

The Way Things Do

Press Kit
30.6–1.10.17

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Press Release

The Way Things Do

30 June – 1 October 2017

Curated by Serafín Álvarez and Martina Millà

Opening: 29 June 2017 at 7 p.m.

The Fundació Joan Miró presents *The Way Things Do*

The exhibition revisits the film by Fischli and Weiss titled *The Way Things Go* on the occasion of its thirtieth anniversary and places it in the hands of three artists born around the time it was produced, proposing an exercise around the notions of reception and perspective.

Curated by Serafín Álvarez and Martina Millà, *The Way Things Do* includes a screening of the original film and three new productions by four artists who provide their reinterpretations focusing on the role of the object: Cécile B. Evans, Daniel Jacoby & Yu Araki (who work in collaboration), and Serafín Álvarez.

The project suggests both a reflection on the relationships that artists born in the 1980s have with the landmarks of previous generations and about how they reconstruct them in their own productions.

The exhibition, which has been organized with support from Hangar, BAR Project, Arts Council Tokyo, Jan van Eyck Academie and Pro Helvetia, will be open to the public at the Fundació Joan Miró until 1 October 2017.

The Way Things Go (1985-87) is a film by the Swiss artists Peter Fischli and David Weiss that documents a long chain reaction in which objects and substances interact with each other inside a warehouse. It is also one of the most striking and influential works of art to have been produced in the late twentieth century. Highly appreciated by the general public and praised within the art world, the piece was one of the most popular works at Documenta 8, held in Kassel in 1987. Appearing as chaotic but meticulously choreographed, the video constitutes an ironic response to the artistic context and the pictorial practices of the eighties, while also proposing reflections about the dualities of mechanism and art or of determinism and freedom, among others.

To celebrate the film's thirtieth anniversary, the Fundació Joan Miró revisits this landmark of contemporary visual culture with the exhibition ***The Way Things Do***. Curated by the artist Serafín Álvarez and the Fundació's programming and projects director Martina Millà, the show includes a continuous screening of the original film, *The Way Things Go*, and presents new productions by three young artists who provide their reinterpretations of the piece: Serafín Álvarez (1985, Spain), Cécile B. Evans (1983, US/Belgium) and Daniel Jacoby (1985, Peru) & Yu Araki (1985, Japan).

First of all, the exhibition considers *The Way Things Go* from an objectual perspective. The curators started off by analysing the connections between the different objects used in the film, and especially the independence with which these objects appear to establish those relationships. Without adhering to any particular movement, the theoretical context of the exhibition considers the different approaches to the notion of the object, recently articulated in opposition to the anthropocentric paradigm. Accordingly, ***The Way Things Do*** becomes an exhibition where the protagonists are the objects – objects understood in a broad, non-hierarchical sense, according to Serafín Álvarez. These objects are material and immaterial, human and non-human: action figures, jockeys, screens, robots, images, events, emotions, sounds, subtitles. For the curator, 'examining these objects from the perspective of contemporary art allows us to see how a term as widespread and ordinary as "object" is in fact infinitely complex and inexhaustible.'

This reconsideration of *The Way Things Go* is articulated in three installations by artists in their thirties, born around the time when Fischli and Weiss produced their legendary film, and belonging to a generation that is marked by rapidly changing technology and the rise of digital culture. According to Martina Millà, ***The Way Thing Do*** is implicitly 'an invitation to wander through the realm of reception as well as a trigger for memories that many visitors may have of the 1980s while also focusing on the relationships that the artists born in that decade may have with eighties' art.' With a specific chronological point of departure and a series of works that represent our current times, the exhibition can also be viewed, to quote the curator, as 'an almost phenomenological itinerary enabling us to reflect on the last few decades and on how we take stock and reconstruct bygone times according to our own biographies.'

