

STOP PAINTING

STOP PAINTING

PETER FISCHLI

The weather was nice and I was walking along a river with muddy water in Germany with the young artist. The young artist told me about his new paintings. I told the painter that when I was young the zeitgeist was claiming that “painting is dead”: some of these voices were barking it, others were more whimpering. On this topic, Jörg Immendorff’s well-known wonderful, paradoxical, fast-scrawled painting *Hört auf zu malen*, half-correctly translated as “stop painting,” obviously crossed my mind. It was already announcing that its funeral would most likely be postponed, since it had the character of a command refuse. I thought of some of the older funeral announcements, starting with Paul Delaroche’s famous quote around 1840: “from today, painting is dead.” [...] He was not right, no coffin was needed.

As time passed, I began to imagine what a panoptic exhibition of these artistic positions might look like. I imagined a show that would be a kaleidoscope of repudiated gestures, including the critique of those repudiated gestures.

I tried to look for a vague outline for a narration structure for a “stop painting” show. Something like “the five crises of painting” could work—could make sense and pretend to make sense at the same time. [...] The use of the word “crisis” felt problematic, since in most cases the term is used when making reactionary arguments. I was looking for another word. What if I replaced “crisis” with “rupture”? To walk on a path, sometimes with enlightening detours, along these rupture lines was in my mind.

Rupture 1. I started with Delaroche’s desperation and collapse at seeing photography coming into the world, which took away the determination of representation from painting. Why make a painting of Napoleon crossing the Alps if one could produce an image with an apparatus? [...] Within the new media surroundings, painting had to find new ways of positioning itself, refusing an ending in a coffin.

Rupture 2. The second irritation in this realm was the invention of the readymade and the collage. Whereas the photographic image was still a depiction of something outside of the picture,

the collage consists of the very “real or existing” object that it depicts. Why make a sculpture of a ballerina skirt if one just could use a real one? Confronted with this dilemma one had choose between illusion and representation.

Rupture 3. The next attack was against the author or the idea of authorship. The idea of the genius creator was called into question and some artist suggested the opposite—the figure of the idiot. [...] Artists mimicked painterly gestures parodistically and questioned the idea of authenticity and originality as myths of modernism. The mode of operation turned away from one of image invention to one of quoting and appropriation.

Rupture 4. The fourth story line [...] is the criticism that arose in the late 1960s [...]. Painting, one could argue, is the perfect commodity because of its mobility, its symbolic value and its easy handling and preservation. It did and still does represent bourgeois morals, and stood and still stands for a conservative mode of art production that conceptual artists problematized. It was the moment of a narration about the end of painting paintings.

Rupture 5. The fifth narrative thread focuses on the crisis of criticism as such in the so-called late capitalist society. Since the 1980s the idea of an avant-garde became obsolete and dissolved. Criticism began to be absorbed immediately by the market [...]. Under such conditions, painting can be seen as a metaphor of neoliberal capitalism, like a monster that gets bigger and bigger by eating its opponents. On the one hand, by its agility and capability to absorb all kinds of critique and adapt to new media surroundings and, on the other, by its ideal commodity form. This leads to the constellation we live in now: another afterlife of the end of painting.

So, why stop painting? And instead of it: stop stop painting. Nevertheless, the contorted echo of the question “why painting?” feels not yet deleted completely from the aesthetic discourse. In the figure of a lively and agile updated version of Frankenstein—a Frankenstein with perfect plastic surgery—painting circulates in a steady process of “morphing” through an endless number of devices. More and more images, including images of paintings, move around as illuminated files on screens driven by algorithms. Instead of established or out of date modes of distribution, they travel at a

new level of speed. Constant circulation instead of distribution. Contexts and narratives change at hyperspeed, and, through this, value is accumulated—economical and symbolical value. What is this doing to images, and, even more worth considering, what is this doing to us?

Under these new circumstances painting appears illuminated, re-auratized. Painting gains a new radiant power through this media condition and profits from this illumination like no other artistic medium. A simulated illumination produced with the help of contemporary technology.

I was looking on my laptop at a collage of Schwitters from 1947 with an inscription on it saying “Don’t be a dim bulb.” Thanks to the screen, the collage was illuminated and it felt like I was looking at the past, the present and the future at the same time I saw the illuminated dim bulb.

THE EXHIBITION

Conceived by Peter Fischli, the exhibition “Stop Painting” explores a series of specific ruptures within the history of painting in the last 150 years, intertwined with the emergence of new social factors, cultural values and technological progress. The project illustrates these turning points and moments of reconsideration through what Fischli defines as “a kaleidoscope of repudiated gestures” which, in Ca’ Corner della Regina, corresponds to doubts about the canons of art history. The exhibition thus proves how in the last century many generations of artists declared that painting is coming to an end, and, by criticizing, often revitalized and reinvented it.

“Stop Painting” starts on the ground floor of Ca’ Corner della Regina with a 1:8-scale architectural model of the first Piano Nobile of the palazzo that is a piece of art conceived by Fischli as “a sculpture of a painting show.” It showcases a multitude of attitudes, approaches and gestures that tell stories of negation and creation while testifying the persistence of the passion of painting as a means of expression, self-representation and self-conscience.

A slideshow accompanied by a recited text—written in first person by the artist—narrates the genesis of the project and illustrates its main theories.

Each section of the first Piano Nobile gathers together the work of artists that share common positions or reactions, and are presented in a diachronical setting that does not follow a chronological order. Each room is introduced by a title which evokes ideas and artistic practices of the exhibited artworks and by informational panels that describe the theme of each room through the artist’s words.

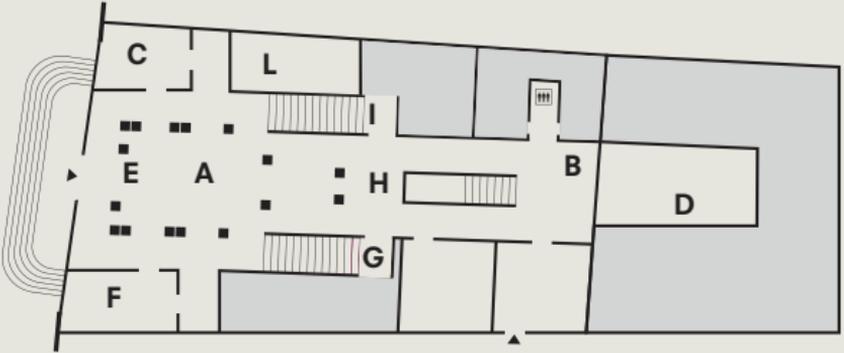
The exhibition display, conceived by Fischli, consists of a system of temporary walls that cross and cut through the spaces, passing through the thresholds that connect the different rooms, unveiling the continuity of intent of the exhibited artists.

The consistent and modernist appearance of these structures is in stark contrast to the frescoed and decorated walls of Ca’ Corner della Regina, thus echoing the different artistic positions expressed by the pictorial language.

The works exhibited are matched by wall labels that, in this digital guide, are supplemented by historiographic commentaries for each work or group of

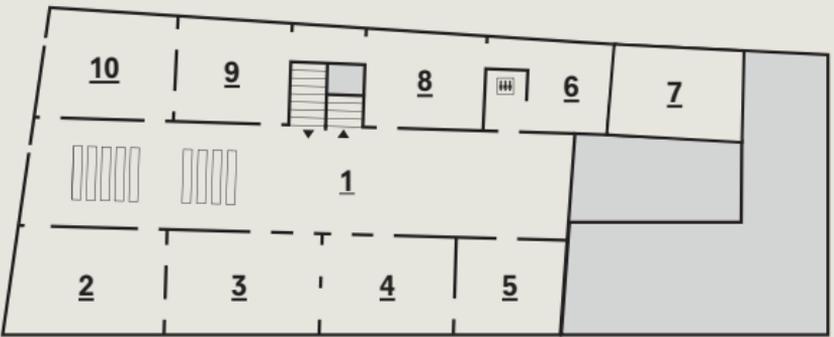
works by the same artist. The different sections are presented in their order of appearance in the exhibition and each section is linked with the others by an interactive menu so that the show can be visited in a different order if desired. Within each section the works are presented in alphabetical order by author.

GROUND FLOOR



- A Peter Fischli
- B Henry Flynt / Jack Smith
- C Theaster Gates
- D Wade Guyton
- E Emil Michael Klein
- F Kaspar Müller / Iacopo Spini
- G Bruce Nauman
- H Josh Smith
- I Lawrence Weiner
- L Slideshow

FIRST NOBILE FLOOR



- 1 DELIRIUM OF NEGATION
- 2 MENSCH MASCHINE
- 3 NIENTE DA VEDERE NIENTE DA NASCONDERE
- 4 WORD VERSUS IMAGE
- 5 WHEN PAINTINGS BECOME THINGS
- 6 SPELLING BACKWARDS
- 7 DIE HARD. STIRB LANGSAM. DURI A MORIRE
- 8 NEXT TO NOTHING
- 9 READYMADES BELONG TO EVERYONE
- 10 LET'S GO AND SAY NO

- 0 **GROUND FLOOR**
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Peter Fischli, *Modellone*, 2021

The work reflects Peter Fischli's idea for the design of "Stop Painting," in which the new walls contradict the architecture of the spaces, which are already charged with painting, though without doing away with it: the Baroque building and a series of walls of modernist appearance coexist as a double exposure. The model showcases a multitude of attitudes, approaches and gestures that tell stories of negation and creation while testifying the persistence of the passion of painting as a means of expression, self-representation and self-conscience.

The artworks reproduced inside the *Modellone* are listed at the end of this leaflet.

Henry Flynt and Jack Smith protesting at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, February 27, 1963. Photograph by Tony Conrad

The philosopher, artist and musician Henry Flynt has confronted the topics of bourgeois culture, formalism and modernist aesthetics since about 1961, when he coined the term "Concept Art" (not to be confused with Conceptual Art). He initially expressed his positions in anti-art demonstrations with the purpose of undermining the ideology of the dominant forms of culture.

On February 27, 1963, he picketed the Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum and the Lincoln Center in New York City with Tony Conrad and Jack Smith, using the slogans "DEMOLISH SERIOUS CULTURE! / DESTROY ART!"; "DEMOLISH ART MUSEUMS! / NO MORE ART!"; "DEMOLISH CONCERT HALLS! / DEMOLISH LINCOLN CENTER!" Shortly afterwards he held the conference *From Culture to Veramusement* in Walter De Maria's loft.

Theaster Gates, *Tar Mop and Bucket, Heirloom*, 2016

Tar Mop and Bucket, Heirloom shows the tools Theaster Gates uses to create his *Tar paintings*. After dunking a mop or a broom in a bucket of tar, he brushes the material on plywood supports to create black monochrome paintings, whose solidified surface reveals the artist's gesture, the identifier of his work with the material.

For Gates, the use of tar signifies the exploitation of

African Americans in the construction of roads in the United States, but it also commemorates the alternative form of protest of his father, a roof repairer, who poured tar on the roofs of houses in Chicago in defense of the rights of the Black community.

Trained as a ceramicist, Gates incorporates sculpture, painting, video, performance and music into his practice, in the poetic belief that different problems and subjects require different platforms. In particular, a recurrent feature of his work is the use of waste materials, which for him represent collective memory and are catalysts of a political and aesthetic reflection on cultural improvement and social activism.

