

## Visitor Information

### Eric Hattan – Five O’Clock Shadow

26<sup>th</sup> February to the 29<sup>th</sup> of May 2023

Eric Hattan (\*1955 in Wettingen, lives in Basel and Paris) is one of Switzerland's most inventive concept artists. His artistic language is chameleon-like, taking place in various media, and has been attracting international attention for many years. In his art, everyday objects and disused building materials are suddenly put to new uses. Unexpected, but productive, contextual shifts are the result. In the historic rooms of the Museum Langmatt, Eric Hattan creates surprising contrasting dialogues between the present and the Belle Époque. Unflinching contrasts disrupt our expectations – not without humour – and relativize the apparent inviolability of the Langmatt, causing the "Grand Old Lady" to visibly come to life.

Eric Hattan has chosen no less than 12 historical rooms where his remarkable rough spatial compositions engage in diverse dialogues with the interior of the museum and the French Impressionist pictures, sometimes more obviously, sometimes more subtly. Even in front of the entrance portal of the historic villa, the astonished public is met by a mysterious concrete structure on a base made of light blue insulating material: the rough foundation of a streetlamp. Seemingly particularly dislocated and uprooted here, positioned in front of the historic listed façade, it can be read as signifying the key thread running through the artist's interventions at the Langmatt: Many of the objects created in recent years seem like oracle-like harbingers of the total renovation of the building – which is more than 120-year-old – planned for 2024-2025. At the same time, the multifaceted tour route through the villa provides an exemplary insight into the artist's multifaceted oeuvre. In addition to the numerous, precisely placed installations and objects, examples of Eric Hattan's video works are also on display. Their theme is the emptying of buildings and spaces.

In the atmospheric library with its dark mahogany parquet, thick carpet and subdued light, the stelae-like *Maxe* – with their ascetic, construction site charm – form an opposing pole and offer a wealth of allusions. Remarkably barren and abandoned, they stand motionless in these unfamiliar surroundings. Interestingly, however, they actually draw our attention to the historical interior: silk wallpaper, armchairs, vases and, of course, the Impressionist artwork collection. In

contrast to a "White Cube" with neutral walls and optimal lighting, this unique encounter of the epochs produces a rare and exciting dialogue. This is recognizable as part of the "DNA" of the Langmatt: the art and craftsmanship of almost 2000 years has always interacted here in a very natural way.

In the Venetian room, a rugged structure with clothes wildly thrown over it is reminiscent of the elegant wardrobe of the Brown family. In the same breath, it is a tongue-in-cheek reference to the museum's regular lack of cloakroom space. Upstairs, quotidian potatoes have spread out across the floor of the elegant historic bathroom. The relationship between transience and eternity is a central theme, especially in the Langmatt. In the dining room, potatoes are hiding in orange socks, posing questions about standards of value: Who determines the value of art? And when does this actually become recognizable? When Sidney and Jenny Brown were accumulating their collection of French Impressionists – some acquired as early as 1908 – these pictures were contemporary art, and highly controversial even in the professional world.

Against this background, seen within the Langmatt, Eric Hattan's seemingly rough compositions seem like an elixir of life: the arc of tension between the epochs leads us to reflect on central questions of art and culture. Ultimately, the eras of time seen within the Langmatt lie closer together than one would initially assume.

*Markus Stegmann*

The exhibition will be accompanied by a publication by Hatje Cantz Verlag Berlin with a text by Markus Stegmann and questions and answers with Eric Hattan. The publication contains photographs of all works within the spaces of the Museum Langmatt. Brochure, German/English, 56 pages, 28 illustrations, CHF 19.80 / CHF 13.80 (discounted).

# LANGMATT

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