

Bellini, Andrea, "Curated by John Armleder," *Kaleidoscope*, Issue 21, Summer 2014, cover, pp. 65-95



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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 Donaueschingen, 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, Tiéche 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 by Yves Klein, Art & Language, Robert Barry,

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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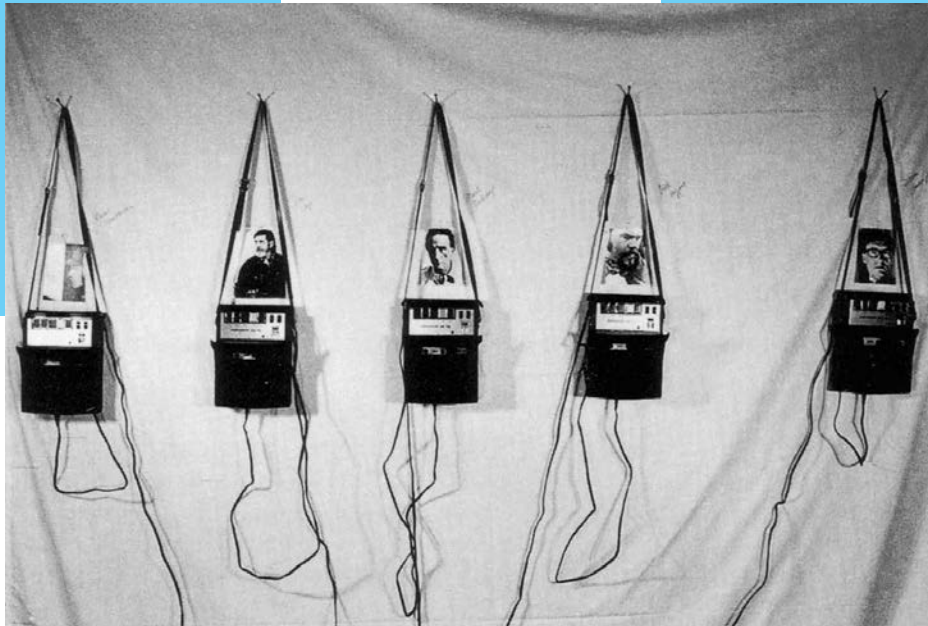


- the artists we exhibited, as we were not only able to produce publications, but it was also a meeting place where we spent time drinking tea. It gave artists the opportunity to suddenly create a small book, which at the time was not an easy thing to do.
- AB When you were at Rue Plantamour, you also started a sort of cooperation and mutual assistance with Adelina Von Fustenber, 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 Jersey, "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.

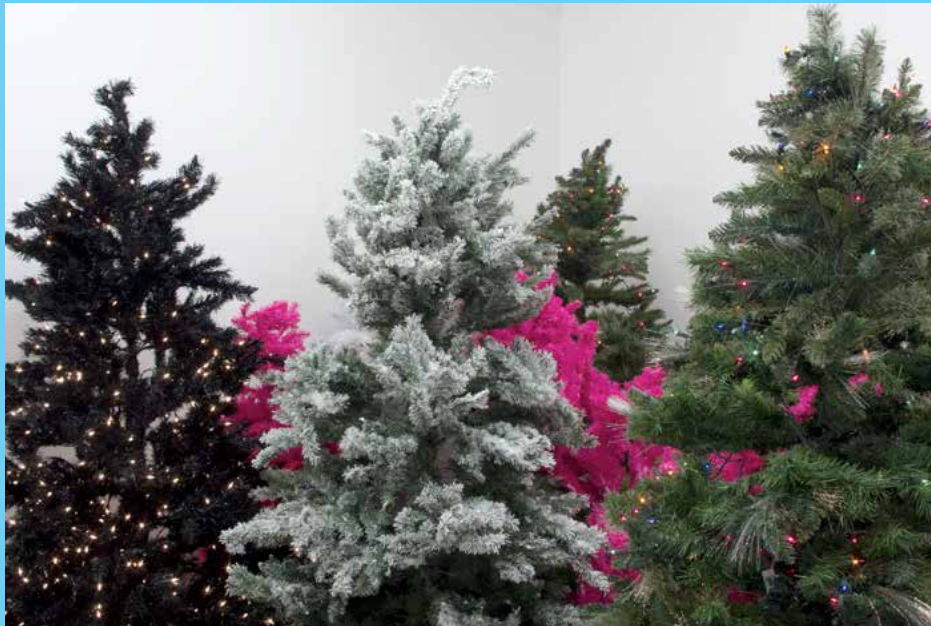
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# Villa Magica 2002–



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 Rockenschaub, 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.



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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 Richmond 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.

# 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 cafe 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 cafe, 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.

MONO

**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 Carzou," 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.

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