Wade Guyton, *Untitled*, 2017

Wade Guyton's work explores our changing relationships with images and works of art through our use of common digital technologies like computers, scanners and inkjet printers. Guyton's intentional misuse of these machines to create paintings and drawings results in irregular and broken abstract compositions that have a direct visual relationship with our everyday life, in which poorly printed photographs and out-of-focus images are seen regularly on the screens of our phones and computers.

With regard to this production process, Wade Guyton has commented: "There is always some form of disappointment in making an artwork. In my case, there is some expectation, an attempt at translation. A struggle for some ideal—but that ideal may not always be clear, and it is likely in transition. Because of the process with the works on canvas, I must reject or accept whatever the results are."

Emil Michael Klein, *Curtain*, 2021

Conceived for the spaces of Ca' Corner della Regina, *Curtain* is one of a series of works that Emil Michael Klein has created since 2008 using fabric as a pictorial material.

His curtains are made of velvet, a material linked with the interiors of historic aristocratic palaces, and places of culture like cinemas and theaters. At the same time, velvet is a fabric with very tactile and variable properties that make the relationship with the pictorial tradition more complex and subtle. The artist shows his curtains in both exhibition and residential contexts, like private homes, at parties and in bars. The surfaces are composed of large differently colored bands of fabric sewn with horizontal seams; their size is double the height of the space in which they are exhibited. Klein drapes them over a rod so that the fabric falls to the ground doubled, thus creating a potential hiding-place between their two faces. A cross between wall hangings, curtains, paintings, and functional objects of interior design, Klein's *Curtains* are marked with his signature, an operation that provides these works with a visual link to the artist's authorship.

Kaspar Müller / Iacopo Spini, *Bottle Catapult*, 2020

Catapults are usually used to fire projectiles using mechanical energy to accelerate the missile abruptly from a resting

position. By incorporating this energy and making a catapult capable of hurling a bottle of wine at a wall to shatter it and create a colored stain, the work ironically alludes to iconoclasm and the abolition and destruction of sacred images. But as the power of the machine is relative, perhaps the potential for destruction that it evokes should include the anticipation of failure.

Kaspar Müller collaborated with Iacopo Spini (formerly his student at ECAL – École cantonale d'art de Lausanne) on the design of the frame and the programming of the launch mechanism, which is digitally controlled.

The catapult is activated two times a week: each Sunday at 4 pm, and each Monday between 11 am and 1 pm.

Bruce Nauman, *Untitled (Flour Arrangements)*, 1967

In 1966, for an entire month Bruce Nauman repositioned piles of flour that he had spread on his studio floor, and recorded their movements each day with a series of photographs. As often occurs in his work, this action was a paradoxical attempt to synthesize the assonance that exists between the words floor and flour. While these gestures are distinguished by the fact that the anti-artistic material—though potentially similar to plaster—is treated in a pictorial or sculptural way, the idea of working on the floor suggests the relationship between the canvas and floor initiated by Abstract Expressionism.

A year later Nauman was invited to present his project once more for the television station KQED-TV in San Francisco. The recording of *Untitled (Flour Arrangements)* took the form of a talk show: Nauman was filmed at work from above, using shots that recall the documentary dedicated to Jackson Pollock by Hans Namuth in 1951, while the artists William Allan and Peter Saul discuss Nauman's actions. Uniting a television studio and the documentary method, the video focuses on the creative process of the work to the detriment of the final result, and shows the reaction of the artists to the advent of mass media, alternatives to traditional artistic means.

Josh Smith, *Untitled*, 2012

In the creation of works like this *Untitled*, Josh Smith makes use of the international language of signage. This immediate image commands the visitor to stop and contemplate the very presence of the work. The choice of aluminum as a pictorial support followed on, not without irony, from Smith's observations on the increasing popularity of reflective surfaces in contemporary art.

Lawrence Weiner, *A 36" x 36" REMOVAL TO THE LATHING OR SUPPORT WALL OF PLASTER OR WALLBOARD FROM A WALL*, 1968

In 1969 the conceptual artist Lawrence Weiner presented *A 36" X 36" REMOVAL TO THE LATHING OR SUPPORT WALL OF PLASTER OR WALLBOARD FROM A WALL* as part of the exhibition *When Attitudes Become Form*, curated by Harald Szeemann and presented at the Kunsthalle in Bern. In creating this work, the artist used a chisel and hammer to remove part of the plaster from one of the museum walls,

opening a square that measured 91.5×91.5 cm. In doing so, he created a work whose presence was defined by its very absence.

Next to the square he added a label with the purely descriptive title above. The use of the text is of fundamental importance in Weiner's works and poses questions on the real nature of the work of art, whether it is the object created, the gesture that made it, or the text that explains it.

That same year, Weiner formulated a lasting declaration of intent that accompanied his work:

1. THE ARTIST MAY CONSTRUCT THE WORK
 2. THE WORK MAY BE FABRICATED
 3. THE WORK NEED[S] NOT BE BUILT
- EACH BEING EQUAL AND CONSISTENT WITH THE INTENT OF THE ARTIST THE DECISION AS TO CONDITION RESTS WITH THE RECEIVER UPON THE OCCASION OF RECEIVERSHIP

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Daniel Buren, photo souvenirs:

Hombres/Sandwichs, April 1968, Paris

Seven Ballets in Manhattan, in collaboration with the John Weber Gallery, New York, 27.5–2.6.1975

Twelve Ballets in Manhattan, in collaboration with Chris D'Arcangelo, Louise Lawler, New York, 1977–78

Hombres/Sandwichs, September 1980, Paris

Ballets in London, organized by the Whitechapel Gallery, London, January 2015

Travaux in situ, détails

Photographs documenting a series of Daniel Buren's on-site performances

At the start of the 1960s, Daniel Buren began to conceive what he described as his "degree zero of painting," radically asking questions on the relationship between the medium and the support, with a view to employing a decisive economy of means. Since 1965, he has used vertical lines that are always 8.7 cm wide in his research into the nature of painting, how it is presented, and, more generally, on the physical and social setting in which he finds himself working. The lines are the cipher used in his encounter with the exhibition and public contexts where he is invited to exhibit and participate, as his projects are always site-specific: once he had abandoned the use of the canvas in favor of working directly on walls, the need to deal specifically with the setting's architecture and context became

increasingly apparent to Buren. For example, in April 1968 at the Salon de Mai in Paris, he worked both inside and outside the Musée d'Art Moderne de La Ville de Paris, lining one of the museum's walls with white- and green-striped paper, and sending two men wearing striped sandwich-boards to walk through the city's streets.

Buren repeated similar interventions in 1975 with his *Seven Ballets* in Manhattan, in 1977, 1978, 1980 and 2015, when demonstrators marched through the streets of New York, Paris and London carrying protest signs, which bore no writing just his iconic vertical stripes.

The artist captured these moments in photographs, which he calls "photo-souvenirs," and which remain the only "memory" of the work of art.

Paul Delaroche, *Cromwell and Charles 1st*, after 1831

The first time he saw a daguerreotype, the French painter Paul Delaroche is said to have exclaimed: "From today painting is dead!" Photography invaded the art world and played a fundamental role in redefining the functions and vocabulary of painting. Whereas some artists soon began to use it as a work tool or allowed themselves to be influenced by the new medium, for others the invention of photography represented a rupture with painting and spurred a search for new forms of representation.

At the end of his career, Delaroche himself, a painter of history paintings who exhibited at the Salons in Paris, would create pioneering works influenced by photographic techniques, and distance himself from strictly academic language. *Cromwell and Charles 1st*, which illustrates a fictional story written by François-René de Chateaubriand, shows Oliver Cromwell looking down at the lifeless body of Charles I following the king's execution. The painting, which was exhibited at 1831 Salon and criticized for its excessively realistic rendering—the primary characteristic of photography—was instead thought by Delaroche to be representative of a new approach to the creation of history paintings.

Jörg Immendorff, *Wo stehst du mit deiner Kunst, Kollege?*, 1973

Influenced by the political unrest during the second half of the 1960s, with this work Jörg Immendorff investigated the relationship that art establishes with society.

In the painting, a young artist bursts into the studio of a painter and, with a commanding gesture, invites him to join the march of demonstrators seen outside the room. As it is composed, the scene creates an antithesis between indoors and outdoors, private and public, and prompts an apparently simplistic and polarized reflection on the different roles an artist can assume: on one hand there is the painter sitting in front of a blank canvas, an artist who works in the institutional environment of museums; on the other, the group of protesters represents the artist who wants to initiate a debate with the collective and with politics.

Immendorf invokes revolution as a painter with a figurative painting, asking the question: "Which side are you on with your art, colleague?"

Louise Lawler, *Chicago*, 2011–12

While the proper readymade was invented by Marcel Duchamp, in the investigation of the crises of the relations between traditional media and the representation of reality it is valuable to examine some of the signs of rupture that heralded this Dadaist approach. The hair ribbon and tutu made of fabric that are worn by Edgar Degas's bronze ballerina can be considered from this viewpoint (fabric as a real material added to the metal with an artistic fiction). As viewed by Louise Lawler—whose work debates the production, circulation and presentation of artworks—the development of Impressionist visual research to embrace the tactile, as it was conducted by Degas in this series of sculptures, is accentuated by her choice to photograph the sculpture from behind, thereby editing it.

Michelangelo Pistoletto, *Vetrina (Oggetti in meno)*, 1965–66

"The works I create have no desire to be constructions or fabrications of new ideas, just as they do not wish to be objects that represent me, to be imposed or to impose me on others, but are objects by means of which I free myself of something—they are not constructions but liberations—I don't think of them as plus objects but as minus objects, in the sense that they carry within them a definitively manifested perceptual experience," Michelangelo Pistoletto stated with regard to the series of *Oggetti in meno* (Minus Objects), made in December 1965 and January 1966 and immediately exhibited in his studio. While some of these sculptures are dedicated to abstract or elusive objects—posing as reinterpretations of an everyday object occasionally inspired by craftsmanship, design or popular culture—, *Vetrina* almost sacredly displays a work overall after it appears to have been used by a painter.

Pistoletto had painted since the early 1950s, focusing mainly on self-portraits as a means of questioning the nature of individual identity, and had by 1961 created his first mirror painting.

Carol Rama, *Spazio anche più che tempo*, 1970

Linked to the Concrete Art Movement in the 1950s, and later to lyrical abstraction (*Arte informale*), in the 1960s Carol Rama followed a poetic path based on the use of unconventional materials and on the evocation of a provocative and personal imaginary universe linked to the depths of the psyche. In this current of her research, the physical object is set within the pictorial representation.

For the works in her *Spazio anche più che tempo* series, she completely replaces the use of color and gesture with industrial materials, applying rubber cables on white or black monochrome canvases with either glue or hooks. Unlike other works in the same series, for the canvas in the show Rama did not use pieces of bicycle inner tubes, but black electrical cables that she glued to the surface in a curve that suggests a threatening hook.

Morton Schamberg, "God" by Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven and Morton Schamberg, 1918

A crisis in the realm of painting is identified with the appearances of the readymade and collage. The term readymade describes an object in everyday use, which, when deprived of its function, is endowed with a new narrative plane when given a title and placed in a setting traditionally reserved for the exhibition of works of art. This stimulates a feeling of alienation in the viewer and prompts the attribution of new aesthetic values to the decontextualized object.

