



WORKS OF ART

By installing a number of art works in the 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 process was entrusted to a jury of leading experts made up of the following persons:

- Jacqueline Burckhardt | Editor at the review *Parkett*
- Loa Haagen Pictet | President of the jury and Curator of the Collection Pictet & Cie
- Simon Lamunière | Art expert and exhibition curator, *Interversion*
- Françoise Ninghetto | Assistant director, Musée d'art moderne et contemporain (MAMCO) of Geneva
- Ignacio Dahl Rocha | Architect, the firm of Richter · Dahl Rocha & Associés
- Adam Szymczyk | Director, Kunsthalle Basel

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

- Peter Kogler
- Matt Mullican
- Monika Sosnowska

In addition, Mr Pierre Mirabaud, former partner at Mirabaud & Cie, donated a painting by Franz Gertsch to the Institute.

MATT MULLICAN

→ 1951, lives and works in New York and Berlin

For several decades now, Matt Mullican, a native of California, has been developing a body of work that is rooted in a system for categorising experience that ranges from subjectivity to pure objectivity. This system of codified signs and colours constitutes a coherent alternative world, a cosmology, through which Mullican explores possible modes of representation linked with the collective or individual perception of reality. He associates five colours with five fundamental concepts: green evokes material reality, red subjective and spiritual values, yellow conscious manifestations of the arts and sciences, blue the mysteries of the unconscious, and black language. His pictogrammes are inspired by multiple sources (contemporary communications, archaic civilisations or personal motifs), and their interpretation varies according to the support, format and context. By turns the artist plays the part of the ethnologist, psychoanalyst, philosopher, architect, urban planner, even high priest of a virtual civilisation akin to ours. The viewer, on the other hand, must take on the role of an explorer, decipherer, interpreter...

Mullican's project for the Maison de la paix involves three sizes of plates displaying one of forty different pictogrammes which are bordered in a certain order by one of the artist's five colours. Thanks to the normal day-to-day circulation of the plates, users of the cafeteria can discover almost countless combinations of meaning, adding cerebral and spiritual nourishment to their meal.



PETER KOGLER

→ 1959, lives and works in Vienna

Peter Kogler is an Austrian artist who first gained attention on the international art scene in the 1980s. His work adopts an approach based on architecture, cinema and the new digital media, as well as the major art trends of Minimalism and Pop Art.

Using the computer to create his motifs, Kogler reinvents the idea of the fresco and decorative wallpaper in a more global architectural perspective. It is in fact a profound blend of inspirations drawn from the corporal and figurative domains that gives rise to the artist's motifs, which are often quite clear in meaning and immediately recognisable, things like ants, pipes or the brain.

Here, as part of the Maison de la paix project, the artist has chosen the honeycomb as his motif. This group of hexagonal cavities or energy cells stretches, warps, expands or curls up according to the forces exerted on the structure – a network that goes on infinitely, plunging the viewer into an unsettling visual experience that seems to exist between real and fictional space. The forms produced, now convex, now concave, offer a vision in three dimensions whose dense fabric looks like an undulating weft of coiling lines.

Covering the floor and walls of the same structure, Kogler's spatial intervention fascinates thanks to the new identity it bestows on the site, shifting the borders between a real space and an immaterial architecture. Introducing a slight destabilisation into the physical perception of a place reminds anyone who ventures there of just how much each of us is a protagonist in a world in motion.



MONIKA SOSNOWSKA

→ 1972, lives and works in Warsaw

A fragment of the metal structure from the façade of a modernist Polish building of the 1960s has been turned into a novel and surprising form. Once reworked by the Polish artist Monika Sosnowska, this relic of the ideal architecture of classic modernism is transformed into an object that is freely suspended in space, nearly negating its 750 kg of mass through its sheer grace, looking like a skin or an elegant fabric that has an almost sensual aspect.

The new life of this structure, which speaks a language of the past, coexists and resonates with the contemporary building that is home to the Maison de la paix, offering not only a surprising spatial sensibility but also a possible dialog on the state of architecture and culture in general.

Springing from the deconstruction of a past world, Sosnowska's *Façade* conveys as well the suggestion of a new potential construction.

Edgardo AMATO.

FRANZ GERTSCH

→ 1930, lives and works in Bern

Franz Gertsch transcends the frozen moment of photography, infuses it with life and immortalises it in one and the same gesture, the gesture of painting. In 1969, at the age of thirty-nine, Gertsch laid down the protocol for his work. His painting would be modeled on the objective reality furnished by the still camera.



Rüschegg I, 1988-1989.

The meticulous description of details, the attention lavished on colours and materials, and the sheer length of time that goes into executing a piece liken his art to the work of Renaissance painters. On the other hand, his choice of subjects, the angle of the composition and the use of a photograph as a model to work from ground his practice in a post-photographic esthetic that was also inspiring American artists of the hyperrealist school during this same period.

Interpreting in his way the upheavals affecting consumer society, Gertsch invented a timeless painting that captures a moment of keen intensity. Depictions of groups and lived scenes filled his immense canvases into the 1980s.

In 1986 Gertsch turned a page and began a new chapter by taking up xylography, or wood engraving. He revived the ancestral technique of pricking but in a novel way, making tiny incisions in a wood panel – the artist works in monumental formats – to create a network of more or less dense points that reveal the subject through a gradual removal of material. The undertaking, which culminates in printing the image on huge pieces of Japan paper especially produced by a master papermaker in Kyoto, is imbued with an exceptional character. It requires several months of working the wood, and continues in the long and painstaking process of pulling the print. Gertsch initially focused his compositions on natural elements, then human faces, whose monumental proportions liken them to imposing icons. Centered on the protracted contemplation of the subject, the work demands prodigious concentration on the part of the artist.

A well-known figure of international hyperrealist painting, Franz Gertsch has built up an oeuvre that is wholly a reflection on the time needed for an image to emerge.

Text by Loa Haagen Pictet.