
 John : [Rires]  
 Stéphanie : Ce qui est bien, c'est les effets de surprise. Parce que nous on se réjouit, Eric. Non, ce qui est génial c'est d'anticiper sur le moment où tu vas découvrir une nouvelle pièce.  
 John : Le Filliou ?  
 Eric : Le Filliou !  
 Stéphanie : Ouais le Filliou.  
 Eric : Elle était très belle d'ailleurs quand Nathalie était au musée de Marseille. Elle avait mis ça dans le..., dans un espèce de..., comme s'il y avait un bassin pompéien à l'entrée.  
 John : Ouais.  
 Eric : Elle avait mis des, des...  
 Mai-Thu : Ce qui doit être bien, c'est le coin des champignons à venir regarder ça comme ça au...  
 John : Hein, hein. Ouais, à peu près tout ce qu'il y a ici.  
 Mai-Thu : Non mais ça je crois que...la répétition.  
 John : Il y a aussi un truc fortuit, c'est qu'à la fin chaque toile posée sur les chaises retournées...  
 Eric : Ouais.  
 John : Et j'avais complètement omis le fait que...  
 Eric : Que la toile de Buren était aussi appuyée contre le mur.  
 John : Ouais.  
 Eric : Ceci dit, le motif est assez bon là de l'enfilade des salles.  
 John : Hein, hein. Alors chez Ghislain, il y a qu'une pièce pour le moment.  
 Eric : Pardon ?  
 John : Je disais chez Ghislain, il y a qu'une intervention si j'ose dire. C'est un tableau de..., enfin c'est une édition d'ailleurs qui vient de chez Catherine Issert en fait.  
 Stéphanie : C'était pas accroché ça.  
 Mai-Thu : Oui, on l'a mis un peu plus tard. Comme d'autres choses d'ailleurs.  
 Eric : C'est un faux ?  
 John : Oui. [Rires]  
 Eric : Oui, enfin ça on connaît.  
 John : Enfin je veux pas vous empêcher de voir ça. C'est juste que vous avez un train à prendre. [Rires]  
 Eric : Moi je suis allé souvent dans l'appartement de Ghislain, près de Beaubourg.  
 John : Oui. J'espère que tu as apprécié le tapissage hollandais des ses... Les gens ont promis qu'ils savaient tapisser les murs.  
 Eric : Ça ?  
 John : Ouais. Bah à l'origine cette pièce là, les murs étaient tapissés. Les tableaux avec les tapissages étaient par-dessus un mur. Mais le mur était tapissé de la même manière.



Eric : Ah ben alors, ça va !  
 John : [Rires] Et ça c'est, c'est aussi bien peint quand même.  
 Je crois que c'est un artiste de l'ECAL qui l'a peint pour moi, je suis pas sûr.  
 Eric : Pourquoi ce serait quelqu'un d'autre qui l'aurait peint ?  
 John : Parce que c'était une exposition où il y avait quelqu'un qui m'aidait pour faire des tests et puis je lui ai dit : « Bah pendant que tu y es, fais cette peinture. »  
 Eric : C'est vraiment beau avec la lumière !  
 John : Ouais. Ça ça a été fait à l'ECAL aussi.  
 Eric : Mais ça, ça n'avait pas été montré chez Brownstone à l'époque ?  
 John : Ouais. Il y avait une exposition avec des pièces comme ça chez Brownstone. Et... Ah, ah, il y a plus que deux étages.  
 Eric : Il y a plus que deux étages.  
 John : C'est bien parce qu'après, le temps d'arrêt devant les pièces se raccourcit. C'est un peu comme quand tu visites justement le Louvre ou un grand musée à l'étranger. Tu passes une heure dans les deux premières salles et après tu cours.  
 Eric : Ça c'est un truc pour les chats non ?  
 John : Ça c'est des arbres à chats. En haut, le truc qui était dans le dessin, c'était un arbre à singes.  
 Eric : Elles sont de quand ces œuvres ?  
 John : Ça c'est tout récent. Mais c'est dans le fond le même principe que celle-là, la dorée que t'as vu en haut, simplement il y a une surcharge beaucoup plus grande. Juste avant ce printemps, j'ai fait avec des plus grandes, une exposition que Mathieu Copeland avait fait avant au musée de Lyon, au musée d'Art contemporain de Lyon. C'est exactement le même principe.  
 Eric : Elles sont magnifiques, c'est absolument magnifique.  
 John : C'est confondant hein ? Bah là j'ai essayé...  
 Eric : On se croirait dans un intérieur avec une cheminée en briques et quelques fauteuils en rotin.  
 John : Ouais.  
 Eric : Non c'est magnifique. J'ai peur que ça doive nous faire craindre un retour imminent de l'art informel.  
 John : [Rires] Je pense qu'il est derrière toi.  
 Eric : Non, elles sont vachement belles. Celle-là aussi, elle est magnifique. C'est ça le truc. Quand j'ai vu ces peintures, tu sais ces peintures de Damien Hirst avec les...  
 John : Oui ! Qui étaient comme des Walter Robinson en fait.  
 Eric : Je me suis dit John aurait pu le faire et je trouve que c'était bien qu'il l'ait jamais fait et en revanche ça il pourrait pas le faire le Damien Hirst.  
 Mai-Thu : Pourquoi ?  
 Eric : Parce que c'est trop raffiné. Celle-là c'est juste magnifique. Ça me fait penser à je sais plus qui ce type, ce grand conservateur américain qui disait : Warhol c'était un bon artiste parce que c'était un grand coloriste. On lui disait qu'il avait inventé plein de choses mais il répondait que c'était parce qu'il était un grand coloriste. Là c'est juste pareil. C'est vraiment très beau. Là je suis soufflé pour le coup. Ooops : celle-là est fautive !  
 [Rires de John]  
 Eric : Tu les as faits pour l'exposition ou avant ?  
 John : Non je les ai faites, oui enfin c'est entre les deux. J'ai fait une première grande série comme ça, qui est le même principe comme je disais de ça pour l'exposition à Lyon. Et après, Pierre Huber les a vues et a dit : « Ah formidable ! On va faire une exposition comme ça extraordinaire. » Je lui ai dit d'accord, trouve moi un atelier donc on les a faites et puis après Christian a dit : « Mais on va les exposer ici. » Et donc on les a amenées ici. Du coup, il y en avait plus, donc j'en ai encore fait quelques-unes qui étaient chez Pierre Huber. Mais c'était pas pensé pour l'exposition mais quand on les a vues, on s'est dit de faire un grand mur comme ça.

