

Country SALTS proudly presents
John M Armleder
Quicksand IV



Opening: 15 June, 11am–5pm
 Exhibition: 16 June 2025 – 15 March 2026
 Venue: Country SALTS, Hof Strickmatt, 4431 Bennwil, Switzerland

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Country SALTS is honoured to present *Quicksand IV* (2025), a newly commissioned large-scale work by legendary Geneva-based artist John M Armleder. This fourth iteration in an ongoing series of installations, begun in the early 2010s, has been conceived specifically for Country SALTS, a former agricultural barn transformed into a multi-purpose art space. *Quicksand IV* features a constellation of objects arranged on industrial shelving—seemingly at random, yet in fact following a score devised by Armleder—and offers an invitation to navigate the artist's cosmos. Part storage unit, part Wunderkammer, part materials library, part artist's museum, this immersive installation is a meditation on (dis)order, an impressive exercise in display, a self-portrait. Like the artist's own life and work, it resists classification.

Following previous iterations in London (Dairy Art Centre, 2013), Geneva (MAM-CO, 2019), and Brussels (KANAL, 2020), *Quicksand IV* marks the latest chapter in Armleder's evolving project. At its core is an immersive architectural environment composed of metal shelving units, on which the artist has assembled myriad objects: remnants of past works, studio materials, collections of found items, plexiglass sheets, books, plastic toys, building materials, lights, vinyl records, decorative artefacts, car parts, and both real and artificial plants. This vibrant accumulation evokes a material memory—a studio inventory in flux—while drawing on the rural context of Bennwil and the unique setting of Country SALTS.

Many of the items exist in a liminal state: neither fully artworks nor definitively archives; not quite a collection, yet more than storage. They are fragments, raw material, the products of obsession—potentialities waiting to be realised. Each object carries part of the artist's story: some are debris from former works, others hint at unrealised pieces; some belong to curated collections, others reflect paths once considered and then abandoned. Suspended between memory and projection, these objects are “in transit”, awaiting activation. In structuring these relationships, Armleder has developed a sort of invisible logic—an underlying score with recurring spatial patterns. Yet the installation ultimately resists fixed meaning. As the artist himself has said: “I may serve a salad, but I don't tell anyone what they should use for dressing.”

The origins of the objects conjure an expansive, tangled network of material worlds: from popular culture to industrial production, DIY to philosophy, modernist design to botanics. Placed on an equal “plane” without hierarchy, they engage in open dialogue across a democratic grid. The work questions systems of classification while also playing with the power—and absurdity—of display. Armleder has long treated exhibitions as “platforms”: structures where things and people may act. *Quicksand IV* exemplifies this ethos—a process (never complete) of attempting to organise reality. But something always resists. The score highlights this restlessness, the uncategorisable nature of life, and the constant reconfiguration of our surroundings. Whenever a readable order emerges, Armleder subverts it—opening space for ambiguity, silence, and disruption. Reflecting on *Quicksand* in 2020, he noted: “... although a system, some form of order, is created, the idea that one can seal a definitive story remains impossible.”



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Armleder's roots trace back to the 1960s when he emerged as a key figure in the international Fluxus network, co-founding ECART, a Geneva-based collective encompassing performance, an exhibition space, and a publishing initiative. Fluxus blurred the boundaries between art and life, aesthetics and the everyday—an ethos deeply embedded in Quicksand IV. The work echoes the Fluxus spirit while connecting to Armleder's long-standing engagement with "ordinary" objects. In the 1980s, he was a pivotal figure in the so-called "commodity sculpture"; in later years, his Furniture Sculptures and immersive, participatory installations extended this into open compositions welcoming the unexpected.

Each time Quicksand is presented, visitors are invited to contribute to it. Armleder actively encourages people to bring objects, transforming the piece into a "collective arrangement"—its form unfixed, its temporality fluid. "In my imagination, the museum doesn't exist. Or rather: the museum is everywhere, all the time," he once remarked. Quicksand IV may well be the ultimate manifestation of this radical, generous, and poetic way of engaging with the world: art as a lens for seeing, connecting, and thinking through the stuff that surrounds us.

Quicksand IV has been realised in collaboration with Ludovic Bourrilly.

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John M Armleder (b. 1948, lives and works in Geneva) is a painter, sculptor, installation artist, performer, archivist, curator, collector, publisher, librarian, gallerist, and more—one of the most unclassifiable figures in contemporary art. A founding member of ECART, the seminal artist-run space that became a Swiss hub for the Fluxus movement, he has shaped the evolving image of abstraction, played a pivotal role in the Neo-Geo movement, and developed a relational, cooperative practice anchored in expansive installations and exhibitions.

Curated by Samuel Leuenberger and Yann Chateigné Tytelman

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