

COLLECTION ON DISPLAY:

John Armleder, Stefan Burger,
Valentin Carron, Edward
Krasiński, Manfred Pernice

May 4–August 18, 2013
Opening: May 3, 2013, 6–9 pm

Collection on Display presents selected works from the collection of the Migros Museum of Contemporary Art. The current presentation from the collection continues the cycle of exhibitions on recent sculptural praxis we launched last year. The works by John Armleder, Stefan Burger, Valentin Carron, Edward Krasiński, and Manfred Pernice on display in the third and final chapter of the exhibition are exemplary of today's creative production in sculptural art. We are delighted to present a series of works by Valentin Carron—who represents Switzerland at this year's Venice Biennale—that has never been on display at the Migros Museum of Contemporary Art. Also shown for the first time are newly acquired works by John Armleder, Edward Krasiński and Manfred Pernice.

Curator:
Judith Welter,
Collection Curator, Migros
Museum of Contemporary Art

In recent years, issues of sculpture have been a major focus of the exhibition programming at the museum and our efforts to enlarge its collection. The three-part presentation of works from the collection brings together works that raise questions concerning the possibilities of sculptural production. As a genre, sculpture—whether figural or abstract—occupied a central position in the history of art from the classical age to the modernist era. As the art historian Rosalind Krauss has argued, since the onset of postmodernism, the conception of sculpture has been broadened as its boundaries have become blurry—sculpture has quite literally been knocked off its pedestal. Sculptural work has expanded into a variety of media and materials, exploring the possibilities of space.

Some of the works on display in the third chapter of the exhibition examine "sculpture" as a three-dimensional construction in the exhibition space; others address the conditions imposed on art by the museum framework. Manipulated or found objects integrated into scenic displays in space become installative sculptures. The dispositives that generates stimulate reflection on the characteristic features of sculptures.

The sculptural oeuvre of Valentin Carron (b. 1977) engages with artisan craftwork and popular culture as well as the classic modernist canon of art; his focus is usually on a specifically Swiss tradition. Most of his sculptures are exact reproductions of the products of manual craftsmanship, fragments of public architectures, and works of art Carron encounters in public space. The artist also questions the principles of modernist aesthetics and sheds light on the fine lines separating art from kitsch and modernist sculpture from popular art in the public sphere. The raw material and point of departure for his works are folkloristic objects and decorative elements, "traffic circle art," but also icons of modernism such as are presented to mass audiences at the Fondation Giannada in Carron's hometown of Martigny. Working with various synthetic materials, Carron manufactures deceptively real imitations of surfaces; his method hovers between a form of appropriation art and a precise craftsmanly exploration of art's mimetic potential. Removed from their original contexts, the sculptures Carron replicates may be read in a variety of ways and not infrequently function as a *trompe-l'oeil*. The series of works presented in this exhibition were created for the show *Pergola* at the Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2010). In a sculptural arrangement surrounding the work *Rance Club IV*—an oversized wooden cross coated in white plaster—Carron assembles elements of a folkloristic Switzerland. The modernist-looking sculptures such as *Stark gefräßig nervös* and *Fructus* are replicas of objects the artist found in Martigny. The sculpture *lówEnzorn* reproduces the shape of a lamp hanging above the tables at the Basel restaurant of the same name.

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Manfred Pernice (b. 1963) has been making sculptures from the most diverse materials for more than twenty years, often combining them with objets trouvés, drawings, photographs, or other documents. Motifs drawn from public space as well as exhibition architecture and elements of classical sculptural form such as the pedestal encounter site-specific themes. In this manner, Pernice creates precise sculptural arrangements that insistently build associative links between questions of representation and the content level of other works or groups of works. The work *Badonviller* was originally made on occasion of the exhibition *liquidation-tischwelten 2* at CEACC, Strasbourg. The ceramic dishes set out on the pedestals and other remains come from the ruins of a ceramics factory in Badonviller, Lorraine, France; the village was burnt down during World War I, rebuilt, and destroyed again in World War II. On the one

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hand, Pernice's arrangement of documents and objects is thus a comment about the site-specific history of the German-French border region and its eventful past in the twentieth century. Although the order imposed by the artist suggests a documentary approach, the documents and relics and the interconnections between them do not coalesce into an unequivocal reading. Besides the historical point of reference, Pernice also foregrounds the reflection on the formal conditions of the display. The exhibition's title—"Tischwelten" or "table-worlds"—suggests a museum of local history or popular art; the form of presentation, meanwhile, has more in common with a modernist sculptural tradition and the display models used in retail. The ceramics serve Pernice as a reference to specific cultural and political situations in which traces of history have accumulated, and not least importantly also to cultural differences that manifest themselves in a particular taste.

