

Art at Swiss Re Next

A selection



People are continually crossing paths, sharing opinions. **The resulting conversations ignite the mind, excite interest, and spark ideas.**

Commissioned
Artwork

Artwork that has been created and produced by the artist specifically for the chosen site and in collaboration with Swiss Re

Mobile
Artwork

Artwork that has been bought by Swiss Re through the artist or gallery after its completion

Why we collect art

Why would a global re/insurer like Swiss Re ever engage in art, build a prominent collection and even commission art projects? Re/Insurance is first and foremost about enabling risk, encouraging progress and making societies more resilient. That is how economies can develop, entrepreneurs thrive, knowledge build. Swiss Re is recognized as a thought leader and is one of the most admired companies in its industry. It has a long tradition, a strong identity and extremely loyal employees.

Re/Insurance products and services, however, are complex, intangible and require explanation. That is one of the reasons why Swiss Re has always engaged in art and architecture. Both help project the company's ability to face the unknown, to deal with future challenges but more importantly, they help create an emotional profile and foster dialogue. Art and architecture express the core values of the corporation, support its brand recognition, establish a link to society and offer great identification for employees around the world. Moreover, clients and other stakeholders benefit from the experience of the unique atmosphere and quality of Swiss Re's workplaces and its iconic buildings.

But there is more to it. While art and architecture have become an important visual expression of the company's identity, they also underpin Swiss Re's commitment to offering a stimulating work environment and to bringing diversity to life – every day.



Image copyright: François Halard

The art at Swiss Re Next

Swiss Re Next is a new office building. It is our new headquarters in Zurich. A place where people work, meet, think and succeed. Art plays a vital role in this context. The dimensions of Swiss Re Next's architecture were craving for art concepts that complement and stimulate the wide space. That's why we chose art projects that motivate dialogue between art and architecture while blurring the boundaries of one another. We selected formats and materials that tie into the architectural structure, such as textiles, wall paintings or light installations.

The development has been special as all commissioned art was advanced in close collaboration between the architects, the artists and the team of Swiss Re.


As you move around the building, you will find renowned artists from different generations as well as cultural and geographical backgrounds, from Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas. They include Kerstin Brätsch, Martin Boyce, Heimo Zobernig, Guyton\Walker, Valentin Carron, Latifa Echakhch, Jonathan Monk, Fiona Tan, Elad Lassry, Carissa Rodriguez and many others.

Anne Keller
Head Art & Cultural Engagement Swiss Re

MARTIN BOYCE

*1967 in Hamilton, UK

 Lives in Glasgow

 Works with sculpture and installation

Commissioned
Artwork

All the Gravity, all the Air 2013–2017

Martin Boyce often speaks of landscape, referring to the intersection between culture and nature: “I’m interested in the idea of a controlled nature,” he says, “a landscape, like you find in parks and gardens. Here, nature is combined with an element of architecture, you have to decide where to plant each tree and where the lake should be. That is fascinating.” This interest in the overlap of “the natural and the man-made” is found in many works by the Scottish artist.

In the entrance area of Swiss Re Next, exteriors join interiors. Boyce calls his concept for this area ‘All the Gravity, All the Air’. “The idea,” he says, “is for it to look as if the entire building has been erected on top of a park or garden with a geometric layout.”

Details

Floor

Wachenzeller dolomit

Furniture

Benches, conference tables, sideboards, coffee tables: various materials and sizes

