

SAMMLUNG / COLLECTION

migros museum für gegenwartskunst Zürich

1978–2008

1st June – 17th August 2008

Carl Andre – Art & Language – Atelier van Lieshout – John Baldessari – Lothar Baumgarten –
Alighiero Boetti – Christine Borland – Olaf Breuning – Christoph Büchel – Heidi Bucher – Stefan
Burger – Tom Burr – Jean-Marc Bustamante – Maurizio Cattelan – Marc Camille Chaimowicz –
Spartacus Chetwynd – Marlene Dumas – Elmgreen & Dragset – Berta Fischer – Urs Fischer – Sylvie
Fleury – Gabriela Fridriksdóttir – Douglas Gordon – San Keller – Sol LeWitt – Christian Marclay –
Olivier Mosset – Juan Muñoz – Bruce Nauman – Olaf Nicolai – Cady Noland – Henrik Olesen – Giulio
Paolini – David Renggli – Ugo Rondinone – Ed Ruscha – Robert Ryman – Jean-Frédéric Schnyder –
Paul Thek – Rirkrit Tiravanija – Niele Toroni – Piotr Uklanski – Banks Violette – Philip Wiegard –
Stephen Willats – Christopher Wool

This exhibition has been organised to mark the 30th anniversary of the Migros-Genossenschafts-Bund's collecting activities, and has involved a three-year overhaul of the entire collection. A large number of old and new works from the collection is being displayed, encompassing all the various collection periods – from Minimalism and Conceptual Art in the 1960s and 1970s to contemporary works setting socio-political, performative, glamorous or surreal strategies off against each another. The integration of the collection, which looks at contemporary art production directed at a broad-minded public and provides continual exposure to new and different thematic points of view, into a lively environment, is the central concern of the exhibition. With this purpose in mind, exhibition architecture by Markus Schinwald is being used, which gives the observer the opportunity to have a “new view” of the works.

In founding the migros museum für gegenwartskunst in 1996 in the Löwenbräu complex in Zurich, where the Kunsthalle Zürich, the galleries Eva Presenhuber, Hauser & Wirth, Bob von Orsouw and Peter Kilchmann are also now located, the Migros-Kulturprozent created an institution whose main task is to mediate access to contemporary art, while at the same time creating an exhibition space for the collection of the Migros-Genossenschafts-Bund. The idea of the Migros-Kulturprozent dates back to the initiative of Migros founder Gottlieb Duttweiler (1888–1962). His wishes stipulated that the Migros-Genossenschafts-Bund and the Migros-Genossenschaften should make an annual contribution to the Migros-Kulturprozent. The contribution is calculated according to turnover, and is also provided in times of recession in retail business. This quite unique patron-like commitment became firmly anchored in the statutes of Migros in 1957, guaranteeing the future and continuity of the Migros-Kulturprozent. The migros museum für gegenwartskunst can be understood as a centre of contemporary art production. The term contemporary art itself implies integration in a social context and involvement in a process of exchange in the production of art. The exhibitions in the migros museum für gegenwartskunst set out to formulate art history through an open process.

For the most part, collection acquisitions have resulted from exhibition productions or work undertaken directly with the artists. In this way various large-scale installative works have been acquired over the decades. This was already happening during the life of *InK – Halle für internationale neue Kunst*, a forerunner of the migros museum für gegenwartskunst founded by Urs Rausmüller, which was based at Limmatstrasse 87 from 1978 to 1981, not too far away from the museum's current location. The migros museum für gegenwartskunst is almost unique in the way that it enables the collection of extremely complex and elaborate installations that otherwise would have stood little chance of being preserved. From the outset the various protagonists have been in charge of collecting activities; Urs Rausmüller (1976–1985), Jacqueline Burckhardt (1986–1990), and Rein Wolfs (1991–2001), who under the leadership of Arina Kowner of the Directorate of Cultural and Social Affairs of the Migros-Genossenschafts-Bund, was able to found the museum in 1996, which was handed on to Heike Munder, its current director, in 2002. The collection's core inventory of circa 450 works has been accumulated during the three decades from 1978–2008. The collection works are not on permanent display, but usually come to public view alongside contemporary art positions within the context of actual exhibitions. In this manner the visitor experiences the collection works in the context of current art production and discovers their numerous facets anew.