In *God*, Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven and Morton Schamberg (who later immortalized the work in a photograph) attached a plumbing trap to a carpenter's wooden box, thereby irreverently relating the sacred aura associated with the title to humble work tools.

Jean-Frédéric Schnyder, *Hudel*, 1983–2004

Jean-Frédéric Schnyder's conceptual framework concentrated on painting from the early 1970s, when the artist undertook a vast production of small-format paintings. Considering artistic practice to be a daily ritual, Schnyder interprets themes and stereotypes in the history of painting, such as Vedutism and plein-air painting.

Composed of sewn rags that were previously used to clean his brushes, the work exhibited becomes a testimony to his activity as a painter. As such it was presented in several of Schnyder's exhibitions as an on-going project before adopting its final dimensions and components in 2004: for example, in 1997 he exhibited it lying on the floor of the Galerie Walcheturm in Zurich as part of his solo show "I pittori sono cani" (Painters are dogs), together with a series of over 100 paintings all the same size, which he painted in a wide variety of styles that represented the classic painting genres.

Kurt Schwitters, *A Dim Bulb*, 1947

The expression "Dim Bulb," in German "Keine Leuchte," is a metaphor for a lack of acuity that sounds particularly evocative and ironic when most of the images we are presented with each day are backlit. Do Schwitters' collages represent as much a revolution in art history as the advent of the digital image? And are both of these innovations attacks on the primacy of painting?

1930s print from a set of negatives made in 1861 by James Clerk Maxwell using the VIVEX process

The advent of photography is considered to have embodied the first crisis for painting in recent art history. This new method of representation, which required no specific manual skills, obliged the traditional arts to search for new forms of expression in which the accurate imitation of the real world was of less importance and eventually became obsolete.

James Clerk Maxwell, a Scottish scientist renowned for his studies of electromagnetism, also contributed to the development of pioneering theories in the fields of optics and the perception of color. In 1855 he devised a method of producing color images by combining three monochrome images in blue, green and red. Six years later, the photographer

Thomas Sutton, who worked with Maxwell, demonstrated what the scientist had theorized: he took three photographs of a Scotch ribbon using three different color filters, projected and superimposed them on a screen, and obtained the first color photograph.

Shown in the exhibition is a reproduction created in the 1930s using the Vivex process on the basis of Maxwell's original slides.

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Marcel Breuer, Richard Schadewell, "Bauhaus" telephone, 1930

At the end of the 1920s, Marcel Breuer and Richard Schadewell jointly designed the "Frankfurt" telephone. Manufactured by the company Fuld & Co. Telefonbau & Normzeit, the telephone was chosen to be supplied in each house as part of the project "Das Neue Frankfurt" to construct affordable public housing in the city of Frankfurt. The Bauhaus also contributed to this project of urban redevelopment, which is why the telephone is also known as the *Bauhaus Telephone*, though its design and development were not born in the school run by Walter Gropius.

The telephone on display here is related with a well-known modernist episode that features one of the central figures of the Bauhaus school and movement, László Moholy-Nagy. The artist stated he had organized abstract paintings to be created by an enamel factory in Weimar, to which his only instructions had been given verbally in a telephone call.

Leidy Churchman, *iPhone 11*, 2019–20

The paintings by Leidy Churchman depict a variety of subjects—ranging from landscapes to animals, figures of Tibetan Buddhism and company logos, or may reinterpret the covers of art books or works by other artists, such as Henri Rousseau and Barbara Kruger. These contents are chosen for personal reasons: for the artist, painting is part of a process of exploring his own awareness.

iPhone 11 was taken from a billboard advertisement that the artist saw as he drove through the streets of New York to his studio. It shows the back of a mobile phone, which is meticulously reproduced against a black ground. The three lenses, the ultimate symbol of the possibility of creating digital images of increasingly greater quality, make this object vaguely anthropomorphic. Painting takes on the responsibility of representing technology that we look at.

Niki de Saint Phalle
Old Master (non tiré), c. 1961
Tir (fragment), 1962

As from 1961, Niki de Saint Phalle, the only woman artist in the group of Nouveaux Réalistes, devoted herself to the series *Les Tirs* (Shooting Pictures). To create these works, she would place a coat of plaster over small bags of colored paint and everyday objects (such as toys, crockery, food) or unusual objects (like a stuffed crocodile). Using a rifle, she then shot at these surfaces so that the bullets would puncture the bags of color and create drippings.

In the art of Niki de Saint Phalle, the violent and destructive act responsible for the creation of these works takes on a cathartic value: the artist shoots at tradition, patriarchal society, and the status quo, but not without also taking an ironic poke at herself, the artist.

Two works are exhibited here: in *Old Master (non tiré)* the prepared white surface remains intact; in *Tir (fragment)*, the chalk has been hit by bullets and the bags of color exploded; the composition is completed by a battle between toy soldiers.

Andrea Fraser, *Untitled (de Kooning/Raphael) #1*, 1984/2005

In her series *Untitled*, Andrea Fraser photographed images of works by Renaissance masters that she superimposed with those of 20th-century artists, as in *Untitled (de Kooning/Raphael) #1*, in which the figures of the *Madonna and Child* painted by Raphael seem to be distorted by the violent, agitated brushstrokes of Willem De Kooning. As a result of this superimposition, which makes the images almost indistinguishable and effaces the pictorial details, Fraser questions the representations of female figures, with their symbolic charge of sacredness and motherhood, that have been conceived by men at different moments of art history. Originally created in 1984 and published in *Woman I/Madonna and Child 1506–1967*, an artist's book in the form of a fictitious brochure, they were later reproduced in poster format in 2005 and put on sale, triggering a further challenge to the commodification of the image.

Pinot Gallizio, *Le acque del Nilo non passarono ad Alba*, 1958

In 1959 Pinot Gallizio introduced the concept of industrial painting, producing art mechanically, making it available to everyone. Using mechanical rollers, he superimposed oil colors and resins on canvases tens of meters long that he would subsequently roll up; these could then be cut and sold by the meter. The use of mechanical tools ensured a rapid rate of production that consequently reduced the price of painting and allowed his canvases to be more widely and easily marketed, in so doing bringing down the economic value of an artwork as a luxury object.

The artist developed a theory of aesthetics that attempted to do away with the traditional conception of painting: not only were his works produced using different means from the habitual ones, but he planned them in order to make them accessible to those unaccustomed to visiting academic places of art.

Executed in 1958, *Le acque del Nilo non passerono ad Alba* was shown in a solo exhibition by the artist at the Galerie van de Loo in Munich in April 1959. On that occasion, several parts of the canvas were cut off and sold, one of which was later recovered and is shown here together with the original scroll.

Alain Jacquet, *Le déjeuner sur l'herbe*, 1964

A French artist in contact with the milieus of Nouveau Réalisme and Pop Art, in 1964 Alain Jacquet created *Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, his first work as part of the Mec Art movement (an abbreviation of Mechanical Art). This term was coined by the critic Pierre Restany to refer to art made using mechanical reproduction techniques without any manual intervention.

Jacquet returned to the masterpiece of the same name by Édouard Manet, which was painted in 1863 and is now held in the Musée d'Orsay in Paris. Jacquet's version recreates the scene in the original work, using friends that include the painter Mario Schifano, the gallerist Jeannine de Goldschmidt, and Restany himself, who are shown seated next to a swimming pool.

Jacquet has transposed the silkscreened photograph onto canvas and enlarged the image to the point that it appears like a surface of dotted fragments. These mechanical procedures make it possible to create several versions of the original shot, and to enlarge or modify it, in a paradoxical reconsideration of the relationship between pictorial tradition and photography that already subtended the pre-Impressionist visual language.

Morag Keil, *Eye 1–4*, 2018

Each of these four painted eyes reflects a computer or smartphone; the surface of the painting has also been covered with a particularly glossy varnish to approach becoming a reflective surface itself. Conceived and painted by Morag Keil to be exhibited in the office of the Jenny's gallery during her solo show in 2018, these paintings depict the artist's eyes but are also a reference to the logo of the US reality TV show "Big Brother," in which the participants live constantly under the eyes of the cameras.

One of the main areas of Keil's practice is her investigation of the impact of the digital world on the cultural and emotional life of human beings, which she conducts both in works that involve the use of traditional media, such as painting and drawing, and those based on the use of technology.

John Kelsey, *Server Farm*, 2013

John Kelsey, a writer, artist and member of the Reena Spaulings and Bernadette Corporation collectives, has dedicated a series of apparently bucolic, watercolor landscapes to buildings that contain data centers. Although the pictorial technique is related with an immediate and often detached—when executed professionally—dimension of plein-air painting, the subjects of his paintings lay bare the solid architectural reality of the places that contain the equipment that makes possible what is thought to be quintessentially insubstantial. Presented

as tranquil, traditional landscapes, the images of these buildings (owned by companies such as Apple and Facebook, or by the US government) are taken from satellite views or helicopters: the scrupulous realism of the images further emphasizes the absurdity of portraying the physical face of the production and transmission of digital content.

Piero Manzoni executing a continuous line during the exhibition "Nul," Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 1962

Piero Manzoni developed his *Linee* series from 1959 onwards: in this, he would trace a single line, the simplest component of a drawing, on a sheet of paper that he then rolled up and placed in a cylindrical container, thus making it impossible to see.

Even more radical was the operation he carried out for his *Linea di lunghezza infinita*, which, denoted by no more than a cylinder without openings, exists only as an idea. The possibility therefore exists for the line to extend endlessly, entering the dimension of infinity.

Broadcast on June 27, 1962, the film *0x0 = Kunst: Maler ohne Farbe und Pinsel* (0x0 = Art: Painters without Color or Brush), produced by Gerd Winkler to document the research of the international art movement ZERO, devotes sequences to the works of this Italian artist, who was also shown creating his own line. Peter Fischli has taken a short extract of the film which, by means of a loop, alludes to the idea that Manzoni can draw an endless line.

Piero Manzoni
Impronta, 1960
Impronta pollice sinistro, 1960

The fingerprint is a recurrent theme in Manzoni's artistic research. Right from his early works, he experimented with the impressions made by everyday objects, such as keys, buttons, nails, and pincers on darkly-colored canvases. Subsequently it was his own fingerprints that he focused on, as occurred on the occasion of the performance *Consumazione dell'arte dinamica del pubblico divorare l'arte*, which he presented at the Galleria Azimut in Milan in July 1960. Here Manzoni pressed his thumbprint on hard-boiled eggs that he then offered to the public.

The fingerprint was not intended simply as a "physical" version of Manzoni's signature (or a symbol of individuality) but represented the starting-point for an ironic expression of the figure of the artist with the power to transform everyday objects into art. A supplementary step in this research was represented by the artist's decision to reproduce his fingerprint or thumbprint in a lithograph, in so doing making a comparison between the act of printing a trace of his body with a traditional printing technique, both of which are based on the mechanical action of exerting pressure.

Jean Tinguely, *Méta-Matic No. 6*, 1959

Central to the practice of Jean Tinguely, a member of the Nouveaux Réalistes group, are his mechanically animated kinetic sculptures often composed of salvaged objects.

