

MSU BROAD

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**The Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum at Michigan State University (MSU Broad) Premieres
Director Marc-Olivier Wahler's Inaugural Exhibition,
*THE TRANSPORTED MAN***



East Lansing, MI —The Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum at Michigan State University (MSU Broad) is pleased to announce its debut exhibition by Director Marc-Olivier Wahler. On view April 29 – October 22, 2017, *THE TRANSPORTED MAN* will feature more than 40 renowned and emerging artists whose work relies on the notion of belief.

The exhibition title is inspired by a magic trick depicted in the novel “*The Prestige*,” by Christopher Priest. “*The Transported Man*” exemplifies the three phases of a magic trick wherein a magician appears onstage (the Pledge), disappears through a door (the Turn), and reappears immediately from another door located a few yards away (the Prestige). How can a magic trick help us understand an artwork? To be efficient, a magic trick, like many other illusions, relies on a system of belief as cultivated between the magician and his/her audience. The wider the gap between what the audience sees and what it is asked to believe, the more efficient and spectacular the trick is going to be. A good trick works only if the spectator can navigate between these two poles, between the feeling of witnessing pure magic and the impression of seeing an ordinary scene. If the spectator decides to consider only one of the poles (a simple fact or pure magic), the trick won’t work. The belief they attribute to what they see acts like a cursor in a field implemented not by category but by intensity.

A table, an elephant, a bug zapper, a bar of soap, a mirror, a thunderclap, a cat, a vending machine, and fireflies are some of the objects encountered in *THE TRANSPORTED MAN*. They can be seen and understood as ordinary objects but gain new meaning when more information is revealed and when new interpretations are made possible. The table floats in mid-air (Roman Signer, *Table*, 2009), the elephant performs an impossible trick (Daniel Firman, *Loxodonta*, 2017), when the bug zapper kills a fly, the building’s electricity shuts down (Fernando Ortega, *Untitled (Fly Electrocutor)*, 2003), the soap is the liposuctioned fat of an Italian politician (Gianni Motti, *Mani Pulite*, 2005), the reverse side of the mirror is signed (Marcel Duchamp, *Mirror*, 1964), the thunder is performed by an orchestra (Hannah Rickards, *Thunder*, 2005), the cat is ready for space travel (Werner Reiterer, *Beginnings of Space Travel*, 2002), the vending machine

beams its cans to its far-away twin (Leopold Kessler, *Sodamachine a and b*, 2006), and fireflies and crickets flash and chirp in synchronicity (Robin Meier, *Synchronicity*, 2015). THE TRANSPORTED MAN will also feature a film by Georges Méliès from 1904 believed to have been lost. Titled *Match de Prestidigitation (A Wager Between Two Magicians)*, this film has not been seen in over 100 years and features Méliès himself as the protagonist. The film was recently recovered at the National Film Archive in Prague, arriving as part of an anonymous gift that included a reel with three films glued together. A complete checklist can be found at the end of this release.

The spectator wonders what happens in the ineffable moment when the magician disappears and reappears at the other side of the stage in the same way a viewer might wonder what happens when pigments on canvas reappear as a painting. How can an old magic trick such as “The Transported Man” help us understand the way an object can be transported between various states of being while gaining the power of embodying multiple identities?

“THE TRANSPORTED MAN examines the power of interpretation and the systems of belief at stake when facing objects. How can they be transported between various states without being stuck in given categories?” said Marc-Olivier Wahler, Director of the MSU Broad and curator of THE TRANSPORTED MAN. “The exhibition also presents a fantastic opportunity to collaborate across disciplines with the resources of Michigan State University to provide alternate access points to contemporary art. I believe this interdisciplinary approach is the cornerstone of how we think about the future of art museums.”

The opening of THE TRANSPORTED MAN will coincide with the introduction of several new annual exhibition programs:

- **Field Station** is an annual cycle of six projects with a particular focus on new terrain, whether new work or evidence of a new direction in the artist’s practice. The series stresses the importance of research by offering a space for artists to further develop ideas that may be in the early stages of conception. The first installment in this series will feature new works by Alicja Kwade.
- **Projection Gallery** is a monthly rotating space presenting annually curated programs of video art. The first series is titled *Digital Bodies*, and will feature videos by artists that use and manipulate digital images, signs, and systems to explore how technology has ostensibly become an extension of the body. The MSU Broad is proud to launch this program with a video work by Cécile B. Evans.
- **Passage Gallery**, in the museum’s west entrance, will house an immersive installation that will take over the entire corridor by TOILETPAPER, the photo magazine founded by Maurizio Cattelan and Pierpaolo Ferrari.
- **Ledge Gallery**, in the Alan and Rebecca Ross Education Wing, will display small-scale work. The inaugural project will feature Michael Ross, known for collecting little scraps of metal, fabric, and paper to assemble tiny, complex sculptures.
- **Collection Gallery** is devoted to excavating, researching, and displaying the MSU Broad’s growing collection year-round. The collection spans artistic production from Ancient Greece and Rome and pre-Columbian cultures to Medieval and Renaissance to Modern and Contemporary. The first exhibition in this space will be *The Transported Collection*, contributing to the conversation about belief and exploring the conventions of taste.

- **Vitrine Gallery** is a non-traditional display niche composed of shelves and glass. The first exhibition will be a collection of hand-painted stamps from fictitious states by American watercolorist, Donald Evans.
- **The Vault** is a monthly rotating exhibition in our glassed-in collection storage space, featuring a single work from the collection chosen by Michigan State University students.

THE TRANSPORTED MAN will be the biggest exhibition on view since the museum's opening in 2012. In preparation for an exhibition of this scale, the museum will close to the public from April 24-28, with a monumental re-opening on April 29 of *THE TRANSPORTED MAN*. *THE TRANSPORTED MAN* is organized by the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum at MSU and curated by Marc-Olivier Wahler, Director. Support for this exhibition is provided by the MSU Federal Credit Union; the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetica; Audemars Piguet; the Eli and Edythe Broad Endowed Exhibition Fund; and the MSU Broad's general exhibitions fund.

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NOTES TO THE EDITOR:

Marc-Olivier Wahler is the director of the MSU Broad (July 2016). An internationally recognized curator, scholar, and museum professional, Wahler brings more than 20 years of experience to the MSU Broad. Throughout his career, Wahler has focused on contemporary art as a platform for building and strengthening communities, catalyzing interdisciplinary collaboration and exploration, and questioning the ways we currently speak about art. Previously Director and Chief Curator at Palais de Tokyo in Paris, he brought together artists with experts from a wide array of disciplines. Gianni Motti's collaborated with the Large Hadron Collider engineers at CERN, Geneva, Robin Meier's worked with the Pasteur Institute, Paris, and Micol Assael with the Moscow Power Institute. At the Swiss Institute in New York, where he served as Director from 2000-2006, Wahler curated exhibitions with artists including Urs Fischer, Jim Shaw, Zoe Leonard, Steven Parrino, and Jutta Koether, and established initiatives to encourage collaboration amongst artists and leaders in fields as disparate as urban planning, chemistry, custom officers, motorbike engineering, and sociology. Wahler has also served as director and co-founder of CAN, the Centre d'art Neuchâtel, Switzerland (1995-2000) and Artistic Advisor for De Appel Arts Center, Amsterdam (2015-2016). He currently serves as Founding Director of the Chalet Society in Paris and artistic advisor of CI Contemporary Istanbul. During the last twenty years, Marc-Olivier Wahler has organized over 400 exhibitions – principally as museum director / chief curator, but also as a free-lance curator. In 2011, he was decorated as a Chevalier in the French Republic's Order of Arts and Letters. In 2013, Wahler was awarded the Swiss Grand Award for Art / Prix Meret Oppenheim Prize, Switzerland's highest cultural award in the contemporary arts.

The Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum opened on November 10, 2012 on the Michigan State University campus. The dynamic 46,000-square-foot museum serves as both a teaching laboratory and a cultural gateway for East Lansing and the region. The MSU Broad conducts a program of original and traveling exhibitions, initiatives with living artists, performances, and educational offerings for students, faculty, and the community make the museum a center for questioning and understanding the modern world. With a collection containing 7,500 objects,

The MSU Broad is uniquely able to contextualize the wide range of contemporary art practices within a firm historical context.

Michigan State University has been working to advance the common good in uncommon ways for more than 150 years. One of the top research universities in the world, MSU focuses its vast resources on creating solutions to some of the world's most pressing challenges, while providing life-changing opportunities to a diverse and inclusive academic community through more than 200 programs of study in 17 degree-granting colleges.

Image credit: Piero Manzoni, Base Magica – Scultura vivente, 1961, courtesy of Fondazione Piero Manzoni.

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