Ça joue sur la galerie de tableaux, les trucs comme ça, donc ça tombait à pic.  
 Eric : Tu as toujours aimé Olitski en plus ?  
 John : Et ben oui ! Poons et Olitski, je peux faire les deux en même temps. Les arbres à chats sont agrandis de 10%.  
 Eric : Ah !  
 John : C'est des copies hein, c'est des copies d'arbres à chats.  
 Bonjour.  
 [Une femme lui parle]  
 John : C'est pas grave, c'est pas grave.  
 La femme : Elle adore votre maison !  
 John : Ah oui.  
 Stéphanie : C'est un piège à enfants, c'est pour que...  
 John : Oui, c'est juste qu'elle ne se coupe pas mais...  
 Stéphanie : T'as tout cassé !  
 Eric : Je comprends quand même comme quoi ça doit foncièrement les agacer les gens de cette génération. Soit t'es provisoirement là un moment pour accompagner l'apparition de tout ça auquel cas c'est juste réjouissant. Soit tu découvriras ça à posteriori et ça peut que te plonger dans une profonde amertume.  
 Mai-Thu : Le jauni avec le bleu dessous, je suis pas sûre que c'était comme ça.  
 John : Le jaune devient plus joli, le bleu je sais pas s'il l'a changé mais...  
 Mai-Thu : Regarde, John.  
 John : Ah. C'est comme ça.  
 Mai-Thu : Ça a un style mais c'est un peu énervant.  
 Stéphanie : On est dans un malentendu absolu.  
 John : Donc ça, ce sont les performances que j'ai faites l'autre jour, qui est une vieille performance de 67 qui s'appelle *Event & Exhibit* et ça c'est la partie *Exhibit*.  
 Eric : C'est une performance de ?  
 John : 67.  
 Eric : 67 !!!  
 John : Ouais c'est anniversaire.  
 Eric : Et qu'est ce qui se passe pendant cette performance ?  
 John : C'est très simple, il y a quelqu'un qui prépare une échelle et moi je vais dehors avec un carton et je ramasse des trucs par terre ou je vais dans une mercerie ou dans un magasin de petits objets que je remplis de trucs, puis je range, et je monte sur l'escalier, je verse le carton et ça c'est le *Event*. Et puis après je descends de l'escalier, on enlève l'escalier et ça fait la sculpture.  
 Stéphanie : *Exhibit*.  
 Eric : Moi je pense que j'en ai vu une il y a très longtemps et qui est formidable...  
 John : Oui ?  
 Eric : Où tu mets une chaise à côté d'une table, tu montes sur la chaise, tu montes sur la table, tu prends la chaise et tu la mets de l'autre côté, enfin un truc comme ça.  
 John : J'ai une chaise pour monter sur la table et je mets la chaise sur la table, je monte sur la table et je redescends de la même manière de l'autre côté. Qui date de la même époque.  
 Eric : Tu vois c'est assez amusant parce que j'avais vu pleins de photos de l'exposition mais je me suis dit que ça valait pas le coup d'y aller... Et je trouve que les 4 ou 5 salles qui sont toujours montrées, ce sont peut-être les plus photogéniques et les plus spectaculaires mais elles sont pas mieux que les autres finalement.  
 John : Ouais, ouais.  
 Eric : Elles sont pas moins bien non plus mais elles sont pas mieux que les autres.  
 John : Je vais accompagner cet enregistrement d'un [Il se mouche].  
 On passe à côté du trombone.  
 Stéphanie : Dans la retranscription ce sera accompagné d'un entre parenthèse où tu sais tu mets rires.