At the Iris Clert Gallery in Paris in 1959, at the start of his artistic career, Tinguely presented for the first time his *Méta-Matics*, moving machinery with a felt-tip pen at the ends which was held in contact with a sheet of paper. The spectators were asked to choose the colors the machine should use and to activate the machines, which, on account of their unpredictable and impromptu movement, produced a design that was always different. The interaction between the machine and the participant—freed from his role as a “passive” user—was a crucial feature of the design.

With these works, Tinguely initiated a reflection in which the artist’s authoriality is undermined and replaced by those of the people who activate the machine and of the machine itself. His research thus broached the theme of the uniqueness of the work of art by virtue of the unlimited and ever different drawings the *Méta-Matics* are able to produce.

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Carla Accardi, *Biancobianco*, 1966

Originally siding in favor of abstraction with the signing of the *Forma I* manifesto, Carla Accardi took up sign painting between 1953 and 1954 and developed calligrams, her characteristic signs that occupy the entire surface of the canvas and are distinguished by their ability to create visual tension with their interweaving.

Starting in the mid-1960s, Accardi began to use sicofoil, a transparent acetate sheet, as a support in her works. The use of this industrial material emphasizes the artist’s resolve and desire to overcome the limits imposed by an opaque canvas: the transparency of this material, when not associated with the canvas, allows a view of the frame and the environment in which the work is situated, and leads to an idea of immateriality, the dematerialization of the surface. In *Biancobianco*, the use of the monochrome sicofoil above the canvas allows the sequences of undulating and regularly iterated lines, organized in a semicircle, to appear both as a sign and as a shadow.

Lutz Bacher, *Big Glass*, 2008

A peculiarity of Lutz Bacher’s research is the inclusion of found elements in her works, often everyday objects that she discovered in junk shops or on the street among the garbage, which allowed her to investigate issues such as identity, materiality

and the human condition. By doing away with media categorizations, her works explore sexuality, power and violence in a strongly political vision.

For the work *Big Glass*, Bacher salvaged a broken mirror which she presents as a readymade, associating a title with the object that refers to Marcel Duchamp's *Grand Verre* (1915–23). The broken and distorted image of the viewer reflected by the mirror confirms Bacher's interest in all that is fragmentary, in disorder or dissolution.

Walter De Maria, *Silver Portrait of Dorian Gray*, 1965

Produced by Walter De Maria in 1965 for the collectors Ethel and Robert Scull, *Silver Portrait of Dorian Gray* is composed of a square silver plate flanked by brown velvet curtains that can hide or reveal the reflecting surface.

This work, like others by De Maria, is altered by the passage of time and the changes can be recorded in photographs: "The silver plate changes color as the air touches it. This process may be photographed. When the owner judges that enough time has passed, this plaque can be removed to free and clean the silver plate. The process can then begin anew. November 5, 1965," is inscribed on the back of the work.

Associated with the portrait of Dorian Gray described in Oscar Wilde's novel and cited in the title, De Maria's work alters over time; simultaneously, it also reflects the changes of the faces reflected in it, demonstrating the limit of physical existence and comparing it with its artistic equivalent.

David Hammons, *Untitled*, 2008

As in other works of the same series, in *Untitled* the African-American artist David Hammons hides a painting by wrapping it with ephemeral materials that he salvages in the street. The industrial plastic sheet used is marked with tears and holes that allow the viewer to glimpse the painting beneath, which is characterized by gestural brushstrokes. The sheet can also be intended as a reference to the visual theme of drapery, a central element in both sculpture and classical painting. But it is in parallel an instrument of visual exclusion, and thus brings into question the hierarchies of artistic materials and representation.

With this series, Hammons applies to painting his poetic strategy of transforming objects of daily life into allegories of the experience of outsiders in the art world.

Martin Kippenberger, Albert Oehlen, *Orgonkiste bei Nacht*, 1982

The German artists Martin Kippenberger and Albert Oehlen have in common a dimension of political disillusionment and the ability to present controversial topics with lightness and satirical humor.

At the start of the 1980s, the pair created a number of sculptures between them: one was *Orgon Box by Night*, a container covered in brownish paint mixed with oat flakes; inside, a pile of painted canvases is just visible from a half-open door.

"Orgone" is the name given by the psychoanalyst Willem Reich to the vital energy that is presumed to pervade

the universe, and which in man is thought to be manifested as sexual energy and libido. This orgone accumulator is mockingly and ironically made to preserve the paintings in his own production that Kippenberger considers as defective or in need of improvement.

Klara Lidén, *Untitled (Poster Painting)*, 2007

Initially trained in the field of architecture, Klara Lidén appropriates the urban space and materials that the city provides in performances and actions that show up the importance and centrality of the physical gesture in her artistic research. In the series of *Poster Paintings*—made in the late 2000s after reading the story of a homeless man who lived in structures he created from posters—Klara Lidén tore down advertising posters she found on city streets, glued them together on top of each other, and covered them with sheets of pristine white paper. The posters thus become emptied and deprived of their communicative function, and, when hung on the walls, become transformed into monochromes that define an encounter between outside and inside, public and private.

Lorenza Longhi, *Untitled*, 2019

Employing a practice that starts from an investigation of the notion of perfection and neutrality in the mass-production of everyday objects, Lorenza Longhi competes with painting through her reinvention of screen printing. In substituting manual craftsmanship for the mechanical procedures required by this method, she produces unique works instead of a series of identical works. This “sabotage” of screen printing invests her works with flaws and irregularities to the extent of revealing the traces of manual gestures. In the production of the diptych exhibited, the silver ink was applied using a frame not directly pressed on scraps of fabric, to which Longhi had previously attached cut-out stickers. The words reproduced were taken from company magazines published during the second half of the 20th century, confirming the artist’s wish to immerse herself in the linguistics of mass production and the high value it places on efficiency.

Michelangelo Pistoletto, *Gabbia*, 1973

The concept of the “cage” has been present in Michelangelo Pistoletto’s visual vocabulary since 1962, when he included it as a subject in his first mirror works: cages for birds, monkeys and even empty cages in which the viewer, looking at himself, finds himself imprisoned. The theme of vision in this work is further problematized by the presence of a fabric that conceals whatever inhabitant is contained in the small aviary.

In 1970 Pistoletto founded the theater company Lo Zoo, which over the following years performed in unconventional spaces in Italy and elsewhere in Europe. The name of the theatrical collective was chosen as a response to the perception of society as the creator of boundaries that do not respect individuality. Thus, in this work too the idea of being caged in roles is seen once again.

Mirror paintings are a challenge to painting, a discipline in which Pistoletto is trained, not simply on account of the presence of the viewer in the work, but also of the change to the dimensions of time and space reproduced in two-dimensionality.

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John Baldessari, *What Is Painting*, 1966–68

In the mid-1960s, John Baldessari wondered about the means of painting and began to experiment with the use of short texts in his works, hypothesizing that he would find a more effective means of representation using words rather than figuration. He conceived the work *What Is Painting*, then hired a commercial sign-painter to transcribe the words on the canvas. The text itself was not devised by Baldessari but comes from an instruction book that explains how to compose a painting. Thus, through a tautological process, Baldessari transformed a text into an artwork while simultaneously questioning the role of the artist, the action of making art, and the traditional conception of painting.

Gene Beery

This is My Last Serious Painting, 1960

Watch This Canvas, 1960–61

Out of Style, 1961

As Long As There Are Walls There Will Be Paintings!, 1986

At the start of the 1960s, Gene Beery was one of the first artists to use words and texts as content in his paintings. Painting on Masonite that he salvaged from construction sites on the Lower East Side, his text-paintings were exhibited—thanks to the interest shown by Max Ernst—for the first time in 1963 at the Alexander Iolas Gallery, which represented the most important European Surrealists in the United States.

Employing caustic irony, Beery used the painting as a means to encourage the viewer to become aware of what a work of art is, what it means to look at it, and what its role is.

Beery left both New York and the art world in the mid-60s when he was not yet thirty, to continue working on the margins of the system in the hills of California.

Karen Kilimnik

Jane Creep (Druids), 1990

Jane Creep (Blow Dryer), 1991

Jane Creep (Crème de menthe), 1991

Jane Creep (Plane to Paris), 1991

Jane Creep (St Bernard), 1991

In the series of *Jane Creep* drawings, which she began in the late 1980s, Karen Kilimnik relates the often cruelly comical tribulations suffered by a female character, which she writes in a childish handwriting.

During the same period in which she was describing Jane's adversities in words, Kilimnik was one of the leading figures in the rebirth of figurative painting in the early '90s, when she began to paint portraits of figures both semi-invented and real, which she took from the worlds of music, cinema, fashion, and aristocracy: removed from the present, in her paintings they become immersed in romantic historical scenarios.

Jane, however, fails constantly to be glamorous; describing the events of Jane's life is one of the ways Kilimnik produces light-hearted and subtle observations of codes of behavior and symbols of social belonging.

Pino Pascali, *Lettera (C)*, 1964

Right from his beginnings, Pino Pascali has combined work as a graphic designer and a set designer for the television studio with his activity as an artist, and enriches his poetics with suggestions and reflections derived from different fields of experimentation. In addition, these contexts allow him to experiment with materials and techniques, such as plastic and polystyrene, papier-mâché and paint, in which he flippantly transposes speculations and ideational mechanisms typical of art.

The work exhibited comes from a series dedicated to letters of the alphabet. Originally created as graphic proofs, these works bear witness to the Pop background that denotes Pascali's approach in interpreting the sensibility of Arte Povera, within which he moves independently, combining polymaterialism and linguistic experimentation.

Jim Shaw

Abstract Shapes and Olive, 2020

Futuristic Mushroom Meditation Buildings in City Park, 2020

Hand Impaled by Knife with Melting Watch Out Window, 2020

Vines and Flowers, 2020

Weeping Caterpillar Boy Questions Nail Polish Bottle Girl

Struck by Cartoon Lightning, 2020

White Wolf and Moon, 2020

In his work, Jim Shaw draws on what has been thought of as waste by American culture since the 1970s. The works exhibited are from his vast collection of flea-market paintings: they were all taken by the artist from non-artistic contexts in which individual authoriality, styles and interests have been lost, becoming a bizarre portrait of a collective imaginary with regard to modernity, horror, punk and, once again, the role of the artist and his ambiguous counterpart, the amateur painter. Considered as a body of works, these paintings, even in a partial presentation like in this exhibition, offer a multifaceted but unitary aesthetic

in which a recurrent visual vocabulary is apparent.

Regarding the influence these works have on his artistic practice, Shaw has stated: "An odd way that being known as the guy who collects thrift-store paintings has affected my work is that in my own work, I'm especially conscious of not making the same mistakes typically found in amateur art. Getting the eyes in the right place, making sure the perspective is correct – it's sort of warped my perfectionism into a perverse level that I struggle against."

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Monika Baer, *In Reserve*, 2018

Monika Baer's solo exhibition "Die Einholung," held in the Barbara Weiss Gallery in Berlin in 2018, included a series of yellow paintings shown with a large and varied body of pictorial works that attest her eclectic pictorial practice. Her work is characterized by her investigation of various historical and artistic references and an examination of the discursive space that the painted image continues to produce.

