

TOUR D'HORIZON

Works from the collection of the migros museum für gegenwartskunst

February 11–May 6, 2012

**Lothar Baumgarten, Georg Baselitz, Jan Dibbets, Martin Disler, Donald Judd,
Sol LeWitt, Richard Long, Robert Mangold, A. R. Penck, Giuseppe Penone,
Gerhard Richter, Robert Ryman, Klaudia Schifferle**
February 11–March 4, 2012

Atelier van Lieshout, Carlos Amoraes
March 7–25, 2012

Art & Language
March 28–April 15, 2012

Gianni Motti
April 18–May 6, 2012

After the collection exhibitions in Vaduz, Kassel and Krems, the migros museum für gegenwartskunst presents a variety of works from the collection before another presentation in Bolzano. The Migros-Genossenschafts-Bund's collection was created in 1957, when the Migros's statutes were set down, providing for the Migros-Kulturprozent (Migros Culture Percentage); the late 1970s brought a new focus on international contemporary art and greater professionalization. Divided into four sections, *Tour d'Horizon* offers insights into the different interests and thematic standpoints that guided acquisition policies over the decades, but also addresses specific aspects and issues of how a collection is built. The show focuses on the presentation of exemplary works that have not been on public display in a long time, if ever. Organized along a chronology of the collection's acquisitions, the exhibition is accompanied by a program of events that examine a wide range of questions about collecting and the history of the collection.

In the 1970s, the collection primarily bought Minimal art, German painting, and important Swiss positions. During the past two decades, by contrast, the main emphasis has been on contemporary artists (including Maurizio Cattelan, Spartacus Chetwynd, Christoph Büchel, Urs Fischer, Douglas Gordon, Rachel Harrison, Mark Leckey, Henrik Olesen, Rirkrit Tiravanija, Tatiana Trouvé, Christoph Schlingensiefel, and Cathy Wilkes) and their important precursors (including Marc Camille Chaimowicz, Stephen Willats, Katharina Sieverding, and Paul Thek). Over the years, several protagonists have been responsible for the collection's acquisitions policies: Urs Raussmüller (1978–1985), Jacqueline Burckhardt (1986–1990), and Rein Wolfs (1991–2001), who was able to found the museum in 1996. Since 2002, Heike Munder has been director of the museum and, as such, in charge of its acquisitions. More recent purchases for the collection have usually been made in connection with exhibitions for which the artists created works. Over the decades, this strategy has enabled the collection to buy several major installations and to closely dovetail its exhibition programming with its efforts to enlarge its holdings.

By collecting contemporary art, we continually reflect both on our understanding of history and on the concept of the present; at the same time, however, any collection anticipates a view of the future. For by collecting and preserving art, we give shape to a narrative, a canon. By taking a contemporary conception of the work into account, an institutional collection is defined by its dynamism rather than being a static site of preservation. This exhibition project seeks to examine specific aspects with

regard to such complex temporality, but also illustrate the flexibility of the processes underlying a collection. *Tour d'Horizon* offers insights into the practices and paradigms of collecting as it has been conducted by the Migros-Genossenschafts-Bund over the past thirty years, and interrogates the current status quo. The exhibition also forms a connection to the project *Sammlung auf Reisen* (Collection on Tour), which has bridged the interim period the migros museum für gegenwartskunst has spent in its temporary exhibition space at Hubertus Exhibitions. The three exhibitions at the Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, the Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel, and the Kunsthalle Krems as well as the upcoming presentations at the Museion, Bolzano, and the Musée Rath, Geneva, have opened up new perspectives on familiar and time-honored works, but also drawn attention to less well-known items in the collection. The four parts of this exhibition project trace a line of development by presenting specific emphases of the collection's acquisitions during the various decades of its history, but also illustrate central challenges the work of collecting faces, an aspect the program of events will scrutinize more closely.

The exhibition's first section takes a look at the phase of growing professionalization in the collection's history, which coincided with the existence of the InK (1987–1981), the institutional precursor to today's museum. The InK, or "Internationale neue Kunst" (International New Art), is regarded as a pioneering institution, a model of its type: the "museum" of contemporary art. Led by Urs Raussmüller, the InK was conceived as an open and experimental site of production and reception; its central emphasis was on the creative process, and the public was sometimes invited to come and watch. Artists such as Bruce Nauman, Robert Ryman, Jannis Kounellis, and Lothar Baumgarten, who had already established reputations as protagonists on the international art scene, were invited to produce solo and group shows—some of the works on display then entered the collection. But the InK was most importantly also a scene of encounters, of the dissemination and exchange of ideas between the local and international art scenes. The InK era constitutes a sort of conceptual precursor for the subsequent reintroduction of formats that dovetail the exhibition programming with the efforts to expand the collection. On display in this section is a selection of works created in substantial connection with the institution by artists such as Jan Dibbets (b. 1941), Donald Judd (1928–1994), Klaudia Schifferle (b. 1955), and Giuseppe Penone (b. 1947), who showed their work at the InK. These works are complemented by documents from the InK's archives.

