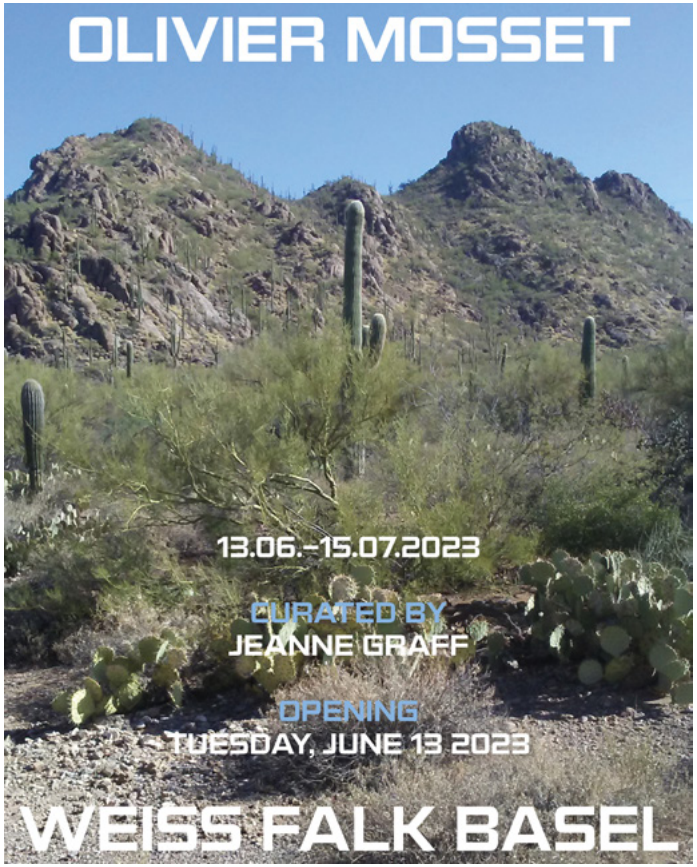
GALERIE OSKAR WEISS

OLIVIER MOSSET
SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

↗ SELECTED WORKS
↗ BIOGRAPHY
↗ PRESS



When Richard moved to New York in the 80s, his best friend was living in the backspace of Olivier Mosset's studio. Every Tuesday, Richard picked up his friend for a movie, and crossing the studio, he was seeing a red monochrome of the size of the wall, and a week after it was green, and a week after it was yellow. Olivier kind of remembers the story in 2023: oui mais c'était pas le même!!

For his exhibition at Weiss Falk, he shows tree triptychs, approximately of the size of a human body, that are changing color when you walk by. The brown turns into purple that turns into blue that turns into green, a serie of chameleon paintings: the pigments have some sort of changing glass particle in themselves so the paint reflects light differently when you see them, the original color shifts are brown gold green red, to get the desired color/color shift you add a layer with the same technique used for cars, sprayed with a high pressure turbo gun sprayer, layers and layers of sprayed painting. The triptychs are hung on the original light purple blue and orange yellow wallpapers from the 20s, a bit hidden in the backspace of the gallery. On the floor above prints de toutes les couleurs are sensitive to temperature: the thermochemical ink changes colour from 27 degrees and the red becomes yellow. In the courtyard is an ice sculpture, so under the June sun it will melt in about a week – he made once one in Tucson but it didn't last long – on the gallery building you see an X painting, et voilà.

Jeanne Graff

↗ View full documentation

Olivier Mosset
13.06.–15.07.2023
Weiss Falk Basel



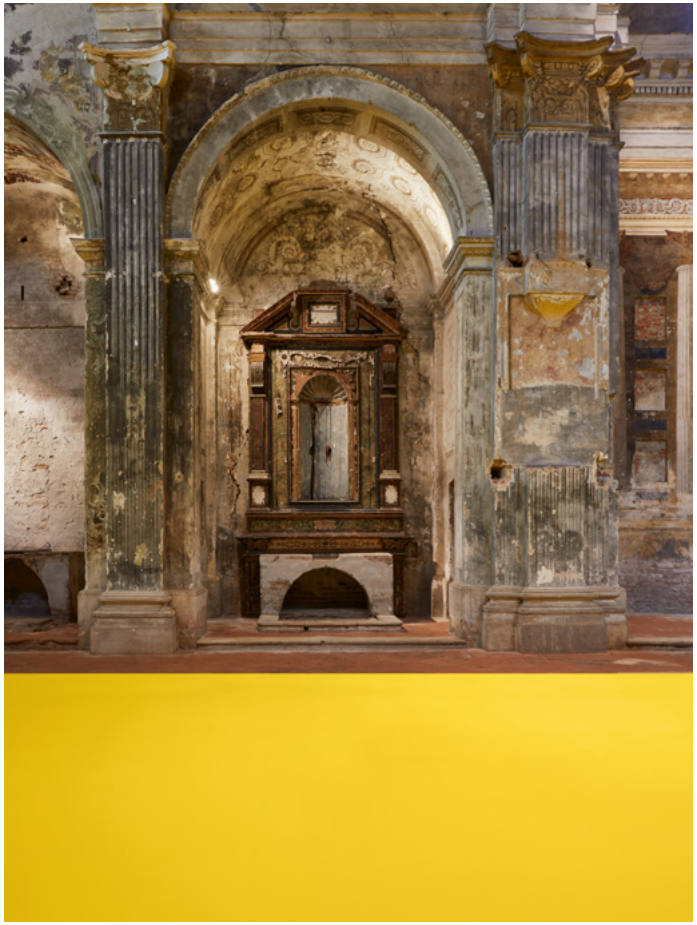
Olivier Mosset
13.06.–15.07.2023
Weiss Falk Basel