These monochrome works, distinguished by different shades of yellow and the differently sized canvases, are marked by furrows or reliefs that alter the uniformity of the pictorial surface. Each painting is also attached to the wall using an aluminum fixing device: unlike other of Baer's works, in which various objects are applied directly on the canvas, in this series the object, which contributes to creating the work's three-dimensional character, is applied on the side of the support, thereby reinventing the relationship between the surface and its tension, shifting it towards objectification.

Dadamaino, *Volume*, 1958

After an initial practice of figurative painting, Edoarda Emilia Maino, artistic name Dadamaino, drew near to the most experimental currents on the Milanese art scene following an encounter with Lucio Fontana and Piero Manzoni. It was against this background that she embraced the rejection of painting, the adoption of the monochrome, and the consequent espousal of the canvas as an "object." In 1957–58 she produced her monochrome works *Volumi*, usually black or white, marked by either a large single or repeated ovoid holes. She would cut a void out of the canvas that allowed the volume to be defined by the shadow on the wall behind.

The first time she presented a work in this series was in December 1959 at the exhibition “La donna nell’arte contemporanea” held in the Galleria Brera in Milan to promote women’s artistic research, and, a few days later, in an exhibition of the work of the group Azimut.

Jana Euler, *Where the Energy Comes From 1*, 2014

Jana Euler’s works are denoted by a strong visual eclecticism. Painting is the focus of her artistic practice, which varies formally between expressive figuration and forms charged with mysticism, while also exploring abstraction and hyper-realism. Euler’s citations are not made directly, but she uses different pictorial methods and styles to express her views on the questioning of identity molded today by cultural, social and technological pressures.

The work displayed comes from a series of three airbrushed paintings of, respectively, enormous German, Belgian and Swiss electrical sockets. The three enlarged and contrasted sockets are reminders of how anachronistic it is that there is no standard, at least in Europe, for the distribution of energy. Furthermore, they suggest anthropomorphic or sexual forms. The title is another element that actuates the tension that exists between language, reality and processes of representation.

Olivier Mosset, *Door*, 2002

In the mid-1960s, Olivier Mosset began his reflection on the repetition of identical paintings, thus deliberately causing provocation on the subject of the bourgeois ideal of creative genius. To this insight stemming from Pop art (“The idea of repetition was already in the air, because of Andy Warhol’s soup cans or whatever,” Mosset has commented), he added a strong interest in the monochrome: the result is a practice in which the viewer is led to focus on the physical experience of the perception of surface and scale, color and form. To Mosset, painting is an object rather than a place in which to reflect a subjectivity. He describes it as follows: “Instead of being a representation of reality, the art object has become its own reality. By dissolving its content into its form, it has become what it is. The object is its subject: representation of its own representation.”

The door exhibited is one of the 300 in the National Library of Bern, that Mosset, as the winner of a competition to artistically redevelop the building, repainted manually using the colors included in the original modernist architectural project.

Jean-Frédéric Schnyder, *Bild*, 2005–06

The result of a visual sampling of the world of cartoons (it faithfully reproduces the forms and colors of the painting that hangs above the sofa in the “Simpsons” living room), this work is the materialization of the archetype of a banal painting. Uninterested in stylistic consistency, Schnyder seeks the subjects of his paintings in zones that lie on the boundary between art and kitsch, taste and cliché.

Relatively indifferent to the ideas and histories of art, he treats them simply as forms of expression, linguistic choices

that are available and adaptable, with which he can describe the world. "I do not care which associations my paintings provoke. Swastika, crucifix and sugar cubes are just motifs which are interesting to paint. To apply color—this is what painting is about, right?—It is for me the common thread."

Offering confirmation of this freedom of interpretation of the history of the medium, an outlook with a conceptual origin, this painting is actually a painted wooden object.

Gili Tal, *Entrance Mat*, 2016

These commercial entryway mats reflect Gili Tal's interest in the patterns used in mass-produced items. Tal noticed that in some cases the decorative motifs have similarities to (or perhaps origins in) formal modernist experiments. Tal's practice is linked to her studies in economics: in rethinking capitalism from the standpoint of the effects it produces on people, she conceives forms of visual investigation on simple industrial objects and on the "taste" of which they are manifestations. The thought that arises from these micro-observations develops in relation to themes of banality and fetishization and underlies her decision to use domestic objects in installations.

Rosemarie Trockel, *Untitled*, 1991

In her work, Rosemarie Trockel endows the linguistic and formal achievements of modernism with a female point of view. In light of this, for example, she has created squares of knitted wool created using a computer-controlled knitting-machine, featuring pre-existing decorative patterns or iconic political and commercial symbols, such as the hammer and sickle and the Playboy bunny.

During the 1980s and 1990s Trockel dedicated a series of works to cooking hotplates, viewed as a formal and symbolic entity on the theme of the kitchen, which she considers to be a work environment on a level with the studio, a real place where ideas arise. At first glance similar to minimalist abstract paintings or sculptures, these works are composed of enameled sheets of steel and real hotplates. These objects, and others specifically related to the female world in the collective imagination, are at the heart of Trockel's poetics, which are embraced by the viewer through dynamics of suggestion and recognition.

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Lutz Bacher, *The Big Book*, 2013

Bacher might have discussed this oversized constructed “book” with its various pages of sketches and painterly brushstrokes as evoking “the something and the nothing, the black and white, the zero and the one.” This is an example of Lutz Bacher’s found-object artworks. She never revealed the precise source of these objects but they often came from surplus stores around America.

Michael Krebber, *DEP-MK-033*, 2017

Michael Krebber works from within the formal language of abstract painting to produce an ironic analysis of art history. The economy of the artist’s gestures on the canvas of such works as the one exhibited is therefore an investigation into the roots and fundamental constituents of the medium.

Taking a conceptual approach to painting, his practice distances itself from the self-confidence represented by modernist painting. Rather than attack that tradition, Krebber takes a restrained and careful approach, adopting strategies such as deferment, hesitation and even artistic failure. Krebber therefore considers the pictorial medium as a space for dialogue and permeation more than a means to produce an object. In this way, his work takes on an additional value as criticism and commentary on contemporary culture, life today and the economy of the art world.

Gerhard Richter, *Farbtafel*, 1966

In 1966 Gerhard Richter began painting simple, uniform grids of colored rectangles or squares on a white ground. With one exception, these color charts were his first paintings not to have been painted in black and white. Richter is interested by these regular forms of industrially produced surfaces that are presented for commercial purposes in systematic layouts of complete ranges of tints. Composed without concern for aesthetics—as work tools used by paint makers—to Richter’s eyes these grids are like an object that expresses a scientific approach to color. In interviews given over the years, Richter has repeatedly stated that the series is linked to Pop Art.

In his practice, Richter encompasses a wide variety of styles and media, thus allowing himself to be interpreted as both a symbol of the obsolescence of painting and as the artist who, in recent art history, has most convincingly demonstrated his vitality and adaptability, while always maintaining a firm belief that “images that can be interpreted and have meaning are bad images.”

Josh Smith

Untitled, 2006

Untitled, 2006

Untitled, 2006

Untitled, 2007

Untitled, 2007

Josh Smith’s *Palette Paintings* are a series of small canvases that have in point of fact been used as a palette for larger paintings, resulting in arbitrarily created abstract compositions.

They are works that seem to mythologize the actions of painting in its primary essence, such as cleaning brushes and preparing the color; at the same time, they help in the production of other paintings.

In his expressionistic, gestural and colorful canvases, Smith, who has said that he “thinks in paint,” freely borrows elements from the lexicon of modern painting. When he opts for the figurative, he chooses subjects that do not demand a great degree of interpretation, such as fish or palm trees, so as to prompt visitors to focus on how his works are painted, capturing colors, substance and atmosphere, and to consider the ways in which identical content can be rendered using different techniques. Repetition and variation are key features of Josh Smith’s practice and have their origin in his training as an engraver.

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Marcel Broodthaers, *Dix-neuf petits tableaux en pile*, 1973

Marcel Broodthaers’ practice is distinguished by mockery, wit, introspection and skepticism, all attitudes he uses in an attempt to invent new ways to give material form to artistic language in his work at the boundaries between poetry, sculpture, painting, artist’s books, etching and film.

In 1968 he announced he was no longer an artist and appointed himself director of his own museum, the Musée d’Art Moderne, Département des Aigles. Lasting until 1972, this project commented on the role of art and the function of the museum in society. As a symbol of divine wisdom, authority, power, superiority, imperialism and the nation state, the eagle—quoted in the name of the museum—is a perfect polysemous element to place at the center of this satirical criticism of art and society inspired by student revolts. The idea of the uniqueness of the art object is one of the myths of art history at which Marcel Broodthaers takes aim in his practice, deriding it in such works as *Dix-neuf petits tableaux en pile*, in which painted canvases have been stacked to be experienced not as paintings, but as sculptural presences or like any three-dimensional material.

Honoré Daumier, *Marche funèbre!!/N°2*, 1855

A painter and sculptor in 19th-century Paris, Honoré Daumier is known above all for his caricatures and salacious and satirical

compositions, which were published in such magazines and weeklies as *La Caricature* and *Le Charivari*. Offering views of society, cities, and the political events of his time, these works reveal the world of the fine arts to have been in profound change: he portrayed artists, the reactions of critics and the public, the methods of production of works, and the conditions in which these were exhibited.

In 1855 he produced forty-one lithographs dedicated to the Universal Exposition, which was held that year on the Champs-Élysées in Paris, and is memorable for the presence of photography. Included in this series, which was published in *Le Charivari* between April and September, was *Marche funèbre !!...*, in which a dejected painter walks away from the Exposition after the jury refused to show his works. Daumier depicts a funeral of painting: the artist's works, tagged with the word "refusé" on the side, are carried on a sedan chair by the painter's assistants. Exclusion from official exhibitions was the equivalent of seeing one's art sentenced to death, and entailed a very high risk of losing fame, prestige and the chance to sell one's works to the public.

Asger Jorn

The Good Shepherd (Le bon berger), 1959

The Sweet Life II (La Dolce Vita II), 1962

Ainsi on s'Ensor (Out of this World—after Ensor), 1962

A member of the CO.BR.A group and a prominent figure in the Situationist International, Asger Jorn presented his series *Modifications* in the exhibition "Peintures détournées" at the Galerie Rive Gauche in Paris in 1959. It is a set of old, academically composed figurative paintings that Jorn had found in flea markets and modified with irreverent touches. With the purpose of modernizing them, he added grotesque images and scribbled text, or let colors drip onto the canvas.

This creative process is part of the situationist technique of *détournement*, the upending and transformation of the meaning and contents of works in order to attain new aesthetic and cultural values. *Détournement* infers an attack on institutions and, in Jorn's *Modifications*, it is art, painting in particular, that is targeted: it appropriates works by other artists, overturns the concept of artistic property, and gives them new values by defacing them.

Michael Krebber

Here Comes the Sons, 2011

MK.163, 2011

MK.168, 2011

MK/M 2011/12, 2011/12

In July 2011, Kate Middleton, the Princess of Wales, painted a red snail during a visit to a children's institute during an official visit to Los Angeles. Through the creation of different variations of this artless painting, several of which were executed by his pupils, Krebber challenges the legitimacy of the work of art and its originator.