Sculptures

Concrete, steel reinforcement, 500 x 24.5 x 24.5cm

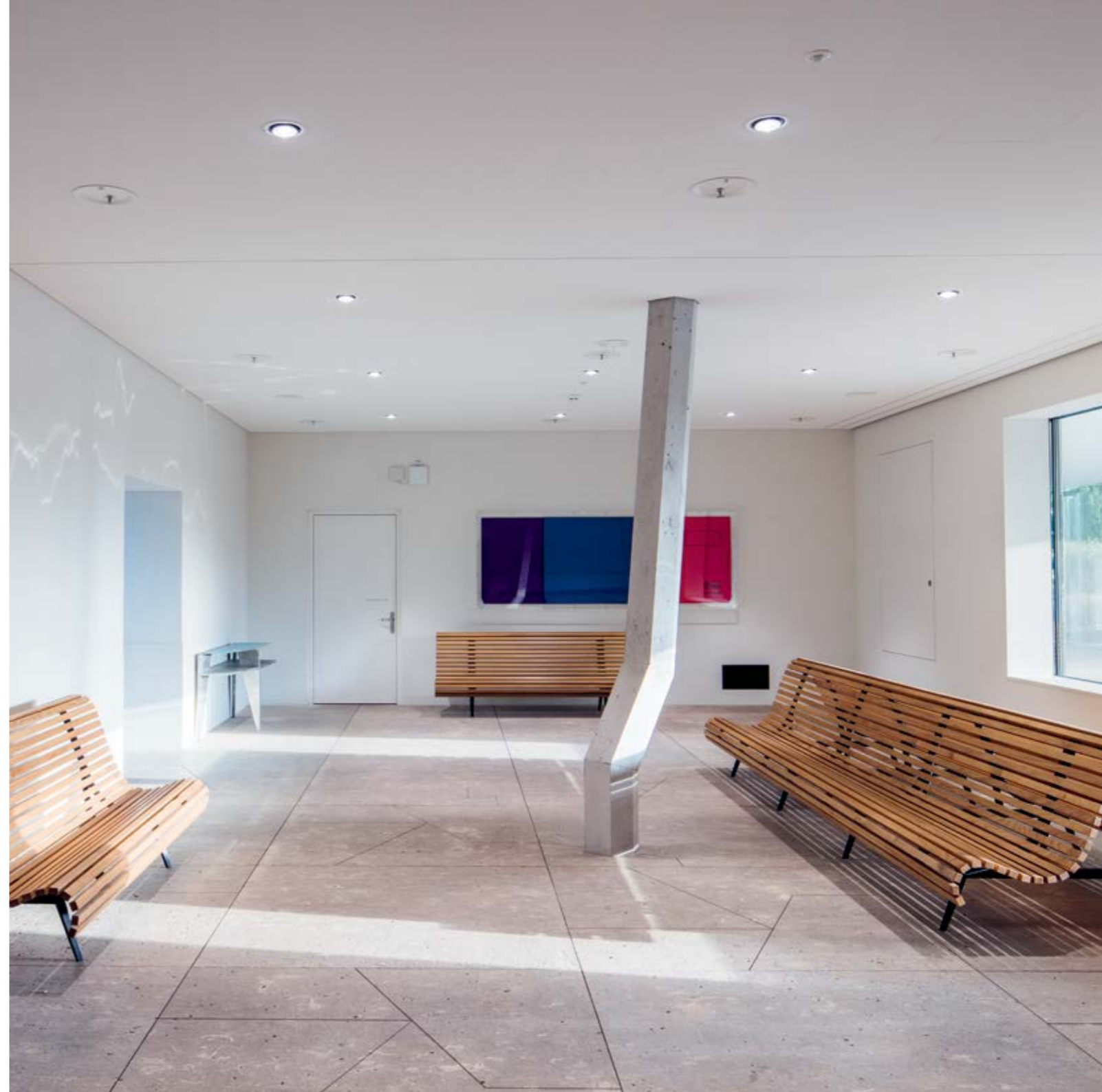
Vents

Bronze, perforated steel, 50 x 25 x 2.5 cm

Reception desk

Carrara marble, 610 x 110 x 120 cm

© 2014, Martin Boyce
Image copyright: p. 5/7 François Halard, p. 6 Stefan Altenburger






KERSTIN BRÄTSCH

*1979 in Hamburg, Germany

 Lives in New York

 Works with painting and installation

Commissioned
Artwork

Stargate, 2013–2017

Untitled, 2013–2017

Kerstin Brätsch is one of the most multi-faceted artists of today – a true contemporary artist. But at the heart of her practice, you find the most traditional medium of all: painting. And each time she approaches painting from a different angle: as a medium, as an artistic practice as well as a theme. Frequently, Brätsch collaborates with others.

For her impressive, multiple storeys-high sgraffito in the south-west atrium, Kerstin Brätsch worked with a traditional sgraffito master from the Swiss canton of Graubünden. For the skylight in the underground corridor connecting Altbau and Swiss Re Next which is appropriately entitled “Starlight”, she worked with a glass manufacturer from Zurich.

