

Elmgreen & Dragset and John Armleder

Room Service

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MASSIMODECARLO is pleased to announce *Room Service*, a collaborative exhibition between Scandinavian artist duo Elmgreen & Dragset and Swiss artist John Armleder. The artists have reimagined Casa Corbelinni-Wasserman with spatial interventions, creating a dreamlike universe that invites viewers to create new and twisted associations.

In this new exhibition, Elmgreen & Dragset and John Armleder treat this historic home as a canvas for experimentation. Their artworks interact with the existing interiors in a way that creates an eerie domestic atmosphere, at one point becoming almost psychedelic. With their use of mundane, readymades, hyperrealism and minimal geometric abstraction, the artists challenge the grand bourgeois setting. With artefacts, sculptures, paintings, and designs, the artists have created several immersive environments where each room tells its own story.

The initial inspiration for *Room Service* stems from Elmgreen & Dragset's long-standing admiration for Armleder's work. The three artists, who first met in the early 2000s, share a passion for everyday objects and their versatility. The duo's works, together with the Swiss artist, are alluring and engaging while also subverting the conventional expectations of art. It is as if the entire enterprise of contemporary art with its many systems quietly amuses them, yet they remain committed to pushing the boundaries of what it can be.

The artists also share a fascination with domestic spaces. For the 2009 Venice Biennale, Elmgreen & Dragset transformed the Danish and Nordic Pavilions into two collectors' homes. At the Victoria and Albert Museum in 2013, they created a grand apartment in the former textile galleries and, most recently, in their 2022 exhibition *Useless Bodies?* at Fondazione Prada, they presented an inhospitable and futuristic domestic setting inhabited by post-industrial age superfluous bodies.

Armleder's fascination with domestic spaces has more to do with décor itself. The Swiss artist sees art as an imitation of life, and he draws inspiration from a range of sources outside of the art world, such as high and low design, popular culture and avant-garde

music. In some of his *Furniture Sculpture* pieces, the artist uses furniture as both subject and material, creating artworks that challenge our notions of what is functional and what is purely aesthetic. In these sculptures, chairs, tables, lamps, and other household items are transformed into abstract forms that call to mind the work of the Suprematists and Constructivists.

The three artists bring their shared affinities to bear in a subtle artistic dialogue. At MASSIMODECARLO, the visitor will come across the uncanny presence of a child figure, kneeling in the middle of the room, drawing one of Armleder's paintings on a sheet of paper. This kind of conversation between the duo and the Swiss artist is present in every space.

Now and then, there will be another protagonist that inhabits the gallery's rooms. *Room Service* comes alive with an enigmatic presence resembling a grown-up version of the young boy.

Through this merging of their practices, *Room Service* immerses the visitor in a world where nothing is as it seems, where the boundary between art and everyday life is blurred, and where the act of creation becomes a collaborative, playful and thought-provoking endeavour.

Elmgreen & Dragset

Michael Elmgreen was born in 1961 in Copenhagen, Denmark; Ingar Dragset was born in 1969 in Trondheim, Norway; they have been working as an artist duo since 1995. They live and work in Berlin. Starting out as performance artists, they moved on to installation and sculpture as their main mediums from 1997. They have consistently been interested in the relationship between people and space, public as well as private. They are well known for their numerous public, architectural and performative installations, such as Prada Marfa, a Prada shop located in the middle of the desert of Texas realised in 2005, and Short Cut, where a car tugging a caravan was rising out of Milan's Galleria Vittorio Emanuele in 2003, produced together with Fondazione Nicola Trussardi.

Elmgreen & Dragset's upcoming retrospective, Bonne Chance, will open at the Centre Pompidou-Metz, France, this June.

The scandinavian duo have had solo exhibitions in prominent institutions worldwide, including: After Dark, BY ART MATTERS, Hang Zhou Shi, China (2023); Useless Bodies?, Fondazione Prada, Milan (2022); Elmgreen & Dragset, Point of View Part 1, Kistefos Museum, Jevnaker (2019); Elmgreen & Dragset: Sculptures, Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas (2019); This Is How We Bite Our Tongue, Whitechapel Gallery, London (2018); Die Zugezogenen, Museum Haus Lange, Kunstmuseen Krefeld (2017); Changing Subjects, The FLAG Art Foundation, New York (2016); Van Gogh's Ear, Rockefeller Center, Public Art Fund, New York (2016); Powerless Structures, Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Tel Aviv (2016); The Well Fair, Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing (2016); Aéroport Mille Plateaux, PLATEAU, Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul (2015); Biography, Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen (2014); Biography, Astrup Fearnley Museet, Oslo (2014); Tomorrow, Victoria and Albert Museum, London (2013); The One and The Many, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam (2011).