The exhibition architecture of this comprehensive collection presentation has been created by a further development of the display form of Markus Schinwald's exhibition, which was on view in the museum from 16th February to 18th May 2008. Schinwald, who oriented his spatial design to that of Friedrich Kiesler (1890–1965), has achieved more than a mere arrangement of the works; he has furthered the concept of holistic Correalism, which opposed the dominating advocacy of Functionalism in Kiesler's time. It is the individual requirements of people or the works themselves that figure in the foreground and for which flexible designs have to be created. In this way the exhibition of the collection works fuses different periods and conceptual foci – whether socio-political approaches, the phenomenon of the “uncanny”, subcultures in music, or the discourse of glamour. The exhibition display uses the “Trager and Leger (T and L) system”, which integrates the spectator into the spatial and temporal context. Kiesler developed the so-called “T+L System” in 1924 for the *Internationale Ausstellung neuer Theatertechnik* in Vienna. It comprises a flexible, free-standing construction for the presentation of objects and pictures. Within it the spectator is made conscious of his role as “active see-er” (aktiver Sehender), and can follow and develop his/her own analogies and narrative strands. Kiesler described his concept of this architecture in the following terms: “Contact, not separation and resignation. They are set up for participation not isolation.”

The exhibition is curated by Heike Munder and Markus Schinwald.

The exhibition will show:

Carl Andre (born 1935) is widely regarded as one of the most important exponents of minimalism. The debate over the spatial potentialities of sculpture lies at the heart of his work. The object is no longer received primarily visually, but instead demands active participation in which perception and consciousness relocate into a new dimension. Thus, responding to the work **Cubolt** (1981), which includes the structure and specificity of the materials, requires the observer to walk between adjacent copper plates. The interplay involves direct contact with the artwork – which is normally forbidden – thereby suspending the need to distance oneself from the work in order to contemplate it.

Art & Language is the title of a periodical established in 1968 and at the same time the title of a group of English artists who work collectively and anonymously. The Art & Language group offers a critical analysis of the relationships between art, society and politics. Against the historical background of the *linguistic turn*, Art & Language links art with language, systematically scrutinising the assumptions of art theory and practice as well as the legacy of the breakdown of modernism. Mel Ramsden (born 1944), Michael Baldwin (born 1945) and Charles Harrison have been leading the Art & Language project since 1976. The images of the installation **Homes from Homes II** (2000–2001), which is divided into three groups, refer both to early works of Art & Language and to older works in the collection of the migros museum für gegenwartskunst. In the exhibition presentation, however, only one group of images of the installation is to be seen. They involve a form of illustration featuring small reproductions of Art & Language works, which parody themselves through their size and how they are hung. This extremely compact hanging raises questions about the reference system of the images and texts. The very area in which the observer has expertise – the construction of references concerning compositional decisions – is doomed here to failure.

The oeuvre of the **Atelier van Lieshout** (established in 1995, by Joep van Lieshout, born 1963) sets out to create an absolutely independent social system and lives off the schizophrenic relationship between community and violence, consequently sketching a controversial image of society. In its installations and (architectural) drawings the Atelier van Lieshout suggests pragmatic solutions to the problems of its creation of society – from compost toilets and water purification systems to sleep and living units – and questions individual freedom, equality and autonomy and the power relationships pertaining to them. The modular figure **AVL-Men** (1999), a representative human being, populates the creation of Atelier van Lieshout, an undemanding, easily satisfied worker made of fibreglass. A critique of the uniformity of mass society and its idealism may be read in him.

In his works **Lamp (Zurich No. 2)** and **Plant (Zurich No. 2)** (1997–1998), **John Baldessari** (born 1931) placed monumental photographs of a plant pot and a lampshade on a background of patterned wallpaper facing one another. The odd analogy repeats itself formally and materially in the motifs confronted on both wallpapers. In his work Baldessari follows, in a conceptual sense, the investigation of spatial experience inherent to Minimalism, but carried over into a new context. The overloading of

the wall surfaces makes the dissolution of the white cube its theme, a paradigm of art experience and presentation of the 1990s.

Lothar Baumgarten (born 1944) slipped into the role of artistic anthropologist through his continued exploration of the cultures of North and South America in the photography of his travels. On some of his photographs he placed exotically sounding names and words over a smooth wooden parquet floor, or ethnological reportages commemorating the subjects. Unlike scientific anthropology, Baumgarten has compiled associative connections, reflecting through them our own perceptions and portrayals of exotic, foreign cultures. The series **Vom Aroma der Namen** (1985) topographically reproduces a distant landscape generated purely through its mythical-sounding names.

In his works, **Alighiero Boetti** (1940–1994) changed various codes of perception and substituted them with his own personal world views – whether through his collages of illustrated cover pages or his most renowned group of works the *Mappe*, created over several decades. He had the embroidered maps of countries fabricated by various women in Afghanistan, where he lived for several years. The works are differentiated by their composition, colouring and territorial demarcation – Boetti thus questioned, as in no other group of works, the specific politics of individual countries and their power relationships to one another, made legible by means of cartography and the investigation of their change, dissolution and shifting. The personal (embroidered) handwriting makes the *Mappa* (1983) a unique piece, thereby implicitly giving a personal perception of the world; while each *Mappa* documents an altered geopolitical world situation, be it the breakdown of the USSR or new border demarcations.

