

# Hommage à Arman

## 20 years since his passing

### An icon remains immortal

In Memory of Arman's passing on October 22, 2005, we would like to celebrate his work and express our gratitude and pleasure for having worked together with him since 1985.

Armand Fernandez, better known as Arman, filled galleries with trash and smashed violins to create beauty. He revolutionized the art world with his unique take on everyday objects. Today, 20 years after his death, his legacy lives on. We look back at his life, his most iconic works and how he continues to inspire new generations of artists.

This year, numerous museums, galleries and art institutions worldwide pay tribute to Arman and we join them with an homage exhibition in our two galleries.

### We wish you a warm welcome



Karlavägen 74 Stockholm

**23 October**

17<sup>00</sup> – 20<sup>00</sup>

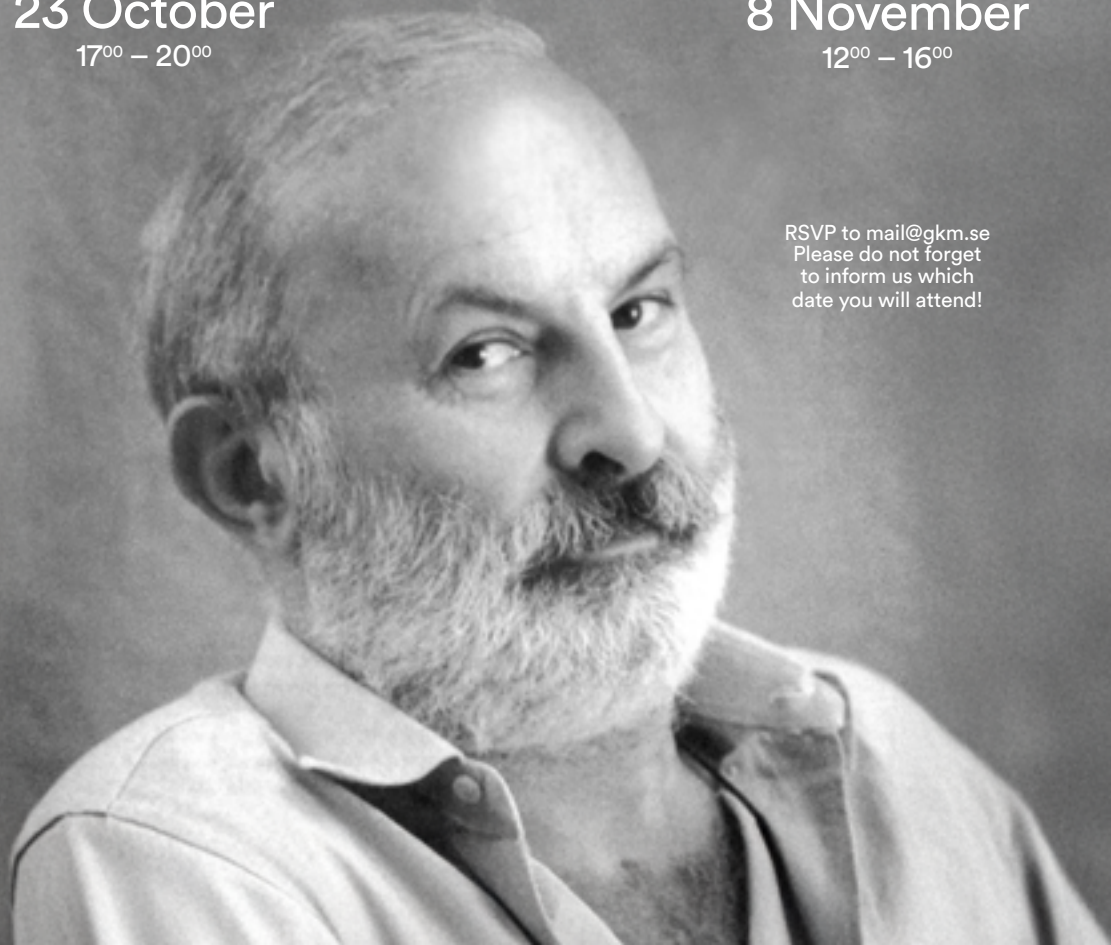
*Thomas, Kalle, Katarina & Ludvig*



Stora Nygatan 30 Malmö

**8 November**

12<sup>00</sup> – 16<sup>00</sup>



RSVP to [mail@gkm.se](mailto:mail@gkm.se)  
Please do not forget  
to inform us which  
date you will attend!