The Swiss artist John Armleder (b. 1948), who has created a large and varied oeuvre over the past forty years, first drew public notice starting in the late 1960s with the Fluxus actions he staged with the Geneva-based artists' group Écart. In the 1980s, he abandoned Actionism and focused on painting and sculpture. Among other pieces, he developed a group of works he called the *Furniture Sculptures*, which combine used furniture or domestic objects with paintings showing abstract minimalist compositions. The everyday objects are painted on or integrated into a sculptural ensemble with the picture, which thus takes on a three-dimensional quality. Our acquisition, *Ohne Titel (Furniture Sculpture)* (1998), is part of this series. A used laundry basket from the 1950s is set on a pedestal, turning it into a sculptural object and relieving it of its original function. The classical form of sculpture presentation is defamiliarized by the exaggerated height and the cheap unpainted wood of the support. The canvas behind the basket, painted in a monochrome color, becomes a tapestry-like backdrop decoration.

Edward Krasiński (1925–2004) was a protagonist of the Polish arts scene of the 1960s and 1970s. As a cofounder of Galerie Foksal, he belonged to the inner circle of Warsaw's artistic avant-garde. The manifestos penned in its orbit crucially influenced Krasiński's creative output. Especially pivotal was a "General Theory of the Site" that endeavored a critical revision of the function and parameters of the exhibition. The site was to become the true object of art. In the late 1960s, Krasiński discovered the commercially available blue adhesive tape that would become the signature feature of his art, applied to various supports at the unvarying height of 130 cm. Both in the choice of industrial materials and in their rigid form and its relation to the space, his sculptures and works in space from the 1960s frame a distinctive variant of the era's prevailing American minimalism and, subsequently, post-minimalism. The work on display in the exhibition, *Intervention (Interwencja)* (1988), attests to the artist's interest in dissolving the traditional genre and interrogating the implications of the picture, sculpture, or action. The strips of blue tape connecting the white canvases turn them into an installation of sculptural objects. The work's title, meanwhile, implies an action the artist has performed in space.

Stefan Burger (b. 1977) creates photographs, sculptural works, videos, and installations that examine benchmarks and interactions within the referential framework of art history. The combination of formal rigor and a reduced visual language with humorous refractions and an ironic language he takes up, for example, in the titles of his works puts the mythologies of that framework on display and exposes them for what they are. The setting of the video work *Abstraktion und Blattmimese* is a model, a makeshift stage with two walls simulating an exhibition space. Inside it is a miniature exhibition of abstract sculptures and paintings. A chameleon sits almost motionless on a wooden pole reaching into the miniature room, dispassionately eyeing the exhibition. The arrangement reflects on the part the White Cube plays in generating the aura that surrounds art as well as the role of the beholder, here represented by the chameleon, who is summoned to contemplation by the sacred quality of the rooms. The work *Internationales Seifenkistenrennen Leipzig 2002* is inspired by a sculpture the artist found on Leipzig's Fockeberg hill. During the international soapbox derby "Prix de Tacot," which has been held there annually since 1991, the sculpture is padded with mattresses and car tires meant to protect the racers as much as the sculpture. By reproducing this temporary and well-meaning transformation of the sculpture carried out by the organizer of the event, Burger not only comments on the question of the value and significance of art in the public space; he also draws attention to art's balancing act between social representation and manipulation.

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John Armleder
Ohne Titel (Furniture Sculpture)
1998
Wood, furniture, acrylic on canvas
320 × 120 × 62 cm



Valentin Carron
Fructus
2010
Polystyrene, fiberglass, acrylic resin, acrylic paint
191 × 80 × 66 cm



Stefan Burger
Abstraktion und Blattmimese
2007
Single-channel video on monitor or projection
(color, sound)
Edition: 2/5 + 2 ap
8:50 min.



Valentin Carron
Stark gefräßig nervös
2010
Polystyrene, fiberglass, acrylic resin, acrylic paint
299 × 123 × 93 cm



Stefan Burger
Internationales Seifenkistenrennen Leipzig 2002
2007
Wood, plaster, rubber foam, concrete, mattress,
various materials
Ca. 350 × 250 × 250 cm

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Valentin Carron
löwenzorn
2010
Varnished steel, translucent glass, paint,
double sided tape
88 × 28.5 × 40.5 cm



Edward Krasiński
Intervention (Interwencja)
1988
Plywood, acrylic paint, scotch tape
4 parts: 70 × 50 × 10 cm each



Valentin Carron
Rance Club IV
2010
Wood, plaster, paint
Ca. 210 × 1101 × 734 cm



Manfred Pernice
Ohne Titel (Badonviller)
2010
Metal, found objects, ceramics, wood, paper,
chip board, acrylic paint
Dimensions variable

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