Olivier Mosset
13.06.–15.07.2023
Weiss Falk Basel



Olivier Mosset
13.06.–15.07.2023
Weiss Falk Basel



San Carlo Cremona is pleased to present Olivier Mosset, San Carlo PG, second show of the year 2023 to be held in the 17th-century deconsecrated church of San Carlo in Via Bissolati 33, Cremona. Olivier Mosset's solo show will be on view from May the 27th until September the 15th 2023. For the 2022-2023 biennium San Carlo Cremona has embarked on a collaboration with Servane Mary, an artist based in New York, who invited artists to exhibit in the church of San Carlo. Each exhibition is a site-specific presentation of an artist's work.

A monumental yellow painting titled San Carlo PG is presented, filling the floor of the 17th-century deconsecrated church of San Carlo. The site specific work measuring over five by twenty meters stretches to the nave's edges as if wishing to expand beyond them. The installation creates a spatial unity in which the emphasis is purely on color and challenges the traditional vertical posture of "art".

Olivier Mosset is one of the central figure of Post-War Abstract Painting, and an essential reference for several generations of European and American painters. In pursuit of formal rigor and the physical roots of painting, Olivier Mosset's art is direct and evident, suppressing figuration, subjectivity, symbol and metaphor in a practice that contains and rejects the dialectical history of painting. With the same analytical rigor of his early works, Mosset's most recent practice exhales the fields of monochromatic and geometric abstraction.

Olivier Mosset
San Carlo PG
27.05.–15.09.2023
San Carlo Cremona



Olivier Mosset
San Carlo PG
27.05.–15.09.2023
San Carlo Cremona



In the heady climate of Paris pre-May ’68, the four painters organised “manifestations” rather than exhibitions and adopted a stance in opposition to the European tradition of “cultivated painting,” whether figurative or abstract. As critic Bob Nickas has observed, Olivier Mosset has always been closely engaged with abstraction and the history of abstraction: “his approach considers painting in terms of production and reception, while acknowledging its social and political dimensions.”

Mosset moved to the US in 1977 and was part of the vibrant New York art scene of the 1980s. His later paintings explore monochrome and geometric abstraction, with all the analytical rigor of his early works. With hindsight, Mosset emerges as one of very few European painters to place themselves within the American tradition of large-scale painting (the legacy of Frank Stella, Robert Ryman, or Barnet Newman), but he remains attentive to developments within the art scenes he traverses, too, and has supported artists whose practices differ from his own.

Occupying virtually all the museum, MAMCO’s retrospective reviewed his career over almost 60 years, from the early experiments of the 1960s to his monumental recent works, via the painter’s reflections on artistic appropriation, monochrome painting, and shaped canvases.

At the same time, several rooms were devoted to movements and artists with whom Mosset was or remains closely associated, allowing us to consider his work in a variety of different contexts. In addition to a section devoted to the activities led with Buren, Parmentier, and Toroni, the exhibition featured works by Nouveaux Réalistes (notably Jean Tinguely and Daniel Spoerri, for whom Mosset worked as an assistant), experimental film-makers’ collective Zanzibar (with whom Mosset directed, acted in and produced a number of films), American “Radical painting” of the 1970s and 1980s (including Marcia Hafif and Joseph Marioni) and artists such as Sherrie Levine, Steven Parrino, Cady Noland, John Armleder, and Sylvie Fleury, with whom he has maintained a regular dialogue.

Olivier Mosset
25.02.–25.11.2020
MAMCO, Geneva

↗ View full documentation



Olivier Mosset
25.02.–25.11.2020
MAMCO, Geneva



Olivier Mosset
25.02.–25.11.2020
MAMCO, Geneva



Olivier Mosset
25.02.–25.11.2020
MAMCO, Geneva



Since the mid-1960s, Olivier Mosset (b. 1944 in Bern, lives in Tucson, Arizona) has been one of the most radical representatives of a contemporary manner of painting that undermines the ideal of artistic originality by means of objectivity and seriality. Taking the question of what painting is and how it works as a starting point, he has produced a multifaceted oeuvre of monochromes and abstract geometric works that reject any mystifying attribution of meaning, as exemplified by the pieces now presented at Museum Haus Konstruktiv.

Olivier Mosset's solo show opens with eight giant square color fields in green, yellow, violet, orange, blue and brown. These monochromes from 2014, of which there are ten in total, were produced in series and demonstrate a very surface-oriented manner of painting, in which the traces of the application of paint are reduced to a minimum. Mosset had already adopted this practice in the mid-1960s, when he created paintings with letters, numbers and dots, including the red A and black dot on a white background that can now be seen at Haus Konstruktiv. These two early works date back to Mosset's time in Paris, where he began his career as an artist in 1962, working as an assistant for Jean Tinguely and Daniel Spoerri. There, he also met Daniel Buren, Michel Parmentier and Niele Toroni. With the aim of fundamentally questioning painting in its predominant form and starting from scratch, these four artists organized four provocative collective acts from January to September 1967, in which they broke away from abstract expressionism and Nouvelle École de Paris. This group, named BMPT after the artists' initials, already disbanded in 1967.