Details

Stargate p. 9

Glass, cast aluminium frame
360 x 240 x 12 cm

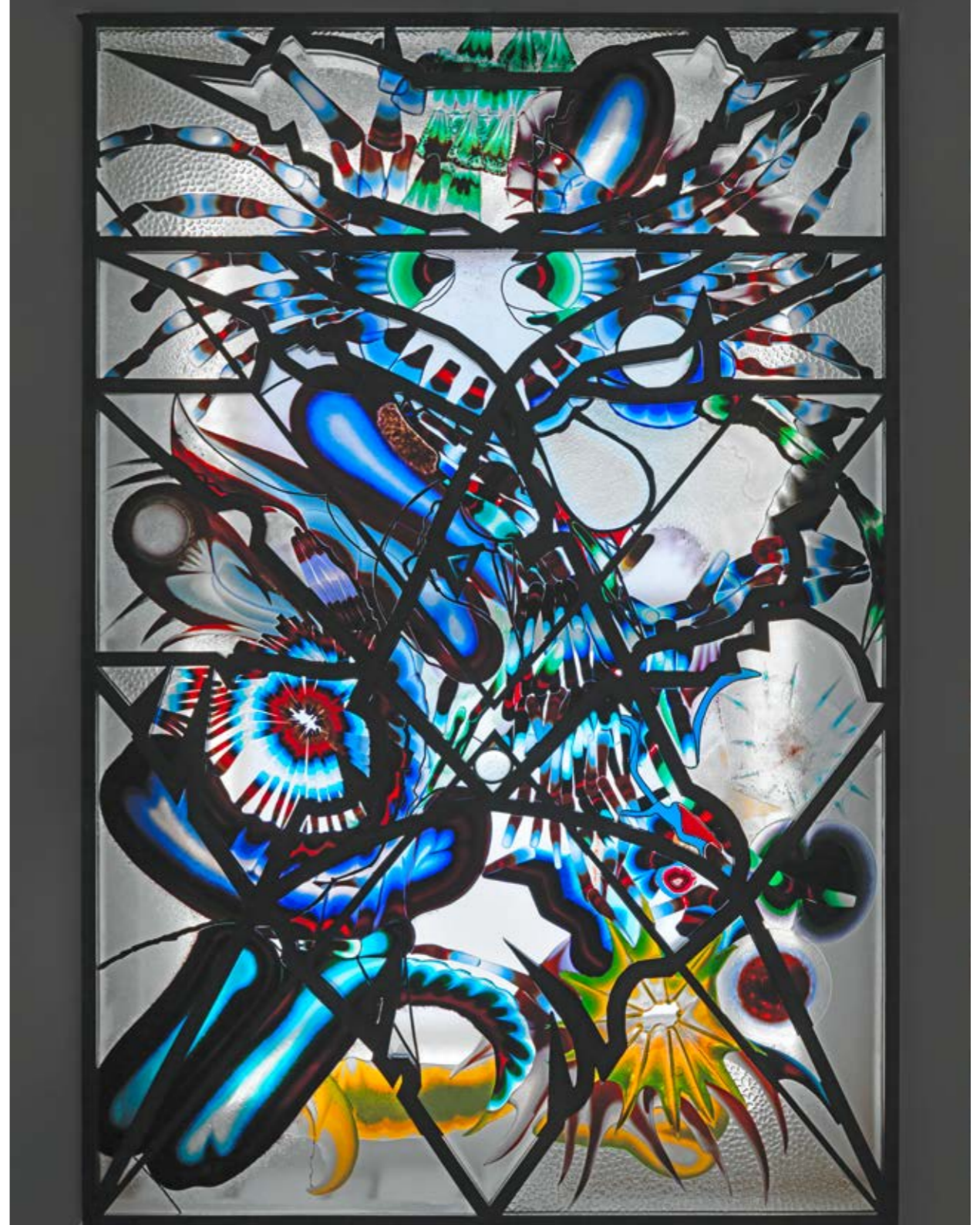
Untitled p. 10

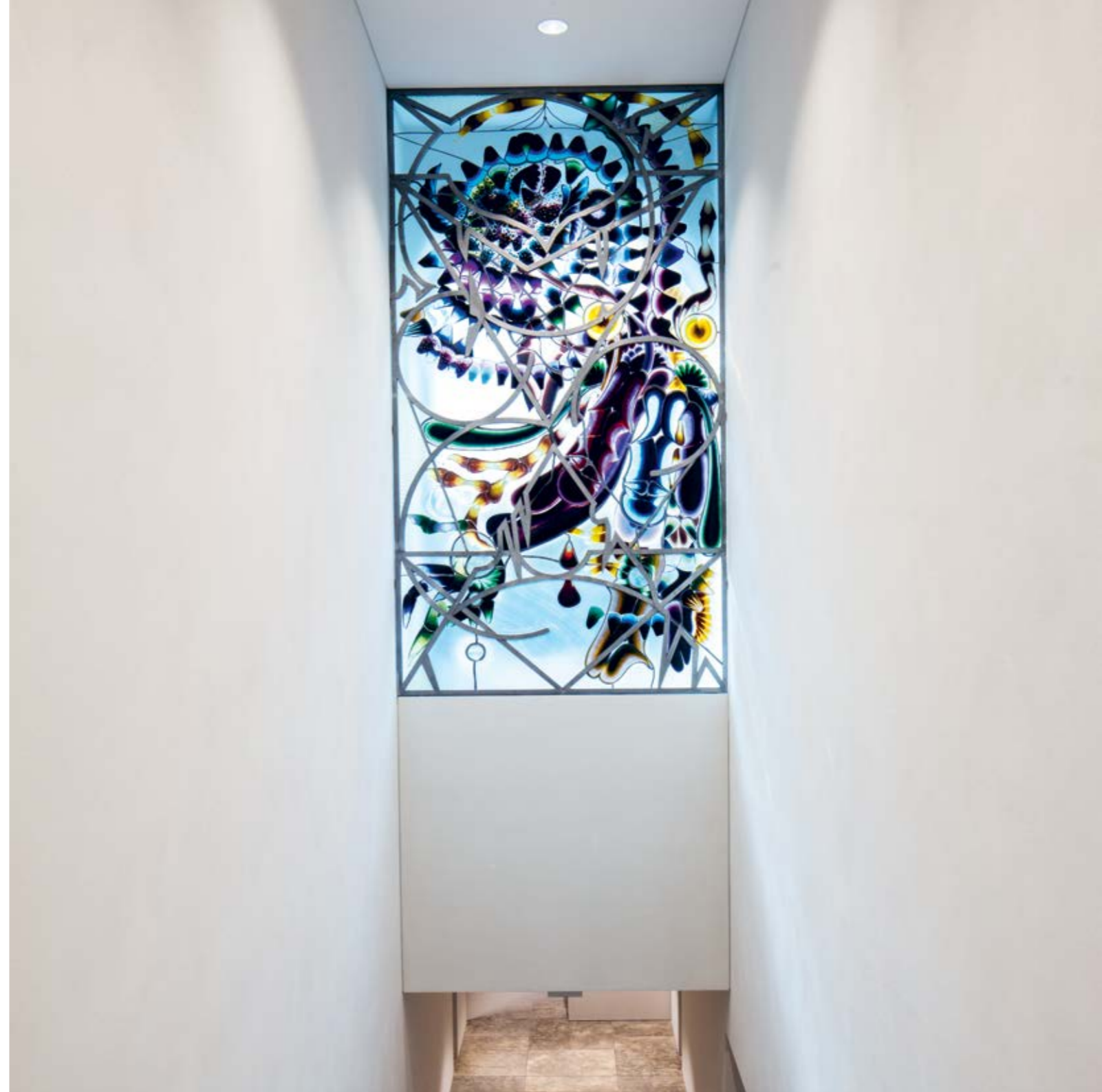
Lime plaster, lime milk
12.85 x 22.85 m

Untitled p. 11

Glass, cast aluminium frame
498 x 275 x 7 cm

© 2014, Kerstin Brätsch
Image copyright: p. 9 Stefan
Altenburger, p. 10/11 François
Halard





HELMUT FEDERLE

*1944 in Solothurn, Switzerland

 Lives in Vienna

 Works with painting, photography,
drawing and architecture

Commissioned
Artwork

The Enormous Room, 2014–2017

For Helmut Federle, art is a matter of the utmost existential tension and a spiritual affair – an expression of the individual, a sign of inner unrest, a search for orientation.

With a team of assistants, and with the help of the restorer Roland von Gunten, Federle painted the Swiss Re Next Auditorium in the shades of green and yellow that are familiar from his paintings. The room, though complete, appears incomplete. The actions of the artist are still visible, the rough gestures of the tools have all left their traces and remain unrefined. Several sections of the walls are paler than others. They engage in an interplay with the movable LED panels which are an element of change in the room.

Details

Wall intervention

Acrylic paint on oak wood panels,
silk screen print, 11 x 21 m

© 2014, Helmut Federle
Image copyright: François Halard



VALENTIN CARRON

*1977 Martigny, Switzerland

 Lives in Martigny

 Works with painting, sculpture and installation

Commissioned
Artwork

Untitled, 2014–2017

Valentin Carron's art is defined by appropriation and reproduction, copying or imitating of everyday objects. The artist draws on contemporary resources from his immediate surroundings and places them into a new, artistic context.

During a train ride, he once saw at a modernist church. The results of that memory appears now high up on the wall in the foyer outside the auditorium. At first glance, the 23 flat objects arranged distantly resemble abstract painting. In fact, however, they are replicas of the windows of that church. They were reconstructed using, among other materials, glass splinters and acrylic paint, the concrete was imitated with filling compound.

The two headed iron snake winding its way in gentle curves around the high-ceilinged space are cast from an Art Deco grille at the head office of Zurich's Fire Police.

