

MAMCO, Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Geneva
Press kit

Kelley Walker

Swiss Pop

General Idea, *Photographs (1969-1982)*

Jack Goldstein, Jenny Holzer, Sherrie Levine,
Cady Noland/Laurie Parsons/Félix González-Torres



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May 31st—September 10th, 2017

Press conference Tuesday May 30 2017, 10 am

Opening from 6pm

MAMCO Geneva will present a major exhibition of the work of the American artist Kelley Walker (b. 1969, Columbus, Georgia). The exhibition will be on view from May 31st through September 10th, 2017, and will be installed throughout the 1000 m² of the museum's first floor.

In his work, Kelley Walker uses techniques common to Pop art, such as collage, photography, and silkscreen printing, as well as digital tools, to question today's frenetic circulation and consumption of images. The show, organized by Fabrice Stroun and Lionel Bovier, will provide a retrospective overview of one of the most innovative artists working today. It will include Walker's most notable bodies of work, specifically "Black Star Press" paintings, where layers of chocolate cover and partially obscure images similar to those used by Warhol; intricate mirrors made of handcut acrylic plexiglas, and reminiscent of the inkblot test designed by the famous Swiss psychologist Hermann Rorschach; "Brick paintings," which combine silkscreen brick patterns with collage from newspapers and magazines; as well as more recent works that explore the transformation of image to object.

This exhibition, in succession to Wade Guyton's one in 2016, will provide an opportunity to address issues concerning the image and its corporeality in recent art history.

The Kelley Walker exhibition benefits from the support of Henri Harsch HH SA.

'Swiss Pop', based on a proposal by Samuel Gross, on view on the museum's third floor, will serve as an introduction to one of the Postwar Era's first interrogations of the status of the image, both in terms of its auratic unicity and its (mostly industrial) mode of fabrication.

An exhibition of images and photographic projects by Canadian collective General Idea extend, on the same floor, this reflection on the mediatic and physical versatility of the image within the McLuhanesque society taking shape after the Second World War. The exhibition of General Idea, *Photographs (1969 – 1982)* benefits from the support of Le Laboratoire and Repro-Solution, Geneva.

Finally, works by Cady Noland, Laurie Parsons, and Félix González-Torres on the second floor, conclude this examination of American practices linked to the "Pictures Generation," appropriation, and the politics of representation (Jenny Holzer, Jack Goldstein, Sherrie Levine). It ends a cycle of exhibitions organized by Lionel Bovier aiming at providing an overview of the main stakes shared by a generation of artists that one might call the "last iconologists": in short, artists for whom the image still possesses weight, presence, and semantic power—all features that the growing digitalization of the 1990s progressively erased to the benefit, in the 2000s, of an understanding of the image as a "liquid skin," able to mutate indefinitely and to be applied on any support.

Gordon Matta-Clark

Open House, 1972 (1985)

Gordon Matta-Clark (1943-1978) explored all manner of media: performance, drawing, sculpture, photography and film. Owing to the specific medium that brought them all together — decrepit buildings — few ‘things’ are left of his work. Yet these ‘remains’ are more than just traces, for they form a whole that still has political, social and aesthetic relevance. Despite his early death at the age of 35, Gordon Matta-Clark left a visionary legacy, an active dialogue developed through, and in opposition to, architecture: ‘anarchitecture’, ‘non-monuments’, and ‘mental projectiles’ — a multifaceted view of ‘imminent ruins.’

In May 1972, Gordon Matta-Clark created *Open House*, a short-lived work produced in a street in New York’s SoHo neighborhood, between 98 and 112 Greene Street, two alternative exhibition spaces that opened in 1969 and 1970 respectively. This work continued his investigations of garbage recycling, using a dumpster that he divided up with wooden partitions—doors from hotels and restaurants that were about to be demolished. *Open House* also owes its name to the opening in the façade and the lack of a roof, producing osmosis and permeability in the created space, the street, the buildings. *Open House* instantly became an experimental, playful center for dancers, performers, and artists. Providing more freedom than alternative exhibition spaces, it was an urban equivalent to the works created in connection with land art.

An eponymous Super-8 film made on the opening day documents the public’s confrontation with this ‘place thing’ or ‘personal spatial epiphany’, as Richard Nonas put it. The poet Ted Greenwald recorded the sound of his truck doing delivery rounds for the *Village Voice* newspaper: ‘Even though it can’t move, *Open House* now has an engine and a sound—the sound of a team at work.’

In October 1972, a second version of *Open House* was set up outside 112 Greene Street, where Matta-Clark had an exhibition from 21 October to 10 November.

The coincidence in place and time made this new event a counterpart to the spaces at 112 Greene Street, which the artist covered with pictures of peeling, decrepit and yet attractive façades, giving the indoor space a street-like appearance. The larger container, made of irregular, deconstructed partitions, had an open flight of steps leading to a platform with a brasero that occupied half of the structure. What Matta-Clark was trying to do here was juxtapose the disparaged world of urban wastelands and a festive activity perceived as typically suburban—a barbecue—in order to change the city.

Although, being events and conceptual projects connected with the recycling and ‘contenairisation’ of living spaces, the first two versions of the work did not survive, the Gordon Matta-Clark Estate, aware that there were few of the artist’s spatial inventions still in existence, decided after his death to give his work and its way of presentation a lasting form. The permanent version, described in a detailed brief, made use of the industrial container from the second reconstitution of the work during Gordon Matta-Clark: a Retrospective, held at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, in 1985. This has now found a legitimate place at MAMCO close to Christo’s *Corridor Store Front* (Matta-Clark assisted Christo on several occasions).

Press Office

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The Museum is open Tuesday through Friday from noon to 6pm, the first Wednesday of the month until 9pm, and Saturday and Sunday from 11am to 6pm. Closed on Mondays as well as April 14, 2017.

Regular admission: CHF8.–
Reduced admission: CHF6.–
Group admission: CHF4.–

Partners

MAMCO is overseen by FONDAMCO, which is made up of Fondation MAMCO, the Canton, and City of Geneva.

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