The works of **Christine Borland** (born 1965) are the undertaking of an enquiring mind, which reverts to a quasi-scientific and forensic method. The busts in the work **L'Homme Double** (1997) were completed assignments by six academic sculptors, each displaying the face of the Nazi criminal Josef Mengele, the “charismatic angel of death” at Auschwitz. The sculptor’s simulations were made using two photographic portraits and written descriptions by survivors of Auschwitz. In Auschwitz Mengele experimented primarily with twins, children of the Sinti and Roma, and people of restricted growth, whom he held to be exemplary of the “abnormal”. By comparing them with other incarcerated children he wanted to confirm the assertions of Nazi racist ideology. Mengele’s “congenial” appearance and his grotesque acts are totally divergent and the busts betray nothing of the psychological structure of Mengele as a person. The functional wooden plinth, documents and photographs on the walls increase the clinical and scientific experimental appearance of the work.

Since the late 1990s **Olaf Breuning** (born 1970) has produced quotation-filled works that refer to the memory of Western society and its world of imagination. **Hello Darkness** (2002) is a room installation staging various objects from popular cultural contexts, which nonetheless refer to classical art historical image categories. In a darkened room stands a wooden coffin in which a female rubber doll lies with an axe in her hand. Across from her sits a plastic skeleton. The figures stand in dialogue with one another – to the puppet’s question of whether the skeleton is sad that its life is over, the skeleton begins to hum a song. This melody quotes the first line of Simon and Garfunkel’s famous song *The Sound of Silence*. The conversation culminates in the words “See? It is always the same story”.

Christoph Büchel (born 1966) has caused a furore in the last few years with his installations that often feature completely fictional contemporary apartments. The work **AKE 0453 PE** (2006), a luggage container that is exploded and then put back together, takes the subject of terrorism and the territorial politics of the USA. The title of the work is the short form of a certain type of luggage container. The “imploded” luggage container, for which reconstructed luggage containers from the Lockerbie bombing served as an example, becomes a symbol of collective trauma.

The artist **Heidi Bucher** (1926–1993) became famous in the 1970s and 1980s for her latex skinning of spatial architecture. In her early cycle of works **Bodysells** (1972–1973) she had already investigated the house and its psychological function. The *Bodysells* were sculptures of plastic foam with mother of pearl rubbed into the exterior. The use of an opalescent material derived from shells turns the soft sculptures into peculiar vestments. Hovering between modernist architecture and the notion of vestments, they also recall odd sea creatures or oversized mussels and octopi. Heidi Bucher had the figures appear to move over the sand at Venice Beach and documented this on video.

In his photographs, sculptural works, videos and paper works **Stefan Burger** (born 1977) investigates points of reference and interactions within the reference system of art history and its mythologies. The setting of the video work **Abstraktion und Blattmimese** (2007) resembles a laboratory experiment. At

the centre is a model-like, provisional stage, which forms an exhibition room out of two walls. Within it is a miniature exhibition of abstract sculptures and paintings. On a wooden stick in the dollhouse-like model configuration sits a chameleon, observing the exhibition almost motionlessly and detached. The configuration reflects the meaning of the white cube in its deployment of an auratic effect, as well as the role of the observer brought to contemplation by the sacredness of the space, represented here by the indifferent chameleon.

The works of **Tom Burr** (born 1963) situate him within a generation of artists who, since the late 1980s, have addressed the political and critical potential of art. As a consequence he is predominantly interested in public issues and the structuring of public spaces, which become his subject by means of his formal vocabulary of signs, originating from minimalist art. At the same time he undermines the “post-minimalist” language of signs by combining them with elements of pop culture and music, underground and gay culture. The four collages ***Spiraling (The Blood of a Poet) No. 2–5*** (2005) refer both formally and in content to Jean Cocteau’s surrealist film *Le Sang d’un Poète* (1930), and can also be read as a homage to it. The film’s protagonist, an artist who sinks increasingly into introspection as he creates his art, finally taking his own life, is taken up again at a formal, abstract level by the symbol of the spiral.

Jean-Marc Bustamante (born 1952) investigates the exchange between sculpture, painting and photography in his works and questions the respective naming and categorisation of these genres. He became famous in the late 1970s for his large-format photography of Spanish landscapes, which he designated as *Tableaux*. One subject that continually resurfaces in his work is the nexus between theoretical, abstract space and real space in nature and architecture. Thus, the painted iron sculpture ***Feuille*** (1992) oscillates between an abstract “crudeness” and, as the title implies, the sensual immediacy of a plant leaf.

In his sculptures, installations, actions and performances, **Maurizio Cattelan** (born 1960) plays ironically with cultural and socio-political values and concepts of morality as well as the art system itself, in a quite immediate manner. The stuffed donkey in the work ***If a Tree Falls in the Forest and there Is No One around It, Does It Make a Sound?*** (1998) is carrying a heavy old TV set – a third-world beast of burden is thereby loaded with the information medium of western media-dependent and technological culture. The donkey is normally an allegory of stupidity but here it is the bearer of the symbol of the power and potential of the media – it is characteristic of Cattelan to torpedo society with an immediate and striking publicity strategy.

