

Rumours & Legends

A new presentation of the museum's collection

15 March – 14 July 2019

Press preview: Thursday 14 March 11 am – 2 pm

Official opening: Thursday 14 March 6 pm – 10 pm

In parallel with the Thomas Houseago exhibition and the arrival of major new donations, the new presentation of the Musée d'Art Moderne collection explores narrative as a visual rather than a literary form of expression. Like a story revealed through history and time *Rumours and Legends* presents art faced with its political, social and aesthetic context, but at the same time receptive to the unpredictably personal.

The layout is divided into two large parts. One re-opens a window onto earlier decades of art in France and elsewhere, while the other echoes the present-day scene in international terms.

For starters, four sequences comprising large groups of works invite the viewer to rediscover artists who played a significant or distinctive role in the movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Over the forty years from the *Everyday Mythologies 1* and *2* exhibitions of 1964 and 1967 to the emergence of individual mythologies in 1972–2000, most of these artists were defended by the Musée d'Art Moderne and shown in these very same spaces. Because of the quantity and historical importance of their work, the Narrative Figuration artists are the core of this new presentation structured around the movement's seminal work, *A Passion in the Desert*, a cycle of 13 pictures painted in 1964 by Gilles Aillaud, Antonio Recalcati and Eduardo Arroyo.

On show with them are sculptures, drawings and documentary material from Étienne-Martin, whose collection has been enriched by a substantial donation; and pictures, engravings and photographs by painter-writer Bernard Dufour – including his manifesto painting *Holger Meins 75*, with its stark representation of the coexistence of the political and the intimate. Further along are tributes to the oeuvres of Annette Messager and Christian Boltanski, both of whom have been championed by the Museum for many years. All these artists are now integral parts of the Museum's identity.

The second part of the presentation brings together a new generation of artists, most of whose works were given their first showings here. These works testify to the Museum's active support for international contemporary art and its decoding of a world in movement. The Internet and the social networks have shaken up the information narrative and the circulation of images, and triggered a dangerous change of scale by giving friendship and privacy a global dimension. A breeding ground for multiple, serial stories, they are determining new narrative modes and speeding up legends to come. Reacting to these turbulent times, many artists are hewing their own singular paths between the individual and the collective, the digital and the organic, in an ongoing exploration of our perception of reality. Many of these works have come to us as donations, in most cases thanks to the generous support of the hardworking Friends of the Museum Society.

The two parts of this historical/contemporary presentation are made up of works which, despite their formal or technical differences, have in common an attempt to portray individuals in relation to their environment, be it personal or collective.



Gilles Aillaud, Eduardo Arroyo, Antonio Recalcati, *A Passion in the Desert*, 1964
© ADAGP, Paris, 2019, Aillaud, Arroyo, Recalcati. Photo: Harold Asencio

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