The second section of the exhibition exemplifies the period during the 1990s around the time the museum was founded. The characteristic feature of the works that were then acquired for the collection is that they tie in with everyday life and a variety of life-worlds on the level of content as well as aesthetics. The installations, many of which solicit the beholder's participation, are representative of the art of the 1990s, which attempted to dissolve the boundaries of the classical museum. The Mexican artist Carlos Amorales (b. 1970) examines Mexico's most popular sport, a form of wrestling called "Lucha Libre"; his "Lucha Libre" performances held in the museum negotiate questions concerning the artist's identity as well the social function of this Mexican tradition. The work of Atelier van Lieshout (est. 1995) addresses the question of social models and utopias. *Installation Saucisson* (1997) is part of a group of works in which the artists critically examine strategies of survival, constructing architectures for models of a life based on the idea of self-sufficiency. The installation recreates the setting of an old-fashioned abattoir, with preserved pork products made according to traditional slaughtering techniques on the shelves. But this work also exemplifies a specific problem museum collections face: how can the real life art transplants into the museum, and sometimes its invitation to the beholder to participate, be preserved? In today's perspective, ephemeral materials as well as the temporary animation and activation of the work through the involvement of the specific audiences present a challenge to conservators, raising crucial questions regarding what constitutes the original and authenticity of a work as well as possible forms of reconstruction or production. In consideration of these questions, parts of *Installation Saucisson* have been reconstructed for the exhibition in collaboration with the Department for Conservation and Restoration, specialization Modern Materials and Media, of Hochschule der Künste Bern.

In the third section, Art & Language's (est. 1968) multipart installation *Homes from Homes II* (2000/2001) will be shown, which was adapted in 2003 for the artists' solo show at the migros museum für gegenwartskunst and builds a relation to the collection's history by integrating earlier works that were purchased by the museum. The installation consists of three different forms of the presentation of three identical sets of works of art and reproductions. It must be read in the context of the conceptual and self-historicizing or retrospective approach to their own oeuvre that Art & Language pursued in a series of works. The installation is based on pieces from different periods of

the group's creative output, which spans decades, but the reproductions they use differ from the originals in their size, color, technique, and sometimes the text modules they include. One of the three forms of presentation expands the set group of works, blending it with items from the museum's collection that disrupt and reshape the "viral" dissemination. The different arrangements as well as the parodic copy of their own work, the artists hope, will inspire redescription and indexing. The artists aim at an interrogation of readings dependent on (re)presentation, a critical stance that can be applied by analogy to the works from the collection they recruit for their show.

The exhibition's final section includes *Moneybox* (2009), a work by Gianni Motti (b. 1958) and one of the collection's most recent acquisitions. Purchased last year, the work was originally created for an exhibition at the Centre d'Art Ferme de Buisson – in the middle of the global financial crisis. The artist took that show's budget in the form of twenty thousand dollar bills, which he tied to strings and then suspended from the ceiling in the museum's rooms so that they were just out of the visitor's reach. The dollar bill epitomizes a financial system whose long-standing hegemonies and finely tuned automatisms have been profoundly destabilized in recent years. The work of art has no permanent material form; after the end of the exhibition, the dollar bills are returned into circulation. Depending on how currency exchange rates shift, presenting the work thus entails a risk of loss, but also a chance of profit. By including the work in a museum collection, the mechanism by which the value of an asset changes constantly is multiplied, since this process can be put on display afresh at any moment in time. With characteristic irony, Motti's gesture illustrates a collection's potential as an investment.

PROGRAM OF EVENTS:

An extensive program of events accompanying the exhibition will address specific issues of collecting. Lectures, film presentations, and a panel discussion will take place on Wednesdays.

PUBLIC GUIDED TOURS:

The migros museum für gegenwartskunst offers public guided tours in German, English, and French. Tours are free of charge.

English: Sunday, March 25 and May 6, 3pm.

German: Sunday, March 11, and April 29, 3pm.

French: Sunday, April 8, 3pm.

GUIDED TOURS FOR FAMILIES:

These tours take 1.5 hours and include a hands-on component. They are specifically designed for families and free of charge. No registration is required. Sunday, March 18 and April 22, 2pm.

HOLIDAYS:

The museum remains closed on Good Friday, April 6, and on Tuesday, May 1. It will be open on Easter Sunday, April 8, and Easter Monday, April 9, from 11am to 5pm.

VISITORS' ADDRESS:

migros museum für gegenwartskunst / Hubertus Exhibitions
Albisriederstr. 199a
CH-8047 Zurich

Tue / Wed / Fri 12–6pm, Thu 12–8pm, Sat / Sun 11am–5pm. Free admission
Thursdays 5–8pm.

The museum remains closed for exhibition installation on Tuesday, March 27 and April 17. On Wednesday, March 28 and April 18, the new sections of the exhibition will open at 6pm.

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