The arrangement of personal, meaningful objects serves as a memory and homage, and takes an important place in the work of **Marc Camille Chaimowicz** (born in the immediate postwar period). At the same time these gestures clarify the inner context of individual works. Associated with the artist’s life, the objects, installations, photographs, sculptures, at times combined with texts, form a poetic whole, often processually generated. Chaimowicz’s creations, originating from the end of the 1960s to the present, elude distinct art historical categorisation and discourses, while reflecting aesthetic paradigms and connecting to, for instance, the arts and crafts movement or conceptual art. ***Partial Eclipse*** (1980–2003) takes up the gesture of arrangements as a form of memory and consolidates these thoughts by means of a slide projection with two parts separated in time. It is a meditation on the loss of a past experience – through interiors, bodies, odours and emotions. The memory work runs over visual fragments, still-life images of plants, people and furniture. Chaimowicz produced these images over a long period of time, from the precursor of the slide installation in 1980, and subsequently in various versions as part of a performance accompanied by sound.

Spartacus Chetwynd (born 1973) gained recognition with her baroque and surreal performances featuring humorous image quotations from art history linked to pop culture. ***Walk to Dover*** (2005/2007) documents a performance in the summer of 2005. Over a week-long journey the artist and her performance troupe travelled on foot from London to Dover. The staged walk refers to a passage from Charles Dickens’ novel *David Copperfield* (1849). David, the novel’s protagonist, while still a child, was compelled to work in a London factory. He decided to flee to his aunt in Dover on foot. Dressed in shabby clothes and frugally equipped, Chetwynd’s troupe repeated the boy’s journey to Dover. *Walk to Dover* shows the performance alternately as a quick sequence of pictures in the style of a slide show and moving video sequences, in turn highlighted by passages from the novel and heavy metal music.

The centre point of **Marlene Dumas’** work (born 1953) broaches the various facets of human life. In the traditional medium of painting Dumas addresses the everyday but also intimate and frequently

unadorned conditions of existence and events. The expressive forms characterizing the painting often give an undisguised view of the body, sexuality and intimacy. The work **Indifference** (1993–1994) reveals a group of people in a surreal environment who have freed themselves of all inhibitions. From a direct perspective Dumas opens up a moment of excess and plays with the voyeuristic position of the observer.

The video work **Drama Queens** (2007) by the artist duo **Elmgreen & Dragset** (Michael Elmgreen, born 1961 and Ingar Dragset, born 1969), is based on a 40-minute performance in the Münster Stadttheater. Superstars from the history of modern sculpture meet there on the stage. They are capricious figures and all of them speak in the languages of their respective creators about their life as sculptures in a museum: thus, for instance, Alberto Giacometti's *Walking Man* (1947) talks with Sol LeWitt's *Four Cubes* (1971). Other actors are sculptures by Jeff Koons, Barbara Hepworth, Ulrich Rückriem, Jean Arp and Andy Warhol. An illustrious host of little **Drama Queens** people the stage, each of whom plays out his or her art-historical idiosyncrasies with adroitness. In the drama written by Tim Etchells, the various fundamental aesthetic concepts and directions of the sculptures are debated and the subjects range from formalism to Minimalism and Pop Art to the postmodern.

From her earlier works **Berta Fischer** (born 1973) engaged with the classical subject of the "figure" – and found a new rendition while questioning their fixity. Fischer's works can be regarded as an answer to the rigid minimalism of the 1960s and 1970s and its industrial materials, which she claimed to be "anti-form". Her neon-coloured Perspex sculptures make the fragility of the material their subject. In the style of *écriture automatique*, an unimpeded stream of consciousness reflecting historical surrealism, the fragile formations whirr through the room – just as they do in the work **Ohne Titel** (2004).

The pictorial world of **Urs Fischer** (born 1973) is changeable and fragile, continually threatened by (apparent) destruction and dissolution. Characteristic of his work is a persistently virtuoso, experimental yet unpretentious handling of various materials, media and perspectives. In the spatially arresting sculpture **Glaskatzensex – Transparent Tale** (2000) Fischer makes a sharp and richly faceted investigation of architecture, taking on its brittleness, absence and lack. Fragments of glass walls, partially coated in silicon skins and applied to wooden boards, form a landscape of ruins that cast gentle shadows illuminated by spotlight. The simplicity of the arrangement of the forms recalls modernist architecture, which has already lost some of its "modernness" and appears slightly dusty and scuffed. Enveloped and hidden in the landscape is the object of the title, a glass cat assembled from fragments.

