

# Material Manipulations

## 8.6.–8.9.2024

Sammlung Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst

Curator:  
Nadia Schneider Willen

Curatorial Assistant:  
Louisa Behr

Chapter 2 – with works by Marion Baruch, Heidi Bucher, Martín Soto Climent, Thea Djordjadze, Berta Fischer, Raphael Hefti, Sonia Kacem, Pamela Rosenkranz and Xanti Schawinsky

Nothing is how it should be: stiff metal blinds hang from the ceiling in dance-like poses. The museum glass, usually non-reflecting, leans against the wall as an oversized sculpture, mirrored. Rigid acrylic glass floats in the room as a ball-like object. Contrasts form the starting point of this exhibition, at the heart of which lies material as an artistic resource and the aesthetic quality of the artworks. As the title *Material Manipulations* suggests, the latter arises from unconventional methods of treatment and experimentation with material.

The exhibition shows how artists test the properties of material: techniques are re-interpreted; chance prevails in experimental processing or materials and objects are used for purposes other than those intended. This extension of existing conventions in the creation of art can also be seen as the overcoming of what is already familiar – only in this way something new can emerge.

Since the 1960s artists have relied on impermanent or organic materials. For this, they like to work with materials from industry or integrate found objects into their works. Artistic working processes and techniques have long since been subject to constant change and expansion, too. However, unlike industrial processing – where the commercial usage of raw materials is governed by the conditions of mass production – no boundaries are set on the treatment of material in art.

As already the case in the first chapter, *Material Memories*, Heidi Bucher's *Hautraum* (*Ricks Kinderzimmer*, *Lindgut Winterthur*) (1987) is the key work of the exhibition. Made of latex, the work serves with its specific materiality as a hinge between the two chapters: it is an object charged with memories and at the same time witness to an experiment in material. Early latex works by Bucher are also on show in *Material Manipulations* along with *Hautraum*. Here, the artist uses such mundane objects as cleaning rags or pieces of soap, which she has coated with liquid rubber and then covered with mother-of-pearl. At the same time, the objects are studies in material and can be seen as leading the way for Bucher's later experimental works with rubber.

Other artists represented in the exhibition deliberately have their works made industrially and push existing production methods to their limits. Where do the physical boundaries of the material lie? Raphael Hefti, for example, has unbreakable museum glass treated with a chemical process that is actually meant to make the glass non-reflecting, but which is repeated so often that it reflects and shimmers with colourful light reflections. Thus, the usually 'invisible' museum glass is rendered visible, turning into an aesthetic object itself.

*Material Manipulations* also displays a sculpture made of glass by Thea Djordjadze that recalls a bench: the artistic use of the fragile material means that the promise of stability in seating furniture is no longer given; the object no longer fits its purpose. Is the newly created, non-functioning object even a critique of capitalistic notions of efficiency, which always takes top priority in industrial production?

At the heart of another installation is the experimental treatment of plastic foil. Sonia Kacem creates a monumental installation out of long plastic sheeting that she has tinted with acrylic paint. *Petra's* folds falling luxuriantly, the space-filling work hangs in the exhibition room. Kacem borrowed the title from the famous ancient city of ruins in Jordan that is chiselled directly into the rock: fascinated by the way that art and architecture were hewn into the landscape here by removing material, Kacem continues with the draped plastic sheeting her interest in the threshold between figuration and abstraction, between landscape and sculpture.

The second chapter of the collection exhibition *Material Manipulations* unifies artistic positions that work with the most varied techniques. What they all have in common, however, is an unconventional use of materials and a curiosity for experimental treatment and exploration.

Info / Agenda:



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## PUBLIC GUIDED TOURS

The public tours of the current exhibitions in the museum regularly take place in German or English on *Saturdays from 3 pm and Thursdays from 6.30 pm*. The tours last approximately one hour and offer an in-depth insight into the themes and backgrounds of the exhibitions. The individual dates are published online on the agenda.

- On *Thursday, 13 June*, the public tour in German will be accompanied by sign language translation.
- The audio-descriptive tour in German on *Thursday, 11 July from 5 p.m.* offers people with visual impairments the opportunity to get to know various works of art in the exhibition.
- The curatorial tour on *Thursday, 20 June from 6.30 pm* with the curator of the exhibition Nadia Schneider Willen offers visitors the opportunity to learn more about the concept and creation of the exhibition as well as the background of the artworks and to ask questions to the exhibition makers. The tour will be held in German.

## COLLECTION INSIGHTS

*Thursday, 27 June from 6.30 pm with Anita Hoess & Matthias Läubli*

In this tour, Anita Hoess and Matthias Läubli share their insights into the conservation of the artwork „Rick's Kinderzimmer“ by Heidi Bucher and offer visitors an insight into the complex restoration process, which they have accompanied intensively as conservators in collaboration with the Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst. The tour will be held in German.

*Thursday, 18 July from 6.30 pm with Francisca Silva e Sousa*

Who takes care of the artworks in the collection? How are the various materials conserved and what are the challenges? During this tour, participants will learn more about the background to the works on display from Francisca Silva e Sousa, Head of Collection Care. She will provide a deeper insight into the preventative care, handling and transport of artworks and highlight cases that defy traditional conservation standards. The tour will be held in English.

## ART DETECTIVES

Young art detectives can once again pick up our exciting exhibition puzzles especially for the exhibition at reception!

- Available free of charge from 8 March 12 backpacks with the equipment (cannot be reserved)
- Ideal age: 8 – 12 years (also suitable for younger children with the help of adults)
- Language: German
- Duration of the riddle activity approx. 1 hour (can vary individually)