

MAMCO GENEVA

11.10.17–04.02.18

PRESS KIT

William Leavitt, *Retrospective*

General Idea, *Photographs (1969-1982)*–extended

Narrative Art

Fictional Artists

Gordon Matta-Clark, *Food*

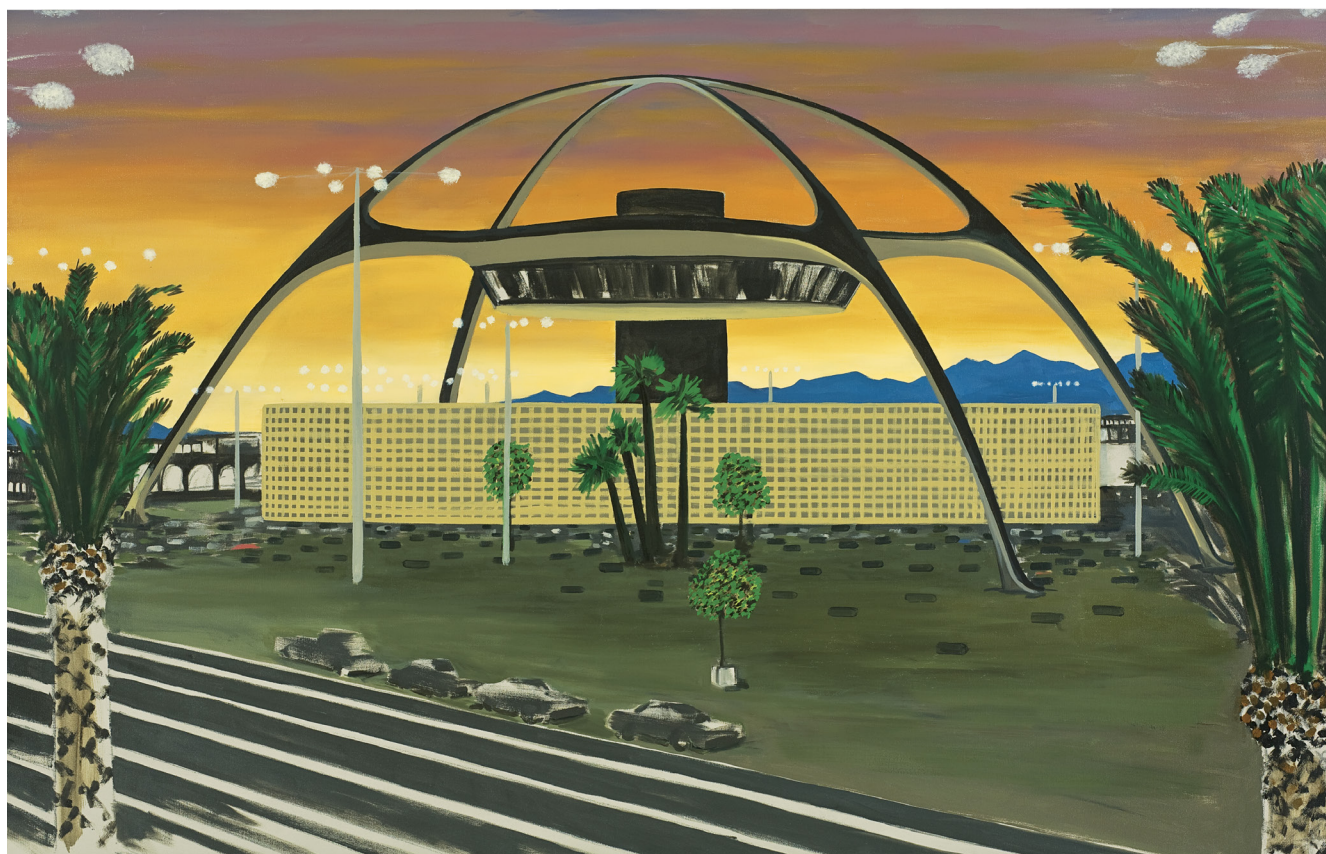
Adrian Piper, *The Mythic Being*

Martha Rosler, *House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home*

Allen Ruppersberg, *The Never Ending Book*

Opening: Tuesday October 10, 2017 – 6pm

10, rue des Vieux-Grenadiers, 1205 Geneva



William Leavitt, *Theme Restaurant*, 1986.