# THE ARTIST AND HIS WORLD

## From Nice to Paris & New York

Armand Pierre Fernandez was born on November 17, 1928 in Nice. His father, an antique dealer and amateur cellist, early planted the seed of what would become central to his son's artistic vision - the relationship with objects. The young Arman showed exceptional talent for drawing and painting and influenced by Vincent van Gogh he began signing his early works with only his first name.

After studies in Nice, Arman moved to Paris to study art history at the École du Louvre. It was here, in the heart of art, that he began formulating the revolutionary ideas that would later manifest in his famous "accumulations" and "colères" (tantrums).

In 1961, Arman made his debut in the United States with his exhibition at the Cordier Warren Gallery. Fascinated with the art scene in New York City Arman took up part-time residency there from his home in Nice and eventually became an America citizen in 1973. Since then he came to share his time between New York and Vence in the south of France.

## A Chance Becomes Destiny

Initially, in the late 1950s, Arman painted abstract motifs. Then he turned his talents to sculpture which in turn led to his breakthrough. After a catalogue entry at the legendary Galerie Iris Clert accidentally omitted the final 'd' from the artist's name, he resolved that from that time on he would sign his works simply 'Arman'.





## Nouveau Réalisme

When Yves Klein met Arman at a judo course in the autumn of 1949 there immediately arose a close affinity between the two men, who subsequently divided the world between them.

Yves assumed responsibility for the spiritual world, Arman for the material. In 1960 they joined with César, Pierre Restany, Niki de Saint Phalle, Jean Tinguely and Rotella, among others, to form the Nouveaux Réalistes. The movement aimed to create "new perceptual approaches to the real" as an alternative to the dominant abstract expressionism. Within the group, Arman occupied a special position - his works represented not a negation of traditional art but a radical redefinition of what art could be.

This was also the year when Arman put together his much noticed show titled "Plein" (Full), a neo-realist exhibition at Galerie Iris Clert. The installation – which was a response to his friend Yves Klein's exhibition "Vide" (Empty) two years earlier – consisted of a monumental heap of junk with trash piled from floor to ceiling in a manner reminiscent of Raymond Hains' collage "Slum Sculptures".

## Everyday Poetry

Arman's revolutionary vision was based on a radical revaluation of the relationship between art and everyday objects. His "accumulations" transformed forks, women's shoes, credit cards and revolvers into art through carefully composed arrangements where each object contributed to a larger visual whole. In parallel, he developed his "colères" - works where he cut apart, burned and sawed objects like violins and motorcycles. This was not destruction but transformation, a way to reveal the inner structure and to give new dimensions to already perfected objects.



# THE COLLABORATION WITH GALLERI GKM

## A Creative Dialogue & Friendship Begins

In 1985, one of Galleri GKM's most significant artistic collaborations began when Siwert Bergström met Arman at FIAC in Paris. It was the beginning of a twenty-year creative dialogue that would shape both parties' development. "There was something in Arman's way of seeing objects that spoke directly to Scandinavian aesthetics" Bergström later reflected. "He understood that beauty could be found in the everyday."

## Exhibitions that Made History

The first Arman exhibition in Malmö, "Trio à cordes", took place in 1987 when Arman staged a "happening" in Malmö Concert Hall. This was followed by several exhibitions in the gallery, at the Stockholm Art Fair, at FIAC in Paris and at the Glyptoteket in Copenhagen.

The highlight of exhibitions was in 1989 when Siwert Bergström together with the curator Marianne Nanne Bråhammar arranged the legendary "happening" at Lund Konsthall.

In 1992 Siwert Bergström took the initiative to donate a sculpture to the city of Malmö, in collaboration with Arman and Skanska. In connection with the unveiling of the sculpture "Cordes Vibrantes" an exhibition was held in the gallery.



# Arman



## International Exposure

Between 1981 and 1995 FIAC in Paris became an annual platform where Galleri GKM presented Arman's works multiple times. These participations established the gallery's position as a serious mediator of French art and opened doors to the international art climate.

## Publications and Editions

A central part of the collaboration was the production of graphic works and sculptures that made Arman's art accessible to a broader public. The most significant publication was "Trio à Cordes", a poetic book that combined the artist's works with his own texts about music. The book captured Arman's deep passion for music and his ability to translate sound into visual form.

About our Publications and Editions, please visit our website by scanning the QR code.