[Rires]  
 Eric : Se mouche bruyamment !  
 [Rires]  
 Mai-Thu : Celle-là j'ai encore du mal avec.  
 Eric : Ah mais ça, c'est très très ancien ça. Je ne me souvenais pas que les parapluies étaient bicolores.  
 John : Non, je pense... Ah si si, dans la photographie d'origine il est bicolore mais peut-être pas de ces couleurs. Je crois, je crois que oui. Mais peut-être quand, quand on l'a... je crois que même c'était rouge et noir d'après le souvenir que j'ai.  
 Eric : C'est la plus jolie pièce de l'exposition !  
 John : Ah ! Tu parles comme Amy O'Neill.  
 Eric : C'est vrai ?  
 John : Amy préfère ça et la pièce du Consortium.  
 Eric : Moi je pense que c'est la plus jolie pièce de l'exposition.  
 John : Bah elle annonce tout.  
 Eric : Et ben voilà. Quel œuvre programmatique !  
 John : Elle est Beuysienne de deux manières. D'une part il y a les instruments de Beuys, comme je sais que tu adores Beuys. Et c'est ça qui m'a empêché d'aller chez Beuys aussi...  
 Eric : Tu avais prévu de rentrer dans la classe de Beuys ?  
 John : Oui. Mais sans penser à mal.  
 Eric : Et tu l'as pas fait... Tu as décidé de pas le faire ou il s'est passé quelque chose que...  
 John : Non il se passe que je vais en prison parce que j'ai pas fait mon service militaire et quand j'étais en prison je me suis dit : « Mais dans le fond pourquoi je vais encore aller dans une école, je détecte les écoles. » Et j'ai pensé au projet d'ECART et on en a parlé avec mes amis et puis quand je suis sorti on s'est dit qu'on voulait faire ça donc faut le faire vraiment. Donc j'ai jamais fait la rentrée des classes. Mais par contre selon la légende, quand Beuys vient à Genève pour une exposition qu'on fait, je lui dis que j'aurais pu être un de ses étudiants mais qu'à la place je suis resté 7 mois dans sa gamme de couleurs donc c'était plus vraiment nécessaire de... Et il l'a pas vraiment pris très bien à vrai dire. Mais par contre parlant gamme de couleurs, ça c'est de la couleur pour tank que j'ai mis à côté. C'est pour les véhicules militaires. Je me suis dit qu'à côté de Sarkis...  
 Eric : Fred Sarkis ! Bah ouais, c'est très bien ouais. Oh mon dieu !  
 John : Ils sont moins animés qu'au début parce qu'ils commencent à tomber en panne.  
 Mai-Thu : Alors quelqu'un a demandé si toutes les rayures sur les toiles c'était normal ?  
 John : C'est parfaitement normal. Par contre sur la chute d'eau, c'est moins normal. Mais...  
 Inconnu : John...  
 John : Bonjour !  
 Inconnu : Salut.  
 John : Tu vas bien ?  
 Inconnu : Oui.  
 John : Ça fait plaisir !  
 Inconnu : On se fait vraiment plaisir dans cette exposition ! Tu la revisites ?  
 John : Heu... Ben écoute j'ai des amis qui viennent et comme c'est le dernier jour heu...  
 Inconnu : Dernier jour...  
 John : On fait un rapide petit tour.  
 Inconnu : Moi je suis vraiment frappé à chaque fois que je vois ton travail, c'est fantastique, tu fais des choses... Moi j'ai un peu arrêté depuis les Beaux-Arts et puis je vois toute cette profusion, ce travail énorme... En fait, c'est vraiment impressionnant. Je suis avec des gens qui connaissent pas très bien et ils entrent dedans petit à petit et ils sont là...  
 John : Superbe...

Inconnu : Je vais te laisser faire ta visite...  
 John : Oui, il faut que j'y aille parce qu'ils sont en train de partir...  
 Inconnu : Bonne fin de journée.  
 John : Oui à bientôt. Ciao, ciao.  
 Autre inconnu : Bonjour ! Il veut vous dire quelque chose.  
 Enfant : Pourquoi toi t'as fait ça ?  
 John : Alors écoute. Il a bien fallu. Il y a des endroits où il y a des taches sur les tableaux alors il y a aussi des taches par terre. Mais c'était une action et puis c'est une sculpture avec pleins de petits trucs par terre. Quand tu regardes dans la rue il y a toujours des tas de trucs par terre. C'est un peu le même dispositif, la même chose.  
 Autre inconnu : Ça te convient comme réponse ?  
 Enfant : Oui.  
 [Rires]  
 Enfant : Allez ! Un peu plus vite !  
 John : Il a raison !  
 Stéphanie : On a à peu près 5 minutes.  
 John : Ah, c'est exactement ce qu'il faut 5 minutes. Tu as vu les pièces irridescentes qui changent de couleurs quand on avance... C'est la dernière chose qui a été exposée non réalisée en décembre.  
 Eric : Réalisée tu veux dire...  
 John : Dans l'exposition. C'est un remake d'une pièce ancienne bien sûr mais dans une version nouvelle.  
 Eric : Mais ce ne sont pas des formes inédites chez toi ?  
 John : Non, non, non. Parce que c'est une exposition qui reprend des pseudos trucs de suprématisme qui étaient dans un vieux, un vieux appartement abandonné, avec des photos en noir et blanc. C'était une exposition dans un appartement où il n'y avait pas d'électricité alors on l'a visitée avec une torche. Il fallait être trois ou quatre à la fois et quelqu'un faisait l'explication en hongrois. Le tour guidé en hongrois.  
 Stéphanie : Il n'y a pas de son du tout ?  
 John : Bah là normalement oui mais je crois que les gardiens, ils en ont un peu assez. Il y a de la musique hawaïenne qui devrait passer à tue-tête.  
 Stéphanie : Ouais c'est ça. Je me disais où est-ce qu'est la musique hawaïenne ?  
 Eric : Alors je vais te dire, pendant longtemps je pensais que c'était bien de faire quelque chose le premier et maintenant je suis plus sûr que ça.  
 John : Ah moi je suis certain que non. C'est toujours une erreur.  
 Eric : J'ai retu il y a pas longtemps beaucoup de trucs de Warhol dont un où il disait : « Ce qui est nouveau c'est pas ce qu'on fait aujourd'hui, c'est ce qu'on a fait il y a dix ans. »  
 John : Bon j'ai pas dit grand chose hein ?  
 Eric : Mais c'est parfait.  
 John : A mon avis vous allez devoir rédiger. [Rires]  
 Eric : Il faut que tu rendes l'enregistreur maintenant le son est horrible.  
 John : Maintenant on fait une interview vite faite ?  
 Stéphanie : Oui.  
 John : [Rires]  
 Eric : Stéphanie, j'ai glissé dans la poche avant droite de ton sac un morceau...  
 Stéphanie : De quoi ?  
 Eric : Voilà, ça.  
 John : Avez vous envie d'un café pour la route ?



