

Accumulation

14.6.2025–27.7.2025

On Collecting, Growth and Excess

Second Sequence

Curated by
Tasnim Baghdadi and
Nadia Schneider Willen
with Paula Thomaka

Curatorial Assistant:
Linda Addae and
Mirta Gianocca

With works by: Bare Minimum Collective, Wang Bing, Anne-Lise Coste (Uruk), Rhea Dillon, Rindon Johnson, Nils Amadeus Lange, Mimi Onuoha, Sandra Poulson, Daniel Arnan Quarshie and Raqs Media Collective.

From the Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst collection: Art & Language, Clegg & Guttman, Joana Hadjithomas & Khalil Joreige, Gianni Motti, Yuri Pattison and Mierle Laderman Ukeles.

How do we create and proliferate a compelling vision of economies and ecologies that center humans and the natural world over the accumulation of material?
adrienne marie brown, *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds*, Chico, CA: AK Press 2017

We can barely imagine a life without accumulation. Whether money, property, clothing or technical devices, material possessions determine our daily life. Yet immaterial values such as social status, influence, wealth or knowledge are also accumulated. They decide who we are and how we see ourselves both individually and socially.

The second sequence of *Accumulation – On Collecting, Growth and Excess* links up to the first part of the exhibition series. The works presented delve deeply into the engagement with accumulation, taking as their theme ways in which the mechanisms of endless growth manifests itself in everyday power structures. Works from the collection, loans and new productions enter into dialogue with one another, extending the discourse from a variety of geographical and historical perspectives.

While the first sequence of the exhibition revealed how accumulation appeared in modern-day societies and what effects they have – such as the preservation of neo-colonial structures, the exploitation of people and resources, or the dominance of eurocentric value systems – *Sequence II* turns its focus towards the material traces of growth. It asks: what influence does the principle of accumulation have on the global movement of people, goods and capital, driven by economic necessity, ecological crises, global inequalities and historical power relations?

The positions shown address the tension between systems and individuals, as well as between the public and private sphere. They illuminate the mechanisms of exploitation in the Anthropocene, the age in which humans have become the most important factor influencing planetary processes: the toxic legacy of the fast fashion industry, the exhaustion of natural resources, the growing mountains of waste in urban areas. They tackle the subject of global financial flows that intervene profoundly in political and cultural processes. They expose colonial narratives through their material – such as mahogany wood, for example, which reminds us of the violent history of slavery and the transnational movement of the black diaspora. And they turn their focus onto digital infrastructures such as underground cable systems that interconnect our modern world.

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The exhibition is accompanied by a diverse programme featuring guided tours, performances, talks and screenings. More information and event dates are continuously updated online on migrosmuseum.ch/agenda

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Accumulation leaves traces behind in the environment, in bodies and in communities – recognisable signs, but deep scars, too. Yet from these fractures, new forms of resistance can grow. The exhibition reveals alternative strategies of care, of collective healing and of resilience; it offers alternative ways of dealing with systemic inequalities.

The two sequences are linked by continual reflection on the role and mission of the museum, in particular with regard to their collecting practices. For the collection of art also means the accumulation of power. What alternative strategies could help in challenging and changing existing practices?

The exhibition's first room seems at first glance to be unusually empty – and yet is not. *Gianni Motti's* work *Moneybox* (2009) penetrates it with its silent omnipresence. In an ironic gesture, the artist has thousands of one-dollar notes float from the ceiling. In this way he reveals the oft-invisible correlations between the economy and culture, making us reflect on the state of the global economy and the effects of the investment logic that is behind art collecting. By rematerialising the invisible flows of capital, Motti highlights the discrepancy between the material and symbolic value of money. Money, as he shows, is nothing more than a collective agreement.

Daniel Arnan Quarshie's installation *Kwatserekwa Mpaboa* (2024) shows the remnants of lived consumerism: worn clothing, an analogue television set, relics of earlier cycles of consumerism that have become obsolete due to wear and tear or the rapid forward march of technology. They are disposable evidence of times past and products of excessive resource consumption with devastating consequences for the environment.

Mimi Onuoha's video work *These Networks in Our Skin* (2021) directs our gaze towards the invisible: to those material infrastructures that enable the global flow of information. In her work, internet cables are filled with organic materials that carry spiritual meaning for the Igbo culture in the southeast of Nigeria: dust, hair, spices. The cables thus turn into carriers of spiritual and symbolic community practices. By means of this subversive appropriation and the subtle gesture of care, the unstoppable flow of information is interrupted.

The *Bare Minimum Collective* also examines care in the context of accumulation. An installation specially created for this exhibition – a space located between monument and altar – offers insight into the artistic collaboration of the collective, through archive materials, textiles, objects from daily life as well as video and audio recordings. In this way they re-define the term 'accumulation', beyond capital and the exploitation of resources: as a network of relationships that is based on lived solidarity, shared grief and mutual support.

A varied programme devised in collaboration with other artists and participants opens up space for the exchange of ideas and discussion. Two essays written by Jayanthan Sriram and Eric Golo Stone and published in collaboration with the magazine *Arts of the Working Class* add depth to the discourse, extending the debate in terms of contents. The exhibition reveals not only the destructive consequence of unfettered growth; it also shows ruptures, resistance and models. It thus encourages visitors to reflect upon new ways in which to rethink society.

Collective Curating:

Accumulation addresses connections between social, cultural, and environmental issues. For both sequences, the curatorial team of the Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst curated an exhibition for the first time through a collective process: By equally integrating the collection, program, and exhibition, a diversity of artistic perspectives has been created.