Details

23 wall sculptures

Foam glass, mineral plaster with glass fibre, quartz sand, acrylic resin varnish, various sizes

Snake

Full steel profile
Approximate length 60 m

© 2015, Valentin Carron
Image copyright: p. 15/16 François Halard, p. 17 Stefan Altenburger






PHILIPPE PARRENO

*1964 in Oran, Algier

 Lives in Paris

 Works with sculpture, video, drawing, installation and text

Commissioned
Artwork

Untitled, 2014–2017

French artist Philippe Parreno works with experiences and impressions, playing skillfully on our senses. With great precision and technical knowhow, he orchestrates situations that are both striking and ephemeral.

His contribution to Swiss Re Next works with sunlight. Parreno has installed a set of heliostats – motorized mirror systems – that track the movement of the sun and project its path as it moves along the atrium walls. If you are in the north-east atrium of the building during daylight hours, and if the sun happens to be shining, then you may spot a few fleeting points of light. For short moments – for a fixed time period each hour –, the light flits through the space, tracing out elegant lines. Then it vanishes again, as if nothing had happened.



Details

Light installation
with 10 heliostats

© 2014, Philippe Parreno
Image copyright: Stefan Altenburger



MAI-THU PERRET AND MARC CAMILLE CHAIMOWICZ

Mai-Thu Perret
*1976 in Geneva, Switzerland

Marc Camille Chaimowicz
*1947 in Paris, France

○ Mai-Thu lives in Geneva.
Marc Camille lives in London and Burgundy (France)

△ Mai-Thu works with sculpture, painting, video, installation, drawing, ceramics, textiles, performance.
Marc Camille works with mixed media and performance

Commissioned
Artwork

Untitled, 2014–2017

Think Tanks are secluded areas for individual or small group work. They are key to the flexible workplace concept at Swiss Re Next. Think Tanks are glass-walled and hence transparent, therefore the need for privacy in some cases.

This is where Marc Camille Chaimowicz and Mai-Thu Perret joined forces to create curtains – coming from very different angles each. For years, it has been central to Chaimowicz' work how to furnish rooms, how to design and thus define them, how to giving them their character. Atmosphere is the first thing he pays attention to when he enters a room, says Chaimowicz.

Mai-Thu Perret, for her part, wanted to be a writer. But then she gradually switched to fine art. Inspired by movements like Bauhaus, Dada or Arts & Crafts, Mai-Thu Perret has created a vast and varied body of work, rich with historical references and driven by a strong interest in utopian communities, spirituality, feminism as well as the formal languages of modernism.

Details

47 Think Tank curtains
Various sizes

© 2014, Mai-Thu Perret and Marc Camille Chaimowicz
Image copyright: p. 21 Stefan Altenburger, p. 22/23 François Halard





GUYTON\WALKER

Wade Guyton
* 1958 in Vienna, Austria

Kelley Walker
*1969 in Columbus, USA



Live in New York



Work with painting, sculpture
and installation

Commissioned
Artwork

Untitled, 2013–2017

The Guyton\Walker project was launched by Wade Guyton and Kelley Walker as a third artistic identity (hence the singular) while sharing a studio in New York in the 2000s. But the two artists do not completely disappear as individuals as they would in an anonymous collective. “Once we have established the shared vocabulary,” says Walker, “we often work on the project independently.” For Swiss Re Next, Guyton\Walker chose a single digital image and then edited, cropped and translated it into different materials to forge a visual grammar. The striped pattern, sometimes broken up by streaks resembling digital errors, is from the early period of Guyton\Walker in the mid-2000s. “This image shows a stripe we printed on a can of paint. We then put it on a scanner and processed it again in Photoshop.” The result is a series of rugs and matching tables. One set of images appears on a particular rug and matching table, while different croppings are transferred to others.



