

MAMCO GENEVE  
09.10.2019 – 02.02.2020  
PRESS KIT

ROSEMARIE  
CASTORO

IRMA  
BLANK

MARTIN  
BARRÉ

ARNULF  
RAINER

Opening October 8, 2019 (6 pm)

October 9, 2019–February 2, 2020



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The exhibition is curated by Clément Dirié and received the support of the Fondation Gandur pour l'Art.

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"I don't paint Venuses or apples, or my last dream, or a dream I might have. I paint paintings. Propositions in paint, questions expressed in, or addressed to the medium of painting." (French artist Martin Barré in 1976, interviewed by critic Anne Tronche). In stressing his resolutely rational artistic approach, its immanent quality, and its engagement with questions of aesthetics, Martin Barré restates what is most apparent in his work: painting and nothing but painting, conceived as a (cerebral) space apart, a conceptual and visual playground, a place to think, and a place where thoughts can assume material form.

Martin Barré was born in Nantes in 1924. He studied architecture and painting at the city's Ecole des Beaux-Arts and settled in Paris at the beginning of the 1950s. He made his début on the Paris art scene with solo and group exhibitions in 1954 and 1955. Abandoning the vocabulary of his student years, he applied himself to the development of a distinctive, abstract oeuvre—an undertaking he pursued with exceptional rigor and originality over the following four decades, until his death in 1993.

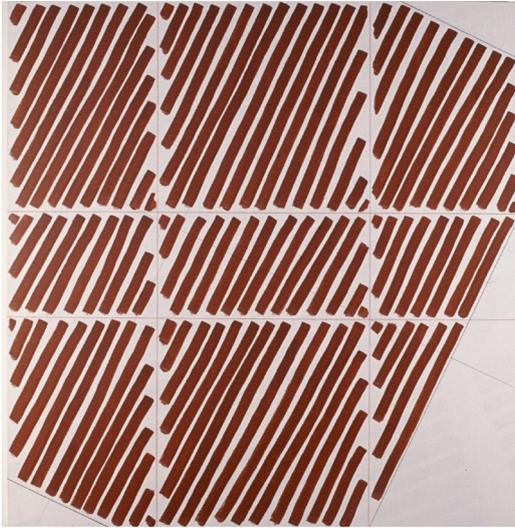
His work as a whole displays remarkable coherence but is nonetheless generally divided into five periods. From 1954 to 1962, an initial phase gives form to an unprecedented synthesis of the artistic lessons of the first half of the 20th century and post-war abstraction. From 1963 to 1967, Barré developed a pioneering corpus in the history of contemporary painting, using aerosol sprays to create performative works that capture gesture and time on canvas. His so-called "conceptual episode," from 1969 to 1971, was a period of experimentation with the conceptual possibilities of photography and the

exhibition-as-artwork—new avenues for his exploration of the medium of painting and the conditions that shape its making and display. Barré's return to painting in 1972 heralded two decades of creativity, exploring the structure of paintings, and overpainting or obliteration from 1972 to 1977, followed by the investigation of color and color combinations from 1979 to 1992.

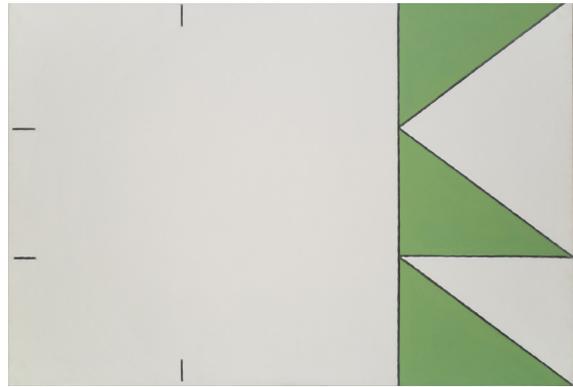
Working sequentially, in series, Martin Barré mobilizes the full range of pictorial parameters to liberate the dynamic, spatial, and cerebral potential of painting as a medium. By conceiving each picture of and in itself, and in relation to the other pictures in the series of which it is a part, Barré conducts his work with precision, applying an almost linguistic approach to painting. The formation of the picture is supremely important: it is here that his selective interplay evolves, between colors and areas left in reserve, between the foreground and background, the picture space and the space out-of-frame, effects of transparency and the border.

MAMCO's exhibition is Switzerland's first large-scale presentation of work by this pivotal figure in mid-to-late 20th-century art. Featuring representative works from each period, the show retraces Martin Barré's engagement with the medium of painting: the enterprise that led him to experiment ceaselessly with the sensory, cerebral, chromatic, and physical properties and possibilities of pictorial form.





Martin Barré, 75-76-D-145x140, 1975-1976  
Acrylic on canvas, 145 x 140 cm  
court. Archives Martin Barré, Paris  
© 2019, ADAGP, Paris



Martin Barré, 84-85-108x154-B, 1984-1985  
Acrylic on canvas, 108 x 154 cm  
court. Archives Martin Barré, Paris  
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Martin Barré, 92B-128x124-D, 1992  
Acrylic on canvas, 128 x 124 cm  
court. Archives Martin Barré, Paris  
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Martin Barré, 92B-128x124-G, 1992  
Acrylic on canvas, 128 x 124 cm  
court. Archives Martin Barré, Paris  
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# GUY DE COINTET

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French-born artist Guy de Cointet (1934–1983) emigrated to the USA in 1965, where he worked as an assistant to Larry Bell in New York. He eventually followed him to Los Angeles, where he lived for the rest of his life.

His work weaves together strands from Conceptual art, visual poetry, and various narrative forms. For de Cointet, code, hieroglyphics, and typography were tools for transforming words into images, and giving form to color. He employed these to create large drawings composed of encrypted writings and his books of "typoetry."

Like Warhol, he drew inspiration from the everyday world, from advertising and soap operas, processing his finds using the "cut-up" techniques of Burroughs and Gysin. Toward the end of his life, de Cointet became increasingly interested in the crossovers between theater, cinema, and dance. His scenery items for his production of *ETHIOPIA*, (part of the MAMCO collection) function by turns as props, scenery, and actual characters.

This room contains works on paper and "post-Pop" paintings, acquired by MAMCO on occasion of the first de Cointet retrospective the museum organized in 2004.







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