Kurt Schwitters

Still Life with Flowers and Tin Plate, 1914

Still Life in Gray, 1914–15

Still Life with Brass Pot, Bottle and Dead Magpie, 1915
Untitled (Still Life with Bunch of Flowers and Apples), c. 1934

After an expressionist and cubist phase, Kurt Schwitters, a German artist who had studied at the Dresden Academy, made his first collages in 1918 using waste materials, fabrics, sponges, newspaper clippings, and stamps. A creator with a multifaceted production, he invented the word “Merz” to describe and comprise his artistic works, which included collages, assemblages, sculptures, the famous *Merzbau* proto-installation, and sound poetry. Alongside these experiments, Schwitters did not renounce painting absolutely and definitively. Almost at odds with his avant-garde research, he continued to paint “for his personal pleasure,” as he wrote, producing images of flowers, views, and still lifes, figurative works for which he made deliberate use of traditional pictorial languages and compositions.

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John Armleder, *Untitled*, 1979–80

John Armleder’s practice is rooted in the Fluxus movement, with which he shares an interest in the inclusion of practical objects in an artistic practice, echoing the desire to fuse art with everyday life. Armleder rejects all belonging to a specific artistic current, but recognizes how much contact with the artists of Fluxus has been fundamental to his becoming aware of collective, self-run and openly multidisciplinary procedures, all of which are fundamental aspects of his practice. The work exhibited derives from his dialogue and exchange with Ben Vautier, and dates from the period in which Armleder was occupied with the *Furniture Sculpture* series in which he assembled iconic pieces of design and painting, as he reflected on the trivialization of the work of art as a decorative accessory.

Martin Barré
65-A-50 × 50, 1965
67-Z-3, 1967
67-Z-18-43 × 40, 1967

After studying architecture and then painting at the École des Beaux-Arts in Nantes, Martin Barré elaborated a conception of painting that calls for a clear relationship between figure and background through the use of essential forms, even in

the context of abstraction. This approach produces paintings that are not closed and autonomous formal entities, but that engender a spatial relationship with the wall. In parallel, in his works he experimented with different tools to free the pictorial language from traditional models and methods, substituting brushes with spatulas or applying color directly from the paint tube.

From 1963 to 1967 he made a series of paintings with spray paints, influenced by graffiti seen in the Paris metro. He sprayed opaque black spray on white canvases in diagonal, vertical or horizontal bands, on the corners and edges, but leaving much of the surface free. The use of the spray-cans allowed Barré to leave a pronounced, vigorous trace, while also establishing a certain distance between the support and his hand, thus ensuring impersonality.

Lynda Benglis, *Untitled*, 1969

The work of Lynda Benglis, who studied in New York during the 1960s, occupies an indefinable space between painting and sculpture. Right from her earliest works, she critically questioned the physicality of the pictorial act of Jackson Pollock and the gestural nature of Action Painting. Benglis reinvented and took the researches of Abstract Expressionism to a level of plasticism, maintaining the notion of painting as the trace of a movement, but doing away with its canonical support: she does not drip color on the canvas, but instead spills large quantities of substances like polyurethane and liquid latex directly on the floor, allowing them to solidify without interfering with the shape that they take as they fall and spread on the floor. The colors stratify, overlap and engender plastic masses that appear to be organic. "It allowed me to think that a painting could be continuous in matter and form," says the artist about this process. "The paint was the subject."

Richard Hamilton, *A Little Bit of Roy Lichtenstein for...*, 1964

"Pop Art is popular, transient, expendable, low-cost, mass-produced, young, witty, sexy, gimmicky, glamorous, and big business," said Richard Hamilton in 1957. The Pop Art he was talking about was not American but the British movement that preceded it, based on the introduction of the real world into art, of which Hamilton was a pioneer. The artist saw Roy Lichtenstein's work in an exhibition at the Leo Castelli Gallery in New York in 1963. Then, Hamilton decided to use the poster that advertised the exhibition, which showed a Lichtenstein screen-print featuring a weeping girl, as the starting point to develop new works and analyses. He took parts of the image, which he photographed, enlarged and then printed in series.

A Little Bit of Roy Lichtenstein for... is therefore an appropriation of a detail from Lichtenstein's work: the drop in the top left corner is the tear falling from the woman's eye, while the black lines in the bottom right corner are those Lichtenstein used to define the shadow of her nose. The dots in the halftone screen, which are emblematic of Lichtenstein's Pop work, no longer outline the woman's face, and instead shift towards ambiguous abstraction.

Blinky Palermo, *Untitled*, 1967

Produced between 1966 and 1972, Blinky Palermo's *Stoffbilder* (Fabric Paintings) are works made with industrial fabrics in different colors that he purchased in shops, sewed together, and then stretched on the framework. The fabrics are mostly joined horizontally and in such a way as to create a sharp contrast between the color fields, which often occupy non-proportionate areas of the surface. Palermo thus eliminated the pictorial gesture by producing purely abstract, minimal works, whose color was not applied but determined by the shades of fabric available on the market, and which was remote from traditional painting though maintained its fundamental characteristics of a canvas support and colored surface.

For Palermo, this series represented the way to dialogue with the legacy of American abstraction, in particular with colorfield painting, which, with artists like Mark Rothko, focused the relationship between the canvas and its viewer on the expressive and spiritual values of color.

Francis Picabia

Soleils, 1949

Point, 1951

Francis Picabia was 70 years old when, in 1949, he began his series *Points* or *Dots*, welcomed as a return to the avant-garde after his experiments in figuration that followed his Dadaist period. The surfaces of his *Points* are created by applying layer after layer of paint, on top of which a circular contour is subsequently added in a different color to that of the base. The presence of these areas of color, each of which is surrounded by its own subtle "aura," makes these canvases "quasi-monochromes," as they were defined by Denys Riout, who, in his study of the evolution of monochrome painting, included this series by Picabia. First shown in the Galerie des Deux-Îles in 1949, these works were presented as a break with both figuration and abstraction: the circles attack the otherwise uniform surface and somehow declare that a "full stop" should be put to the discussions about painting.

Poster of the exhibition "Robert Rauschenberg: White Paintings, 1951," 12–27.10.1968, Leo Castelli Gallery, New York

The *White Paintings* series was conceived by Robert Rauschenberg in the summer of 1951, while he was a student at Black Mountain College in North Carolina.

Distancing himself from Abstract Expressionism, Rauschenberg produced canvases that are entirely white, whose surfaces reflect the changes of the light and random effects of shadows in the spaces where they are exhibited. The role of the creator is also redefined: Rauschenberg envisaged that the canvases could be repainted or created without his direct involvement, underscoring the importance of the concept with respect to its material realization. The surfaces have to be smooth and pristine, bearing no traces of the execution involved.

Produced on the occasion of the exhibition "White Paintings 1951" held in the Leo Castelli Gallery in New York in October 1968, the poster shows Rauschenberg in front of one of his compositions, consisting of four modular panels.

Ben Vautier

Banane, 1958

Banane, 1959

Banane, 1959

In the mid-1950s, Ben Vautier explored how to identify a new, abstract form that no artist had yet created. In an interview, he said: "One day I thought about the banana, and I was very proud of myself. I went to visit Yves Klein and said: 'See, now I'm the king of the banana, I'm the best!' And he replied: 'Your bananas are finished, the monochrome is stronger because it integrates all forms.' After him, monochrome put an end to abstraction. And I put my bananas in the drawer."

In reality, Ben continued to make stylized bananas, which he reduced to just an outline, on different supports, mostly in Indian ink on paper or canvas or drawn on photographs. Traced with a single action of the artist's hand, bananas mark a passage towards the introduction into his works of sign-writing, emblematic in Vautier's research.

Puppies Puppies (Jade Kuriki Olivo), *Painting to Pay for My Healthcare (Lexapro Withdrawal) (Monday) (Anxiety) (177 cm My Height) (121 cm My Armspan)*, 2019

During a performance in June 2019 in the spaces of the Balice Hertling gallery in Paris, Puppies Puppies (born Jade Kuriki Olivo) shows their body completely naked and in transition during the nineteenth month of hormone therapy. On this occasion they created a series of works, writing the words "ANXIETY" and "DEPRESSION" on seven blank canvases hung on the walls of the gallery. Each work refers to the portrait of the artist: the canvases' dimensions are the same as their body, while the texts attest to the emotional state of an identity in the making.

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"Andy Warhol BMW Art Car #4," 1979

BMW Art Car is a project conceived in the 1970s by the French driver Hervé Poulain, who asked the car manufacturer to make racing cars in partnership with world-famous artists.

Andy Warhol was the fourth artist to take part in the project. Unlike the other artists, he didn't work on a scale model

but painted directly with a brush onto the car's bodywork, thus creating a genuine hybrid between a working car and a work of art through his direct intervention.

Warhol used bright, intense colors, which he applied in flat tints with undefined contours to create a sensation of movement; he also signed his work with his fingers: "I have tried to give a vivid depiction of speed. If a car is really fast, all contours and colours will become blurred," he explained.

The car was used only once, when it was driven by the German driver Manfred Winkelhock and French drivers Hervé Poulain and Marcel Mignot in the 1979 Le Mans 24 Hours race.

Alighiero Boetti, *Mimetico*, 1967

Alighiero Boetti developed the *Mimetico* series at the beginning of his research, presenting his work on military camouflage for the first time in his solo exhibition held at the Christian Stein Gallery in Turin in 1967, alongside a set of works composed of non-artistic and industrial materials like fiber cement, iron, wood and enamel paints.

To produce his *Mimetici*, Boetti stretched over picture frames pieces of fabric used to make the uniforms used by the Italian army. Influenced here by the principles of the ready-made, the artist removed the object from a context that ambiguously refers to the themes of war, nature and even costume (clothes made from military cloth are part of a symbolic and politicized approach to clothing, particularly during the second half of the 1960s) and relocated it by attributing to it the status of a work of art by shifting it into the realm of a traditional artistic medium. *Mimetico* thus appears both as a practical object and a painting, capable of eliciting reflections on the theme of mimesis, which is central to art throughout time, by dint of cloth that has been designed to blend into nature.

Marcel Duchamp, *Apolinère Enameled*, 1916–17 (1965)

Apolinère Enameled was painted by Marcel Duchamp in New York in 1916–17, by erasing and adding letters to an enameled plate that shows a young girl applying color paints on a bedhead. The plate and image were originally created as an advertisement for Sapolin enamel paint. It is therefore a withdrawal from reality, an operation at the basis of the Duchamp's ready-made.

The play on words with reference to the name of the poet and art critic Guillaume Apollinaire, a friend of the artist, emphasizes the irony of the criticism of traditional painting that is implicit in the readymade, which, through the figure of the child, suggests that painting is an act lacking intellectual intent.

Genoveva Filipovic, Daniel Murnaghan, *Untitled*, 2016

The choice made by young artists Genoveva Filipovic and Daniel Murnaghan to investigate the history of painting through a series of paintings that refer to the American abstractionist artist Mark Rothko was one of the cues that prompted Peter Fischli's conception of this exhibition.

Pop Art is an expression of the desire of a generation of artists to include objects and images from the real world

(consumer goods, advertising figures, etc) in their art, as opposed to the previous American avant-garde whose abstractionism was an expression of subjectivity and interiority. With Filipovic and Murnaghan, Rothko's color field painting, famous for its vibrant spirituality rendered by the use of impalpable nuances of color, in turn becomes an "object" to be appropriated.

