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Cher David,

Just seeing this image makes my day ! It reminds me of course of the very nice exhibition in Oakville with Rober.

This was the complementary document : Satie photographer (after Stravinsky, all that was missing was Debussy photographer.

and a potential portrait of both Stravinsky and Satie together). The photo camera might have been Debussy's. We see him

with one by the sea. The first thing i noticed about that photo was the ray of light on Stravinsky's hand and the square of light

on the floor. It seemed to add an extra life to the scene. Debussy looks at Satie but Stravinsky's appear to stare in a kind of void.

Those photos are dated 1910. Debussy was like a mentor figure at that moment for Stravinsky. But in 1913, Debussy will be

' crushed ' (non intentionally) by Stravinsky when his score ' Jeux ' will go unnoticed after the scandal and huge success

of ' Le sacre du printemps ' performed at the same time. And it's all in that photo of 1910 !

**Raymond Gervais
Artist
1946-2018**

From Intuition to Epistemology: Raymond Gervais's *Carignan:* *circuit-les ponts*¹

DAVID TOMAS

In 1977, *Parachute* and the Institut d'art contemporain de Montréal presented a multifaceted public encounter lasting from March 3 to March 23. The event, appropriately titled 03 23 03 and branded as a “*manifestation*”—with the subtitle “premières rencontres internationales d'art contemporain”—was designed to take stock of the richness and diversity of contemporary art in the mid-1970s. Lectures,

1. This article was first presented at a roundtable discussion at the Leonard & Bina Ellen Gallery, Concordia University, on November 5, 2011.

performances, artists' talks, and an exhibition of artists' projects took place in a disaffected post office on Amherst Street in Montréal. The project, organized by France Morin and Chantal Pontbriand from *Parachute* and Norman Thériault from the Institut d'art contemporain de Montréal, was ambitious in its scope and sophisticated in its vision of the constituent practices that could be marshalled under the label of contemporary art at the time.

A letter was sent out to potential contributors in December 1976, inviting them to send in a project that represented the current state of their practice. 03 23 03 concluded with the publication of a catalogue containing a record of the projects, lectures, discussions, and performances, with accompanying documentary texts and photographs. The organizers' intention was succinctly summarized by Norman Thériault: "Comment tenir compte de l'art occidental sans nous engager à faire de la manifestation un geste 'impérialiste' tout en renouant (ou s'alignant) avec les forces vives de l'art occidental."² Their answer was idiosyncratic, democratic, and in keeping with the conceptual and political spirits of the late 1960s: to personally invite one of every four artists listed in *Art Diary* to send an original project on paper by mail. Choice, representational balance, and neutrality of taste were guaranteed in one of the most perfect curatorial appropriations of systemic LeWittian conceptualism. If, in Sol LeWitt's view, "The idea becomes a machine that makes the art," then for

2. Norman Thériault, 03 23 03 / introduction, in *03 23 03* (Montréal: Médiart et Parachute, 1977), 17.

the curators of 03 23 03, the *idea* of choosing one in four artists became a machine for automatically producing an exhibition, thereby inadvertently highlighting—since there is no  evidence to suggest that they applied a LeWittian conceptual template to this exhibition—in a particularly ironic fashion the utility, objectivity, and political neutrality implied by this canonical definition of conceptual art.³ Choice, however, entered into play in the lectures and performances, and in the latter case, in particular, the distinction between event and reproduction was played out with varying degrees of success in the catalogue pages devoted to this real-time medium.⁴

Raymond Gervais presented one of the nine performances during 03 23 03, on Tuesday March 22 at 8:30 p.m. It was billed as follows in the catalogue: “An audio-visual piece whose narrative follows a cyclical pattern. It deals essentially with the ambiguous use of old material re-channeled in a new time situation where its different aspects (words, sounds, images) interact in a non-arbitrary way.”⁵ Gervais’s performance was titled *Cari-gnan: circuit–les ponts*. Although the 03 23 03 version was considered to be a new work, it was, in fact, the translation (in its Benjaminian sense of an afterlife stage, as opposed to an act of transparent instrumentalized communication)

3. Sol LeWitt, “Paragraphs on Conceptual Art,” *Artforum* 5, no. 10 (June 1967): 79–83.

4. Chantal Pontbriand, 03 23 03 Performances, in *03 23 03*, 19.

5. *Ibid.*, *03 23 03*, 11.

of an earlier work that was itself a reconstruction of an unmediated week-long private site-specific daily routine. The version presented during Gervais's retrospective at the Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery in 2011 can also be considered a translation, but in this case it is an institutionally defined archival re-presentation "of old material re-channeled in a new time situation where its different aspects (words, sounds, images) interact in a non-arbitrary way." Each translation is a function of a different environment: original site, 03 23 03 performance, and documentary re-presentation of the 03 23 03 version at the Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery. This articulated process of translation represents a transposition of an initial performance economy from one site to another, a process that was initiated by a desire to photochemically and electromagnetically record the initial performance, thereby opening the way to a second performance the logic of which was governed by the contact of recording technologies with the idea and concrete cartography of a daily routine.