## MAGAZINE

Dadachat

John Armleder talks to Parker Williams



Parker Williams, the long-term alter ego of the artist, interviews John M Armleder.

Parker Williams: John M Armleder, your work has in these past couple of years been staged extensively again, giving it a renewed visibility and above all describing a critical platform where your art seems extremely influential on today's scene according to many younger artists and critics. Your exhibits appear in venues of different types, all over the world, and in many forms. Just to name a few, your disco-ball installations (Global Domes, Liberty Domes) have been seen at the MoMA in New York, in the opening show of the Contemporary Arts Centre designed by Zaha Hadid in Cincinnati, and the «ein-leuchten», the inaugural exhibition of the Museum der Moderne in Salzburg. Your wall sweeping kinetic neon pieces were first at Caratsch de Pury & Luxembourg in Zurich, before being at the last Lyon Biennale, also at the Museum der Moderne in Salzburg and at the GAMeC in Bergamo, your most recent wall-paintings have as well gathered critical attention as they cover the premises of many galleries and museums such as the ICA in Boston, the Mamac in Nice, the ICA in Sydney, the Palais de Tokyo in Paris, Le Magasin de Grenoble, or again the MoMA in New York – all announcing the publication by Lionel Bovier of the catalogue raisonné of these works (1966 – 2005). Then there are those huge walk-in diorama-gardens like the ones you did in the «Flower Power» exhibition in Lille or condensed at «Art Unlimited» in Basel, or the scaffolding towers one has seen at the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the Kunsthalle Baden-Baden and so on, including your new videos, new Furniture-Sculptures, some incorporating classic original design by Prouvé, Aalto, Jacobsen, Niemeyer and the such (also for those work is a catalogue raisonné, 1979 – 2005, in preparation) new dot-paintings and other abstract paintings, the continuing series of Pour-Paintings which have lately gained wide appraisal... Now this turns out to be a full cornucopia stuffing enabling all of us to re-evaluate what we believed to know about your art. Then, as we are about to set up the largest ever

show of your works on paper covering over 40 years of work, you choose to call the exhibition «About Nothing»...

John M Armleder: Yes, that's about it!

PW: As a matter of fact, many people are not aware that your very first personal museum show, initiated by Dieter Koeplin, was an exhibition of works on paper («981 and other pieces») at the Kunstmuseum in Basel in 1980.. Some of the exhibits are back on view here at the Kunsthalle in Zurich, including early pen and ink drawings that have a definite Wols or Klee touch, some Picabia style gouaches and colour pencil works that recall your para-suprematist and para-constructivist paintings that will end up defining you, after being a Neo-Dadaist and Fluxus linked artist, as a postmodernist deconstructionist, an appropriationist and a neo-geo leader. Your full body of work though, as revealed by the comprehensive display of all these "work-stains" that somehow tell a hidden story and write a subtext to your art, we might say does not live up to such identifications. It rather spreads a range of strategies that exclude only exclusion. Some will see this as some kind of encyclopaedia, especially in this paper format, but with a scrambled lexicon. You do relish in going on with things, as opposed to a progressive stylistic continuum. You might as well tomorrow do your first drawing again. It's like if it has passed the birth-test, it will never stop coming back to life again. You add layers of the various and the same. It's a club sandwich!

JMA: I might as well be a pop artist after all.

PW: Well, you smear it all up then, the coats above coats, in this overload theory you developed ad nauseam after a Larry Poons quote. But then you end up with cleaning up and keeping psychotronic effects...

JMA: ...and an op artist too ...

PW: ...and then going the Zen way and making formal plastic displays...

JMA: ...and a minimal... oops !

PW: Oh! Forget it! You're just a B-movies addict and probably an UFO believer.

JMA: Now don't start, because we might still be here in 500 hundred years.

PW: I won't ask why. My point is that this show is about everything.

JMA: As long that it is "about". Now, this must be understood both ways: just about, almost, and à propos. It's also the kind of thing you find on the spine of a book. Now, how far the spine and the collated trims are related is always questionable. There are different processes leading to different events. Spine reading is very enriching. I recommend such use of libraries; second best being back page lure-texts. And this is what this present interview is about to become, I guess.

PW: So let me say this. I believe this show, beyond your permanent reliance on John Cage's open-end gateways, might give a chance to enjoy some magic you seem to tumble around in whatever you do, and, although you don't seem to give any thoughts into or weight on this, will confirm you, through the manuscripts, and the notations, as a major player in the art world of the last forty years. These works could seem esoteric, or simply too knowledgeable, and less breathtaking than your recent neon bravados, or your blends of artificial and living nature, but they tell an essential story about your unique position, and how it has turned out to be a possible way, as you would state. And somehow, a drawing of yours of 1964 performs as one of 1978, or 2004.

JMA: Well, it's all paper, after all.

Parker Williams, Shanghai, October 2004

## JOHN ARMLEDER talks to BOB NICKAS



**BOB NICKAS:** You've been coming to the Basel art fair since the early '70s, using your little corner spot to promote artists you like. And you do this through Ecart, which is more of a publishing activity than a gallery. So it's a certain philosophy that's led you to participate in something so commercial?

**JOHN ARMLEDER:** When Ecart started back in the '70s, we had a gallery space in Geneva and an offset print shop, and we would publish books, which we brought to the book fair in Frankfurt. One day I thought, "Maybe we should go to the art fair in Basel," and I asked for a table to show our books. In the beginning, a booth was beyond our budget. But we were also slightly reluctant to be part of this kind of art-market event.

