

ARTFORUM

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Marc Camille Chaimowicz ARTISTS SPACE

This past summer, under the new direction of Stefan Kalmár (formerly at the Kunstverein Munich), the venerable nonprofit Artists Space underwent a significant physical transformation. Calling on architects ifAU & Jesko Fezer in collaboration with common room (Lars Fischer, Todd Rouhe, and Maria Ibañez de Sendadiano), Kalmár—taking into consideration a related site-specific project Michael Asher proposed for the space in 1988—had all interior walls and all existing lighting removed, and the floor sanded down and left unfinished. To establish spatial coordinates while retaining transparency, the architects used floor-to-ceiling wooden posts (like frames without drywall) to make legible the non-gallery areas (entrance, office, bar/bookshop, and study room), and installed a bench in the space where the director's office had previously been.

Having given the institution a new body, Kalmár then revisited its founding year, inviting Marc Camille Chaimowicz to install *Enough Tyranny*, the artist's expansive, floor-based, post-Pop, critique-of-consumer-culture-meets-Paradise-Garage installation, first shown at London's Serpentine Gallery in 1972. The work, which comprises barbed wire, fresh-cut flowers, a desk lamp, a plastic candleholder, Christmas decorations, a fox fur, and two water pools, each with a school of goldfish, among some two hundred other elements, was here retitled *Enough Tyranny Recalled, 1972–2009*, and took up the entire gallery; its sprawling electrical wires, reflective surfaces, and pulsating lights implicated the viewer as yet another constituent formal component. Chaimowicz's design calls to mind the post-Minimalist strategies of his near-contemporaries such as Robert Morris, Dan Flavin, Barry Le Va, and Group Zero, who likewise set out to destabilize personal and public space with reflective surfaces, self-illuminated sculptures that altered phenomenological conditions, floor-based displays, and kinetic light installations that highlighted objects within the space. In this updated version of *Enough Tyranny*, as in its original sister installation *Celebration? Realife* (also 1972), the viewer observes herself in the mirrors placed within the work as a two-dimensional image among the commercial detritus, her own shadow casting her body's form across—and therefore altering—the tonal qualities of other objects in the room. Time is also indeterminate for Chaimowicz, and as I stood alone amid the splay of half-used goods and trimmings, with Roxy Music's self-titled album coming through the speakers, it was not clear whether I had arrived too early or was looking at the tailings of last night's party, if not one that took place thirty-seven years ago.



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When discussing his choice to begin his tenure with an old work by an older artist, Kalmár has rejected the notion of categorization by age or experience, adding that he sought to support the emerging interests of a vital sector of New York's artists. Indeed, although this exhibition marked the first solo presentation of Chaimowicz's work in an American institution, one need only consider the work of Wolfgang Tillmans, Jutta Koether, Scott Lyall, Clegg & Guttman, or Ei Arakawa to recognize the elder artist's influence as formidable.

Across the length of two gallery walls *ENOUGH TYRANNY* appeared in thick letters, hand-drawn in black paint. When Chaimowicz first exhibited this work, the words cast an open-ended reference to British relations with Northern Ireland. In today's context, the particular meaning was less pointed, but in an environment of corporatized New Museums and X-initiatives in which the emphasis feels weighted toward assertions of cultural power rather than the concerns of practicing artists and committed art viewers, this incarnation of Artists Space appears to be taking Chaimowicz's message to heart.

—Caroline Busta



View of "Marc Camille Chaimowicz," 2009.