Daniel Jacoby and Yu Araki occupy the first exhibition space with *Mountain Plain Mountain*, a joint project created with support from Arts Council Tokyo, Hangar and the Jan van Eyck Academie, and which stemmed from their interest in a race track located in the city of Obihiro, in northern Japan. This venue is the last in the world where *Ban'ei* competitions are still held, a kind of traditional Japanese race in which a jockey leads a draft horse pulling an iron sled through an obstacle course. The fact is that, aside from being an emblematic location for this sport, in 2002 the Obihiro race track hosted the Demeter International Art Exhibition, an event that

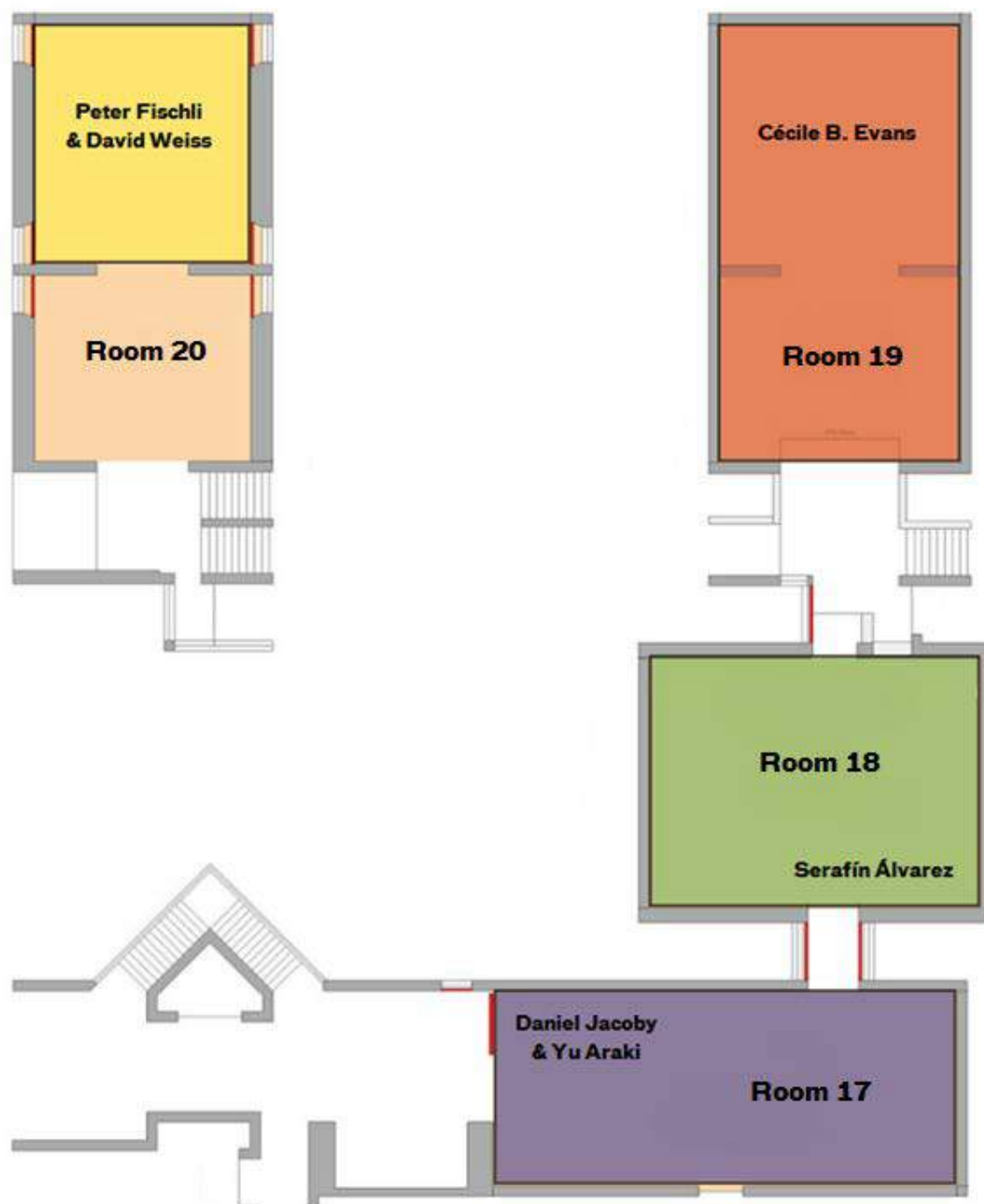
brought together artists from around the world with leading figures in Japanese art, such as Yoko Ono, Shigeaki Iwai and Tadashi Kawamata. Jacoby and Araki researched the network behind the scenes of this sport, in other words, everything that happens behind the races themselves, such as the relationships between the different actors involved (jockeys, horses, trainers, the audience) or an analysis of the resulting statistical data. The outcome is an experimental video produced primarily with the images obtained using TV broadcasting techniques and a system of multiple compact cameras installed in the sleds.