Around 1966, Mosset produced the first of around two hundred identical paintings with a circle motif, which he would work on until 1974: for the purpose of undermining the principle of authorship and of creating a manner of painting that refers to nothing other than itself, this Swiss artist persistently painted black rings on white primed canvases measuring 100 × 100 cm, three examples of which are exhibited on the fourth floor.

However, as these untitled rings became a kind of signature, he turned to two-tone vertical stripe paintings around 1973. The first paintings from this series show a white-and-gray stripe structure. Later, Mosset broadened his color palette, as seen in the striped exhibit in white and light green, until he started to combine two similar color nuances in 1976. This gradual convergence of the stripes' colors led him to monochromy in 1977. At that time, he moved to New York, where he met key representatives of so-called radical painting and exhibited with them collectively. Until the mid-1980s, he addressed monochromy intensively, experimenting with various colors and formats while consistently intent on applying paint without any individual style. In 1985, Mosset returned to geometric abstraction, producing two-tone and three-tone abstract geometric paintings until 1990. He also started to give them titles, which rarely provided clear information about the work, but instead encouraged contemplation of possible references to other artworks and ideas. In the exhibited piece TUTU (2013), for instance, which consists of four shaped canvases with the forms of letters T, U, T and U, there is subtle wordplay referring to Marcel Duchamp and his drawing of a ballerina. The version shown at Museum Haus Konstruktiv comprises two previous works from 2013, Untitled (TU M') and Untitled (TUTU), which can also be read as veiled homages to Duchamp.

Read full text here.

Olivier Mosset
TUTU
30.05.–08.09.2019
Haus Konstruktiv, Zurich

↗ View full documentation



Olivier Mosset
TUTU
30.05.–08.09.2019
Haus Konstruktiv, Zurich



Olivier Mosset
TUTU
30.05.–08.09.2019
Haus Konstruktiv, Zurich



Olivier Mosset
TUTU
30.05.–08.09.2019
Haus Konstruktiv, Zurich



To celebrate the fifth anniversary of its opening in 2013, the MAMO gallery in Marseille will host a new exhibition by Olivier Mosset, bringing together some of his most monumental works.

For 50 years, the Swiss visual artist has rigorously pursued his practice of deconstructing painting. Best known for his series of monochrome paintings, each featuring a black circle, Mosset avoids any claims of paternity over his works, something he undoubtedly believed following his membership of a Parisian art collective in the 1960s who claimed that art itself was more relevant than its creator.

His latest show Untitled will gather three works that are emblematic of his artistic research, including a Harley Davidson 74′ Panhead (1957) reflecting his deep affection for the world of motorcycles and, in the solarium of the Cité Radieuse, two metal panels – one measuring five metres, the other eighteen – covered with a chameleon paint, whose reflections offer "a unique tribute to the sun that bathes Marseille in summer".

Olivier Mosset
Untitled
07.07.–30.09.2018
MAMO, Marseille

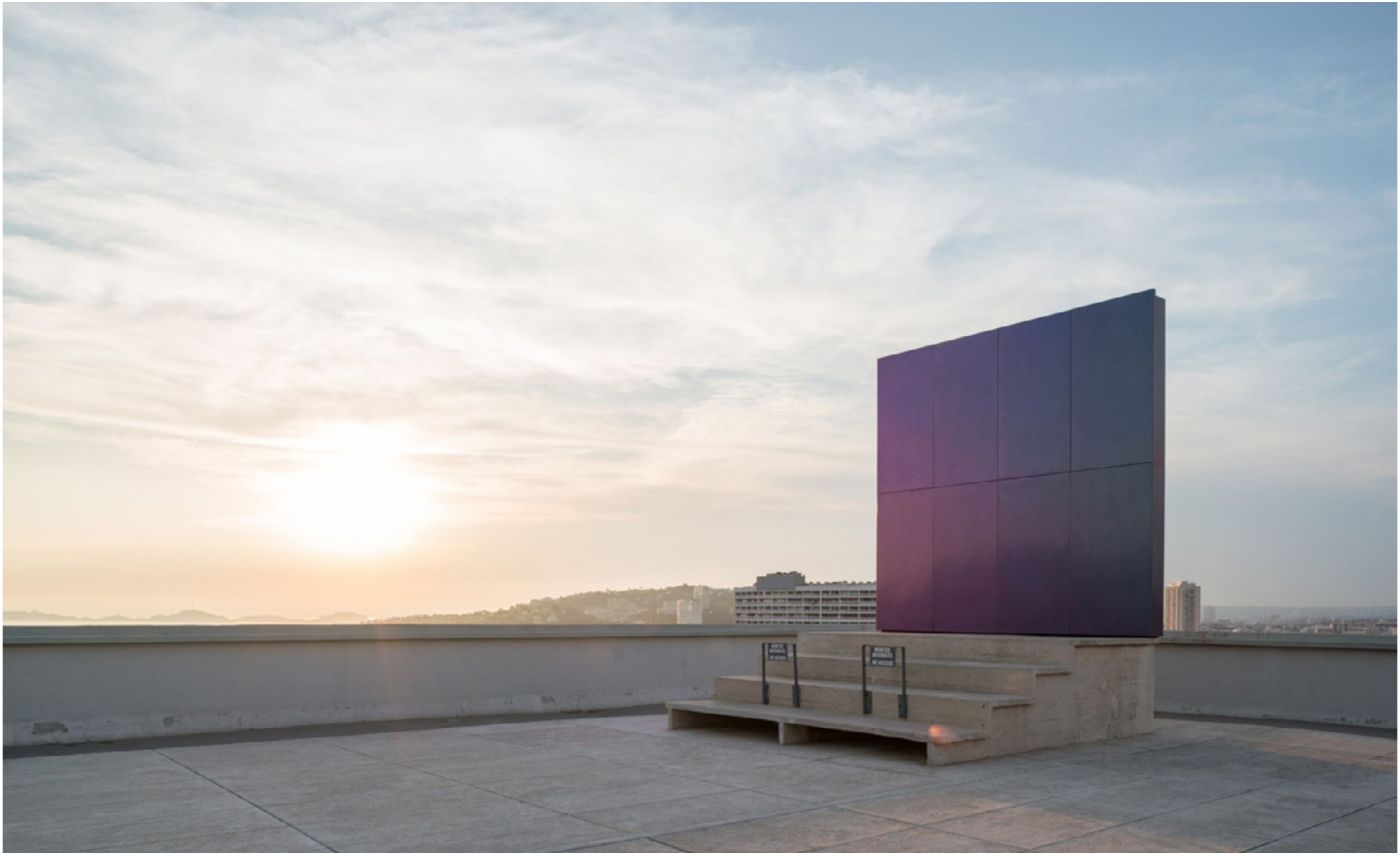
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Olivier Mosset
Untitled
07.07.–30.09.2018
MAMO, Marseille