**BN:** As the '70s passed into the '80s, did you notice an increased buzz around the fair?

**JA:** Of course. The audience radically changed at some point in the early '80s. That transformation corresponded to the explosion of interest in "wild" painting, maybe around 1983, and to a period of rapid economic expansion. Before, the audience had been art lovers, people who knew the artists and galleries. There was a club of people who followed what was happening on a daily basis. There were only five big shows a year, so it was easy to do. Then, the coverage of art changed completely. Art became available to more people because that kind of money was suddenly

available to them. Art was not just in a few specialized magazines, but in fashion magazines, sports magazines—and the people who read them did whatever those magazines suggested. And they came to the fair to buy things.

**BN:** Around this time you began to get more attention as an artist, and although you didn't hang your own work on the wall in Basel, it was all about your endorsement.

**JA:** People would pay attention just because, as you say, I was sitting there. It's true, and we always ended up selling works even though I certainly made no effort to sell anything. What happened in the '80s is that people presumed that if I had an eye on someone they would become the next hot artist.

**BN:** This is where people saw Sylvie Fleury for the first time.

**JA:** That's probably right—at the Basel art fair certainly. (She was showing at Philomène Magers in Germany and Postmasters in New York around that time.) We showed Karen Kilimnik probably for the first time in Basel, Christian Marclay, Thom Merrick, John Tremblay, and Pipilotti Rist early on, and Herbert Hamak. Everything of his was sold before the opening.

**BN:** Even if you're thought of as an '80s artist, your history goes back to collaborative Fluxus-oriented events in the late '60s and early '70s and to completely noncommercial situations mostly in and around Switzerland. Then you enter people's consciousness in the mid-'80s, showing in galleries in New York, London, Paris, Munich. You showed at Barbara Gladstone in '86 alongside the painters Helmut Federle and Olivier Mosset, also Swiss, and Gerd Wald Rockenschau from Vienna. Neo-geo seemed to be in all the galleries

at the time, but I knew when I saw something at Gladstone that it was in fashion and had been confirmed. So what was it like to already be in the stream, so to speak, to have a history, but only then have people take notice?

**JA:** What happened in my case is that, of course, I had been working before my "discovery"—and would go on working. I've always made different types of work in different formats. But in the mid-'80s, because of this neo-geo thing, that aspect of my work was picked up as a label for the period. So it has very little to do with me. It has to do with the times. Also this side of my work—abstract paintings and furniture sculpture—entered the market at that moment.

**BN:** Did collectors change?

**JA:** A lot of collectors like to enter the artist's private world, purchasing their notebooks and so on; they feel that much closer to something unique. To them, having that kind of work gives them entry into the private confessions of the artist. There are people who have this relationship, which is cute in a way. But in the '80s there was a more "open door" situation where collectors would say, "Look, I bought the work of so-and-so, and I have the biggest, or the one from Documenta." I'm not being critical about this attitude. It's a very human way to react. It's always the case that the earlier collectors think that whatever is coming up is trivial, while the new ones don't have any idea what happened before, or they don't care. Critics and curators aren't so different.

**BN:** I imagine that having come out of Fluxus and been around a bit, you didn't see this time as your big chance, but rather as a moment in which chance played a big part.

**JA:** Certainly I have a different perspective from artists who emerged as instant success stories, which in my time didn't really exist, or not on the same scale. And I was never ambitious in the sense of caring about these things. In a way, whatever happened happened. Many people thought about career strategies in those days, but I didn't try to get into major collections or shows—it just happened. On the other

## '80s AGAIN

## RIRKRIK TIRAVANIJA

The '80s were a funny time to have gone through as a young artist. If artists in the '90s were trying to rethink what art could do in a bigger way, in the '80s they were trying to rethink how art could continue on as itself. After Conceptual art and a return to expressionism, the question was, What can you do next? Maybe another big question was, What can you do after the ready-made? ■

—AS TOLD TO JULIE GOWILA

Opposite page: John Armleder and Andy Warhol, Basel, 1984. This page, right: John Armleder, Furniture-Sculpture, 1987, acrylic on canvas and leather couch, dimensions variable. Below: John Armleder, Untitled, 1986, acrylic on canvas, 70 1/2 x 51".

hand, I totally benefited from this exposure. It's something you can't invent. And it gave me another reading of my own work.

**BN:** How did you see things differently?

**JA:** Well, it's always the case that something you make can be understood as something else, that it becomes part of a period understood in terms of a group of people doing different things within certain shared parameters. There's a look-alike situation. You realize that one is always a collective as much as an individual person. Once the exposure comes, you have a better sense of this, but you can also find new mind-sets or ways of working.

**BN:** And within that your perverse side might come into play. If there's a misreading of what you're doing, you're likely to accept and even embrace that. Riff on another artist's work if only because it was linked to yours purely based on appearance. That look-alike situation. This tendency for playful reaction seems very much your spirit and applies more to you than to

anyone else I can think of in this period.

**JA:** The differences can seem quite obvious if we look at some of my colleagues, like Haim Steinbach, who had been working for a long time as well, or Jeff Koons, who is even more emblematic. Of course you can say, "Well, Andy Warhol traced the whole pattern and it's just happening again." It's true. But what wasn't foreseeable was that the pattern of the '60s as it played out in the '80s had nothing to do with the pattern drafted.

