



WORKS OF ART

GENEVA
GRADUATE
INSTITUTE

Monika Sosnowska, *Façade*, 2010, painted steel, 515 × 145 × 220 cm. Photo credit: Jean-David Curchod / Geneva Graduate Institute

The Institute and Contemporary Art

By installing a number of art works in Maison de la paix, the Institute makes plain its support for contemporary art while adding to the building's attraction and offering both employees and visitors something to reflect on, to discuss, and to inspire them. The selection of works was entrusted in 2013 to a jury composed of leading experts:

- Jacqueline Burckhardt | Editor at Parkett magazine
- Loa Haagen Pictet | Jury President, Curator of the Pictet Collection
- Simon Lamunière | Expert and Exhibition Curator, Interversio
- Françoise Ninghetto | Deputy Director, Musée d'art moderne et contemporain (MAMCO), Genève
- Ignacio Dahl Rocha | Architect, Richter Dahl Rocha & Associates
- Adam Szymczyk | Director, Kunsthalle Basel

Working with preliminary projects submitted by eighteen international artists, the jury recommended six proposals. The Institute eventually selected works by:

- Peter Kogler
- Matt Mullican
- Monika Sosnowska

The jury also selected works by Superflex and William Kentridge that were not specifically designed for their exhibition spaces. A painting by Franz Gertsch, donated by Pierre Mirabaud, a former partner at Mirabaud & Cie, completes the collection.

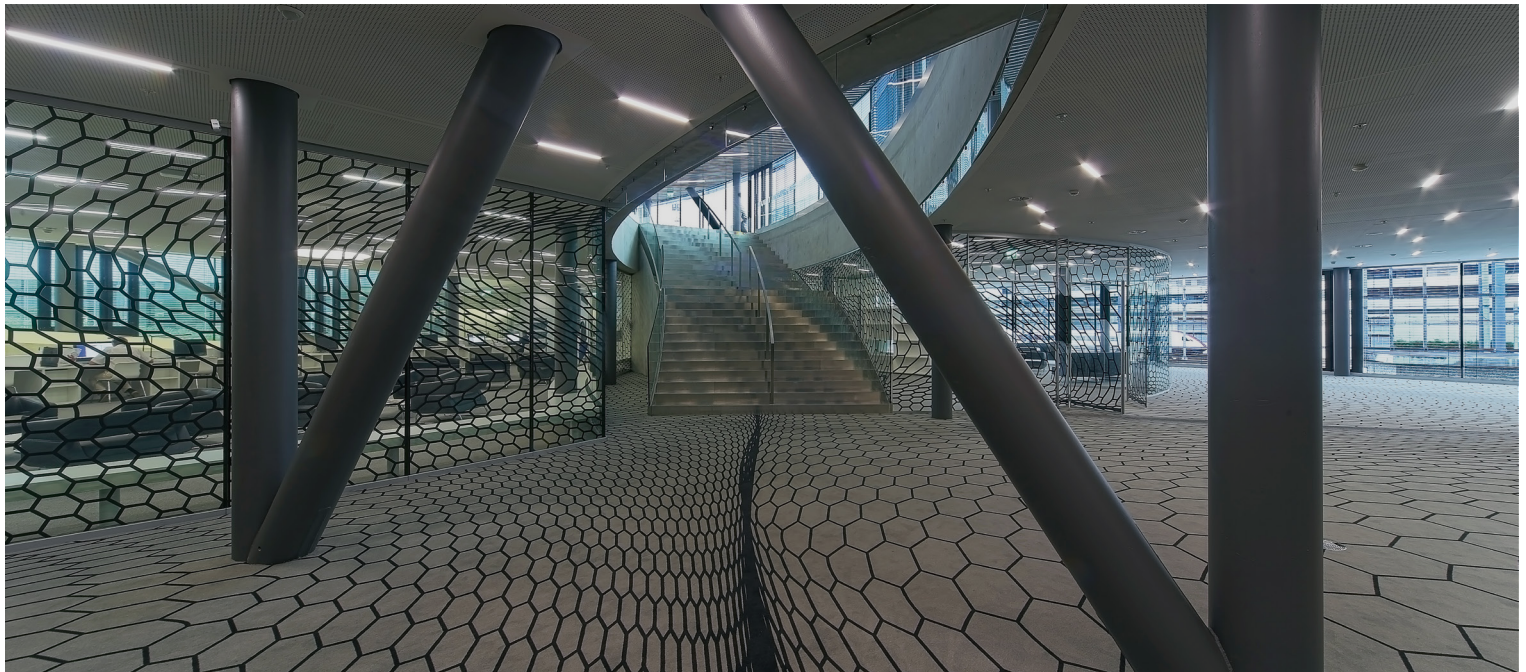
MONIKA SOSNOWSKA (1972, lives and works in Warsaw)

