

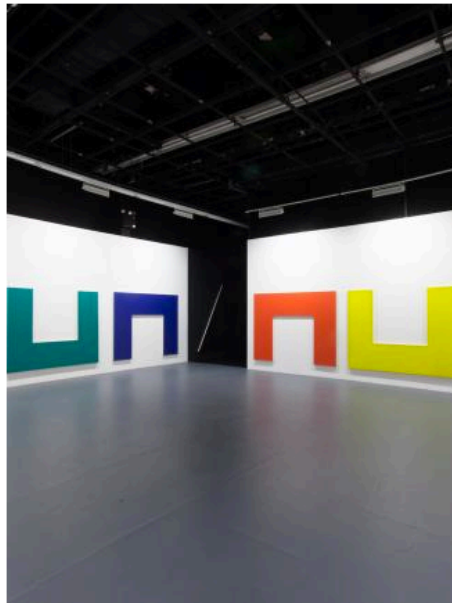
Art in America

November 27, 2013

On the Road Again with Olivier Mosset

by Sarah S. King

Olivier Mosset,
"Exposition de
Groupe," 2013. Photo
Jason Mandella,
courtesy The Kitchen,
New York.



Swiss-born, Tucson-based conceptual artist Olivier Mosset has come to New York this fall to present his latest round of collaborations in two group exhibitions. One part took place at Cultural Services of the French Embassy uptown; the other continues at the Kitchen in Chelsea (through Dec. 20). Co-curated with the Embassy's Sophie Claudel and Thomas Delamarre and with Kitchen director Tim Griffin, the shows, collectively titled "Exposition de groupe" ("group show"), feature a surprising range of works by over

20 contributors and include paintings, motorcycles, film and music.

Known for his conceptually driven art and abstract paintings that took aim at institutional art venues and doctrines, Mosset, 69, began his artistic career in the 1960s as one of the members of the quartet BMPT (Buren, Mosset, Parmentier, Toroni) and subsequently was a founder of the Radical Painting group.

The Embassy installation comprised a series of Mosset's monochrome paintings; customized Harley Davidson and Triumph motorcycles made in collaboration with motorcycle builder "Indian Larry" (Lawrence DeSmedt), artist Vince Szarek and Jerry Schad, who customized some of the bikes; and *T.S.Y.O.W.*, a 2007 video by Amy Granat and Drew Heitzler. Serge Bard's 1968 black-and-white movie, *Fun and Games for Everyone*, is on view at the Kitchen along with 14 new large-scale Mosset canvases whose shapes spell out words directly referencing Duchamp's titling and signatory strategies, as well as his readymades. The Kitchen is also host to a series of music performances selected by Mosset. Performers include Al Foul, Al Perry, Arto Lindsay, Cory Henry, the Cornichons and Airport Seven, among others.

The artist recently talked with *A.i.A.* in an interview about the curatorial premise behind

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the two shows he initiated.

SARAH S. KING How did these two shows and concerts come about?

OLIVIER MOSSET I came up with the various components, but ultimately, it was a collaboration with the curators, the artists, musicians and technicians. My first idea was to include motorcycles. Then I added some of my off-white monochromes, and we included a video by Granat and Heitzler. It's inspired by Jean Genet's funny envisioning of a play based on Goethe's *Werther*, in which he replaced Werther's beloved Charlotte with a motorcycle.

KING One could say that, in the Embassy installation, the shimmering, rough surfaces of the monochromes connected the motorcycles and the video to an open road, conjuring an inward narrative of sorts.

MOSSET Yes, there is that quality, which is why I paint. Of course, you need to have these kinds of excuses to make a painting but then you lose this subjective narrative when you are confronted with the actual work, and it becomes the onlooker's. There are other kinds of references as well—for instance, in the paintings at the Kitchen, there is a Frank Stella type of thing going on and a subtle game with Duchamp in the titling, that is, *TUM/Tum'* and the Mutt signature, in the shapes of the canvases.

KING What prompted you to screen Serge Bard's movie, based on the opening of your first one-person show at the Rive Droite gallery in Paris in 1968, at the Kitchen? Aside from its aesthetic perspective and striking visual effects, and perhaps for a sense of nostalgia, does its inclusion also offer a wry commentary on the obscene commodification taking place in art world today?

MOSSET Some of that, and it's a little more generous than monochrome paintings. It's the first U.S. showing of the movie since 1968. Serge filmed the actual opening—César came and even Dalí passed by—and then he recreated the opening with extras, all older than 50, because at the time 50 was old. Then he mixed the footage up. [Saxophonist and composer] Barney Wilen and [drummer] Sunny Murray made the psychedelic soundtrack. [Cinematographer Henri] Alekan, who worked with Cocteau, did the lighting effects.

KING Were you involved in the production?

MOSSET No, but I was there. Getting back to painting—I think that painting is basically institutional critique. But the institution is not the museum; it's the art, the art system. I played with that in the '60s. Everything was political. I have my own agenda now; if people are interested that's great.

KING Nevertheless, these two shows, reinforced by the movie, hark back to that history and continue its spirit and resistance?

MOSSET Yes, things come from somewhere . . .