Oil on canvas. 116,84 × 182,88 cm, Collection Richard S. Massey, Miami (FL)

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Exhibitions from October 11, 2017 until February 4, 2018

Press conference Tuesday October 10, 2017, 11 am

This fall, MAMCO is organizing the first European retrospective of William Leavitt (born in 1941, Washington, USA), an historic figure of the Los Angeles art scene. Deployed on the entirety of the first floor, this exhibition brings together pieces ranging between 1970 until now. Through his installations, drawings and paintings, play and sound performances, Leavitt re-examines the production of the Western imaginary, as imposed, since the end of WWII, by the "Hollywood factory." Through a selection of parts of stage sets, the isolation and recombination of fragments coming from everyday culture, which often conceals a conservative social order and politics, the artist turns these representations inside out: he makes us see them as conceptual frameworks in which stories (fictional ones or from our own lives) can be set.

This show, organized by Lionel Bovier and Julien Fronsacq, is thus an opportunity to go back over several issues in art history, whether it be the 1970s movement of

"Narrative Art" or the fictional dimension present in the practice of General Idea, whose exhibition is extended until the beginning of February. Narration is also at the heart of a project devoted to fictional artists by David Lemaire, and the ensemble of works by Adrian Piper and Martha Rosler, respectively brought together by Elise Lammer and Sophie Costes.

This sequence is the third phase of a method of investigation into the art of the past decades, inaugurated by *Zeitgeist* in spring, and then continued with the series of exhibitions organized around the retrospective of Kelley Walker in the summer. In this way, MAMCO has been offering, via a system of nested presentations, a prismatic reading of the artistic movements and debates that have traversed our era. This singular museographical proposition, the result of the collective work of the curators of the MAMCO and its associated curators, is itself set in the heritage of the "global exhibition" concept, which has been prevalent in the museum ever since its opening in the 1990s.

Martha Rosler, *House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home*

An exhibition organized by Sophie Costes

Bringing the War Home is a series of 20 photomontages produced between 1967 and 1972 by Martha Rosler, made up of two sections: *In Vietnam* and *House Beautiful*. These photomontages bring together two opposing worlds: modern interiors that convey an image of security and good taste, and scenes from the Vietnam War that focus on the first conflict to be transmitted by television and nicknamed "the living-room war" by the writer Michael Arien, to highlight the intrusion of images of war at the heart of American homes. Martha Rosler appropriated this confrontation, imposed at the time by news broadcasts, by integrating black-and-white images of violence into domestic spaces which are in colour. For the most part, the source images come from the pages of *House Beautiful* and *LIFE Magazine*, two major illustrated periodicals.

During the 1970s, these images were distributed by the alternative and feminist press (such as the *Newspaper for San Diego Women*) or as anti-war flyers, with Martha Rosler taking part in these actions. Feminist artists were particularly mobilised against the Vietnam War, in which they saw a connection between "militarism and patriarchy, war and masculinity", and the resulting visual strategies that lead to the use of female bodies. It was only in 1991 that she decided to show them in a gallery context to prevent their disappearance.

Cleaning the Drapes, for example, shows a woman brandishing a vacuum cleaner, slung over her shoulder, as if it were a microphone, against a trench scene. Above *Pat Nixon*, the wife of President Richard Nixon, who intensified the American presence in Vietnam, there appears a classic oval with the depiction of a female body riddled with bullets. This is the final scene from the film *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967); it is also one of the bloodiest death scenes in the history of the cinema. Neat and groomed, the *First Lady* is immune to the convulsions of this outlaw, even though the same social rules apply to both of them.

Like the highly politicised artists of her generation, Martha Rosler could not remain deaf to the various sorts of conflict that tear apart the world and which art cannot ignore.

MAMCO GENEVE

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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.

Regular admission: CHF 8.–
Reduced admission: CHF 6.–
Group admission: CHF 4.–

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The exhibition of William Leavitt benefits from the support of the Fondation du Jubilé de la Mobilière Suisse Société Coopérative and of the Greene Naftali Gallery, New York.

The General Idea's exhibition received the generous support of Le Laboratoire and ReproSolution, Geneva.

MAMCO's fourth floor "A collection of spaces" exhibition would not have been possible without the essential support of Fondation Leenaards.

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