Details

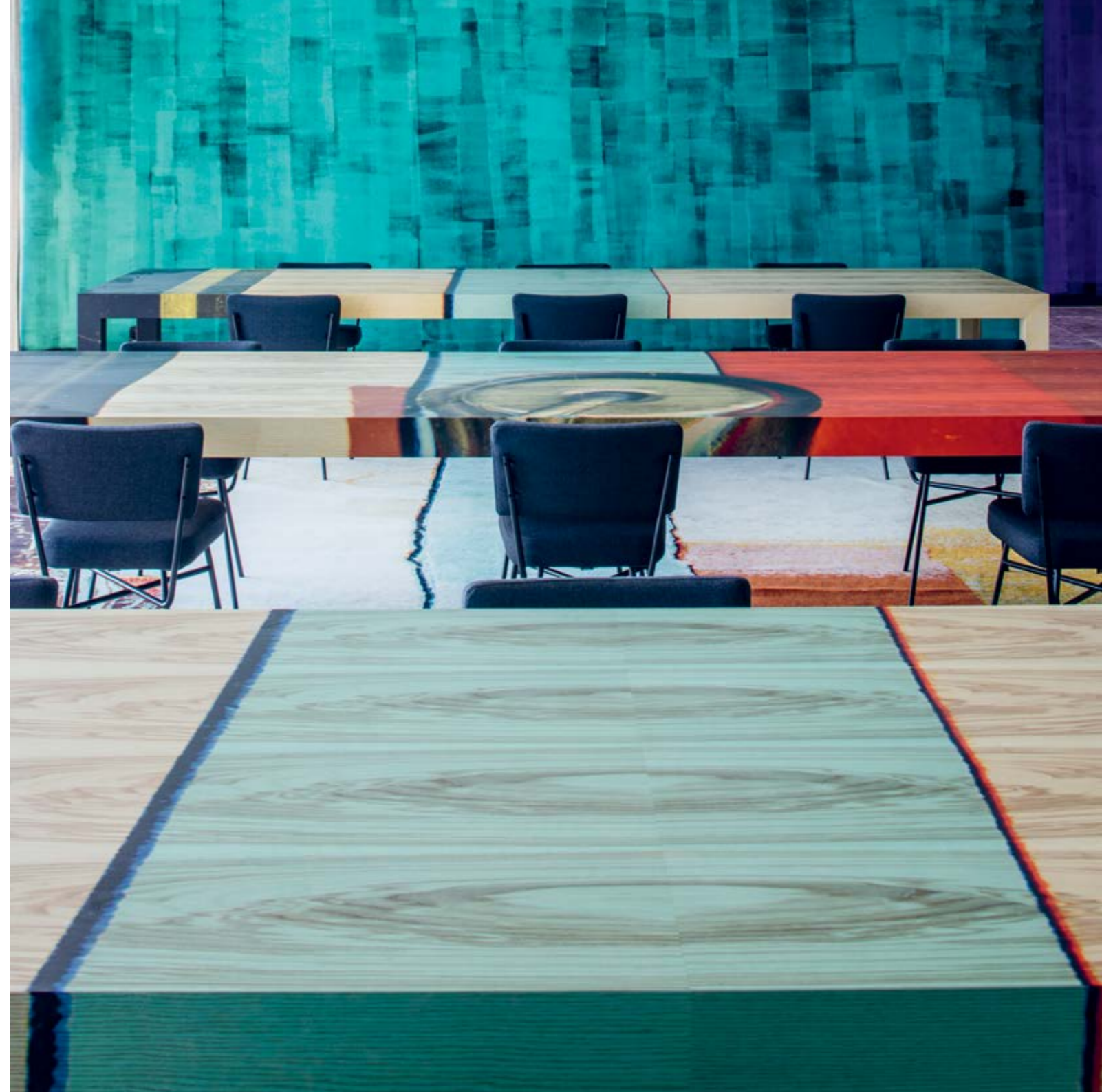
Rugs

Wool, various sizes

Tables

Ash wood veneered on birch
plywood on steel structure,
various sizes


© 2014, Guyton\Walker
Image copyright: François Halard



HEIMO ZOBERNIG

* 1958 in Vienna, Austria

 Lives in Vienna

 Works with painting, sculpture, video and architecture

Commissioned
Artwork

Untitled, 2014–2017

For Austrian artist Heimo Zobernig, the dividing lines between painting and installation, film, theatre, design and architecture offer points of departure for a play on roles and expectations. He masterfully switches from fine to applied art, constantly shifting the boundaries between art, craft, design and architecture.

The murals Zobernig has realized on two storeys of Swiss Re Next explore the principle of monochromy in abstract painting. The resulting artworks in intense magenta, blue, indigo, turquoise, yellow and violet are the opposite of what one would expect. The reason for this effect lies in the choice of material. The striped walls are painted with “interference paints” which are usually not used in abstract painting. In collaboration with architect Norbert Steiner he has also designed the stainless steel coffee bar that hovers above ground in the bright blue reception area on the 6th floor.

Details

Wall intervention

Interference colours (Lascaux)

Bar

Stainless steel
970 x 110 x 256 cm

© 2014, Heimo Zobernig
Image copyright: Cover, p. 27/29
Stefan Altenburger, p. 28 François Halard





WILLEM DE ROOIJ

* 1969 in Beverwijk, the Netherlands

 Lives in Berlin

 Works with installation and video

Commissioned
Artwork

Untitled, 2013–2017

Willem de Rooij is interested in paradoxes. He insists on clear positions, yet is always looking for nuances. He asks whether meaning is inherent in things or attached from the outside. “In discussions and debates, I think it’s important to adopt a clear position,” he says: “But I’m always also looking for transitions and gradations. This two-sided approach probably explains why I’m interested equally in hard contrasts and in gradients and grey areas.”

The artist designed curtains tracing the entire outside façade of the five office floors. This corresponds to a width of almost 250 meters per floor, adding up to a total of 3000 meters. He took advantage of this grand scale. Subdivided into ten segments per wall, the colour changes gradually from corner to corner, from pale to dark. Overall, this gives each storey two pale and two dark corners, each pair facing each other diagonally across the space.

Details

Façade curtains

Natural wool

Approximate length 3000 m

© 2015, Willem de Rooij

Image copyright: Stefan Altenburger



JONATHAN MONK

* 1969 in Leicester, UK

 Lives in Berlin

 Works with sculpture
and mixed media

Mobile
Artwork

The World in Bloom, 2012

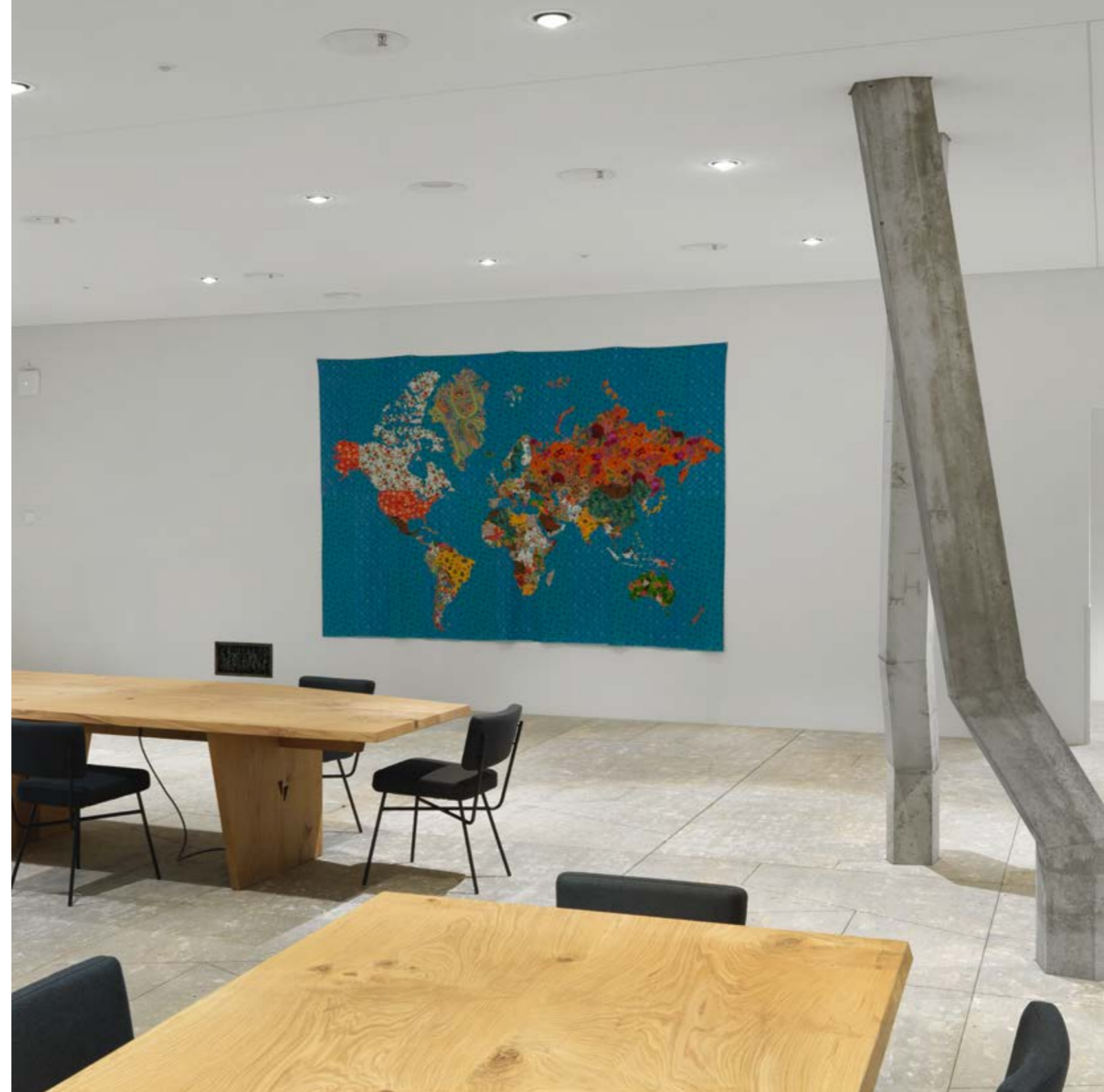
Using techniques of appropriation – recasting, remaking, remodelling – Jonathan Monk frequently turns to the work of others. “Already at art school I realised that being original was almost impossible”, he says. “So I tried using what was already available as source material for my own work.”

