

STRA-XUAEB SED LANONTNVA EÉSNS ENNASNA Press release

René Bauermeister. California Dreaming

12.3.2021 – 30.5.2021



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MUSÉE CANTONAL DES BEAUX-ARTS LAUSANNE

1. Press release

It was the rediscovery and restoration in 2018 of six sculptures by René Bauermeister from the collections of the Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts of Lausanne that was the impetus behind the present show. While Bauermeister is often reduced solely to his involvement in Swiss-French video art in the 1970s, *California Dreaming* highlights the work in sculpture by an overlooked artist.

Aluminum, polyester, plexiglas, and even synthetic polymer are some of the materials employed by René Bauermeister (Neuchâtel, 1930 – Gland, 1985) in producing his sculptures – entirely made by machine – in the second half of the 1960s. Discreet and determined in equal measure, Bauermeister developed in his brief career a body of sculpture whose materials, forms, and colors attest to his fascination with the technological progress and aesthetic trends of his day, while empirically retaining their codes, which he borrowed from contemporary design, Pop Art, Conceptual Art, and New Realism. From the Neuchâtel countryside, where he resided, to the California coast, which he visited twice in hopes of seeing his own work promoted, Bauermeister was endlessly exploring, questioning, and experimenting with the ways of transmitting and communicating through artistic means, never shying away from tackling new mediums to achieve that goal.

Exhibition curator :

Elisabeth Jobin

Hours:

Tuesday–Sunday: 10 am–6 pm

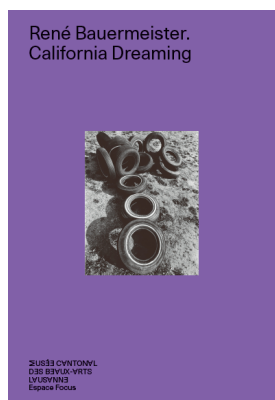
Thursday: 10 am–8 pm

Monday: closed

Good Friday (2.4.21), Easter Monday (5.4.21), Ascension Day (13.5.21) : open

Espace Focus, free admission

Catalogue:



Elisabeth Jobin (ed.), *René Bauermeister. California Dreaming*, with contributions by Jean-Michel Baconnier, François Bovier, and Elisabeth Jobin (FR/ENG), 32 p. 18 ill., Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts of Lausanne, 2021 (Espace Focus, no. 3)

Price: CHF 5.-

Available at the museum's Book and Giftshop

2. Questions for the exhibition curator

Why did you decide to display Bauermeister's body of work?

The specialist art circles are aware of René Bauermeister for his pioneering role in video art in French-speaking Switzerland in the 1970s. We know, however, that he initially began producing sculpture, turning to industrial milieus for that. The works featured in this show are probably prototypes that the artist hoped to produce on a large scale. They attest to his many aesthetic references because he was very up on the art of his day. He defined himself as a "designer" and readily mentioned artists associated with Conceptual Art or Nouveau Réalisme by way of comparison. I would add that the colors and the simplification of the message are akin to the codes of Pop Art. The possible parallels are very eclectic.

How many works are on display (sculptures, photos, videos)?

The show focuses on a brief period in his career, the passage from late 1960s to the early 1970s, when Bauermeister was still producing sculptures but was already in the process of shifting toward video art. The exhibition features five sculptures (including two in multiple copies), along with several construction designs, drawings, and a poster, as well as his first ever work for video.

What is his influence on artists today?

It's just about zero, because few people know about him and his work. The aim of the MCBA Focus exhibitions is also to advance research and highlight the hidden treasures in the museum's collections. I hope the rediscovery of these sculptures will surprise many.

In what museums, institutions or foundations nowadays can you find the most works by this artist? Switzerland and abroad (USA)?

As far as I know, only Swiss museums keep works by Bauermeister, despite the considerable effort made by the artist, who in his lifetime hoped to see his work circulating in the United States. The Fonds d'art contemporain de la Ville de Genève and the Kunstmuseen of Bern and Lucerne possess some of his videos, but only MCBA and the Musée des beaux-arts of La Chaux-de-Fonds own the artist's sculptures. The latter institution, moreover, holds the Bauermeister archives.

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How many of Bauermeister's works does MCBA possess and how did they come into the collection?

MCBA has six sculptures, all of them donated by René Bauermeister in 1976. The artist addressed this donation more personally to René Berger, who was then the director of the institution. Berger was a great defender and champion of video art in Switzerland. He associated Bauermeister with a group of artists who were pioneers in the art of the moving image whom he dubbed the "musketeers of the invisible." Besides Bauermeister, the name brought together Jean Otth, Gérald Minkoff, Muriel Olesen, and Janos Urban. All of them stood out for their formal experimentation in the field of artist's videos, which at the time was expanding.