**BN:** How so?

**JA:** The big difference is that we had worn down one of the great experiences of that century, which was modernism. Maybe the label "postmodern" is overrated and doesn't mean much anymore, but nevertheless modernism was available to be consumed. You could extract its side effects and replay them however you wanted. In the '80s you would do that consciously. You were dealing with the fact that things had been made before. The '60s in a festive way—and

**ALTHOUGH WARHOL'S WORK IS SO '60s, I ALWAYS THOUGHT OF IT AS A PREDICTION OF WHAT WAS TO COME. I REALLY THOUGHT THE '80s WERE JUST AN UNFOLDING OF THE WARHOL MAP.**

the '70s in a more moralistic way—were a time when everyone was trying to make signature pieces, perfect inventions. That was gone in the '80s. You were just doing your thing and using what was available, but you were still quoting the sources. The difference today, when suddenly the '80s seem so "period," is that although younger people are still lifting and recycling, they just don't care about the sources. They don't even know about the sources. So they have another kind of freedom. But suddenly, for the those who try and twist it—and that's few of them, I would say—the '80s are as distant as the '60s and '70s.

**BN:** That leaves plenty of room for "interpretation."

**JA:** One of the nice misunderstandings about my paintings in the '80s was that when people saw dots they thought, "Oh, this is what he does." I knew very well that dots had been done by other people—as well

as by me—before. And now people sometimes ask if I'm quoting Damien Hirst. I think that's wonderful. It's somewhat true. If they see it like that, it's right.

**BN:** Do you remember first seeing Sherrie Levine's work?

**JA:** Yes, in the late '70s. At that time I had done all those little Constructivist drawings but had never shown them. And when I did my first paintings they were really van Doesburg look-alikes, and I felt very timid about showing them.

**BN:** Why?

**JA:** Because you couldn't show work that had been

already done by others and was part of history.

**BN:** And after Sherrie you thought it was possible?

**JA:** Exactly. It probably started earlier—don't forget Sturtevant—but I think that in the '80s there was a kind of liberation, and it was exciting. Another thing was that I'd always had great respect for and fascination with Andy Warhol. In a way, although his work is so '60s, I always thought of it as a prediction of what was to come. Many of the artists we're talking about were, consciously or not, fascinated by the position of Warhol. They all wanted to be an Andy Warhol. I really thought the '80s were just an unfolding of the Warhol map.

In the '80s you also had the feeling you could take art in your hands and put it somewhere else, next to something else, whatever you wanted. The process art, Minimal art, and Conceptual

(continued on page 170)





comment, and when the interpretation is convincing, it resembles objective proof. But that is a lure. Our interpretations are convincing only inasmuch as our readers feel that they fit the work in question. And with this feeling—which only a reader who has actually seen the work can have—we're back to aesthetic judgment. To justify a judgment, another one is needed.

Though this aside to Isabelle may seem marginal to our topic, it is actually central. In the course of our debate, we have moved from the "death of painting" to the paragon of the '80s, which turns out to have opposed "painting" to a certain dogmatic, purportedly politicized, and definitely anti-aesthetic practice of art criticism as "theory." But what will remain of the painting, or the art, of the '80s will in the long run be the product of aesthetic jurisprudence, not of "theory." It may very well be that the prerequisite for addressing an art history of the '80s is a change of theory that makes room for the concept of aesthetic jurisprudence.

**ISABELLE GRAW:** If one wants to call painting "great," one has to define what the criteria are. Although I don't deny the subjective nature of every aesthetic judgment, I find it more challenging to reflect on the preconditions of aesthetic judgment (for instance, knowledge about the status of the artist or the privilege of connoisseurship). This makes the general claim of each subjective judgment in taste more legitimate. Every time one argues for the value of a painting, one has to develop criteria that are not fixed but elaborated in view of a specific social and artistic situation. What is estimated "successful" in one instance may turn into its opposite under different circumstances.

**ARTHUR C. DANTO:** I feel that a certain depth has been reached through these last interventions. The renunciation of "good painting," of aesthetics, of pleasure seem clearly to belong to a radical political mood that these interventions help us see with a certain clarity: It was a renunciation of privilege. It was in its way an aftershock of the Cultural Revolution, and it went with the refusal, in the late '60s, of students at the École Normale to sit for the examination that would give them their certificates, or of Swedish students to wear the regalia that went with graduation and was an emblem of social stature. The Death of Painting was in part an expression of *ressentiment* against the painting that was causing so much excitement in the early '80s, neo-expressionism. But it seems evident that the target must have been, in part, the form of life in which the affluence of the Reagan years expressed itself in collecting art, in "getting in on the ground floor" through acquiring paintings that were certain to appreciate in the way that Abstract Expressionist paintings had done—so that "bad painting" was a kind of willed uglification, a refusal to be complicit in the agenda of painting-as-luxury. I am not a social historian, but it seems to me, if I am right in these speculations, that the true art history of the '80s has not yet begun to be addressed.

**YVE-ALAIN BOIS:** Arthur's elegant conclusion to our debate, and Isabelle's remark on the taboo on aesthetic pleasure, remind me of this strange moment when an ersatz

social art history, cultural studies, and the most traditional (I'd even say reactionary) type of art history, together with the market, colluded to cook up the argument that the avant-garde never really existed: that there was no fundamental difference between Tintoret and Degas, and that poor old Bouguereau was unduly repressed by the authoritarian modernist canon (the Musée d'Orsay display represents the moment of absolute triumph of this argument). And it also reminds me of the shock some of T.J. Clark's admirers received when they heard him utter the old debased word "masterpiece," which I thought was a very courageous move on his part. The idea that some works matter more than others, are more critical than others, just as some facts are more resonant than others—which is, after all, one of the reasons we write—had gradually become suspect. Maybe one of the effects of this roundtable will be that of initiating a much needed critique of this deliberate refusal to pass judgment. □

**CAMERON/HALLEY** *continued from page 121*

many of the prominent artists—Julian Schnabel, David Salle, Laurie Simmons, Sherrie Levine, and Ross Bleckner—were part of a sudden florescence of young Jewish-American artists. Like other, non-Jewish artists, they were reacting to being the first generation of Americans brought up in the suburbs, and, by becoming artists, they were trying to decipher their suburban experience. In my view, the artists of Jewish background specifically reacted to suburbia as a kind of diaspora from the city, which caused them to hearken back to a heroic vision of the urban Jewish intellectual—especially to the 1920s and people like Rothko and Newman—at the same time that they were reacting to suburbia. I experienced this as well, but I'm only half-Jewish.