Each shift, each "translation," was the product of the adaptation and reorganization of an archive composed of audio and photographic documentation. How does this sequence of translations/spatial-environmental transpositions work? What are its implications for reading and reconstructing not only the physical activity but also the extended mental process of production embodied in *Carignan: circuit-les ponts*? Finally, what impact does this sequence have on how an *idea*—and, in particular, the idea of the circle and its corollary, the circle as circuit—operates as a basic geometric and metaphysical reference in much of Gervais's work?

A weeklong daily routine served as the template for the 03 23 03 performance. Gervais had been invited, in June 1975, to take a two-week vacation in Carignan, a small locality near Chambly, Quebec, and he decided to bring some instruments, including a bass clarinet, flutes of various cultural origins, and a Tunisian zurna (or zokra) with him.⁶ He also brought a copy of *The Upanishads*, a series of sacred Hindu philosophical texts that, in his words, “prêchent la délivrance des renaissances et montrent la voie vers l’absolu,” which he happened to be reading at the time.⁷ (He had visited India in 1972 during a seven-month trip from Greece to Nepal and had been so impressed with its culture and music that its influence was still present in 1975.) Once there, Gervais instituted a daily routine, the kind of activity that anyone might pursue during a country holiday.

The routine consisted of an afternoon walk around a predetermined “circuit” that began and ended at his vacation residence and whose topography was governed to some extent by the presence of a river and canal. The route

6. For a description of the zurna see Satilmis Yayla, “Zurna FAQ,” accessed November 18, 2011, http://www.fromnorway.net/yaylas/zurna/zurna_faq.htm#99.

7. Raymond Gervais, Carignan : circuit—les ponts (*Narration*), 03 23 03, p. 42. In an elaborate undated draft for the performance (p. 3), Gervais describes *The Upanishads* as follows: “Ces textes parlent de l’origine de toute chose, de leur substance, leur essence, leur interrelation, l’air, le feu, l’eau, le soleil, la respiration, la parole, l’individu, la vie, la mort, l’univers...”

was punctuated with some precise physical and (from Gervais’s perspective) activity-related features: two “rest areas” (it is unclear whether they were arbitrarily chosen or were distinguished by “significant” physical features), two bridges—one at the east end of the circuit, the other at the west end—and a couple of sightlines toward other bridges. The routine was pursued “un peu comme une idée fixe dont on ne parvient pas à se débarrasser.”⁸ During the first week, the activity was simply vacation related. However, the “idée fixe” of a daily afternoon routine took place according to a circular geometric logic even though its actual form was that of an irregular circuit that was defined by the idiosyncrasies of a local topography. During his walk, he would cross a swing bridge (which was sometimes open, necessitating a waiting period). He would continue until he took a rest (always at the same place) that included dipping into *The Upanishads*, playing the zurna in harmony with the echoes of the river, lying on his back staring at the sky, dozing off (or trying to), and, at some point, taking stock of another bridge in the distance. After this first pause, Gervais would continue on his course until he reached the sightline of a second (abandoned) bridge just off the path and near to a second resting place. When he reached this second location, Gervais did not read or play music. Instead, he sat under the trees and listened as attentively as possible to the sounds of nature in spite of the constant intrusion of his imagination—incursions that provoked an oscillation between presence and absence,

8. Ibid., 03 23 03, 42.

reality and dream. Toward the end of the afternoon, Gervais continued on his path, crossing a second bridge and returning by way of a main road to his vacation home.

Idea, ecology, physical and mental activities (walking, resting, reading, playing music), technology (bridges), and culture (Indian philosophy, Western and non-Western instruments) were intertwined in this first embryonic version of *Carignan: circuit–les ponts*. It is worth briefly noting, in connection with this circuit and the 03 23 03 performance, that the word “ponts” serves not only as an index of the existence of non-places (bridges) on the circuit, but also as a metaphoric reminder that there is more than one dimension or circuit to this work and that bridges serve literally and metaphorically as access points to these other dimensions.