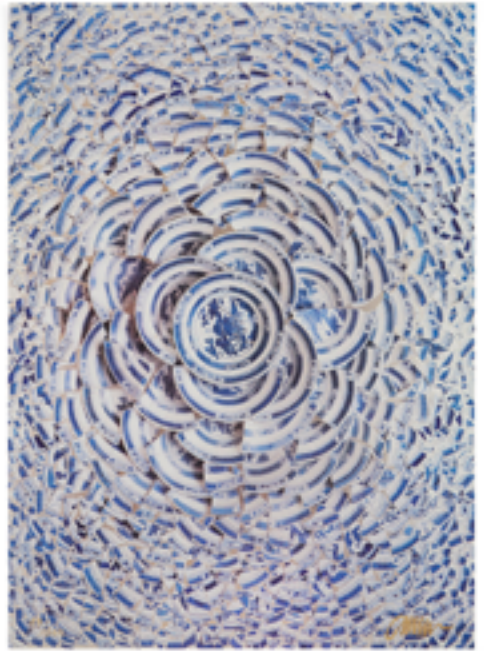
# THE ARTWORKS

## Transformation of Everyday Objects

In Arman's "accumulations," a fundamental transformation of our relationship to the material took place. By collecting hundreds of identical objects, he created works that were both minimalistic and overwhelming. Each individual paint tube or women's shoe lost its individuality but gained a new collective identity as part of a larger poetic vision.

His accumulations were cast in bronze or created on canvases but his technical mastery also manifested in the revolutionary use of transparent polyester resin. By casting the objects in crystal-clear blocks he froze not only the objects but time itself. Each accumulation became a monument to a specific moment where everyday life's transient objects were preserved for eternity.

In "Fragments de Chine" from 1990 Arman has placed the fragments of smashed Chinese porcelain in beautiful patterns cast in resin. Arman's genius lay in seeing the beauty hidden in artefacts – transforming the ignored into the noticed.









## Destruction as Creation

Arman's "colères" explored destruction as a creative act, not as violence but as sculptural composition where dismantling became the first step in the transformation. The process was meticulously planned despite the result appearing spontaneous and explosive. He chose objects bearing collective memories or cultural charge and gave them new dimensions.

"Colère de Violon" from 1961 captured music's violent passion by presenting a violin at the moment of destruction. The splinters were arranged as if they still vibrated with the last note.



Another form of creative destruction resulted in the series "The Day After" from 1984. The series consists of furniture from a living room in the Classical French style which the artist has burnt so they are not reusable yet they retain their identity. The fragile remnants have then been cast in bronze.

A highlight at FIAC 1994, as GKM showed the whole series of "The Day After", was when Madonna lay down on the sofa "Horizontal Catastrophe" –unfortunately no pictures were taken!







## Happenings

Arman's "colères" challenged fundamental assumptions about art's role by showing that beauty could arise from destruction. They were not nihilistic but deeply optimistic - they showed that nothing is truly lost, that every ending contains the seed of a new beginning.

The events in collaboration with GKM at Malmö Concert Hall and Lunds Konsthall, where Arman transformed cellos into artworks before an audience, attracted art lovers from all over Scandinavia. "It was like witnessing art history in the making," wrote a journalist from the Swedish Newspaper Expressen.









# Music as Visual Form

Music permeated Arman's artistic universe as a fundamental force. His relationship to musical instruments was intense - he saw them not just as tools for sound but as sculptural objects with their own beauty and dramatic potential.

The "Trio à Cordes" exhibition at the gallery in 1987 included not only the works made at Malmö Concert Hall but also an album of serigraphs as well as a book with the same title published by Galleri GKM. The book is a poetic meditation on the relationship between sound and form. Arman's own words "The bow on the strings releases an explosion of sounds" captured the ability to translate music's kinetic energy into sculptural form.

Through his musical themes, Arman created a completely new form of synesthetic experience where the boundaries between the senses dissolved. His compositions functioned as frozen symphonies where rhythm and harmony were translated into visual terms.



# THE LEGACY



## A Lasting Legacy

During his lifetime, Arman participated in nearly 500 exhibitions worldwide and his works are today found in the most prestigious art institutions. But his real legacy lies not in this institutional presence but in the way he fundamentally changed our understanding of art's possibilities.

His monumental public sculptures became iconic landmarks that continue to define urban environments. "Hope for Peace" in Beirut stands as a powerful monument to conflict's human cost, "À la République" at the Élysée Palace celebrates republican values, and "L'heure de tous" at Saint Lazare station reminds daily commuters of time's significance in modern life. When President Mitterrand in 1993 presented the Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres to Arman, he acknowledged art's ability to bridge cultural boundaries.