Olivier Mosset
Untitled
07.07.–30.09.2018
MAMO, Marseille



Olivier Mosset
Untitled
07.07.–30.09.2018
MAMO, Marseille



The site-specific installation by Olivier Mosset includes selected works from three integral series in the artist's oeuvre: monochrome paintings, murals, and custom motorcycles. The installation layers these varied bodies of work, prompting a dialogue that explores Mosset's interest in materiality and surface as they relate to the history of the readymade, while also tracing the works relationship to landscape.

This installation is presented in conjunction with the exhibition Buren, Mosset, Parmentier, Toroni currently on view at the Hunter College, 205 Hudson Street Gallery in Tribeca. The exhibition is the first critical examination of the significant, albeit brief, work of the BMPT Group, comprised of Daniel Buren, Olivier Mosset, Michel Parmentier, and Niele Toroni in 1967 and seeks to reexamine the BMPT group by placing its work in context with the broader conversations surrounding institutional critique, performance, and the role of painting as a political medium.

↗ View full documentation

Olivier Mosset
04.03.–08.05.2016
The Hunter College Art Galleries, New York



Olivier Mosset
04.03.–08.05.2016
The Hunter College Art Galleries, New York



Olivier Mosset
04.03.–08.05.2016
The Hunter College Art Galleries, New York



Organized by Rod Teeters

The work of Olivier Mosset (b. 1944, Bern Switzerland) has been presented in museums, galleries and institutions since the 1960s. For a brief period he was associated with BMPT (Buren, Mosset, Parmentier, Toroni), an informal association forged in 1966 with Daniel Buren, Michel Parmentier and Niele Toroni. The four artists publicly expressed their desire to challenge institutional structures of authorship through five acts that took place throughout the year of 1967. The assertion behind BMPT was a need for a radical break from dominant painting(ie. Abstract Expressionism and Art Informel) with an urgency to recalibrate painting, a return to degree zero. Among the five acts of BMPT, the fourth manifestation took place at Galerie J.(Paris). Without Parmentier, the group's associative activity and collaboration ended. The remaining three artists declared authorship over each other's work, claiming," Today each of us will sign the paintings of the two others and his own, signing all three with his own name." Mosset signs the works of Buren and Toroni those of Buren and Mosset and Buren those of Toroni and Mosset. This signal to disrupt the commodity status of the art object has filtered through Mosset's project to the present day.

Before his association with BMPT, Mosset was a teenage runaway. He left Switzerland for Paris in 1963 and began working for artist Jean Tinguely. He is introduced to Niki de Saint Phalle, Daniel Spoerri, Andre Breton, Ben Vautier, Jean-Jacques Lebel, Alain Jouffroy and Marcel Duchamp and, in 1964, paints two canvases that seem to paradoxically summarize his attitude towards painting at the time. On one canvas, Mosset paints the words "THE END" and on the other "RIP." In both cases, an end indicates a beginning and termination becomes a means of commencement.

From this point onward, Mosset's work prioritizes neutrality, anonymity and objectivity over specificity, referentiality, temporality and aesthetics. He begins to reduce linguistic characters to more ambiguous yet simplified forms, finishing his first circle painting in 1966. In Paris, he systematically paints a single black circle centered on a white ground, producing one canvas after the next repeatedly until abruptly stopping in 1974. Throughout the eight years he made the same painting roughly two hundred times over. As an archetype of neutrality, the cyclic form seems uniquely poised for this kind of repetitive, almost reflexive, action. "To the perpetual motion of the production of signs he responded with repetitiveness, resistance to change and the reiteration of flawlessly concerted acts, the outcomes being the production of a picture identical to itself, although multiple and, one sensed already, destined to undergo appreciable changes due to the imponderables of conservation." Mosset describes the circle as "something that's there and exists, and could just as easily been made by someone else.

↗ Read full text here.