Serafín Álvarez's installation focuses on material objects related to science fiction and fantasy narratives in contemporary media such as film and video games. Álvarez presents a variety of pieces, some of which were produced with support from Hangar. One of these, placed in the middle of the room, is *One Step Closer to the Finest Starry Sky There Is*, a work that explores the ways fans relate to their favourite fictional worlds from an explicitly materialistic perspective: collecting, cosplay – a Japanese subculture that involves dressing up like a manga, anime, or video game character – homemade film props and objects, among others. The result is a large-scale sculpture inspired by a video game, *Katamari Damacy*, with a large number of tangible objects of varying sizes assembled into a composite form.

Next, the work of Cécile B. Evans examines the influence of new technologies in our ways of feeling, relating to one another and managing our emotions. The pieces she produced for this exhibition revolve around one of the artist's former works, shown at Tate Liverpool in 2016. It consisted of a theatre piece played by three robots, a water fountain and three pole dancers, which reacted to a series of images shown on a system of twenty-seven screens. The artist's aim is to succeed in playing out a video in a physical space. Now, in *Leaks*, Evans presents an audiovisual installation that includes a video recording of that theatre piece, a game of mirrors that brings the circle of resonances to a close while delving into the relationship between physical and digital objects in motion.

All three installations lead the visitor to the last room, where the original film by Peter Fischli and David Weiss is screened continuously, with the support of Pro Helvetia. According to Martina Millà, 'although the piece is the chronological starting point for the show, the exhibition itinerary places the screening at the end, like an encounter with a memory - distant for some and almost ghost-like for others - which acquires new meaning when viewed from the present.' ***The Way Things Do*** will be open to the public in the Fundació Joan Miró's temporary spaces from 30 June through 1 October 2017.

Exhibition Floor Plan



Artists and Projects

Daniel Jacoby and Yu Araki

At the beginning of Yu Araki and Daniel Jacoby's film *Mountain Plain Mountain*, an elderly man speaks to the camera, describing how it takes a very strong force to overcome two mountains pulling a heavy burden. At this point, the viewer doesn't know whether the man is speaking in a literal or metaphorical sense. This ambiguity between abstraction and figuration continues throughout most of the film, in which a succession of images gradually reveals the Obihiro race track, in northern Japan, and a unique, unusual variety of horse race that is still practiced there today. It is traditional Ban'ei racing, where ten huge draft horses pull heavy iron sleighs, advancing slowly in a straight line across an obstacle course full of hills, in a competition of strength and strategy. According to the curator Serafin Álvarez, everything surrounding this sport can be viewed as an ecosystem with its own interconnected elements, like a *The Way Things Go* in which the items that interact with each other are not only physical objects, but also abstract or symbolic artefacts, people, data, animals and contexts.

Aside from its being an iconic setting for this anachronistic sport, it just so happens that in 2002 the Obihiro pavilion was the venue for the Demeter International Art Exhibition, an event that brought together artists from around the world with leading figures in Japanese art, such as Yoko Ono, Shigeaki Iwai and Tadashi Kawamata. Drawn to all of this, Jacoby and Araki travelled to Obihiro to research this particular sport, which they then used as a basis for an experimental video using TV broadcasting techniques and a system of multiple compact cameras installed on the sleds and the horses. Last of all, the artists built a mechanical system which allowed them to move the screen showing the video automatically around the entire room in a programmed choreography. The project was completed with support from Arts Council Tokyo, the Jan van Eyck Academie and Hangar.