In front of the Institute's reception

A fragment of a metal façade structure from a Polish modernist building of the 1960s has been transformed into a wholly new form. Once reworked by the Polish artist Monika Sosnowska, this relic of an architectural ideal of classical modernism has been transformed into an object suspended freely in space, almost defying its 750 kg weight, with a grace reminiscent of skin or an elegant, almost sensual fabric.

The new life of this structure, which speaks the language of a bygone era, coexists and resonates within the contemporary building of the Maison de la Paix, bringing not only an extraordinary spatial sensibility but also a potential dialogue on the state of architecture and culture in general.

Emerging from the deconstruction of a bygone world, Monika Sosnowska's *Façade* carries within it the suggestion of a possible new construction.



Peter Kogler, *Untitled*, 2013, digital print on carpet, digital print on glass, variable dimensions. Photo credits: Jean-David Curchod & Gérald Sciboz / Geneva Graduate Institute

PETER KOGLER (1959, lives and works in Vienna)

In front of Auditorium Ivan Pictet

Peter Kogler is an Austrian visual artist who emerged on the international art scene in the 1980s. His work draws on architecture, cinema and new media, as well as major artistic movements such as Minimalism and Pop Art.

Using a computer to create his designs, he reinvents the concept of the fresco and decorative wallpaper within a broader architectural perspective. His motifs, often rich in meaning and instantly recognisable, such as ants, pipes or even brains, emerge from a profound blend of inspirations drawn from the figurative and corporeal realms.

Here, as part of the Maison de la Paix project, the artist has chosen the honeycomb motif. This array of hexagonal cells, or energy cells, stretches, warps, expands and curls up in response to the twists imposed on its structure – a network that extends infinitely and plunges the viewer into a destabilising visual experience straddling real and fictional space. The resulting forms, by turns concave and convex, offer a three-dimensional vision whose dense fabric appears as a undulating weave of serpentine lines.

By covering the floor and walls with the same material, Peter Kogler's spatial intervention intrigues with its creation of a new identity for the space, blurring the boundaries between the physical environment and an intangible architecture. The introduction of a slight sense of disorientation in the physical perception of a place serves as a reminder to those who venture there that each of us is a protagonist in a constantly changing world.



Franz Gertsch, *Rüschegg I*, 1988–1989, woodcut engraving on Kumohadamashi paper, 234 × 181 cm / 276 × 217 cm.

FRANZ GERTSCH (1930–2022)

Kathryn and Shelby Cullom Davis Library

Franz Gertsch transcends the frozen moment of photography, breathing life into it and immortalising it in a single act: that of painting. It was in 1969, at the age of 39, that he established the methodology of his work: his painting would take as its model the objective reality captured by the camera.

The meticulous description of details, the attention paid to colours and materials, and the slow pace of execution bring his work close to that of Renaissance painters. The choice of subjects, the angle of composition and the use of a photographic template, however, situate his practice within a post-photographic aesthetic that inspired American hyperrealist artists during the same period.

Interpreting the upheavals of consumer society in his own way, Gertsch invented a timeless style of painting that captures a moment of vivid intensity. Depictions of groups and scenes from everyday life filled his immense canvases right up until the 1980s.

In 1986, a new chapter began for Franz Gertsch: wood engraving. He revitalised the age-old technique of pointillism from a fresh perspective, which involves making minute incisions in a wooden block—which he chose to be monumental in size—forming a network of dots of varying density, so as to reveal the subject through the gradual removal of material. The process, which culminates in the printing of immense sheets of Japanese paper specially crafted by a master in Kyoto, is exceptional in nature. It requires several months of work on the wood, followed by a long and meticulous printing process. Gertsch focuses his compositions on elements of nature, and then on faces which, having become monumental, resemble imposing icons. This work, centred on the slow contemplation of the subject, demands prodigious concentration from the artist.