Morag Keil

Untitled (Piss Painting 1), 2014

Untitled (Piss Painting 12), 2014

For the realization of her series of *Piss Paintings*, the Scottish artist Morag Keil was inspired by Andy Warhol's research. During the late '70s, the Pop artist created his *Oxidation Paintings* by making his assistants urinate on canvases coated with copper paints: the consequent oxidation created abstract and iridescent compositions on the surfaces that conceal a satirical attack on Action Painting and the works of Jackson Pollock. In even more of a provocation, Morag Keil herself urinated with her woman's body on copper plates rather than delegate the task to others, thereby defending female authoriality and autonomy. Keil's action is not limited to the canvas: she also urinates on furniture, guitars and chairs, which she first coats with copper paint.

Ushio Shinohara, *Drink More*, 1965

A founding member of Japanese Neo Dada, Ushio Shinohara discovered Pop Art through illustrated articles published in the magazine *Art International* in 1963. This new art movement exerted a radical influence on Shinohara who, in his *Imitation Art* series, imitated and recreated the most distinctive elements of American Pop Art.

In *Drink More*, Shinohara combines an assortment of images and influences: Jasper Johns' iconic flags are suggested by the stars and stripes in the background, while the Coca-Cola bottle cites *Coca-Cola Plan*, a combine painting executed by Robert Rauschenberg in 1958. The decision to screen-print the work, and the use of bright colors, are a more general reference to the work of Andy Warhol.

Reena Spaulings, *Gate 1*, 2018

A fictional character in a novel written by the collective The Bernadette Corporation, the name Reena Spaulings also represents an artists' collective and a gallery opened in New York in 2004 by John Kelsey and Emily Sundblad. As an artists'-collective and gallery, Spaulings questions the hierarchies in the art world by experimenting with different forms of artistic research and creating an environment in which the roles of gallery owner, artist and curator are merged.

Taking inspiration from Andy Warhol's act of painting a BMW racing car in 1979, in her series *Gates* (five pieces created in 2018), Reena Spaulings transforms the practical object of a metal-detector gate into an artistic object by a pictorial gesture. Found in airports, courts, banks and even museums and schools, this security device, which can allow or deny access to

a particular environment, involves the viewer, who is prompted to cross a threshold and thus destroy the limits of the traditional canvas, thereby introducing painting to a physical, bodily space.

Sturtevant, *Johns Flag*, 1966

Repeating the most representative works of some of her contemporary artists, such as Joseph Beuys, Andy Warhol, Jasper Johns, Roy Lichtenstein and Claes Oldenburg, Sturtevant pioneered an exploration into the themes of the uniqueness of an artwork and intellectual property.

Created in the mid-1960s, her *Johns Flag* marked the start of her career: just like Jasper Johns, Sturtevant recreated the American flag using the encaustic technique by mixing colors and heated wax. Although she faithfully repeated Johns' work, Sturtevant's appropriations cannot be considered as copies, but as new original works that are capable of destabilizing the concepts of authorship, originality and authenticity: "The decision makes other artists' work and use of them as catalysts to reveal the powerful under-structure of art both surprising and terrifying. Surprising in its validity and truthfulness, terrifying in its possible consequences. My intention was to work on issues that, in their current aesthetic, would probe the concept and limits of originality," stated Sturtevant.

Ben Vautier, *Buvez Coca Cola frais*, 1960

One of the founders of the Fluxus movement, Ben Vautier is known for his text-based paintings: his work is based on the assumption that any object can be turned into art by the addition of the artist's signature. So Vautier signs monochrome canvases, works by other artists, salvaged objects, even the horizon and his own body, thus determining it as a work of art.

The distinctive characteristic of Vautier's art is his use of simple cursive script, which he applies to objects and canvases. His paintings are composed of sentences, short questions or single words. His handwriting becomes even more telling in this work in which, in addition to expressing subjectivity, the script seems almost to plagiarize the Coca-Cola logo by appropriating the brand's characteristic use of color and an entire advertising text, which Vautier transposes onto a canvas and thus turns into a painting.

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Alberto Burri, *Plastica*, 1962

As from the second half of the 1950s, Alberto Burri introduced the use of fire into his works, which he treated as a tool used to work on paper, wood, iron, plastic and cellophane. During the previous decade, his practice had concentrated on the contrast between the idea of painting and the use of non-pictorial, recycled or industrial production materials, such as jute sacks, Vinavil glue, cloth and tar. As the critic Giulio Carlo Argan wrote about the results of this comparison: "Burri's art is a sort of inverted trompe-l'oeil, in which painting no longer pretends to be reality, but reality pretends to be painting."

By working with fire on plastic sheets stretched across frames, Burri created surfaces featuring wrinkles, rips and creases reminiscent of Baroque art. The structure remains the classic one of the painting, but Burri often chose not to hang these works on the wall (as he did with those made using other materials), instead placing them three-dimensionally in space, so as to render the effects of the chiaroscuro and composition created by the combustion more intelligible.

Merlin Carpenter, *The Opening: Intrinsic Value: 5*, 2009

In his series *The Opening* Merlin Carpenter creates his paintings during the exhibition previews by writing statements of protest on blank canvases and the gallery walls. As expressed more recently, his intent was to expose the "monotony of figurative formalism" and money-driven logic of the art market: "Like Dalí signing hundreds of blank pieces of paper, or La Monte Young performing pieces before they were composed, the empty canvases beg the question of what possible value these works have. The guarantee of the biography of the artist? The power of the gallery? Price-fixing or oligarchy? Energy stolen from the bohemians who decorate the room? Or something intrinsic to a work which evidently could be anything?" Carpenter wondered.

Henry Flynt

Fight Racist "Laws of Music", 1964

Down with Art!, 1968

Centered on his essay "Art or Bred," Flynt's first publication was *Down with Art*, which recapitulates his positions of hostility to art and the art world.

On September 8, 1965, he and George Maciunas held a demonstration called "Anti-Art Pickets Pick on Stockhausen," during which he protested against the absence of non-Western music in the program of a festival of avant-garde music directed by Charlotte Moorman.

Lucio Fontana, *Io sono un santo*, 1958

With publication of his *Manifiesto Blanco* in 1946 and his successive *Spatialism Manifestos*, Lucio Fontana declared "the need to move beyond painting, sculpture, poetry." From the end of the 1950s, he began to produce his *Concetti Spaziali* (Spatial concepts), which he called *Attese* (Waits), in which he inscribed long vertical cuts using a razor or blades on mostly monochrome canvases. Going beyond the traditional space of the

canvas with his slashing gesture, Fontana aimed at eliminating the distinction between painting and sculpture. The work exhibited is one of the first instances of this research. Unlike what would occur in his later works, the cuts in this paper mounted on canvas are rather short and poorly calculated, though they also create a dialectic between the surface and the void.

Distinguishing this work from Fontana's later rigorously monochrome canvases is the phrase "Io sono un santo" (I am a saint) in blue ink, to which he added a "non" (not) in pencil, thereby reversing the meaning of the statement. This modification is confirmed by the inscription "Io sono una carogna" (I am a lowlife), which appears on the back. Fontana kept this work hanging in his studio and, depending on his mood, showed one side or the other.

David Hammons, *Pissed Off*, 1981

In 1981, the photographer Dawoud Bey captured African-American artist David Hammons as he urinated on the monumental Corten steel sculpture *T.W.U.* by Richard Serra, which had been installed the year before in the Tribeca neighborhood of New York, at that time still not engulfed by gentrification.

Bey is often the person who records the shots bearing witness to Hammons' subtle and trenchant public actions, including the famous snowball sale the artist held in New York in 1983, when he set up next to other vendors on the sidewalk. Hammons' actions are rooted in the consideration of the specificity of social life dedicated to historically marginalized people and neighborhoods: for him, operating from the anonymity of street life is an action of resistance to the codes of cultural institutionalization and legitimation of which the system of traditional art is an expression.

Lee Lozano, *Untitled (General Strike)*, handwritten version, 8.2.1969

Initially trained as a painter, at the end of the 1960s the American artist Lee Lozano abandoned painting and developed conceptual projects that clearly criticized the art world from a strictly subjective point of view. It was from that time that she conceived her *Language Pieces* and wrote down in notebooks and exercise books the standards and rules that would become the basis of her work. For her *General Strike* piece of 1969, she jotted down the date of her last visit to exhibitions, museums, bars, and parties, and declared her "gradual, but determined" rejection of and withdrawal from the commercial art world.

Moreover, between 1968 and 1970, while living in New York, Lozano carefully recorded in a series of diaries information about her works and artistic research, her relationships with other artists, and her personal thoughts on the world of art, and political and social life.

Boris Lurie

NO-ON, 1962

Untitled (NO Sprayed), 1963

Stenciled NOs, 1969

In 1959, Boris Lurie, who arrived in the United States in 1946 as a survivor of the concentration camps in Europe, was one of

the founders of the NO!Art movement that openly encouraged revolt against the art system and its complicity with the repressive and expansionist policies of the United States. In the years that followed, the movement continued to aspire to “totally unabashed self-expression leading to social action” that would oppose the art market, Pop Art as a celebration of consumerism, and other elements of artistic research that it considered decorative and disengaged. Lurie used dense pictorial matter and collages that provocatively combine disturbing images to create visually aggressive works. At the time they were produced, these works were exhibited almost exclusively at the NO! Gallery, though they were ignored by critics and curators active in the institutional art system.

Gustav Metzger, *Auto-Destructive Art—The Activities of G. Metzger*, 1965

In 1959 the artist and political activist Gustav Metzger published his first manifesto *Auto-Destructive Art*, in which he declared the significance of destruction in his artistic and theoretical research, and produced his first self-destructive works by spraying acid on nylon sheets.

During the 1960s, Metzger applied his approach in various public spaces in London. Protected by a gas mask, goggles and a helmet, he used brushes and sprays to apply acidic substances to bedsheets and canvases. The sheets were completely disintegrated by the corrosive action of the acid, and only a few traces of the fabric were left hanging on the metal frame. In his works, it was the very creation process that caused and determined their destruction.

Metzger formulated these works as forms of protest against the use of nuclear weapons, wars, policies that ignored environmental issues, and in particular to denounce consumerism and capitalism, which he believed were responsible for the breakdown of society.

Francis Picabia, *Tableau Dada*, reproduced in *Cannibale*, no. 1, 25.4.1920

Underlying the *Tableau Dada* is the refusal of all the aesthetic values of traditional and avant-garde art. Reproduced in the pages of *Cannibale*, a magazine of just two issues published by Francis Picabia in April and May 1920, the work shows a toy monkey surrounded by the inscription “Portrait de Cézanne / Portrait de Renoir / Portrait de Rembrandt / Natures mortes.” The attack on institutional art is here made by the figure of the monkey, which is given an irreverent pose with its tail between its legs, and associated with the names of artists considered central to the development of art history—here Picabia “apes” painting, an art that he declares dead.

The assemblage depicted was probably the lost *Tableau par Francis Picabia*, which was presented on March 27, 1920, during the manifestation of the Dada movement held at the Maison de l'Œuvre Theater in Paris, for which it was originally thought to include a real monkey.

