

AUTOKOMANDA
Show 8

Tributary
Michael Ray-Von
Margherita Raso

25 April - 15 June 2026

Michael Ray-Von (b. 1988, California) is an artist based in Basel, Switzerland. His practice is informed by his understanding of the brain's function as a predictive machine, and explores how it creates internal models of the world. He is interested in presenting human space as a feedback system which emerges from and produces history.

Margherita Raso (b. 1991, Italy) is an artist based in Basel, Switzerland. Working in a wide range of media, her practice spans textile, sound, video, photography, drawing, installation, and sculpture, combining processes of craft and industrial production. Through casting and repetition she interrogates how meaning shifts and information travels, and what is lost or born anew in translation. Her work sustains a tension between visibility and concealment, tracing history's perpetual cycles of rupture and revision.

Checklist:

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Margherita Raso - Pivot, 2026. Single channel video, sound, 7'

Margherita Raso - Sidesteps, 2026. Metal shelves, 10.5 x 90 x 42 x cm

Margherita Raso - Borders are red, the rest is blue, green, and yellow, 2026. Globes, plastic wrap, dimensions variable

Margherita Raso - View from the top of the stairs / Donauquelle (from the studio), 2026. Inkjet on paper, 59.3 x 129 cm

Margherita Raso - Panoramic view / Donauquelle (from the studio), 2026. Inkjet on paper, 59.3 x 129 cm

Margherita Raso - Half of a hole, 2026. Aluminum, 50 x 12 x 23 cm

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Michael Ray-Von - Tributary, 2026. Carpet, 376 x 1035 cm

Michael Ray-Von - Antinomy (Novartis Campus through Dan Graham's One Straight Line Crossed by One Curved Line in January), 2026. C-print, 9 x 13 cm

Contribution

I inhale clouds of gnats; whizzing insects that fit beneath my fingernail swarm about every other meter of air near the river by my home. When a few happen to strike the back of my throat, I'm enchanted by the thought that I am wandering near a fertile ecosystem. Water is the unmistakable anchor of life, as we know it. Life at the shape and scale that captures our attention and admiration has always pronounced itself around water. The precursor to human settlement can be witnessed in the crowds of all species that gather, drawn to drink, and to eat the drinkers.

There is nothing more sacred than this mysterious liquid spark which springs from special places, charges through the landscape, crashes on the sand, and washes away the pure and impure alike. The seemingly spontaneous emergence of civilization can be traced to the allure of this substance that is frighteningly everywhere and nowhere at once. The ancient merchant city of Mecca, where long before the birth of Muhammed ﷺ, travelers of all tribes would come to honor their gods, is itself located at the spring of the Zamzam well. But who would it surprise that, in the vast Arabian desert, an oasis would prove an attractive bait for commerce and worship.

Waters are indifferent, offering really nothing, yet we conspire to derive technologies and powers. At the confluence of rivers, some settlements have lingered for millennia, inspired to cultivation and capture, transportation, civil engineering, military strategy, baptism. We have formed societies in relation to the river's invariant vector, such that for generations hence, the social formation is self-evident, as if confirmed by the natural order. In Basel where I live, the Rhein divided the city into two halves: one for the wealthy merchant class and their priests, for the markets and the high houses; the other for labor, for farms, factories, and for the lay people and their homes. And although the factories have closed and the marketsquare is largely ornamental, the tableau stands still.

Though the river is as the foot steps, we take it as the knife cuts. I was not born with a soul, but have been given words to create one. From the river we take the line, to divide the androgyne, and make holy circles and magic squares that frame our precious places of power and interest, so that out of two we conjure an ineffable third. The elusive third that has eclipsed understanding since we came to 1 and 2; the third that reveals itself at times in mystic scribbles and political metamorphoses, that now unsettles the atom and troubles the body, and that I encounter at the back of my throat where the gnats become briefly me.

Michael Ray-Von

APPENDIX:

Despite everything: Plan C (text by Natalija Paunić, introduction to *Pivot* by Margherita Raso, in the context of *Tributary*, a show with Margherita Raso and Michael Ray-Von at Autokomanda, Belgrade)

Our project and exhibition started from an intuitive decision. We felt that, as people, we see something in each other; some facets of our realities matched well together. Thematically, it then became about the present: what is it, that we share, have in common, in this very moment?

Therein comes theory. Margherita Raso, the author of the short film you're about to see, sent us something written by Pier Paolo Pasolini — *Observations on the Long Take*. In it, Pasolini uses the filmed assassination of John F. Kennedy to argue that each long take captures reality as a subjective present, bound to a single embodied point of view. Incomplete. Even when multiplied into many perspectives, reality remains fragmented—the simultaneity of multiple realities produce ambiguity and possibility, but not the truth. Meaning only emerges retrospectively, when these perspectives are ordered—through montage—into a sequence that transforms the unstable present into a coherent past.

This process is not just cinematic but existential: life itself is an endless long take that lacks meaning while unfolding. Only after the “cut”—as in, death,—can events be fixed, related, and thus understood. One can, for example, think of the ending of *The Sopranos* here.

In cinema, a *long take* is a single continuous shot that lasts longer than typical editing rhythms, without cuts. It can be static or moving (tracking, handheld, etc.), but the key is duration and continuity—time unfolds in real time, without interruption. Thinking about this, also makes me think about the legacy of something supposedly dead — Yugoslavia, the longest take of my life. The fact that we are watching this, I called it short film, but in fact a long take, in the house of Yugoslavia's legacy, carries both subjective and general significance. The very purpose of this house is to reconsider history, a task that seems more relevant than ever in trying times, like these — we need not more than empirical evidence that we are indeed in an era of neofascist tendencies in the world.

Speaking with Michael and Margherita, it was in fact them who reminded me of the third way. In the way they questioned who even has the right to speak about Yugoslavia, an entity with more facets than languages and countries of which it consisted, the number of which we still cannot agree on. What does it say about the current state of the world if it is a matter of potential offense to study or question history?

This brought us to the main point in question — the visual representations in our show at Autokomanda, and the shape of what you'll see here. Someone told me once that history is a helix, a spiral that repeats itself. It feels relieving to think of complex things in terms of simple geometry. Think about it: whenever times got hard, art got simple. Cubism and dada developed in parallel with World War One; abstract expressionism during the Second World War. Degenerate art, they called it, things that lacked representation and could then become dangerous in the simplicity they carry. A circle can be anything — a reflection of what you want it to be. So can the square. Facets of simple geometry — a circle — can also reveal the dark side of the moon.

Margherita's video gives us an aerial view of Donauquelle — the supposed representative origin of the river Danube. To think that something so obviously linear, water that travels from the mountain to the sea, can be reduced to a circle baffles me. But it also reminds me that this is not a circle but — a cylinder. Or, as I mentioned already, a spiral: think of the water draining in your sink, spinning in continuity. A cylinder is a circle from the top, a rectangle from the side.

Things you do over and over again in a loop, and things you let go off, in a seemingly non-nonsense, linear way, might in fact look different from different angles, with exactly the same consequence. What you don't notice is time, which we always consider as an imperative force that can only move linearly. Like I just did, a simple human, from one edge of this platform to the other. And maybe you did not even notice. A long take.

Please enjoy Margherita Raso's beautiful eye, or rather that of a Drone and a lens, the tools we use to make sure reality is not only a one-sided thing.



(Image: Luigi Amato)