A leading figure in international hyperrealist painting, Franz Gertsch creates a body of work that is entirely a reflection on the time required for the image to emerge.



William Kentridge, *Long, Long, Long Live the 4 Modernisations*, 2014, India ink, red pencil, digital print on paper, 339 × 178.2 cm. .



William Kentridge, *Good Vegetables & Exemplary Deeds*, 2014, India ink, red pencil, digital print on paper, 231 × 252 cm.

WILLIAM KENTRIDGE (1955, lives and works in Johannesburg)

Auditorium Ivan Pictet

William Kentridge is a committed and internationally renowned South African artist. His favourite subjects are history and its evolution, systems of power and authority, memory and forgetting.

Having found their place in the Ivan Pictet Auditorium with a certain naturalness, these two monumental ink drawings introduce a subtle world that is both organic and literary, encompassing the broader history of China's authoritarian regimes, viewed through the lens of a contemporary artist from another continent.

At first glance, they appear to the viewer as exquisite ink drawings depicting plants. But this delight is soon accompanied by questions about this blending of genres—drawing, text and medium, in this case book pages. By dismantling a book, whose pages he juxtaposes in the manner of a mosaic, Kentridge superimposes his work onto existing knowledge drawn from what appears to be a Chinese encyclopaedia—that is, a compendium of facts and knowledge situated within a specific historical period. The artist depicts motifs familiar from 14th-century scholarly paintings of vegetation and vegetables. Alongside these, there are echoes of writing—fragments of sentences in English that oscillate between ancient parables and parodies of political slogans from the Chinese Cultural Revolution.

In *LONG LONG LONG LIVE THE 4 MODERNISATIONS*, the artist thus refers to Mao Zedong's 'modernisation' campaign, the Great Leap Forward, during which he rallied the Chinese people in a struggle against 'the four pests' – sparrows, mosquitoes, flies and rats – which, according to the Maoist regime, posed a threat to the country's harvests. The campaign launched to eradicate millions of sparrows resulted, in particular, in an invasion of locusts (whose larvae these birds usually eat), which contributed to the great famine that struck China between 1958 and 1961. The other slogans, such as 'HARMONISE SOUP', "GLOWING WITH HEALTH & RADIATING VIGOUR", "STRUGGLE, CRITICISE, TRANSFORM", contain both the paradoxes of revolutionary optimism and an ironic critique of the dark side of the Maoist authoritarian system and its utopian dream.

As if in an echo, *GOOD VEGETABLES & EXEMPLARY DEEDS – LET US DEDUCT 5 YEARS* welcomes, like a semi-transparent spectre, a surviving bird, whilst in the opposite corner the text 'EAT BITTERNESS' resonates, bitterly evoking the scale of the famine.

“I am interested in a form of political art – that is to say, an art of ambiguity, contradiction, incomplete gestures and uncertain outcomes – an art capable of embracing optimism and escaping nihilism. ”



Superflex, *You Can't Eat Identity / 200 Euro*, 2015, acrylic on canvas, 120 × 180 cm. Photo credit: Jean-David Curchod / Geneva Graduate Institute

SUPERFLEX (artist collective, founded in 1993, base in Copenhagen)

Restaurant at the Maison de la Paix

You Can't Eat Identity / 200 Euro is part of a series of seven paintings, all featuring the same text, 'You can't eat identity', but each in one of the colours of euro banknotes.

This text refers to the decision by the inhabitants of Mayotte, situated between the Mozambique Channel and the Indian Ocean, to remain part of France at a time when the three other islands of the Comoros archipelago gained their sovereignty in 1975. In 2011, following several referendums, Mayotte acquired the status of a French overseas department. From 2014, it officially became part of the European Union, becoming an outermost region and, as a result, a target for illegal migrant trafficking.

In 2014, when Superflex were invited by the French government to Mayotte to develop an art project for the local hospital, the artists asked the residents why they had chosen to become French. "You can't eat identity" was one of the answers. The residents of Mayotte chose French and European nationality because identity or independence are not enough to feed oneself.

This painting, along with the six others in the series, was part of the exhibition "You Can't Eat Identity", which also included a dual video projection, *European Union Mayotte*. The exhibition's central theme was migration and the dream of elsewhere.

Texts by Loa Haagen Pictet



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