Adrian Piper, *Catalysis III*, 1970

Catalysis (1970–73) was one of the first series of performances devised by Adrian Piper to be presented in the street, with the objective of testing the sensibilities and attention of the “public” of passers-by. According to the artist, “these actions tend to define the situation in terms of the pre-established categories of ‘guerrilla theater,’ ‘event,’ ‘happening,’ ‘street work,’ etc., making disorientation and catalysis more difficult.” This series introduced and spearheaded the treatment of race and gender in conceptual art.

In performance number 3, Piper paints the clothes she is wearing with sticky white paint, and, with a sign saying “WET PAINT” hanging on her chest, she goes to Macy’s department store in New York to buy gloves and sunglasses.

Ed Ruscha, *Museum on Fire*, 1968

This drawing, together with a painting of the same year on the subject of the same imaginary incident, continues the artist’s deliberately inexpressive pictorial research inspired by icons of popular culture. His canvases, mindful of the years Ruscha studied and practiced graphics and typography, make reference to the aesthetics of advertising billboards: they often include brand logos or show isolated, metaphysical landscapes. California in particular is the place from which he observes and describes the American way of life, as well as being his preferred subject.

In this drawing Ed Ruscha depicts the destruction of the Los Angeles County Museum by fire. Although generated as part of his open opposition to the transfer of the museum to a new site, the work also gives form to a growing sense of impatience and alienation of artists towards academic exhibition venues.

Digitally enhanced infrared scan of Robert Rauschenberg’s *Erased de Kooning Drawing* (1953), 2010

At the start of the 1950s, Robert Rauschenberg explored the path of producing works using processes of erasure, which were therefore created not by the formation of signs or addition of colors on the support, but rather by their removal. He initially attempted to erase his drawings, but soon came to understand that the operation had to be applied to a work that was already significant and autonomous in itself. He therefore asked Willem de Kooning, whom he held in high regard, if he could use one of his drawings. Having obtained it, Rauschenberg performed the erasure; then, together with Jasper Johns, he framed the erased sheet and added a plaque beneath it with the inscription “ERASED DE KOONING DRAWING BY ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG 1953.” The text became part of the work, while giving information on its creative and simultaneously destructive process.

Displayed in the exhibition is a reproduction of an infrared scan made in 2010 that shows both the traces of the original drawing and those of the erasure.

Figures from Michelangelo Pistoletto's *I visitatori*, 1968;
Rome, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea.
Courtesy Ministero per i Beni Culturali e Ambientali e del
Turismo

DELIRIUM OF NEGATION

Alighiero Boetti, *Mimetico*, 1967

Paul Delaroche, *Cromwell and Charles 1st*, after 1831

Lucio Fontana, *Io sono un santo*, 1958

Lucio Fontana, Milan, 1962; Photo Ugo Mulas © Eredi Ugo
Mulas. All rights reserved

Jörg Immendorff, *Wo stehst du mit deiner Kunst, Kollege?*, 1973

Louise Lawler, *Chicago*, 2011–12

Francis Picabia, *Tableau Dada*, reproduced in *Cannibale*, no. 1,
25.4.1920; Photo 12 / Alamy Stock Photo

Michelangelo Pistoletto, *Vetrina (Oggetti in meno)*, 1965–66

Ed Ruscha, *Museum on Fire*, 1968

Morton Schamberg, *"God" by Baroness Elsa von Freytag-
Loringhoven and Morton Schamberg*, 1918

Jean-Frédéric Schnyder, *Hudel*, 1983–2004

Kurt Schwitters, *A Dim Bulb*, 1947

Kurt Schwitters, *Mit Bindfaden*, 1923–26

1930s print from a set of negatives made in 1861 by James Clerk
Maxwell using the VIVEX process

MENSCH MASCHINE

Marcel Breuer, Richard Schadewell, *"Bauhaus" telephone*, 1930

Casio VL-80 portable calculator from the 1981 Kraftwerk tour

Leidy Churchman, *iPhone 11*, 2019–20

Niki de Saint Phalle, *Old Master (non tiré)*, c. 1961

Niki de Saint Phalle, *Tir (fragment)*, 1962

Niki de Saint Phalle, Paris, 1961; Photo Shunk-Kender © J. Paul
Getty Trust. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (2014.R.20)

Pinot Gallizio, *Industrial Painting*, 1958. Estate of Pinot Gallizio,
courtesy of Galleria Martano, Collection – Tate

Alain Jacquet, *Le déjeuner sur l'herbe*, 1964

Morag Keil, *Eye 1–4*, 2018

John Kelsey, *Server Farm*, 2013

Piero Manzoni executing a continuous line during the exhibition
"Nul," Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 1962

Piero Manzoni, *Impronta*, 1960

Piero Manzoni, *Impronta pollice sinistro*, 1960

Jean Tinguely, *Méta-Matic No. 14*, 1959

NIENTE DA VEDERE NIENTE DA NASCONDERE

Carla Accardi, *Biancobianco*, 1966

Carla Accardi, Rome, 1967; Photo Ugo Mulas © Eredi Ugo
Mulas. All rights reserved

Lutz Bacher, *Big Glass*, 2008

Alighiero Boetti, *Niente da Vedere Niente da Nascondere*,
documentary directed by Emidio Greco, 1978; ph. Paolo Mussat
Sartor

Walter De Maria, *Silver Portrait of Dorian Gray*, 1965

David Hammons, *Untitled*, 2008

Martin Kippenberger, Albert Oehlen, *Orgonkiste bei Nacht*, 1982

Klara Lidén, *Untitled (Poster Painting)*, 2007

Michelangelo Pistoletto, *Gabbia*, 1973

Robert Rauschenberg, *Instructions for White Paintings*, 1965

Jacques Villégé, Paris, c. 1968; Photo André Morain

WORD VERSUS IMAGE

John Baldessari, *What Is Painting*, 1966–68

Lorenza Longhi, *Untitled*, 2019

Gene Beery, *This is My Last Serious Painting*, 1960

Gene Beery, *Out of Style*, 1961

Gene Beery, *As Long As There Are Walls There Will Be Paintings!*, 1986

Karen Kilimnik, *Jane Creep (Crème de menthe)*, 1991

Karen Kilimnik, *Jane Creep (Plane to Paris)*, 1991

Pino Pascali, *Lettera (C)*, 1964

Jim Shaw, *Futuristic Mushroom Meditation Buildings in City Park*, 2020

Jim Shaw, *Hand Impaled by Knife with Melting Watch Out Window*, 2020

Jim Shaw, *Weeping Caterpillar Boy Questions Nail Polish Bottle Girl Struck by Cartoon Lightning*, 2020

WHEN PAINTINGS BECOME THINGS

Monika Baer, *In Reserve*, 2018

Dadamaino, *Volume*, 1958. Courtesy Archivio Dadamaino

Jana Euler, *Where the Energy Comes From 1*, 2014

Olivier Mosset, *Door*, 2002

Carol Rama, *Spazio anche più che tempo*, 1970

Jean-Frédéric Schnyder, *Bild*, 2005–06

Gili Tal, *Entrance Mat*, 2016

Rosemarie Trockel, *Untitled*, 1991

SPELLING BACKWARDS

Lutz Bacher, *The Big Book*, 2013

Michael Krebber, *DEP-MK-033*, 2017

Gerhard Richter, *Farbtafel*, 1966

Josh Smith, *Untitled*, 2006

Josh Smith, *Untitled*, 2006

Josh Smith, *Untitled*, 2007

Josh Smith, *Untitled*, 2007

Roy Lichtenstein, *Maquette for Sculpture "Brushstroke"*, 1996

Jiro Yoshihara, *Please Draw Freely*, Osaka, 1956. Nakanoshima Museum of Art, Osaka. A021-S3-FN070-09

Die Hard. Stirb Langsam. Duri a Morire Marcel Broodthaers, *Dix-neuf petits tableaux en pile*, 1973

© Estate Marcel Broodthaers

Honoré Daumier, *Marche funèbre!! / N°2*, 1855

Wade Guyton, *Untitled*, 2017

Asger Jorn, *The Good Shepherd (Le bon berger)*, 1959

Asger Jorn, *Ainsi on s'Ensor (Out of this World—after Ensor)*, 1962

Michael Krebber, *MK.163*, 2011

Michael Krebber, *MK.168*, 2011

Michael Krebber, *MK/M 2011/12, 2011/12*

Kurt Schwitters, *Still Life with Flowers and Tin Plate*, 1914

Kurt Schwitters, *Still Life in Gray*, 1914–15

Kurt Schwitters, *Untitled (Still Life with Bunch of Flowers and Apples)*, ca. 1934

Kurt Schwitters, Norway, c. 1936; © 2021. Foto Scala, Firenze / bpk, Bildagentur fuer Kunst, Kultur und Geschichte, Berlin

NEXT TO NOTHING

Martin Barré, *65-A-50 × 50*, 1965

Martin Barré, *67-Z-3*, 1967

Martin Barré, *67-Z-18-43 × 40*, 1967

Lynda Benglis, *Untitled*, 1969

Lynda Benglis, Kingston, Rhode Island, 1969; Photo Henry Groskinsky / The LIFE Picture Collection via Getty Images

Blinky Palermo, *Untitled*, 1967

Francis Picabia, *Soleils*, 1949

Francis Picabia, *Point*, 1951

Poster of the exhibition "Robert Rauschenberg: White Paintings, 1951", 12–27.10.1968, Leo Castelli Gallery, New York

Ben Vautier, *Banane*, 1958

Ben Vautier, *Banane*, 1959

READYMADES BELONG TO EVERYONE

Andy Warhol, *BMW Art Car #4*, 1979

Richard Hamilton, *A Little Bit of Roy Lichtenstein for...*, 1964

Marcel Duchamp, *Apolinère Enameled*, 1916–17 (1965); reproduction after "Apolinère Enameled," Marcel Duchamp, 1916–1917 © Association Marcel Duchamp, courtesy of the Association Marcel Duchamp

Genoveva Filipovic, Daniel Murnaghan, *Untitled*, 2016

Morag Keil, *Untitled (Piss Painting 4)*, 2014

Reena Spaulings, *Gate 1*, 2018

Sturtevant, *Johns Flag*, 1966

Ben Vautier, *Buvez Coca Cola frais*, 1960

LET'S GO AND SAY NO

Photos-souvenirs: Daniel Buren, *Hommes / Sandwichs*, travail *in situ*, april 1968, Paris. Détails. © DB-ADAGP Paris / Photo Bernard Boyer

Alberto Burri, *Plastica*, 1962

Merlin Carpenter, *The Opening: Intrinsic Value: 5*, 2009

Henry Flynt, *Down with Art!*, 1968

David Hammons, *Pissed Off*, 1981; Photo Dawoud Bey

Lee Lozano, *Private Note Books*, 1968–70, published by Karma

Lee Lozano, *Untitled (General Strike)*, handwritten version, 8.2.1969

Boris Lurie, *NO-ON*, 1962

Boris Lurie, *Untitled (NO Sprayed)*, 1963

Boris Lurie, *Stenciled NOs*, 1969

Gustav Metzger, London, 1961; Photo Keystone / Hulton Archive / Getty Images

Adrian Piper, *Catalysis III*, 1970

Digitally enhanced infrared scan of Robert Rauschenberg's *Erased de Kooning Drawing* (1953), 2010

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