Gervais had to return to Montreal for an urgent matter after the first week of his holiday. During the weekend, after reading some excerpts of *The Upanishads*, he realized that his visit to Carignan could have a precise meaning. He confessed, in a detailed unpublished draft of the final catalogue statement, “Je réalisai que mon séjour à Carignan avait un sens précis, se précisant, une symbolique propre à démasquer, démonter, expliciter, exposer” (emphasis in original).⁹ As he would later acknowledge in reference to *The Upanishads*,

Ces textes étaient liés intimement à mon expérience de la semaine précédente, ils en étaient à la fois le

9. Undated draft, 3.

commentaire et l'élucidation. J'identifiai ce circuit au cycle d'une vie humaine, de la naissance à la mort, symbole exprimé quotidiennement par la poésie du jour et de la nuit.¹⁰



When Gervais returned to Carignan the following week, he brought a camera and tape recorder with him. During the second week, he photographically and acoustically reconstructed the first week's routine. He was not interested in exhaustive documentation. He wanted to transmit a raw or basic trace ("un tracé brut") and an orientation in relation to earth, rock, and water.¹¹

10. Gervais, Carignan : circuit—les ponts (*Narration*). See also the undated draft (3) for a slightly different formulation of this insight. In the draft, Gervais also links the Carignan bridges to "des étapes à franchir (i.e. discipline à choisir) afin de réaliser ce cycle, de joindre les deux bouts, d'un extrême à l'autre, du départ à l'arrivée" (4).

11. Carignan : circuit—les ponts (*Narration*), 03 23 03, 42. J'enregistrai les sons de l'environnement en marche et aux différents points de halte. Je photographiai tout le tracé de ce circuit i.e. la route, les lieux de halte, les ponts. Je n'étais pas intéressé à photographier des paysages mais plutôt à montrer un tracé brut, une orientation à même le sol, la terre, la roche, l'eau.

However, it seems that the process of documentation might or might not have taken place in one day. "All this

The documentation was set aside until Gervais had an opportunity to return to it in March 1976, when he began to work on a performance scenario and produced various documents, including a set of three drawings and a detailed eight-page description of the performance and its *raison d'être*. At this stage, the performance was subtitled *rituel intermédia, pour Robert Lepage et Lucie Desrochers*. The initial scenario was conceived for a dancer or musician. The performance would include an audio excerpt from *The Upanishads*, and natural sounds would be played throughout the performance. Slides were to be used in this version, with different durations of projection in synchronicity with recorded sounds. Gervais notes that the image would function as a commentary on the performance's "soundtrack." In this initial version, the slides would serve to anchor the soundtrack in the real-world environment of Carignan.¹² There is also a refer-

was done in a very intuitive manner, not knowing why and for whom or what. There was a sense of urgency I guess and no scenario or method to go about. It had to be done. It is very mysterious in a way as it was done almost without thinking about it or too much planning." In any case, the process of documenting was not systemic but rather "raw and spontaneous" since there was no precise "program" or "performance project" in mind at this stage. Email communication to the author, 24/11/11.

12. Raymond Gervais, email communication to the author, November 22, 2011.

ence to hands holding flutes that signified, for Gervais, “the choosing of a particular discipline to accomplish oneself (here music).” The image of a hand with flutes corresponds to two of the projected slides in his final 03 23 03 performance.¹³ It is clear from this detailed scenario that the performance was conceived as an elaborate analogy of the human biological and socio-cultural life cycle—hence its subtitle of “intermedia ritual” in which each artefact (bridge), symbol (book or musical instrument), geographic location (rest place), and thought process had its analogical equivalent up to and including the musician’s return to his point of departure and the final closure of the circuit in the environmental absorption/disappearance (death?) of the performer as he crossed the physical/symbolic threshold of the daily routine’s entry/exit point: Gervais’s vacation home. Gervais notes, in this connection, that “le circuit seul (le tracé) reste visible, mystérieux, magnétique, impénétrable”—possibly, I would suggest, because it could also be understood to embody the mystery of creation and, by extension, cosmic creativity in the circuit’s more basic geometric form of the circle, notwithstanding the routine’s irregular route and topographic singularities.¹⁴

However, Gervais also produced a sequence of three undated drawings that appear to have been made during the development of this first extended scenario. They are unique in relation to the development of *Carignan: circuit*—

13. Ibid. See also undated draft, 4.

14. Gervais, undated draft, 7.

les ponts because they expose its potential and its conceptual and developmental logics in an exceptionally lucid fashion. Their primary function was to exhibit three different ways of performing the work, thus serving, along with an accompanying sheet of paper that verbalized their functions, as concise performance scripts in themselves: the first for a mental performance, the second for an on-site performance at Carignan, and the third for an indoor performance. The diagrams and the variations they proposed were radical statements about the possibilities of producing private performances designed for an individual interpreter but mapped on another human being's experience of a particular geographic location; they stand together as a major conceptual work in the area of performance art. However, when considered as a sequence they also suggest a different way to interpret this performance based on a progressive engagement with a general work method and logic that transcend the individual work and performer. It is in this sense that they shed additional light on the unique status and position of *Carignan: circuit-les ponts* in Gervais's oeuvre. For these drawings, together, map out the logic of a method of working and of conceiving the world from both the individual (private) and the collective (public) viewpoints; from a private mental space, a local site-specific performance, to the final public 03 23 03 performance, as is suggested in an accompanying list of possible versions of *Carignan: circuit-les ponts*.