Daniel Jacoby & Yu Araki
Mountain Plain Mountain. Still
Courtesy of the artists. 2017



Daniel Jacoby & Yu Araki

Mountain Plain Mountain, 2017

Single-channel video projection with
automated screen transporter
5 x 2 x 14, 5 m. 25 minutes

Screen transporter by Benoît
Duchesne

Automation by Miguel Ángel
de Heras/Hangar.org

Courtesy of the artists



The work of **Daniel Jacoby** (1985, Lima), arising from an interest in the unexplainable, often focuses on real or fictional characters that he approaches with a sense of estrangement. In some of his films and installations, seemingly unconnected elements appear to coexist naturally within a given time frame. In others, a group of words, images or sounds acquires meaning through repetition, in an attempt to invent a new vocabulary. Daniel Jacoby graduated in Fine Arts from the University of Barcelona before attending the Städelschule in Frankfurt as a pupil to Simon Starling and Peter Fischli himself. He has recently shown at CRAC Alsace (Altkirch), Eye Film Institute (Amsterdam), The Banff Centre (Alberta), Kunsthal Charlottenborg (Copenhagen), Palais de Tokyo (Paris), Kunstverein Harburger Bahnhof (Hamburg), 1646 (The Hague), Trafó (Budapest) and the 11th Cuenca Biennial (Ecuador). His films have been screened at a large number of festivals, such as 25FPS (Zagreb), Bienal de la Imagen en Movimiento (Buenos Aires), Videobrasil (São Paulo), MIEFF (Moscow), Go Short (Nijmegen), Sheffield Fringe (UK) and Les Recontres Internationales (Paris). His film *Jagata* was the winner of the Lima Independent International Film Festival (Peru) in 2016.

Yu Araki (1985, Yamagata City) is an artist, filmmaker and photographer who describes his practice as a form of 'cultural espionage.' He works from a variety of international locations, examining the ways in which different cultural, socio-political and geographical contexts shape his productions. Araki approaches each new project with careful consideration of both the place and the space, and often allows the environment and the available materials to determine the production. Araki graduated in Fine Arts from Washington University in 2007 and continued his education with a Master's Degree in Film and New Media Studies at Tokyo University of the Arts in 2010. His films have been screened at international festivals such as NIFF (Thailand), BFI (London), The Weight of Mountains (Iceland), International Short Film Festival Oberhausen (Germany), Dong Fang (Italy) and MIEFF (Russia). He has recently shown at the Okoyama Art Summit (Okayama, Japan), the Yokohama Museum of Art (Yokohama, Japan), The Benaki Museum (Athens, Greece), JIKKA and The Container (Tokyo, Japan), ZKM (Karlsruhe, Germany), CAST (Tasmania, Australia), Tate Modern (London), no.w.here (London), Alternative Space LOOP (Seoul, South Korea) and Para/Site Art Space (Hong Kong).

Serafín Álvarez

Based on an exploration of the objectual character of *The Way Things Go* and extending it towards his own interests from an explicitly materialistic perspective, Serafín Álvarez approaches the relationships that certain fans develop with their favourite fictional worlds. Focusing on the science fiction genre and on media such as animation, video games and film, Álvarez uses several high-profile fictional references: *Star Wars*, *The Lord of the Rings*, *Superman*, *Star Trek*, *Pokémon* and *Dragon Ball*. Physical artefacts such as action figures, mugs, posters, T-shirts, badges, key rings and costumes are seen by the artist as a bridge between the diegetic world of screens and the tactile experiences of the off-screen audience. Álvarez uses video installation and sculpture to explore this subject through collectors' practices, while also analysing the problematic relationship between the industry and fans that is apparent in the process of the manufacturing, sale and purchase of merchandising products.

The result is three pieces that interact in the second exhibition space. *One Step Closer to the Finest Starry Sky There Is* is a sphere with roughly a four-meter diameter inspired by the *Katamari Damacy* video game and composed of a mass of thousands of these objects. The sculpture was produced with support from Hangar. Next, in *Creeping Together*, a series of items drawn from popular fiction that connect different realities are transformed into each other. The animation shows the same piece of matter constantly changing its shape and appearance, imitating the metaphorical capacity of the T-1000 in *Terminator 2*. Last of all, *Bleed* features a fully customizable professional video game controller that purports to instantly translate the user's tactile commands with the utmost precision into actions that his or her digital avatar performs at the other side of the screen.



