

PRESS RELEASE

FROM 07.07 TO 09.09.2016

THE FREE DESIGN

A PROPOSAL BY DENIS PERNET - HARD HAT, GENEVA

WITH WORKS BY GERALDO DE BARROS, FRANCIS BAUDEVIN, ALIGHIERO BOETTI, GINA FOLLY, VIDYA GASTALDON, CHARLOTTE HERZIG, FABIAN MARTI AND BAKER WARDLAW

24, RUE DU VIEUX-BILLARD

OPENING ON 07.07.2016 – 17H

Art Bärtschi & Cie is pleased to announce the opening of *The Free Design*, an exhibition conceived by Denis Pernet, independent curator and curator in Hard Hat (Geneva).

Under a title borrowed from the name of an American music group from the 1960s and 1970s, *The Free Design* proposes a reflection on the freedom and uses of art. The exhibition presents historical works by artists such as Geraldo de Barros (Chavantes, 1923 - São Paulo, 1998) and Alighiero Boetti (Turin, 1940 - Rome, 1994) as well as recent productions by artists Francis Baudevin (*1964, lives and works in Lausanne), Gina Folly (*1983, lives and works in Basel and Berlin), Vidya Gastaldon (*1974, lives and works in Geneva and Grange Neuve), Charlotte Herzig (*1983, lives and works between Berlin and Switzerland), Fabian Marti (*1979, lives and works between Los Angeles and Zurich) and Baker Wardlaw (*1984, lives and works in Lausanne).

The Free Design questions the relationship to design, emotions, improvisation, everyday objects, wellness culture and utopia. A plexiglass fountain -*Youth* (Live) (2015) by Gina Folly, a replica of a coconut seller's stand, stands next to photographic compositions made by overprinting in 1949 by Geraldo de Barros, who practised painting and furniture design. The utopia of the songs of the group The Free Design seems to emerge as a nostalgia encoded in Fabian Marti's photogram and ceramics. The freedom of the contrapuntal composition of the melodies is evoked in Vidya Gastaldon's paintings on prints and the posters of the Montreux Jazz Festival that Francis Baudevin designed for the 2011 edition and took up again in 2016 by reframing the motif. The freedom of thematic treatment, inherited from the *free jazz* practised by the father of the two brothers and two sisters who make up the American group, is evident in Charlotte Herzig's painting *Rain Gum* (2016), from the series *La professionnalisation des sentiments* (*feelings at work*). Baker Wardlaw's mural structures, as well as his printed canvas, reflect the methods of manufacture and design practices. Alighiero Boetti's linen embroidery *Segno e disegno* (1979), with its title and spiral letters, recalls the magical power of the combination of craftsmanship and artistic invention.

The text of the exhibition commissioned by the curator consists of a long interview given in 2012 to *Psychedelic Baby Music Magazine* by Sandra Dedrick, one of the members of the siblings who compose The Free Design. The interview reveals the emergence of a family practice of music and its revelation through the advanced sound recording techniques practiced in the late 1960s in New York by sound engineer Phil Ramone for Enoch Light's Projet 3 label. The precision of the melodies, lyrics and sound recording transcends the nursery rhyme and allows The Free Design to create songs that comment on the state of society (*Make The Madness Stop*) or offer an elegy in homage to their cousin killed in Vietnam.