When, in the early 1990s, **Sylvie Fleury** (born 1961) placed the results of her escapist shopping trips in an art space by simply putting them down, the art critics rapidly agreed on her iconic gesture – the 1990s' Ready Made, which took consumer habits as a subject, had been born. The starting point of the work **Blue Notes & Incognito** (2004) is a copy of a Carl Andre piece: the fragments of a Chanel make-up tin, which has been smashed by a deliberate hammer blow, lie on a base of metal plates. The work, however, is not to be understood as pure irony, but rather as the transferral of the historical work into the present for its discussion, even as a homage to the minimalist artist. Additionally Fleury does not refer directly to Andre's work but to its reception, commenting on its iconic and auratic development with a gesture of glamour that makes minimalism, with its macho gestures and self-imposed dogma, appear hieratic and fossilised.

In her drawings, sculptures, music experiments and videos the artist **Gabriela Fridriksdóttir** (born 1971) creates a surrealist microcosm peopled by hybrid and sexually charged beings, which can be read as a metaphor for melancholy and excess. Her video works are characterised by the weave of a narrative structure inspired by Nordic saga cycles that is then broken by rational logic. Fridriksdóttir's energetic drive to investigate the irrational and enigmatic is also reflected at a material level in her sculptures. The work **Melancholy** (2001) can be regarded as exemplary of Fridriksdóttir's sculptures. A (human) animal is frozen in an ominous position, on one side a saw and on the other a tree branch have grown prosthesis-like out of the creature instead of hands – the animal finds itself in a moment of self-mutilation. In this sculpture the artist plumbs the dark depths of an emotional place where psychic moments of excess manifest themselves catastrophically in the physical and become a permanent condition.

Douglas Gordon (born 1966) became known for his experimental confrontations with film, putting the communicative potential of art to the test in his series *Instructions*. **Instruction. (Number 3a)** (1993) was created for the *Migrator* exhibition, curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist at the Musée d'Art Moderne in

Paris. The curator or an assistant were to make a telephone call at least once a day and carry out instructions stipulated by Gordon. The work was not generated by the artist alone but by following of his demands and therefore through a cooperation between artist, curator and institution. The sentence to be spoken – *If you hear those words until you kiss someone with blue eyes* – which is conveyed to the receiver without comment, remains enigmatic and contrasts with the clear instructions.

The works of **San Keller** (born 1971) are not created from isolated objects, but are spaces of activity that often involve the artist as well as the observer in equal measure. In his actions Keller investigates the role of the artist, but also the tension between the artist and observer, between actor and public. In the work ***Nothing Is Perfect*** (2005) the ebony baton is not a relic of a performance but far more to be understood as an object of action. The fashion designer Christian Dior possessed a baton with a golden point with which he could indicate his employees the flaws to be corrected in his items of clothing. Keller's wooden stick is a free interpretation of that baton, used in the art context: critics can move through the exhibition and collections and point out the shortcomings of the exhibits to the public. The work is paradigmatic of Keller's way of dealing with the institutional and his intention of using the museum as a space for his actions, and through these reflections likewise to disclose the infiltration of institutional structures.

Sol LeWitt (1928–2007) works out of the tradition of constructivism, the Bauhaus as well as the Dutch De Stijl movement, and today is regarded as one of the most important proponents of conceptual art. His image language is moulded by geometric forms, which often surface in serial combinations. Here the aesthetic experience is not at the forefront as in traditional visual art, but rather the idea, the concept of the work. In the work ***Geometric Figures*** (1977) basic geometric shapes, created from an inner logic, align with a traceable system.

The work of **Olivier Mosset** (born 1944) initially developed over a series of actions, which he organised together with Daniel Buren, Michel Parmentier and Niele Toroni under the name B.M.P.T. between 1966 and 1967. With the demand of limiting himself to the repetition of a certain random motif, Mosset's was a black circle with a diameter of 9 cm; the artists reduced their painterly practice to a "zero point" of meaningfulness and personal exertion. Mosset continued to demand a form of painterly "truth" (as Paul Cézanne named it), which had to base itself on the material conditions of the picture (size, format, picture carrier, colour, technology and so on). In the work ***Red Star*** (1990) the peculiarity of the material is that it corresponds to the motif and form of the canvas. The "critical materialism" developed by the artist 30 years ago turns his work into a specific abstract (objective) and painterly form of resistance against the art's entry into the culture industry.

The work ***Living in a Shoe Box (For Konrad Fischer)*** (1993) makes the motionlessness of sculpture its subject, one that interested **Juan Muñoz** (1953–2000) greatly. Two small figures ride back and forth endlessly in a shoe box fastened to the rails of a model railway track – they seem like miniaturised versions of sculptures by the artist. The indefatigable movement of the two puppet-like figures refers to the unending circle in which the figures of the artists are bound. The dedication of the title is to a one-time Düsseldorf gallery owner, and relates to an anecdotal recollection of Muñoz: in his eyes Konrad Fischer lived in an apartment the size of a shoe box, contrasting sharply with his activity as an international gallery owner.

