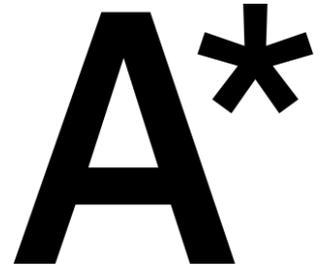


Media release

Aarau, December 2021



## Dominic Michel Manor Art Award 2022

29 January – 24 April 2022

Aargauer Kunsthhaus, Aarau

Dominic Michel (\*1987 in Klingnau) is the winner of the Manor Art Award 2022, one of the most important awards for contemporary art in Switzerland. The award is linked to a solo exhibition at the Aargauer Kunsthhaus, where Michel presents his latest works in the form of objects, videos and installations. His œuvre illustrates that objects and places are highly context-dependent and, through their transformation of content, point to new levels of meaning.

In his artistic work, Dominic Michel is interested in objects and places as well as their socio-cultural significance. "Objects are carriers, protagonists, and, at the same time, the language of a history that is continuously changing and being rewritten," says Michel. He traces contemporary narratives along social, economic or private cycles. In doing so, he questions the symbolic charge of objects and localities and facilitates new perspectives.

On the occasion of the Manor Art Award, the Aargauer Kunsthhaus is hosting the artist's first solo exhibition. He is showing new works in four rooms: The starting point are twelve identically tailored coats, the backs of which have been screen-printed with different motifs. Ossified into a "runway-defilee," with it Michel raises questions about serial production and the fetish of the original.

Among the new works, there is also a wall object: an interior with three sofas is clamped between two metal plates. The small-format living room has been cropped to the height of the furniture and thus loses its actual purpose. Here, Michel thematises the relationship between model and original and thus also between object and body in space.

At his own request, Dominic Michel's exhibition is embedded in the collection presentation of the Aargauer Kunsthhaus. Rooms with collection works alternate with environments designed by Michel. Four video works by

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the artist are shown in a dim living room cinema. Their soundtracks are composed of noises, distorted recordings, voices and synthetic sounds. Michel treats sound and image as equal media: in interplay, they share the space. The four works show urban scenes from La-Chaux-de-Fonds as well as footage from a surveillance camera depicting a burglary or short sequences with people outdoors, moving along the border between public and private properties.

Original and copy, repetition and distinction, public and private space: these themes run like a thread through the exhibition. The installation "Cast" - a revolving door covered with upholstery fabric - also bears witness to this. This type of industrially produced glass door is usually found in the temples of consumer society, in shopping centres, or even in hotels. By covering the door with fabric, Michel adds a new layer of meaning to the object. His works illustrate the extent to which interventions in content affect context, thereby manifesting themselves as signs.

### **Publication**

On the occasion of the exhibition, Dominic Michel's first artist's book will be published. In 36 photographs, Michel stages his collection of green painted glasses in changing formations with the same background. The focus of interest is the shifting relationship to industrial commodity - from mass-manufactured product to the personal, intimate object. The work is accompanied by an essay by the Canadian artist, cultural theorist and psychoanalyst Jeanne Randolph (\*1943). Situated between reality and fiction, Randolph's narrative both references and transcends Michel's work. The book's title, *coniunctura*, derives from the Latin word *coniungere* (to connect, link, or attach) and indicates the close collaboration between Michel and Randolph. As an independent artistic work, the book has a lasting impact beyond the exhibition.

The book will be published by Christoph Merian Verlag, Basel 2022, design: Marietta Eugster

### **A Commitment to the Young Swiss Art Scene**

One of the most important advancement awards for contemporary art in our country, the Manor Art Award was established in 1982 by Philippe Nordmann to offer a platform for young Swiss artists. Every year, a jury of experts awards it in six Swiss cities, with Aarau, Basel, Biel, Chur, Geneva, Lausanne, Lugano, Lucerne, Schaffhausen, Sion, St. Gallen and Winterthur

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\*Aargauer Kunsthaus

alternating every two years. As a look at the list of awardees reveals, the Manor Art Award has contributed to the international breakthrough of a whole slew of artists, including Luciano Castelli (1984 Art Award Lucerne), Marie José Burki (1993 Art Award Geneva), Pipilotti Rist (1994 Art Award St. Gallen) and Lena Maria Thüning (2013 Art Award Basel).

**The presentation of the award** to Dominic Michel will take place during the exhibition opening on Friday, 28 January 2022. The exhibition takes place from January 29 to April 24 2022.

**Dominic Michel**, born in Klingnau (Canton of Aargau) in 1987, lives and works in Zurich; 2019 Master of Fine Arts, Academy of Art and Design Basel and Athens School of Fine Arts; 2014 Bachelor of Visual Communication, Bern Academy of the Arts. In addition to his own artistic practice, Michel is active in various curatorial collectives, among others 2015 co-founder of the artist-run space RIVERSIDE (riverside-space.ch) and 2013 co-founder of the artist-run space FALKO, Basel.

Solo exhibitions: *over the bed, under the skin, inside the head, Hamlet*, Zürich (2021); *CARAVAN 1/2020: Dominic Michel*, Aargauer Kunsthau, Aarau (2020)

Group exhibitions (selection): *Cantonale*, Kunsthalle Bern (2021); *Sommer des Zögers*, Kunsthalle Zurich (2020); *Auswahl 19*, Aargauer Kunsthau, Aarau (2019); *A House is not a Home*, Fri Art, Fribourg (2019); *I Hood*, Kunsthau Baselland, Muttenz (2019); *Crisis of Glass Bell*, TANK, Basel (2019); *Cantonale Bern/Jura*, Kunsthalle Bern (2018); *Walking Through Clear Water in a Pool Painted Black*, Kunstverein Freiburg i.B. (2018); *Break Time*, Solonos, Athens (2018); *Infos*, Real Positive, Cologne (2017); *Auswahl 17*, Aargauer Kunsthau, Aarau (2017); *Winding at Once*, Urgizy, Densbüren (2017); *Look, all this is fraud*, Milieu, Bern (2017); *Beyond the Real*, Kunsthalle Basel (2016); *Belong Anywhere*, Garret Grimoire, Vienna (2016)

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