Serafín Álvarez
*One Step Closer to
the Finest Starry Sky
There Is*. 2017
Sculpture made of
various objects
Variable dimensions

Constructed by
Pense/Hangar.org
and with the support
of Hangar.org
Courtesy of the artist

The work of **Serafín Álvarez** (1985, Spain) focuses on the representations that mainstream media offer of subjective experiences mediated by scientific and technological advances, and particularly on changes in the perception of reality. His most recent projects develop heterogeneous considerations of a variety of aspects of science fiction, especially the ways in which the concepts associated with otherness and travelling into the unknown are represented in contemporary audiovisual media such as film and video games. To do so, he implements work methods that replicate creative practices widely applied by certain fans of this genre.

Álvarez holds an undergraduate and a Master's degree from the University of Barcelona, where he is currently in a PhD programme and working on a research project about the transmedia extensions of science fiction. His work has been shown in venues such as CA2M (Móstoles), CAC (Vilnius), Junefirst Gallery (Berlin), MACBA (Barcelona), MUSAC (León), la Panera (Lleida) and Trafó (Budapest). Currently, Serafín Álvarez is collaborating with the Fundació Joan Miró on several projects in the education department: on the one hand, he is leading an experimental sound workshop titled 'Sound Hunter;' in addition, he is involved in the Gravitacions educational mediation programme, a project held in Espai 13 and aimed at students enrolled in high schools of the arts.

Serafín Álvarez

Creeping Together, 2017

Single-channel video

46 minutes 40 seconds

CGI by Produktia

Music by Roc Jiménez de Cisneros

Courtesy of the artist



Serafín Álvarez

Bleed, 2017

Customized video game controller, chrome iron tube

22 x 17 x 75 cm

Courtesy of the artist

Cécile B. Evans

During 16 minutes and 45 seconds, two humanoid robots, a robot dog, a water fountain, three pole dancers and a series of images shown on a system of 27 screens carry out a perfectly orchestrated performance. They are actors of different types who follow commands sent by a server with a precise system of call and response, or cause and effect, which could collapse at any moment, in a way that is not entirely different from the system of interconnected objects and actions in *The Way Things Go*. The piece, titled *Sprung a Leak*, was presented by Cécile B. Evans at Tate Liverpool in 2016, and is the point of departure for the two works now featured in *The Way Things Do*.

While *Sprung a Leak* represented the effect of a multi-screen video in a physical space, *Leaks* is an audiovisual installation that documents that physical theatre piece, creating a game of mirrors that brings the circle to a close by relating it to several sculptural elements. Using editing techniques and audiovisual language, the piece showcased at the Fundació Joan Miró creates an unbroken chain of events that did not exist in the multiple reality of the physical space. With this piece, the artist explores the relationship between physical and digital objects in motion. To quote Serafín Álvarez, *Leaks* 'imagines scenes that run parallel to the reality of the play and pose specific questions arising from the complexity of the plot, to build a constellation of artefacts that act as touchstones.'



Cécile B. Evans

Leaks . 2017

42" video monitors supported
by various objects, HD video, Raspberry Pis,
cables, sculptures (*Test Cards*)
Courtesy of the artist

The work of **Cécile B. Evans** (1983, Cleveland) examines the value of emotion in contemporary society and the growing impact of digital technology on the essence of feeling and being. She was the winner of the Emdash Award (now the Frieze Award) in 2012 and received the Push Your Art prize the following year with a video piece that was shown at the Palais de Tokyo (Paris). She created AGNES, the first digital commission from the Serpentine Galleries, curated by Ben Vickers. Evans has had solo exhibitions at Seventeen Gallery in London (2014), Frieze in New York (with Barbara Seiler, from Zurich) and the Bielefelder Kunstverein (2016). Her work has been included in group shows such as the 20th Biennale of Sydney, The Moscow International Biennale for Young Art, Inhuman (Fridericianum, Kassel), Software, Hard Problem (Cubitt, London), La Voix Humaine (Kunstverein, Munich), Phantom Limbs (Pilar Corrias Gallery, London) and CO-WORKERS (Musée d'Art Moderne, Paris). Her videos have recently been shown at the ICA, the V&A and the BFI in London, as well as the Hamburg Film Festival. Her output has garnered a considerable number of grants and residencies: at the Wysing Arts Centre (UK), the CCA in Andratx (Spain) and the Arts Council England, among others. She has recently been invited to the symposia held by the ICA Salon, the Art Basel Conversations, the Global Art Forum and Rhizome's Seven on Seven.