In the 1960s **Bruce Nauman** (born 1941) began making neon sculptures. Nauman used neon lighting in a way akin to its original advertising function, for the production of writing. The characters of the name Bruce, based on the artist's own handwriting, are difficult to decipher in the work ***My Name as Though It Were Written on the Surface of the Moon*** (1968). To represent his signature as suggested in the title, to be legible from the earth when written on the moon, the individual letters of the name were repeated several times. Nauman's work persistently engages with questions of the perception of meaning and exposes the observer to irritating experiences. Accordingly the work demands a participatory effort by the observer, who has to imagine reading the text aloud in order to understand the visual distortion. In an exaggeratedly humorous manner Naumann points likewise to the stylized import of the artist's signature.

Olaf Nicolai (born 1962) confronts the aesthetic symbols of lifestyle and design, investigating therein the various contexts of reception and possibilities of effect. Smooth surfaces and objects from the consumer and commodity aesthetic world are the themes of Nicolai's work. In this way he questions the ideal of a democratised aestheticisation of everyday life, a position propagated since the time of the Bauhaus. The illumination sculpture ***Dresden 68*** (2000) is made up of modular forms and rests on the design of lamps that lit the display windows of large departments stores in Dresden from the mid-

1960s. Transported into the context of the exhibition space, they lose their function to the benefit of an aesthetic sublimation.

With strategic lightness, **Cady Noland** (born 1956) combines the iconographic sources of Pop Art, the display forms of Minimalist Art and the re-semanticization of the form in post-minimalistic art of the 1970s. Far from exalting the “American Way of Life”, Noland’s artistic practice is better grasped as a form of socio-archaeology and de-sublimated reality stagings. Thus ***Ohne Titel (Brick Wall)*** (1993–1994) – the silkscreen print version of a brick wall motif – is at once the picture of a wall and a sheet of aluminium where the function of a wall has been simulated. The brick wall, a cheap construction, which became the symbol of poverty in the working class, in a way becomes an image of social repression, which in the meantime presents itself as a purely decorative element. Robbed of its function, it becomes a fleeting substitute image, rather as one strives to grasp at meaning during psychoanalysis.

Since the mid-1990s **Henrik Olesen** (born 1967) has used the media of collage, sculpture and minimalist spatial invention to investigate the societal constitution, and the construction of identity and historiography. Through the appropriation of image sources and the contextual displacement of implicitness Olesen probes the association of homosexuality and its criminalisation in the past as well as the present. The work ***Some Gay-Lesbian Artists and/or Artists Relevant to Homo-Social Culture Born between c. 1300-1870*** (2007) is part of a room-filling installation, which the artist first displayed in his solo exhibition in 2007. It is composed of a four part series of illustrations – only two will be shown in this exhibition – recalling the *Mnemosyne* series of art historian Aby Warburg. Warburg railed against the notion of art knowledge directed by art enthusiasm and purely formal aestheticisation and proposed the conceptualisation of art in the context of social embedding and production. Henrik Olesen worked with and against this spiritual father of another form of art history. The image series are the result of two years’ research and include images from the Middle Ages to the 19th century.

Since the 1960s **Giulio Paolini** (born 1940) has engaged in an interplay between artist, work and observer, the presentation and representation of works in space, and not least with seeing as the constitutive moment of the image. Underlying his works is an interest in staging via theatrical means. The work ***Summa copiosa*** (1982) consists of a seemingly classical mural surrounded by ten framed figure parts. Scattered over the frames and the wall are fragile laurel leaves. The border of the work, drawing and at the same time installation, are openly legible, and the observer is called upon to assemble the picture through the act of seeing.

The unanticipated conjunction of a multiplicity of various everyday materials and motifs characterise the sculptural objects and spatial installations of **David Renggli** (born 1974). Renggli creates apparently known objects, which upon closer inspection frequently emerge to the observer as surreal, absurd grotesques because of their material composition or the combination of objects. The moment of surprise shapes the aesthetic principle which is a recurrent theme in Renggli’s work. The installation ***You, Can You Recommend Your Psychiatrist*** (2007) leads the observer past a lamp sculpture to a light bulb in the middle of the room, the light of which is enveloped in an artificial fog. Initially the light cast from this bulb reveals a wall upon which are hung 1001 framed collages, drawings and paintings. They are not to be seen as individual works but rather, overall, as a manic installation. But precisely this seemingly unending arrangement remains incomprehensible. The room is subject to a total overload of images, which in the fog and the loss of the sense of space can only just be made out.

A longing for romanticism and a deep despair characterise the work of **Ugo Rondinone** (born 1963), who over the last twenty years has produced a body of work that repeatedly adopts and cites the figure of the exhausted clown, large-format India ink drawings which nostalgically recall 19th century Romantic engravings and large multi-coloured concentric paint circles. Two monumental Indian ink landscapes surface in the installation ***The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter*** (1995). They are hung on a brown wall of vertically placed boards, reminiscent of the 1970s’ narrow-minded, petit-bourgeois smugness. Round loudspeakers have been randomly placed in the wall of wooden boards, appearing like knots in the wood and emitting melancholy music that completes the scene.