↗ View full documentation

Olivier Mosset
Plan B
23.10.–18.12.2015
The Power Station, Dallas



Olivier Mosset
Plan B
23.10.–18.12.2015
The Power Station, Dallas



Olivier Mosset
Plan B
23.10.–18.12.2015
The Power Station, Dallas



The exhibition Olivier Mosset Leaving the Museum is the final project to be staged by the Kunsthalle Zürich at its temporary home in the Museum Bärengasse before it returns to its renovated and extended premises at the Löwenbräu art complex. Over the past year and a half, wide-ranging encounters with contemporary art have taken place in the houses of the Museum Bärengasse, which were built in 1670 and feature tiled stoves, decorative stucco work, and wood panelling. We have now come full circle with this last exhibition by Olivier Mosset (born in Bern in 1944, lives and works in Tucson, Arizona), which is staged in 16 rooms of the Museum Bärengasse and presents a range of works, which have been integrated into the features of the space. Leaving the Museum combines a large selection of Mosset's paintings with works created in collaboration with other artists, works which arose in his circle and works inspired by him. Olivier Mosset approaches the Museum Bärengasse's numerous individual rooms as individual exhibitions in themselves, which together provide an insight into his wide-ranging œuvre and artistic practice.

Olivier Mosset left Switzerland as a young man and settled in Paris. He worked as an assistant for Jean Tinguely and Daniel Spoerri, and together with Daniel Buren, Michel Parmentier and Niele Toroni established the BMPT group in the mid-1960s. The group, which explored the essence of painting and undermined traditional institutional structures, raised questions about authorship and originality. Mosset became known for his circle paintings during this period. By 1974 he had painted 200 of these works, all showing an identical black circular ring on a white background. This repetition and limitation to a single, simple motif reduced the manifestness of painterly practice and the individual artistic effort to a lowest common denominator. He continued his interrogation of traditional ideas in the stripe paintings which he produced from 1972, and which—inspired by Buren's stripe motifs—opened up a literal field of experience. This led to a radical reduction to monochrome in 1977 and saw Mosset become an important proponent of Radical Painting. Mosset's painting is always based on the material reality of the work: dimension, format, ground, colour and the uniform application of the paint. The central focus of Mosset's work is the exploration of what painting is and how an artist must paint so that painting functions exclusively as such, without being systematically programmed or dictated by chance. Painting is colour and colour alone. In the 1980s, Mosset produced two-coloured abstract paintings and since the 1990s, Mosset has been producing "shaped canvases."

Mosset is an "easy rider." His rejection of the norms of painting finds analogous expression in the vast expanses of unspoiled landscape found in his adopted home of Arizona and his love of motorbikes that often feature in his art and presentations—for example one of his motorbikes, a 1950s "Vincent," appears in a curious presentation in one of the small rooms on the top floor of the Museum Bärengasse. The motorbike rhetoric is reflected in the delicate irony of the folk-rock songs of Al Perry, in the work Run by Christina Da Silva, in Mosset's video Last Run at Montriond 14 (2004) as well as in the road movie T.S.O.Y.W (2007) by Amy Granat and Drew Heitzler that are all included in the exhibition.

Read full Text here.

Olivier Mosset
Leaving the Museum
21.04.–17.06.2012
Kunsthalle Zürich at Museum Bärengasse

↗ View full documentation



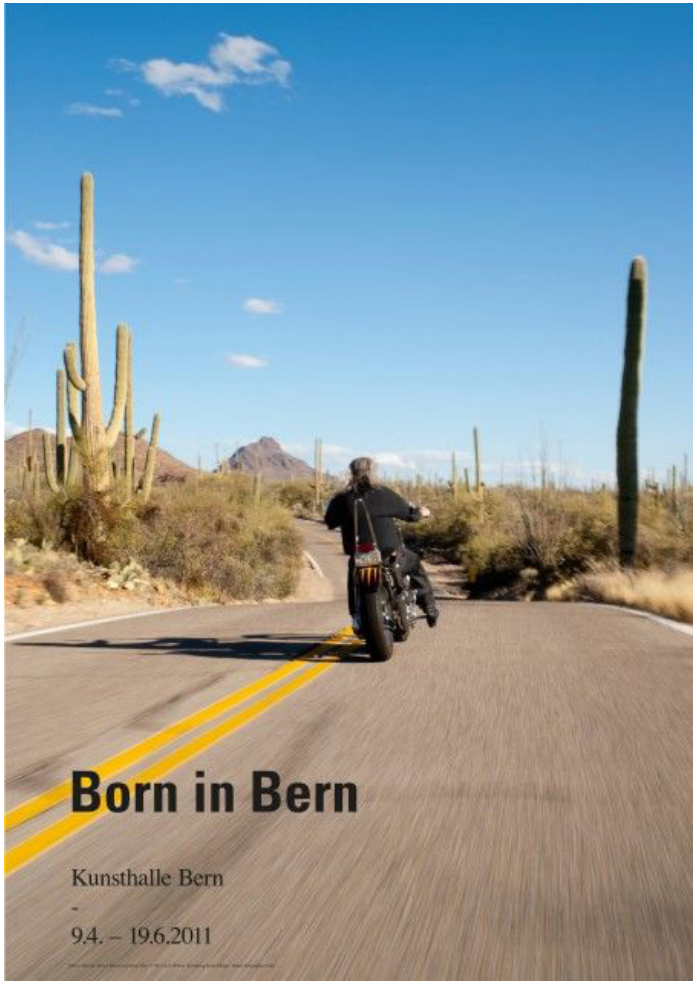
Olivier Mosset
Leaving the Museum
21.04.–17.06.2012
Kunsthalle Zürich at Museum Bärengasse



