

MASSIMODECARLO

JOHN ARMLEDER

CLOWN'S WAY

Massimo De Carlo is pleased to present *Clown's Way*, the first solo show ever by contemporary Swiss artist John Armleder (Geneva, 1948) in Hong Kong.

Best known as the co-founder of the Ecart group, and the European counterpart of the Fluxus movement, John Armleder's practice transcends categorization or definitive placement within genres, styles, or movements. Since the late 1960's, the multimedia artist has ventured through his work to deconstruct the boundaries between the spheres of daily life and art. Throughout his long-standing career the artist has had solo exhibitions in prestigious institutions such as the Aspen Art Museum (2019), the Schirn Kunsthalle in Frankfurt (2019), the Madre Museum in Naples (2018) and the Museion in Bolzano (2018), just to name a few recent ones. In 2020 John Armleder will have two vast solo shows in Asia and Europe: one at KANAL - Centre Pompidou in Brussels in April and one at Rockbund Art Museum in Shanghai in September.

In his practice John Armleder plays with the humour, irony and inventiveness that characterized the Fluxus movement. The renowned Swiss artist dwells in and questions the abstract references that have nurtured his exploration and analysis of the relationship between art, the object and the gesture. The notion of object-hood is morphed into art through the painterly gesture. The brushstroke becomes the decisive medium that allows Armleder to challenge the ordinariness of the subject's aesthetic and for the investigation of the abstract that evolves around self-conscience and otherness, authorship and ego.

Drawing from what the artist himself calls a "supermarket of forms," his oeuvre encompasses painting, performances and installations that exceed the categories between art and design, figuration and abstraction. Typical to the modality of the artist's work, the legacy of painting in art history is questioned through his works, albeit without abandoning the medium itself. As Armleder explains, "I'm an artist who comes up with new things or new forms, or new strategies for producing the work," giving insight to the playful experimentation and philosophy behind his disparate yet idiosyncratic practice.

The exhibition *Clown's Way* consists of signature mixed-media works. The two *Furniture Sculpture* pieces – *Candy Clown* and *Chills* – re-contextualise commonplace objects into sites of artistic inquiry. Vast in colour and size, the canvases create a symbiotic dialogue with the physicality of the sculptural pieces, incorporating elements of daily life.

To create the *Puddle Painting* in the exhibition, *Spare Part*, the artist combines large quantities of paints made from mediums that react in unpredictable ways, the artist throws glitter and other bric-a-brac into the still-wet puddles that accumulate. As they dry, visual and sculptural incidents emerge out of what seems like the materials' own volition, exceeding the artist's intention and placing Armleder, like any other viewer, in a position where the artist can stand back and observe formal relationships between textures and colours. The effects of chance and playfulness in the production of the works conjure a sense of immediacy as well as interactive elements for the viewer.

The *Pour Painting* titled *Lake Placid* – on the left wall upon entering the gallery – is made with a similar principle to the *Puddle Paintings*: it takes shape as the artist pours painting on the canvases from above by taking advantage of the force of gravity. Here the artist lets abstraction take control, chance and chaos mediating the painterly gesture.

Clown's Way encapsulates John Armleder's practice, in which the sheer scale of the Pour and Puddle Paintings co-exist and interact to form a visual maelstrom in the exhibition space, where artistic and quotidian divides are relinquished. In addition, the incorporation of sculptural works exemplifies the omni-medial and multifaceted work of the artist, creating entryways for the viewers to immerse themselves in Armleder's universe.

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John Armleder was born in Geneva in 1948. He lives and works in Geneva. John Armleder has had solo exhibitions in prestigious institutions such as: Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, D(2019); Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, USA(2019); Museion, Bolzano, Italy (2018); MADRE - Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Donnaregina, Naples, I (2018); Istituto Svizzero di Roma, Rome (2017); Consortium of Dijon, France (2014), Dairy Art Centre, London (2013); Swiss Institute, New York, USA (2012); Kunstmuseum, Sankt-Gallen, Switzerland (2010). Selected group shows include: Récit d'un temps court, MAMCO, Geneva, CH (2016); Biennale de l'image en mouvement 2016, Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève, Geneva, CH (2016); Accrochage, Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain, Strasbourg, F (2015); Don't Shoot The Painter, GAM, Milano, I (2015); Food: Produire, Manger, Consommer; Musée des civilisations de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée, Marseilles, F (2014); Abstract Generation: Now in Print, MoMA, New York, USA (2013); The System of Objects, The Dakis Joannou Collection, DESTE Foundation for Contemporary Art, Athens, GR (2013); Neon - Who's afraid of red, yellow and blue?, La Maison Rouge, Antoine de Galbert Foundation, Paris, F (2012).

Hard Facts:

Massimo De Carlo, Hong Kong
3rd Floor Pedder Building, 12 Pedder Street, Central, Hong Kong
From January 9, 2019 until March 5, 2020
Opening reception on Thursday January 9, 2019
Open Monday to Saturday, 10:30am – 7:00pm

For further information and materials:

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