In the works of **Ed Ruscha** (born 1937), elements from advertising graphics and scene painting, and their emotive properties, surface continually. His painting and paper works are informed by an illusionist matt technology on glass, which was used in early Hollywood films. The photograph-like motifs swing between kitsch and good taste – as in the work ***Westward Ho*** (1986). Language, or its absence in the title, plays a central role in Ruscha’s work. Many of his titles contain sayings inspired

by American rhetoric such as “*Westward Ho*”, which to the observer recalls the American “pioneer spirit”. Red censor lines mark the absence of formerly dominating linguistic elements.

The colour white and the square format are both constants in the oeuvre of **Robert Ryman** (born 1930). This principle is used in the work ***Painting with Steel and Line*** (1978). All forms of subjective, individual composition are blanked out in Ryman’s painting. The reduction of colour and form, as well as the elimination of subjectivity, permit a deepened confrontation with the medium of painting. At the core is a focus on the manner of paint application. The interplay between certain picture frames, colours, and fastening and hanging systems gives each a completely different effect. Within a limited scale of possibilities Ryman tests the diversity of the forms of appearance of painting.

From the early 1980s the trained photographer **Jean-Frédéric Schnyder** (born 1945) has painted a series of pictures of everyday motifs in Switzerland: railway station waiting rooms, sunsets, landscapes, pictures of villages and motorway traffic – even the logo of Migros, instantly recognisable in everyday Swiss life in ***Ohne Titel (M)*** (1986). Thus, in its manner of appearance, his conceptual painting recalls a folk art “Sunday painting” style. In Schnyder’s work, however, the representative function is self-conscious so it acts as a mantle from which a more radical and abstract content can be read.

The work of **Paul Thek** (1933–1988) is steeped in an individual and personal mythology resulting from his own subjective experience. ***Uncle Tom’s Cabin with Tower of Babel (from the series “The Personal Effects of the Pied Piper”)*** (1976), a tower-like bronze sculpture, is conspicuous for its height and refined design. The little house at the bottom of the surrealist figure resembles a house of the colonial Deep South, referring to the first part of the title of the work that quotes Harriet Beecher Stowe’s famous novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. The architectonic structure of the construction refers to the other part of the work’s title, the tower of Babel. The mice – the only inhabitants of the utopian building – are another reference to a literary art work: *Uncle Tom’s Cabin with Tower of Babel* belongs to the series of works entitled *The Personal Effects of the Pied Piper*, created from various sculptures and works whose source of inspiration is the Grimm tale *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*, Thek’s alter ego. The allegorical self-portrait treats the artist as outsider and redeemer, and oscillates between the poles of self-heroicization and self-commiseration.

At the heart of the works of **Rirkrit Tiravanija** (born 1961) lies an interest in the communicative potential of art. In the manner of the participative paradigms of the 1990s the visitor becomes an integral constituent of the work and the exhibition space becomes a space of action. The work ***Ohne Titel (Bon voyage Monsieur Ackermann)*** (1995–), narrates the journeys and adventures of a converted 1969 Opel Commodore. In the car boot Tiravanija has installed a simple kitchen, which can be used for catering during trips. The car is driven to the location of each exhibition by the artist or a representative – an act which is part of the concept of the work. Here too Tiravanija’s art is a process: the locomotion is constantly recorded by a tachometer. Like a colossal relic the car, still in active use, stands in the exhibition space, where it is mutated from a used object into a museum object, but at the same time a documented activity that has taken place. *Ohne Titel (Bon voyage monsieur Ackermann)* comments on a globalised art world, in which the artist and work have become nomadic entities in equal measure. The often difficult journey, which has to be driven between the various exhibition locations, is a constantly repeating real-time experience, which Tiravanija has enabled the visitor to experience.

The work by **Niele Toroni** (born 1937) was initially developed in a series of actions between 1966 and 1967 together with Daniel Buren, Michel Parmentier and Olivier Mosset organised under the name B.M.P.T. With the aim of limiting themselves to the repeat of a certain arbitrary motif, the artists reduced their painterly practice to a “zero point” of meaningfulness and personal deployment. Since 1967 Toroni has painted regular brush strokes at a distance of 30 cm with a 50 cm brush. His procedure is rigorously depersonalised, although his ***Empreintes de pinceau no. 50 répétées à intervalles réguliers*** (1993) are always the result of an individual composition.