For *The World in Bloom*, Jonathan Monk takes as a starting point a series of world maps made by the Italian artist Alighiero Boetti in the 1970s and 1980s. In his textile maps, Boetti used the official flags of the world’s countries to mark the different territories. For his remake, Monk opted for almost identical flower prints instead. Rather than sharply underlining borders and highlighting national differences like in Boetti’s original versions, Monk’s update for a globalised world illustrates the contrary: that people – wherever they may live – might not be that different after all.

Details

Textile
220 x 322 cm


© 2016, Jonathan Monk
Image copyright: Stefan Altenburger



SCOTT MYLES

* 1975 born in Dundee, Scotland

 Lives in Glasgow

 Works with sculpture, printmaking, drawing, text, photography, painting and performance

Mobile
Artwork

The Past From Above (ELBA Purple, Blue, Red), 2011

On a formal level, it may seem hard to find the common denominator holding together Scott Myles' extremely varied artistic output. Why? Because Myles is interested in the more abstract structures of communication. How do certain things gain specific meaning? And how do the general modes of exchange or interaction shape our way of living together?

Elba is the name of an island in the Mediterranean, renowned for being Napoleon's place of exile. But Elba may as well refer to the eponymous brand of Manilla folders used to sort out and store documents. For *The Past from Above (ELBA Purple, Blue, Red)*, Scott Myles shows enlarged versions of the latter, scaled up in the width to his own body height. An artwork, he seems to suggest, is a sign that can have many meanings. Like a folder, it is a container of sorts that can store all kind of things: research material, memories, references or historical anecdotes. And sometimes, it can even become a stand-in or substitute for the artist.

Details

Screenprint on paper

99 x 284 cm

© 2016, Scott Myles, Meyer Riegger



IMI KNOEBEL

* 1940 in Dessau, Germany

 Lives in Düsseldorf

 Works with painting and sculpture

Mobile
Artwork

Anima Mundi, 2014–2015

Born Klaus Wolf Knoebel in Dessau, Knoebel adopted his first name Imi after he met fellow artist Rainer Giese at art school. Both artists chose to work together under the moniker “Imi und Imi”. After Giese’s untimely death in 1974, Knoebel decided to keep the name.