Which part of his work is best known? Sculpture, photography, or video?

It is impossible to say that one work by him is well known. His videos have only been screened on a few occasions since his premature death in 1985, and his sculptures have almost never been shown after 1970. His work has received little critical attention and all of it in fact is waiting to be discovered and researched. René Bauermeister is part of that group of artists who have remained on the margins of Swiss art history. Their rediscovery today is exciting, because it proves the depth and breadth of artmaking in the 1960s and '70s.

MUSÉE CANTONAL DES BEAUX-ARTS LAUSANNE

3. Press images

The images of the exhibition are available here www.mcba.ch/presse

The images are duty free for the duration of the exhibition. Any reproduction of them must mention the following: author(s), title of the work of art, date, name of the museum, name of the photographer and the copyright.

Other indications (dimensions, techniques, etc.) are welcome but not obligatory. Once the document is published, we would be grateful if a copy was sent to the museum's press department: Service de presse, Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne.



1. René Bauermeister
Sphère tournante, 1968
Polyester and Plexiglas
210 x 38 x 38 cm
Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts of Lausanne. Gift of the artist, 1976.
Photo © MCBA, Nora Rupp



3. René Bauermeister
Untitled, undated
Ink and felt-tip pen on paper
55.5 x 44.2 cm
Collection of the Musée des beaux-arts of La Chaux-de-Fonds.
Fonds René Bauermeister
Photo © Yannick Lambelet, Musée des beaux-arts de La Chaux-de-Fonds



2. René Bauermeister
Forme rayée jaune et rouge, 1966-1968
Polyester and steel
270 x 100 x 270 cm
Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts of Lausanne. Gift of the artist, 1976.
Photo © MCBA, Nora Rupp



4. René Bauermeister
Untitled [Voyage aux États-Unis], 1971-1973
Photograph on paper
23 x 29 cm
Collection of the Musée des beaux-arts of La Chaux-de-Fonds
Fonds René Bauermeister
Photo © Musée des beaux-arts de La Chaux-de-Fonds

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5. René Bauermeister
Support-Surface, 1969
Video, b/w, sound, 12'
Collection du Fonds d'art contemporain de la Ville de Genève
(FMAC)
Video Still © Fonds d'art contemporain de la Ville de Genève
(FMAC)



6. Gallery view / Espace Focus
René Bauermeister. California Dreaming
© MCBA, Étienne Malapert



7. Gallery view / Espace Focus
René Bauermeister. California Dreaming
© MCBA, Étienne Malapert

4. Public engagement – Public outreach services

Events in conjunction with exhibition:
see the announcements on our internet pages
→ www.mcba.ch

Guided tour (in French) with
Elisabeth Jobin, exhibition curator
Tuesday, 20 April 2021 at 12:30 pm

Reservations (limited number of participants) →
mcba.ch/agenda

Programme for schools and private tours →
mcba.ch

ENNSAVAL SED LANONTAV EÉSUNΣ STRA-XVAEB DEB ARTS

5. Book and Giftshop – Le Nabi Café-Restaurant

Book and Giftshop

In the MCBA Book and Giftshop you can find books on all of the shows currently on view, and a selection of publications on artists in the collection, the history of art and techniques and mediums, books for children, along with a range of items (notebooks, jewelry, scarves, pencils, etc.).



Hours:

Tues.-Sun.: 10 am – 6 pm

Thursday: 10 am – 8 pm

Monday: closed

Good Friday (2.4.21), Easter Monday (5.4.21),

Ascension Day (13.5.21): open

Contact and order:

shop.mcba@vd.ch

Café-Restaurant Le Nabi

Before or after your visit, Le Nabi invites you to take a break. The menu, reflecting the open, welcoming spirit of our museum, is both family oriented and refined. Drinks are all artisanal and the menu emphasizes local products that change with the seasons. Due to the Covid situation, Le Nabi is momentarily closed



Hours:

Tues.-Sun.: 10 am – 6 pm

Thursday: 10 am – 8 pm

Monday: closed

Good Friday (2.4.21), Easter Monday (5.4.21),

Ascension Day (13.5.21): open

Reservations :

T. +41 21 311 02 90 / info@lenabi.ch

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6. MCBA partners and sponsors

The MCBA building was inaugurated on 5 April 2019. The museum's new premises were built by the canton of Vaud with the generous support of the City of Lausanne and the following private partnerships:

Fondation
Les Mûrons

Fondation
Gandur pour l'Art

Nestlé



Abakanowicz art
and culture charitable
foundation



Loterie Romande



Audemars Piguet

AUDEMARS PIGUET
Le Brassus

Fondation
Art et Vie

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