## Continued Relevance

Arman's influence on generations of artists who came after him can hardly be overstated. His revolutionary technique of casting objects in transparent resin was adopted by sculptors worldwide, while his controlled destruction methods inspired performance and installation artists to explore violence's creative potential.







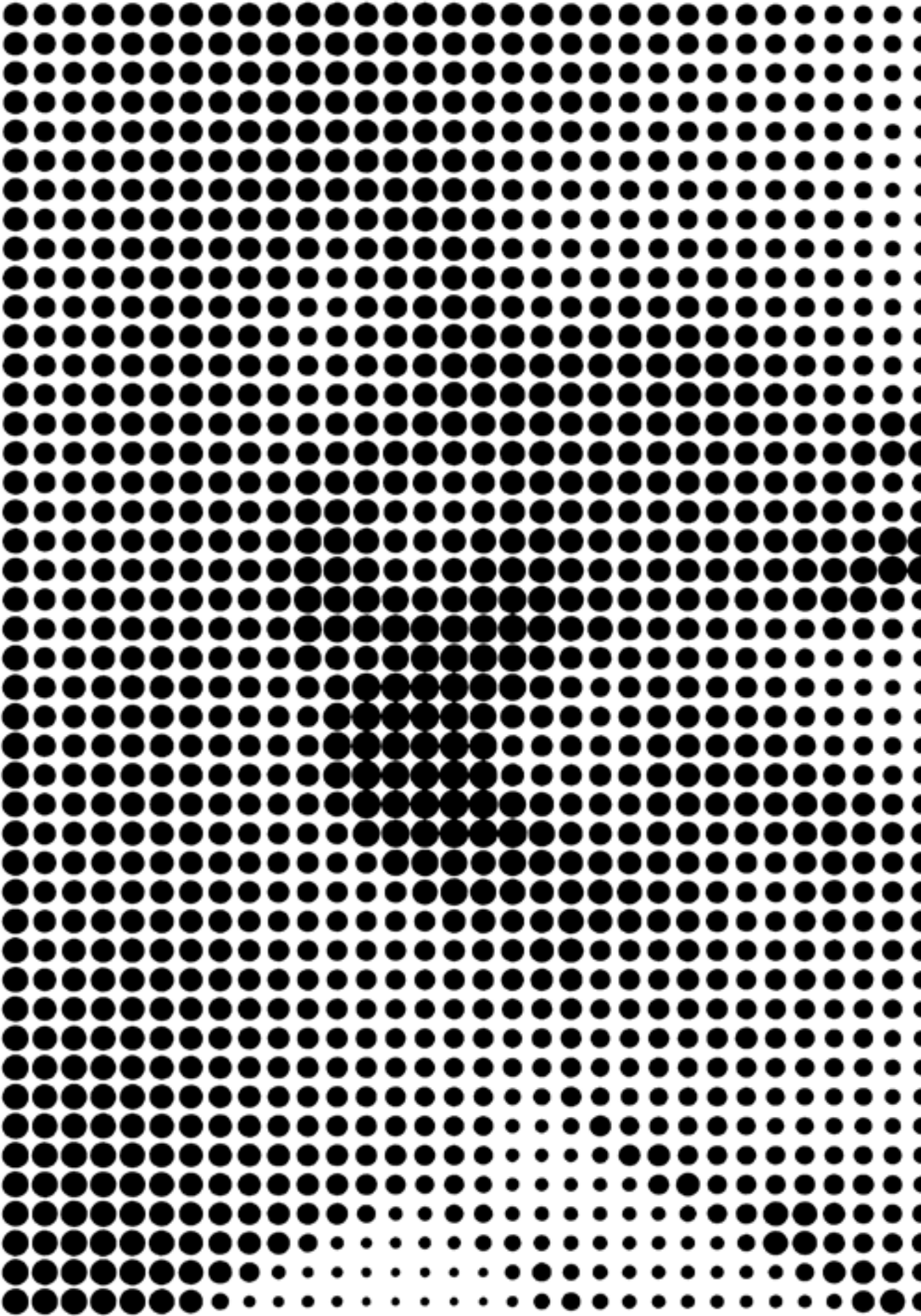
## Living Tradition

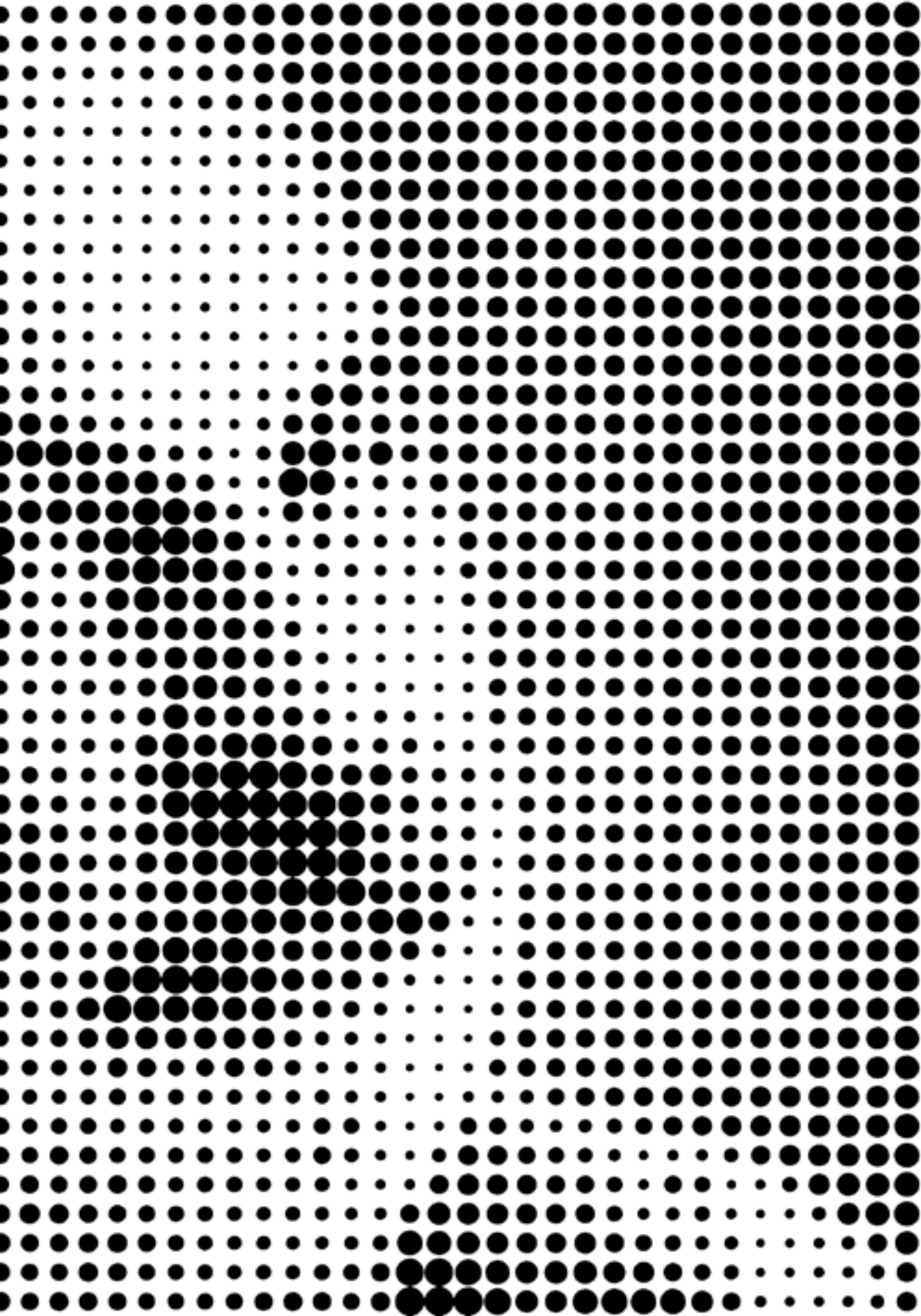
The Bergström family - Thomas, Kalle, Ludvig and Katarina - continue to care for Arman's legacy with the same passion that characterized Siwert Bergström's original vision. Their approach is deeply personal, shaped by decades of close collaboration with the artist. In the gallery's rooms, Arman's spirit lives on through careful curation and presentation for new generations.

Twenty years after Arman's death, his vision has proven prophetic. In a time characterized by environmental awareness, his transformation of discarded objects appears as a visionary commentary on our consumer culture. His words "I specialize very much in... everything" were not empty boasting but an artistic philosophy that embraced the richness of all existence. This vision is as relevant today as it was fifty years ago - art's ability to transform our perception of reality continues to inspire and challenge.

*For more information about Arman's works, please visit our website by scanning the QR code.*











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