Olivier Mosset
Leaving the Museum
21.04.–17.06.2012
Kunsthalle Zürich at Museum Bärengasse



Olivier Mosset
Leaving the Museum
21.04.–17.06.2012
Kunsthalle Zürich at Museum Bärengasse



Olivier Mosset was born in Berne, Switzerland, in 1944. That fact is also the point of departure of new series of works by the seminal Swiss artist at Kunsthalle Bern. Mosset will delve into his earliest memories of the city of his childhood and bring them back in an oblique way. Resident in the United States since 1977, Mosset now lives and works in Tucson, Arizona. He moved to France in 1962. For a brief period, he was associated with Daniel Buren, Niele Toroni and Michel Parmentier. From December 1966 until December 1967, the four artists publicly expressed their desire to break with institutional structures and recognised artistic models. During the same year, Olivier Mosset created several paintings featuring the same black circle on a white ground at the centre of a 1 × 1 metre square.

Between 1966 and 1974, he produced about two hundred paintings of circles. The relationships that he created among shades of colour from 1976 progressively led him towards monochrome painting. In 1977, Mosset moved to New York. For the Paris Biennale, he produced a wall-sized painting covered with a coat of red, through which could be discerned the traces of stripes in pencil; confused with the wall, the painting went unnoticed. In 1978, he met Marcia Hafif, with whom he established an artist's group; this resulted in the exhibitions entitled New abstraction (1983) and Radical painting (1984). In 1986, Mosset participated in the Tableaux abstraits exhibition at the Villa Arson in Nice. The same year, he presented paintings with titles for the first time. Although he never belonged to the "Néo-Géo" movement, Olivier Mosset maintained relations with these artists: Peter Halley, Helmut Federle and John Armleder.

In 1990, he exhibited in the Swiss Pavilion at the Venice Biennale. Olivier Mosset has collaborated on numerous occasions with such diverse artists as Andy Warhol and Steven Parrino, at the Pierre Huber gallery in Geneva in 1990; with John Armleder, who invited him to present a skateboard ramp at the Lyon Biennale in 1993; and with Cady Noland at the Migros Museum of Contemporary Art in Zurich 1999. Olivier Mosset has also produced on-site art and open-air sculptures: in Neuchâtel and Bienne, for example.

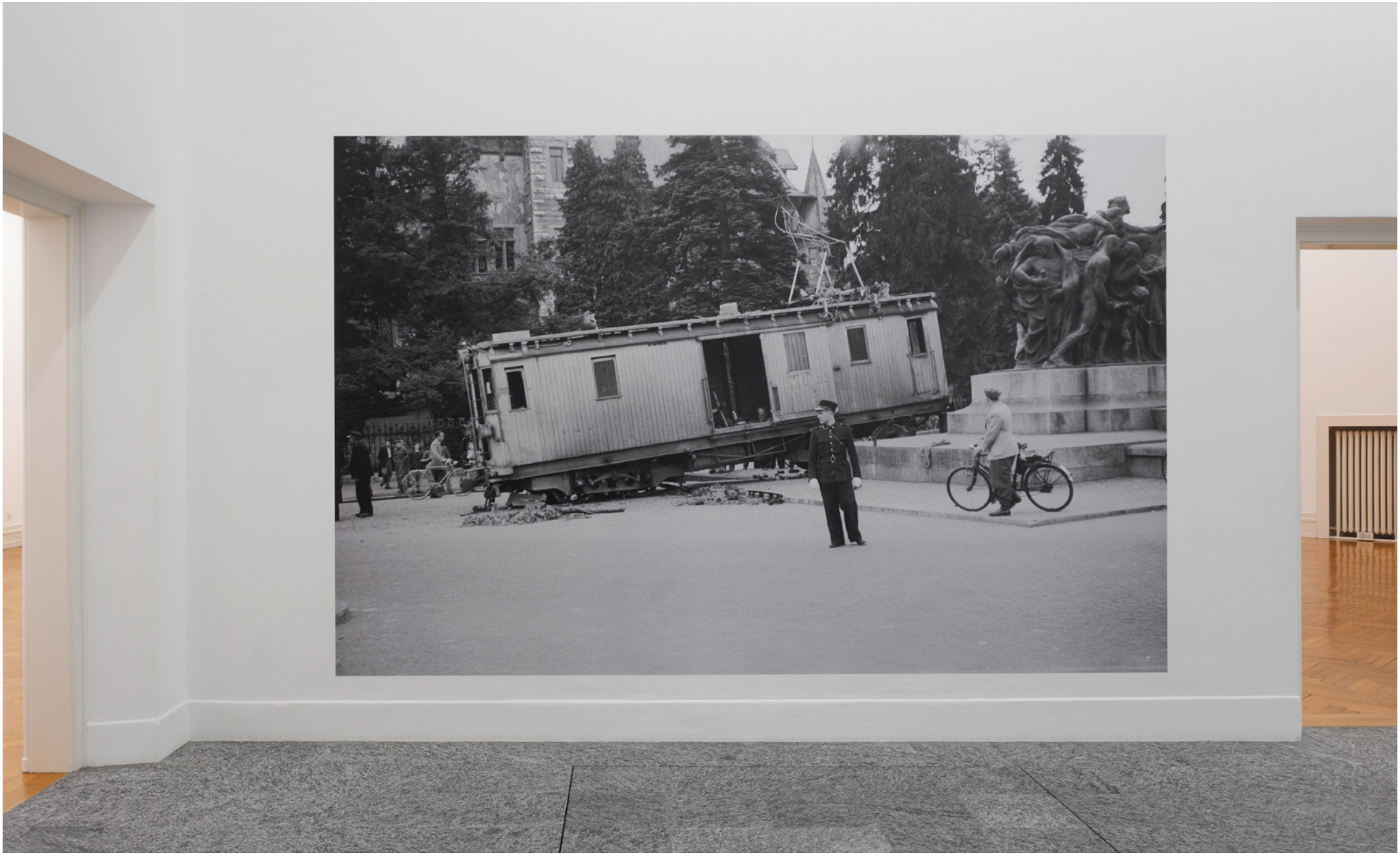
In 1994, in the Sion Museum of Fine Art, he designed an installation made of cardboard that echoed – life-size – the shape of the anti-tank barriers familiarly called "Toblerones" by the Swiss during the Second World War. In 2003, Oliver Mosset presented a two-fold retrospective at the Museum of Fine Art in Lausanne and at the Art Museum St. Gallen.