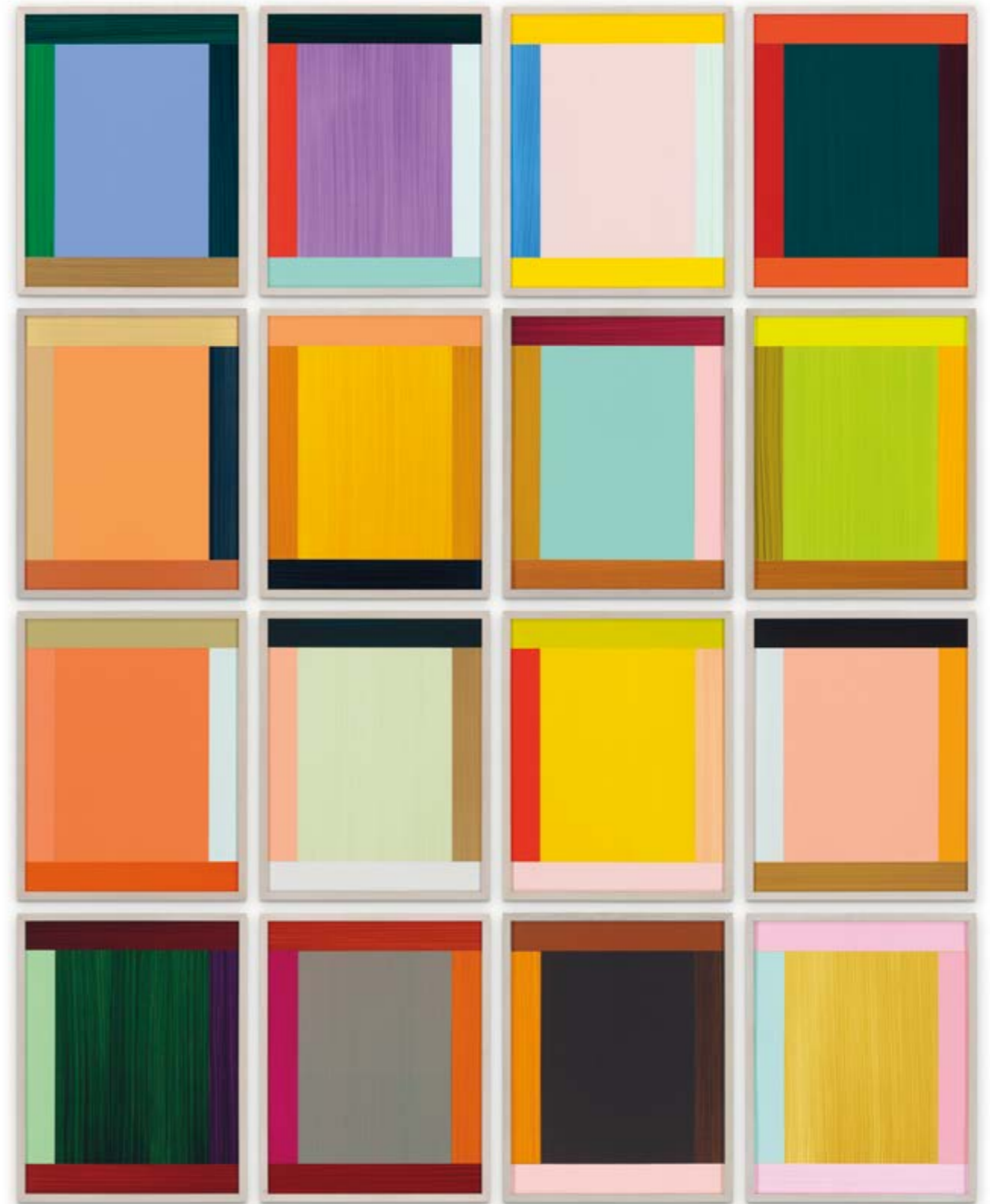
Having been taught in the famous class of Joseph Beuys at Kunstakademie Düsseldorf in the 1960s, four-time documenta participant Knoebel decided to take a completely different direction than his teacher. Over the years, he became one of the main protagonists of minimalism, geometrical abstraction and colour field painting in post-war Germany. Influenced by the early abstract experiments of Russian Suprematist Kazimir Malevich or the primary colours of Dutch painter Piet Mondrian, Knoebel’s works are marked as much by a rigid and intellectual statement for abstraction as by a deep understanding of the sensual qualities of colour and form.

Details

Acrylic on plastic collage
on plastic

46 x 36 cm each

© 2018, ProLitteris, Zürich



CARISSA RODRIGUEZ

* 1970 in New York, USA

 Lives in New York

 Works with sculpture and mixed media

Mobile
Artwork

Green Curve, 2015

Carissa Rodriguez' practice is as varied as it can possibly be. Concerned with question of authorship, collaboration and a refusal of a formally coherent and recognisable style, the artist's work displays a unique sensibility of various contexts and roles. Having studied English literature, Rodriguez made a "lateral entry" as an artist in the 1990s – only to then withdraw again to co-run the successful gallery Reena Spaulings Fine Arts. Being predominantly concerned with working as a gallerist for quite some years, Rodriguez made a comeback as an artist in her own right in the late 2000s.

Her wall object Green Curve from the year 2015 is part of a series of works that refers back to the formal vocabulary of American Hard Edge painter Ellsworth Kelly, one of the heroes of classical American abstract art. Cast in salt, Rodriguez adds an extra layer to these art historical references – connecting quintessential American painting to the world of the ocean and to cross-continental cultural spaces.

Details

Salt cast
184 x 259.5 cm


© 2016, Carissa Rodriguez



YTO BARRADA

* 1971 in Paris, France

 Lives in New York

 Works with photography, film, publication, installation and sculpture

Mobile
Artwork

Untitled (painted educational boards found in Natural History Museum, never opened, Azilal, Morocco), 2013–2015

Paris-born artist Yto Barrada grew up in Tangier, Morocco. In her work, Barrada often returns to her hometown vis-à-vis the European border to analyse its architecture, history and culture. Barrada charts the lives of Tangier's inhabitants in a research-heavy and long-term series.

Her series of six untitled photographs is part of a larger body of work named Faux Guide evolving around the question of fossil trade in Morocco. As often in her work, Barrada tackles the subject matter indirectly, focusing on seemingly unimportant or only vaguely associated details. In this case, her photographs depict "educational boards" found in the Natural History Museum of Azilal, Morocco. Showing tectonic movements, continental drifts or volcanic eruptions, these boards – as the title indicates – have never been used. The chance to learn was actually there, but was never taken.