Cécile B. Evans
Leaks . 2017. Stills.
Courtesy of the artist

Peter Fischli and David Weiss. *The Way Things Go* (1985-87)

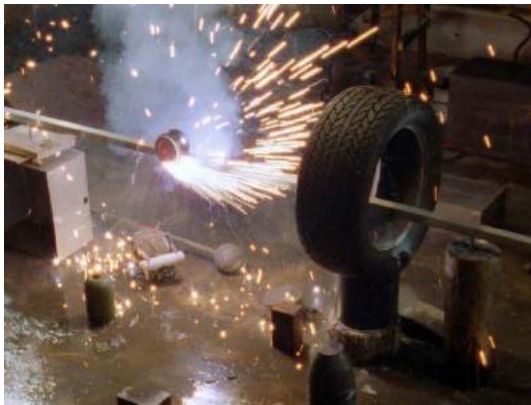
Inside a warehouse, we find an ephemeral, precarious structure made of everyday objects and waste materials. When it starts to move, it sets off a chain reaction lasting almost 30 minutes in which the different materials and chemical substances involved interact with one another following a cause-and-effect logic. Between 1985 and 1987, the artists Peter Fischli and David Weiss designed this piece, recorded it, and turned it into the film titled *Der Lauf der Dinge*, better known by its English translation, *The Way Things Go*. The piece was one of the sensations at Documenta 8 in Kassel, and went down in the history of contemporary art as a landmark of late twentieth-century visual culture. The artists propose reflections about the dualities of mechanism and art, improbability and precision, or determinism and freedom, while making an incisive, ironic commentary about the status of art in the eighties and the return to highly textured painting.

Wheels, ladders, candles, barrels, frames and numerous other objects that refer to everyday life - but also to the pictorial practice of their times – turn, fall, burn, collide. The objects and actions that unfold are the protagonists. These objects are not isolated from each other; they are connected, each patiently waiting to be activated by its preceding element, and, in turn, activating the next in the long journey that is captured by the camera. They relate to each other following their own course, somewhat independently from the human hands that arranged them several times until they behaved as expected, the hands that filmed them, the ones that edited a succession of more than twenty different takes to simulate the final sequence. The Swiss artists also designed *The Way Things Go* as a large-scale Rube Goldberg machine of sorts, a highly complex device made up of a series of artefacts with a linear connection to each other which does nothing other than show a sequence of cause-and-effect reactions with no conclusion. Underneath it all, they also conveyed a scathing response to the art world of their times and to post-conceptual pictorial practices.



Peter Fischli i David Weiss
The Way Things Go
1985-1987
16 mm transferred to video
31 min

How *The Way Things Go* is interpreted thirty years later, both by those who experienced it in its context and those who now perceive it as a milestone, is what the exhibition curated by Álvarez and Millà seeks to address. Placing the film in the hands of artists born in the 1980s allows for addressing the issues of perspective and reception while unfolding new reflections on the multiple meanings arising from the object in the digital context and provides an overview of contemporary art practices. With the support of Pro Helvetia, the original film is screened in the last exhibition room. According to Martina Millà, 'although the piece is the chronological starting point for the show, the exhibition itinerary places the screening at the end, like an encounter with a memory -distant for some and almost ghost-like for others - which acquires new meaning when viewed from the present.'



Peter Fischli i David Weiss

The Way Things Go

1985-1987

16 mm transferred to video

31 min. Stills.