Olivier Mosset
Born in Bern
09.04.–19.06.2011
Kunsthalle, Bern

↗ View full documentation



Olivier Mosset
Born in Bern
09.04.–19.06.2011
Kunsthalle, Bern



Olivier Mosset
Born in Bern
09.04.–19.06.2011
Kunsthalle, Bern



Olivier Mosset
Born in Bern
09.04.–19.06.2011
Kunsthalle, Bern



Cady Noland and Olivier Mosset have had a considerable influence on other artists - of both their own and of a younger generation. References to everyday life are loosely woven into their works; the two have no problems in dealing with the 'real' world. Mosset, for instance, refers to long trips on his Harley-Davidson as being an important experience for his painting. There are parallels in the artistic vocabularies of the two. Their works are precise, direct and reduced to the bare essentials. Noland and Mosset are joining forces for the first time, putting on a double exhibition in the migros museum.

Curated by Rein Wolfs

Olivier Mosset
MONO
28.08.–24.10.1999
Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zurich

↗ View full documentation



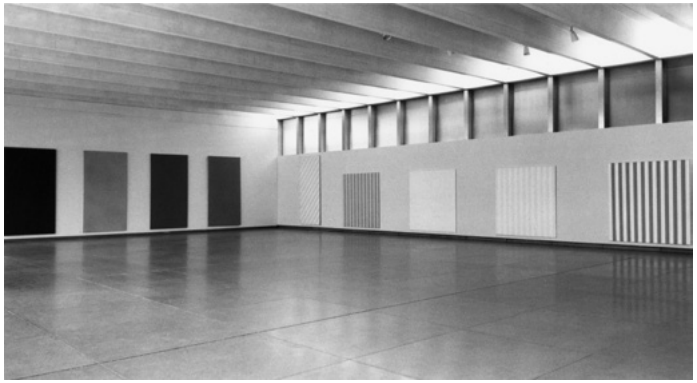
Olivier Mosset
MONO
28.08.–24.10.1999
Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zurich



Olivier Mosset
MONO
28.08.–24.10.1999
Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zurich



Olivier Mosset
MONO
28.08.–24.10.1999
Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zurich



ARTFORUM Review from 1986:

By lucky happenstance this retrospective of Olivier Mosser's work from 1965 to 1985 coincided with a group show at the Centre d'art contemporain, Geneva, in which Mosset presented some of his most recent paintings. These latest works indicate a shift away from the flat monochromatic painting that Mosser has practiced rigorously since 1977, the year of his move from Paris to New York, and toward a more painterly abstraction. If we look at Masset's work as a whole, this most recent development can be seen less as a continuation of his previous painting than as a new interest in a new motif. Yet in this work, too, Mosser is striving for an image that insists on its exclusive identity as painting, which entails confronting the definition of art as the conscious use of skill and creative imagination by reducing painting to its essential prerequisites. Mosser's work is in this sense an example of conceptual art, which constantly poses questions about the necessity of the discrete object as the site of the idea.

Among the earliest works in the retrospective were four small rectangular canvases from 1962–65. Each presents a black A or a black dot on a white ground, or, more precisely, an A-shaped construction or a disc shape; for in calling these figures "A" or "dot" we fall captive to the convention of seeing the image as a representation. Mosset is playing here with an abstract construct whose nonobjectivity is beyond question, but whose semiotic meaning slyly suggests a possible reality of the motif beyond the image qua image. After these ambiguous early experiments Mosset began to search for an image that would preclude all speculation about an objective component and would thus center attention exclusively on the image as painting. The results of this search were over 200 paintings, completed between 1966 and 1971, each consisting of an identical black ring with an arc width of 2 5/8 inches placed at the center of a square white picture plane. Mosset thereby achieved a deliberate neutrality that points to the self-evident quality of the individual painting, and that alone; paradoxically, the discreteness of each painting is heightened through the persistent reiteration of the motif.