Details

Series of 6 chromogenic prints

Edition 2 of 5
70 x 70 cm each


© 2016, Yto Barrada



ELAD LASSRY

* 1977 in Tel-Aviv, Israel

 Lives in Los Angeles

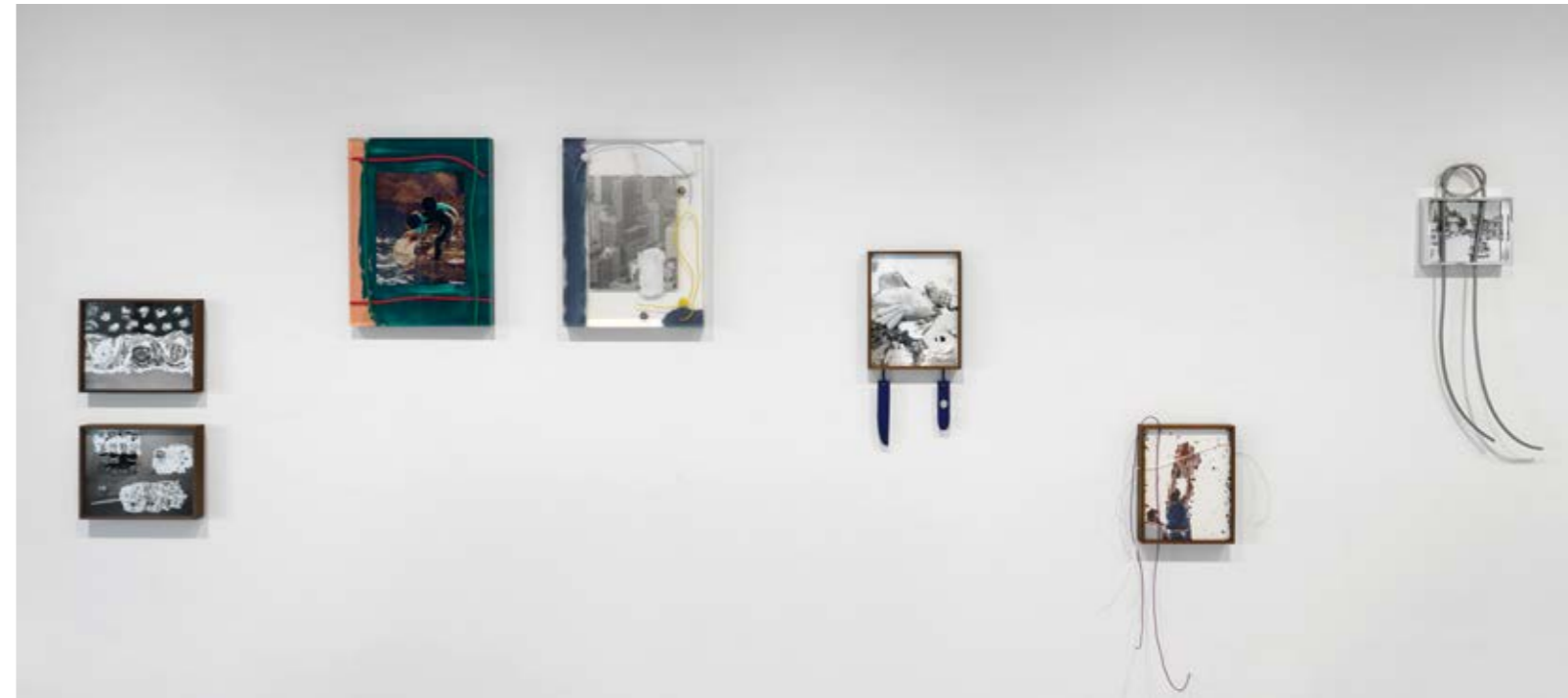
 Works with photography, sculpture and film

Mobile
Artwork

Series, 2010–2014

What is an image? What is an object? And what is photography? These are the questions that come to mind in front of Elad Lassry's multifaceted work. The Israeli-born and US-based artist combines photographic works with sculpture, installation and sometimes even film in ever-new, almost dialectical arrangements.

Photography is a key element of Elad Lassry's artistic practice. He underlines the object character of photographic prints by using fitting colours for the frames or by turning the prints into components for collages of sorts. "I don't allow the pictures to be thought of as photographic", Lassry says, "I think of them as objects. I think of them as something that's suspended between a sculpture and an image."



Details

Various materials and dimensions

© 2017, Elad Lassry
Image copyright: Stefan Altenburger

FIONA TAN

* 1966 in Pekan Baru, Indonesia

 Lives in Amsterdam,
Netherlands

 Works with photography,
film and installation

Mobile
Artwork

Vox Populi Switzerland, 2010

In her work, Fiona Tan explores the notion of time, memory and identity, and how these categories interlink. The Indonesian-born and Amsterdam-based artist is also interested in the role of photography, film and image archives in shaping our memories and identities, from the personal and intimate up to the collective.

Births, birthdays, friends, families and holidays – almost everybody owns images like the ones Fiona Tan shows for Vox Populi Switzerland. The work is one of a five-part series for which the artist sourced private photographs at a different place for each iteration – be it Norway, Sydney, Tokyo, London or, in this case, Switzerland. Presented individually framed and hung in groups, the pictures form a local portrait by exhibiting the private life of the individuals inhabiting a specific place. At the same time, Tan raises questions about the way our memories and our identities are shaped: Do we all remember the same things? Or is it photography that makes life look almost the same everywhere?

Details

**254 individually framed colour
photographs**
Edition 2 of 4

13 x 18 cm each
(overall size approx.: 3 x 8 m)


©2017, Fiona Tan



LATIFA ECHAKHCH

* 1974 in El Khnansa, Morocco

 Lives in Martigny

 Works with painting and installation

Mobile
Artwork

Derives 52, 2015

Derives 55, 2015

In her work Latifa Echakhch questions the notion of identity and belonging, of supposedly fixed meanings and false essentialisms. Against the limitations of rigid concepts, she pushes for a fundamentally open process.

For Derives, Echakhch refers to a traditional ornamental element from Islamic architecture, a jagged star. Broken up and prolonged, these thick decorative forms could potentially run as an endless line. Echakhch uses a concrete reference and opens it up toward new and other meanings.



Details


Acrylic on canvas
200 x 150 cm each

© 2016, Latifa Echakhch

THOMAS SCHÜTTE

* 1954 in Oldenburg, Germany

 Lives in Düsseldorf

 Works with sculpture, drawing, photography and installation

Mobile
Artwork

Grosse Geister, 1996

It is hard to find an equivalent translation for Grosse Geister. "Geist" can mean zeitgeist, the Holy Spirit, a powerful mind, clergyman or ghost, and is used to describe the science of thinking itself. Despite the seeming mutual incompatibility, all refer to something higher and difficult to grasp. But this sculpture comes across as pathetic and ridiculous – a cross between Ghostbusters, the Michelin Man, Michael Jackson moon walking, Terminator 2 and a burger bar customer. Grosse Geister distorts our image of ourselves and our surroundings, unsettling our mental states and social situations and making the boundaries of the body seem fluid.

Details

Polished aluminium
257 x 114 x 122 cm

© 2018, ProLitteris, Zürich
Image copyright: Stefan Altenburger



Facts and Figures on Swiss Re's Art Collection

Global collection
focusing on contemporary art



4000 works
by around 1000
international
artists

40 locations
Placed in 40 group-wide
locations

**Commissioned
artworks**
Various commissioned
artworks, being the most
prominent artistic
expression of
the collection



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