The work ***Ohne Titel (A Leaf)*** (1999) and ***Ohne Titel (Tiger, Bursting)*** (1998) are part of the current series *The Joy of Photography* by **Piotr Uklanski** (born 1968). It investigates and reflects the medium of photography, which in an everyday and popular cultural context has long possessed a huge meaning beyond the artistic tendency of the medium. The title of the series quotes a publication by Kodak aimed at amateur photographers, offering instructions and help in the search for the right kind of visual language and the creative potential of the medium. Uklanski’s series contains photographs of the most diverse subjects and uses very varied photographic technologies, plumbing the potential of

the medium, which at the time of the Kodak publication, in the late 1970s, was far from the possibilities of digital technology.

With his assemblage of drawings, epoxy resin-covered sculptures and murals, **Banks Violette** (born 1973) has developed a closed symbolic system, which reflects his interests in an artistic engagement with subcultures like black and death metal music and its iconography. The subcultures create elements and motifs of "high art" – as with the example of the skull, a favourite motif of the transient in the baroque still-life – but in this detour via subculture it is charged with a new significance. Thus, in the seductive glossy black graphite drawing ***Beneath the Remains*** (2005), whose striking edges or contrasts are made by the scorings of razor blades, Violette takes on the classical symbol of Vanity as a basic motif and elaborates it further with other symbols of black metal.

Philip Wiegard (born 1977) uses various media and stylistic devices – the conceptual starting points of his precise works are usually clearly defined positions and stylistic directions of art history, design, or trivial everyday culture, which remain recognisable as quotes in his works. His sculptures, often once-functional but now disused furniture or objects, are distorted, crushed, buckled and pressed by an invisible hand. In this manner, through the deconstruction of their functionalism, the objects are released and inserted into a new value system. In the work group ***Kulissenphoto*** (2001/2006) Wiegard formally links to cubist and Dadaist elements in the tradition of Kurt Schwitters. He constructed a wooden model of tables and chairs with a life-size backdrop, which was photographed with a camera obscura he made himself. Wiegard created a series of photographs distinguished by the varying interplay of light, perspective, surfaces and backgrounds.

Stephen Willats (born 1943) understands art as a social process in its most rigorous implementation. His conception incorporates the reflection of social conditions within the museum exhibition space. Willats' works evidence an attempt to decipher the construction of social acts. For over thirty years he has been concerned with conditions of social building projects and the confining effects on the occupants. Through conversations and photographic documentation he attempts to put the individual occupant in the foreground and work out where the peculiarities and freedom of the individual actually reside. The diagrammatic collages of ***Learning to Live within a Confined Space*** (1978) demonstrate the mechanisms the occupants have developed to express their individuality within the uniformity of the building, and the forms of self-organisation that have emerged from those structures.

The painting of **Christopher Wool** (born 1955) analyses standardised serial manufacturing methods and their potential for an individual artistic handwriting. For the series of paintings to which the two works ***Ohne Titel*** (1992 and 1993) belong, Wool applied paint, with the use of stencils or a roller, onto aluminum plates. He implemented the qualities of a craftsman, but managed in spite of mechanical standardisation to produce an individual texture through deliberate imprecision. The recourse to decorative patterns and their repetition led to an abstraction, which can be equated with an auratic effect. Wool utilises excerpts from texts and quotations. Without break or interruption he aligns these words alongside one another, so they are usually only decipherable at second glance. The decorative, minimalist and serial design manner contrasts with the ironic sayings or the implementation of black humour.

COLLECTION CATALOGUE!

A comprehensive collection catalogue with text contributions by Lionel Bovier, Dan Fox, Gisèle Girgis & Hedy Graber, Raphael Gyax, Tom Holert, Heike Munder, Bettina Steinbrügge, Philip Ursprung, Astrid Wege, Judith Welter, Jan Verwoert, Tirdad Zolghadr has been published by JRP|Ringier. This itemises the core inventory of the collection for the first time.

PUBLIC GUIDED TOURS!

Sunday, 1st & 15th & 29th June, 13th July, 3rd & 17th August at 3 pm, as well as Thursday, 19th June & 14th August at 6.30 pm. **FAMILY GUIDED TOUR:** Sunday, 22nd June at 1.30 pm.

WORKSHOPS FOR SCHOOL CLASSES!

During the exhibition period the migros museum für gegenwartskunst is offering workshops for pupils, school classes at all levels, and school holiday offers. For more information see: www.migrosmuseum.ch

INFORMATION!

For visual material and other information please contact: presse@migrosmuseum.ch

Opening hours: Tues / Wed / Fri Midday–6 pm, Thurs Midday–8 pm, Sat / Sun 11 am–5 pm.
Between 5 pm and 8 pm each Thursday museum entrance is free.

migros museum für gegenwartskunst

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The migros museum für gegenwartskunst is an institution of the Migros Kulturprozent.

Migros Kulturprozent is a voluntary initiative by Migros, incorporated in its articles of association that demonstrates the company's responsibility towards society. Migros is committed to providing a wide access to culture and education for the general public, allowing the company to interact with society and empowering people to participate in social, economic and cultural changes. Key elements of this commitment are culture, society, education, leisure and economy.

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