**DC:** Shortly after the emergence of that generation, questions of racial and cultural identity moved to the forefront of artistic production and critical discourse. I think the role of Jewish identity in the formation of this generation of artists was there and may have been tacitly acknowledged as an aspect of what people were about, but nobody really formulated it as something shared by these artists.

**PT:** There's still a great deal of hostility toward the period. I don't know whether it means it's bad art, which is certainly possible. I'm open to that interpretation. But there is something that is still uncomfortable for a lot of curators, writers, and collectors. It'll be interesting to see how that looks in another ten years. In the meantime, one of the nice things is that there are a lot of younger people who have come of age finding something in this work—choosing to combine Minimalism and Pop as an interesting position, just as I did. So that's nice. □

*Don Cameron is senior curator at the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, and is organizing the 8th International Istanbul Biennial.*

**NICKAS/ARMLEDER** *continued from page 121*

art of the '60s and '70s gave so much respect to the object itself, to all the mystery around the piece, which was just a development of what came before. But in the '80s there was a kind of freedom where you could do wrong with artworks without being blamed.

**BN:** I remember shows back then that were presented in such calculated ways, like neo-Surrealism or a new this or that. It was as if people were competing to see who could be most transparent.

**JA:** One of the good things about the '80s was that you had those very cheap strategies, which you couldn't afford before—and maybe you can't afford to have now. You could come up with the stupidest, cheapest trick, and it meant something in those days. What was surprising is that it performed. And since it performed, it was exciting. It was not so different from other times. It just took a very obvious turn because of the change in scale of the audience. You wouldn't trick people in such a blatant way in the '70s, and there weren't so many people to trick. The trick was part of the accepted game in the '80s, and that was a new thing. So maybe people played with that, consciously or unconsciously. Then it got slightly more diffused in the '90s because the economy changed and it was worn out.

**BN:** I had a feeling that as everything sped up artists were left behind and one had this appetite, not for what was new so much as for what was next.

**JA:** If you look back at neo-geo, you see that it only lasted two years, really. At that time people picked up on my work—on only one aspect of my work—but I didn't commit myself to that alone. Of course, it's difficult for artists who are more committed to a style—and then it's suddenly out of fashion! You have to wait until it comes back. It's like somebody who only made miniskirts and had to wait until the miniskirt came back. He has a tough time in between.

**BN:** The '80s started out in one place and really ended up somewhere else.

**JA:** When this neo-geo thing picked up, a lot of my very good artist friends from Germany didn't speak to me anymore because they thought I had invented neo-geo to push them out of the market. It was tough because they couldn't sell a painting. But remember, when they came along all the Conceptual artists lost their place. And now look: You have young artists doing conceptual art that's as good as before, as healthy as before—and as successful as before.

**BN:** And now we have a lot of what I think of as pretty or kitschy academic painting.

**JA:** But it doesn't mean there isn't other painting now. And you know, it's my view that there's no painting that isn't somewhat bad.

**BN:** You're responsible for some of it . . . some of my favorite work of yours, actually.

**JA:** Mine, too. □

*Bob Nickas is a New York-based critic and the curator of more than forty exhibitions since 1984.*

**BIRNBAUM/COLOGNE** *continued from page 122*

Werner, but in 1979 artist and dealer decided to go their separate ways. Werner remembers their last conversation vividly: "I always had this somewhat childish idea of running my gallery strategically: I would try first to get into the market in Switzerland, then in Holland, then Great Britain, and so on. I remember having this argument with Kiefer about his not being strategic enough." *continued on page 124*

MASSIMODECARLO

MASSIMODECARLO

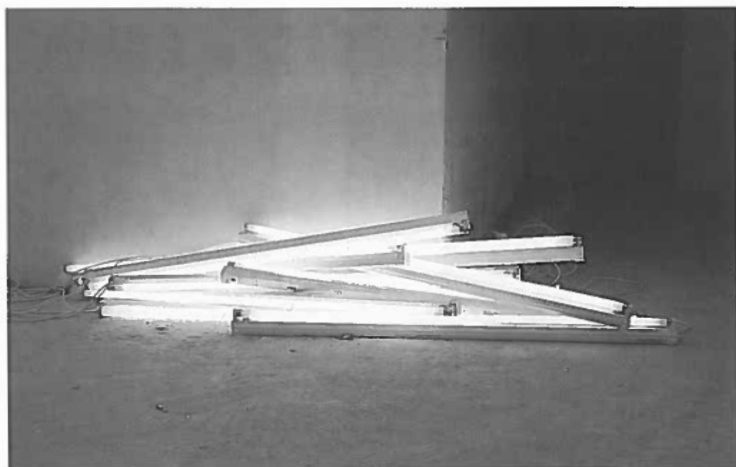
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Moreover, the political and cultural differences between a dominant religious community and a more secular population are important in the way the social structure, the economic behaviour, the political and cultural behaviour, the education and the economy of a state are shaped. Countries in which the majority of the population is Muslim, or population is becoming more like to become more so, cannot be seen using the same economic policies. It is not a kind of "Islamic bank" approach introduced by the introduction of a new modernisation in the area of Islamic banking and capital markets in the message. The question is also related to how easy we can see how fast the area of message is not just a message, but is the growth in the long. He makes the case for a focus on the future to see what is the good Islamic world. He speaks of the importance of education in making better educated generations, and what the world