It was with these "circle paintings" that Mosser introduced himself to the public in Paris at the end of the '60s as a member of the radical artists' group BMPT, an acronym for (Daniel) Buren, Mosset, (Michel) Parmentier, and (Niele) Toroni. This association was to prove somewhat problematic in light of Mosser's real concern, for the circle paintings were in danger of being misconstrued as a logo, and painting as an esthetic representation. Mosset resolved this dilemma by borrowing the stripe pattern used by his colleague Buren, not in the sense of merely copying it but as an object lesson. Mosser's fascination with the sensual fluctuations between figure and ground led to more qualitative gradations of color, until the "stripe paintings" approached monochrome, as one color all but merged into another. Yet I believe that Mosser did not arrive at painting in monochrome by following a logical progression or by becoming more consistently reductionist, but, rather, that he consciously chose this as an absolutely unequivocal motif that would make it possible for him to paint the rejection of imagery as image. It has allowed him to evoke in ever new ways that plane of color on the surface of the canvas that we habitually call the "picture." In short, Mosser's paintings, even when they depict nothing, do not in their emptiness mean or suggest nothingness but rather always and only suggest painting itself.

—Max Wechsler

Translated from the German by Leslie Strickland.



Olivier Mosset
08.12.–16.03.1986
Aargauer Kunsthaus, Aarau

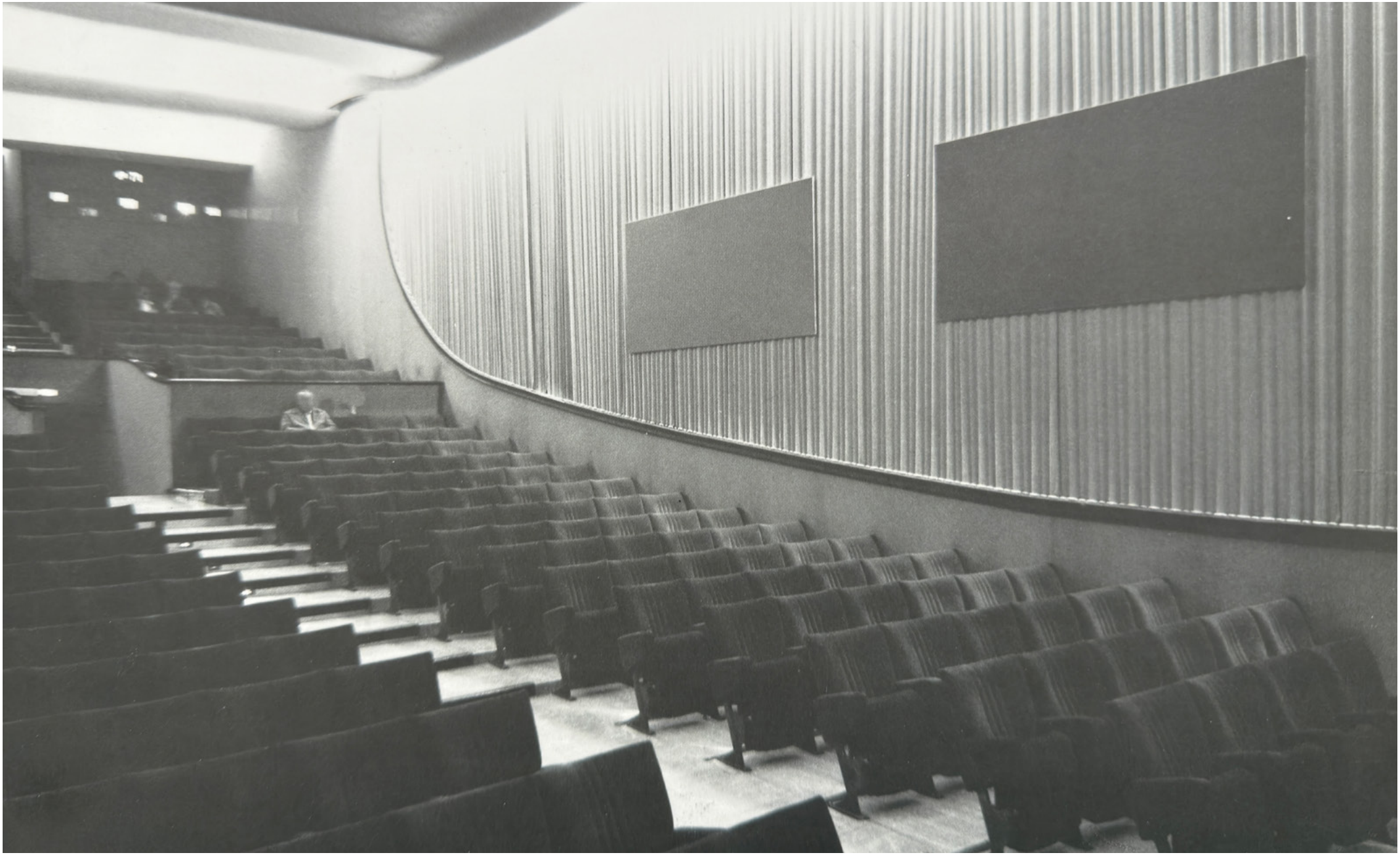


Olivier Mosset
08.12.–16.03.1986
Aargauer Kunsthaus, Aarau



Olivier Mosset
2 peintures
1983
Cinéma Rex, Neuchâtel

↗ View full documentation



Olivier Mosset
2 peintures
1983
Cinéma Rex, Neuchâtel

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