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# The Ladder Café. *microsilions*

● Bureau des transmissions

7 March – 15 May 2019  
11:00–22:00

📍 Garage LAB

## DESCRIPTION

With growing interest around the world in gallery education and public programs, participation has become a key notion for cultural institutions. *The Ladder Café* is a proposition imagined by the artists collective *microsilions* as a framework to discuss the various ways in which a museum can interact with its public and with society at large, and vice versa.

In 1969, Sherry R Arnstein published the text *A Ladder of Citizen Participation*, in which she proposed an eight rung ladder to classify different levels of participation, from manipulation to citizen control. Her article is an attempt to rethink participation strategies—that she observes in city management/development projects in the US—not as positive in themselves but as multiple, complex, and often problematic in terms of manipulation and hidden agendas.

*The Ladder Café*, based on Arnstein’s ladder of participation, has been thought of as a meeting place to retrace, invent or critique the possible roles of art and culture in our lives and, more specifically, to rethink how a contemporary art museum could serve as a platform to exercise citizenship. In doing so, it aims to question the notion of participation in the field of gallery education and cultural institutions.

The café is displayed as a ladder with rungs displaying two series of mugs. The first series shows illustrations of memories of participatory moments in a cultural institution and evocations of dreams or fears for future formats involving citizens in the museum. The second one is a collection of questions linked to participation.

The content has been produced mostly from a series of interviews, by *microsilions*, with the curatorial and educational team at Garage.

Visitors are invited to pick the mug of their choice (in one series or the other) and share a drink with the gallery educator on site (who will pick a mug from the other series). Following an open protocol proposed by the educator, a conversation will take place, with no other purpose than conversing, asking questions, practicing debate. No form is filled in, no note is taken.

Throughout the process *microsilions* will use the educators’ feedback to produce additional mugs from these new discussions.

## ABOUT THE COLLECTIVE

*microsilions* was founded in 2005 in Geneva by Marianne Guarino-Huet and Olivier Desvoignes. The collective has collaborated with many cultural institutions, in Switzerland and internationally, including the Centre d’art Le 116 (Montreuil), VANSa (Johannesburg), WYSPA Institute (Gdansk), and the Centre d’art Contemporain Genève, where it was in charge of the gallery education projects between 2008 and 2010. *microsilions* is currently responsible of the TRANS– Art–Education–Engagement Masters at the Geneva University of art and design (HEAD).

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Free admission

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### CONTACT US

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### HOURS

Open daily, 11:00–22:00  
Ticket office closes 30 minutes before  
Museum closing time