Their group exhibitions include: Tainted Love, Villa Arson, Nice (2019); There I Belong - Hammershøi, curated by Elmgreen & Dragset, Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen (2019); For Today, I Am a Boy: Contemporary Queer Abstraction, Des Moines Art Center, Des Moines (2019); Art's Biggest Stage, Clark Art Institute, Williamstown (2019); Art & Porn, ARoS Aarhus Kunstmuseum, Aarhus (2019); Like Life: Sculpture, Color, and the Body, The Met Breuer, New York (2018); WAITING. Between Power and Possibility, Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg (2017); Slip of the Tongue, Punta Della Dogana, Venice (2015); Panorama, High Line Art, New York (2015); GOLD, Bass Museum of Art, Miami (2014); Do it Moscow, Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow (2014).

They have also taken part in the Bangkok (2018), Istanbul (2013, 2011, 2001), Liverpool (2012), Performa 11 (New York, 2011), Singapore (2011), Moscow (2011, 2007), Venice (2009, 2003), Gwangju (2006, 2002), São Paulo (2002), and Berlin (1998) biennials as well as the Yokohama Triennale in 2008 in Japan.

Elmgreen & Dragset were appointed curators of the 15th Istanbul Biennial (2017). They were awarded a Special Mention at the 53rd Venice Biennale (2009) for The Collectors at the Danish and Nordic Pavilions and won the prestigious Preis der Nationalgalerie für Junge Kunst at Hamburger Bahnhof in Berlin (2002).

John Armleder

John Armleder was born in Geneva in 1948, where he lives and works.

His career spans five decades and synthesises many of the competing aesthetic developments associated with that period. Student of Fluxus in Geneva in the 1960s, and founder of the Ecart group, Armleder was later, in the 1980s, associated with Neo-Geometric Conceptualism. He is known for the variety of his work, which combines Fluxus spirit and abstract painting, readymade and sculpture, performance and room-size installations.

As a painter, sculptor and performance artist, Armleder constantly asks questions about what art is, what it can do, and what art is allowed. From room-size installations to abstract paintings, from geometrical constructivist paintings to furniture sculptures and pattern-strewn wallpapers, his art admittedly takes on attributes of Suprematist painting, Minimalist sculpture, Concrete Art and Dada readymades, among other movements. Student of Fluxus in Geneva in the 1960s and founder of the Ecart group, Armleder was later, in the 1980s, associated with Neo-Geometric Conceptualism for his furniture sculptures, conflating art and the design object, as he has always been interested in breaking through perceived divisions between art and architecture, art and design, and art and functional objects. Recent projects have seen Armleder looking at more conceptual approaches, questioning the notion of authorship via delegation methods and curatorial undertaking. John Armleder's art never looks quite like itself, and it escapes any possible definition and label. Nevertheless, he has developed a signature vocabulary and sense of humour that make his work unmistakably his own.

John Armleder's upcoming retrospective, *Yakety Yak*, will open at MRAC - Musée régional d'art contemporain Occitanie, Sérignan, France, this April.

The Swiss artist has had solo exhibitions in prestigious institutions such as: *Again, Just Again*, Rockbund Art Museum, Shanghai, C (2021), *It Never Ends*, Kanal Centre Pompidou, Brussels, B (2021), *Della materia spirituale*, MAXXI, Rome, I

(2020), 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: *Picture & After*, MAMCO Genève, Genève, Switzerland (2023); *Geometric Opulence*, Museum Haus Konstruktiv, Zürich, CH (2022); *&*, MAMCO Genève, Genève, CH (2022); *It Never Ends - Part 2*, Kanal Centre Pompidou, Brussels, B (2021); *X_Minimal*, Cassina Projects, Milano, I (2021), *Stop Painting*, Fondazione Prada, Venezia, I (2021), *Villa Chiuminatto*, Torino, I (2021), *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, Marseille, F (2014).

In 2011 he received the Meret Oppenheim Prize, in 2007 the Leenaards Foundation Prize and in 1995 the Ville de Genève Prize. He was shown at the Thessaloniki Biennial of Contemporary Art, Thessaloniki (2013); the International Triennial of Contemporary Art, Yokohama (2008); the Prague Biennial, Prague (2008); the 7th Biennial of Contemporary Art, Lyon (2003); the 6th Sculpture Biennial, Lugano (2001) and the 42nd Venice Biennial, Venice (1986).