Courtesy of TC Film, Zürich

From 1979 on, **Peter Fischli** (1952) and **David Weiss** (1946-2012) collaborated on a body of work in which they combined, manipulated and transformed their everyday experiences into something new and unexpected. Executed with a variety of media, including clay, polyurethane, photography and video, their production playfully disregards the distinction between high and low art. *The Way Things Go* is one of their best known pieces and exhibits many of the distinguishing features of Fischli and Weiss's work: brilliant humour and a profound vision; analytical attention to detail, a sense of illusion and transformation, and a dynamic exchange of states of order and chaos.

The Swiss duo's work has been shown in leading museums and biennials around the world. The artists represented Switzerland in the 1995 Venice Biennale and were awarded the 2003 Golden Lion for *Questions* (1981-2002), an installation containing more than one thousand existential questions compiled over the course of several years. Fischli and Weiss showed their work at Documenta on two occasions: in 1987, when they presented *The Way Things Go*, and again in 1997. The Walker Art Center held their first retrospective, titled *In a Restless World*, in 1996; the show then travelled to San Francisco, Philadelphia and Boston. Ten years later, the Tate Modern held another retrospective with the title *Flowers and Questions*, which travelled to the Kunsthhaus in Zurich and to the Deichtorhallen in Hamburg. Fischli and Weiss participated in the 2012 Venice Architecture Biennale and in the 2013 Art Biennale, and were featured in exhibitions at MACBA in Barcelona (2001), the Boijmans Van Beuningen Museum in Rotterdam (2004), the Art Institute of Chicago (2011) and the Serpentine Gallery in London (2013). In 2016, the Guggenheim presented *Peter Fischli David Weiss: How to Work Better*, the third major retrospective in their career.

Publication

The Way Things Do includes the publication of a catalogue featuring an introduction by Rosa Maria Malet, curatorial texts by Serafín Álvarez and Martina Millà, an essay by Margarida Mendes and photographs of the works on display.

The publication, in Catalan, Spanish and English, has been produced by the Fundació Joan Miró Publications Department. Hijos de Martín was responsible for its design.

ISBN: 978-84-16411-34-4

56 pages

Presentation of the Publication

20 July at 7 p.m.

With a video presentation by Roc Jiménez de Cisneros

Activities

The Way Things Work: Let's Make an Absurdly Complex Machine



Things move. Some fall, some roll, others jump and yet others push others still. In this workshop we'll connect many things to build a highly complex machine that does very simple things. We'll build a machine that self-destructs. A Rube Goldberg machine, a Heath Robinson machine. A wheel pushes a racket that hits a ball that bounces in a cup that pulls a string from which a bottle is hanging that pushes a button that turns on a light. A choreography of objects in balance, on the verge of falling apart. An introduction to physics using everyday objects in a playful way.

This workshop is being held as part of the exhibition titled ***The Way Things Do***, and involves a group effort to build a machine inspired by the structure of *The Way Things Go*. The outcome will be shown in the last room in the exhibition, next to the screening of the original film by Peter Fischli and David Weiss.

An activity conceived and led by **Serafín Álvarez and Carlos Carbonell**

Wednesday, 12 July and Tuesday, 18 July, 2017, at 11 a.m.
Paid activity. Advance reservation required.

General Information

Hours

Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays except holidays

from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. (April through October)

Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Sundays and public holidays from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Mondays, except public holidays Closed

Access to the Foundation until 30 minutes before closing

Prices

General Admission

Adults: €12

Concessions: Students ages 15-30, visitors over 65: €7

Children under 15 and the unemployed (proof required): Free

Temporary Exhibitions

Adults: €7

Concessions: Students ages 15-30, visitors over 65: €5

Children under 15 and the unemployed (proof required): Free

Annual Pass: €13

Multimedia Guide: €5

Articket BCN

Visit the 6 leading art museums in Barcelona for €30 www.articketbcn.org

Accessibility



Transportation

Bus lines 55 and 150 (Parc de Montjuïc bus)

Montjuïc Funicular (Paral·lel metro station, integrated fare)

We recommend using public transportation to visit the Fundació.

Photographs for the press and a digital kit from our virtual press room are available at www.fmirobcn.org/press and at the link <http://bit.ly/2a6yGJL>.

Follow the activities for **The Way Things Do** on social media with the hashtag **#TheWayThingsDo** and online at www.fmirobcn.org

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