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Accurately to grasp the complexity of this relationship of making and looking, where the artist himself is the subject, is not easy. In 1977, when a show is partially prepared, he is often painting on his back. The paintings that appear are then pieces of themselves: chairs, sofas, stools, tables, beds, sometimes, themselves. The Japanese were in imagination and actually gave an image to the object, but also strongly with the less spatial situation. Most often the objects are placed on all angles, so that there is a correspondence between image and thing which, for us, no longer necessarily really fulfills function, but postulates himself, both from the shape, and from a common sense. The same thing, making, where the artist has complex objects with abstract patterns with regular forms. If the objects are placed at right angles to the images, and when the eye looks at the things, objects show a strong irregularity. This highlights the possibility for which the artist puts the subject, and in it, perhaps, a question of painting, for the separation—the point of a human sense of sculpture—that the artist creates in the subject is really other than that is expected in painting. In this way the object itself, which has the nature of the thing, in fact, makes a difference, for it makes an object for the artist in painting.

Yet to grasp painting shows in a simple change after an artist taking a new point of view, where the artist himself is simply in moving the object, or in painting the subject, before the painting in gallery. For Anselm, this is no longer enough since he could not make the object's value as art, and there is no communication. He needs to get the thing painting, where the object (the other man's consciousness, there is nothing more, nothing, in such a difficulty as in about a painting.

They are things that sell in the wall in a nation so strongly marking the Communist banner of Kuznets in the Soviet native grounds of Moscow. It is a kind of a monument of art which is Andriusha's

attempts [16, 17, 18] and [19], consistent with the experience of the Italian jobbers. This is due to the need to increase the number of people's works to the 100-1500 levels [16] to fully exploit the potential of his own works, as clear as the use of the 1000 individual works even when as though they had been nearly by someone else [19].

This is yet another central point of the "second hand" experience, which implies a shared relationality between original author and reader, both of the artist and the public, a relationship of a certain strength and philosophical depth that, contrary to the dominant in France and, until recently, a broad female stream in the work of Arendt, this is also a political category. The public's public works, such as the sculpture for the 1991 renovation of the Gare d'Orsay when the artist-graphic conversation is an arrangement with the original architect of the work, which are examined in contrast in different angles and on a smaller scale against full-page black-and-white photographs of the actual installation. This approach gives us the visualization of a work which is what remains after the selection, the message-medium that circulates in the work again inquires the importance, for Arendt, of a composition and that "second hand" sign, where the original in this case the work exhibited ends up in the same level as the deconstruction of the work of by the work itself.

Chrysostomus again, in *De prophetis*, 1, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845,





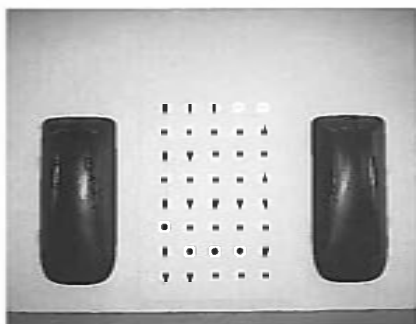






John Armleder

The artist's work is a constant interplay of text and image, often in the form of a collage. His work is characterized by a playful and ironic use of language, often incorporating words and phrases that are both familiar and obscure. This is evident in his use of text in his paintings and sculptures, which often serve as a commentary on the social and cultural context in which he works.



JOHN M. ARMLEDER, UNTITLED (FURNITURE SCULPTURE), 1995, acrylic on canvas and fiberglass cases, installation view, Klaus Nordenhake Gallery, Stockholm / Acryl auf Leinwand und Fiberglasboxen.

ARMLEDER'S CLASS, installation view at the exhibition "504" in Braunschweig, 1997 / KLASSE ARMLEDER, Installation im Rahmen der Ausstellung "504", Braunschweig (PHOTO: ANDREA BÖNING)

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John M. Armleder



five stages in the sequence of a film, I found that I could have been influenced by the image. So I used the same sequence of images, but with the

sequence of images in the same sequence, but with the same sequence of images in the same sequence.

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Il progetto di John Armleder per la Biennale di Venezia 1997, "Images, Things and Participation", è un'opera d'arte partecipativa che coinvolge il pubblico nella creazione di un'opera d'arte collettiva. L'opera è composta da una serie di pannelli murali che rappresentano diverse immagini e cose, e che sono stati realizzati con la partecipazione di un gruppo di persone. L'opera è stata installata nella Sala Terrena della Biennale di Venezia, e ha attirato l'attenzione del pubblico per la sua natura partecipativa e per la sua estetica.



*Whatever  
by  
Whoever*

[illegible][illegible]

1.  $\lim_{x \rightarrow 0} \frac{1}{x} = \infty$   
 2.  $\lim_{x \rightarrow 0} \frac{1}{x^2} = \infty$   
 3.  $\lim_{x \rightarrow 0} \frac{1}{x^3} = \infty$   
 4.  $\lim_{x \rightarrow 0} \frac{1}{x^4} = \infty$   
 5.  $\lim_{x \rightarrow 0} \frac{1}{x^5} = \infty$   
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 8.  $\lim_{x \rightarrow 0} \frac{1}{x^8} = \infty$   
 9.  $\lim_{x \rightarrow 0} \frac{1}{x^9} = \infty$   
 10.  $\lim_{x \rightarrow 0} \frac{1}{x^{10}} = \infty$

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## WHATEVER BY WHOEVER

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