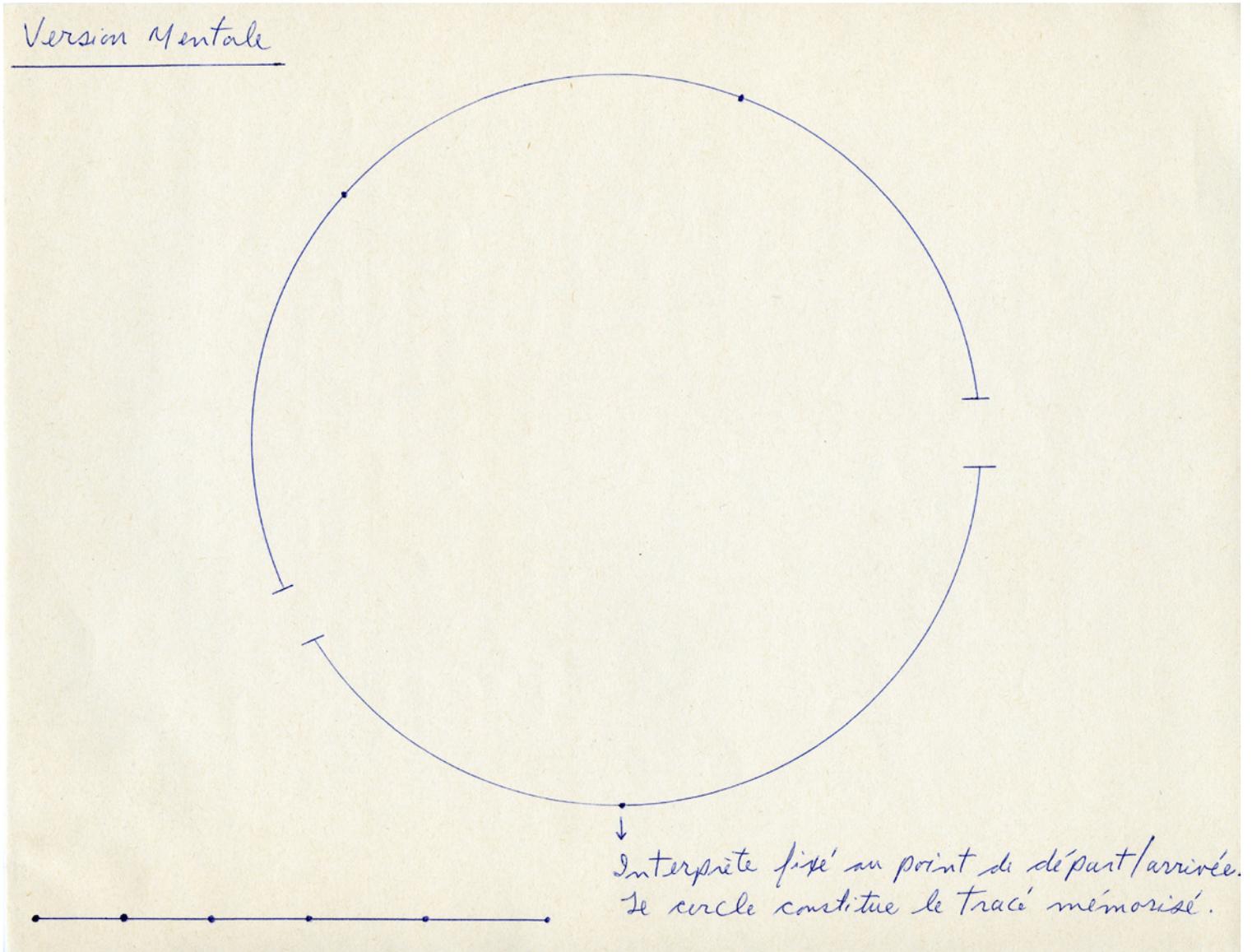
CARIGNAN - CIRCUIT LES PONTS: Versions possibles:

- 1 - Version mentale: (pour un espace restreint) L'interprète reste sur place. Il parcourt dans sa tête les différentes étapes du circuit. Il joue avec la bande sonore. Son jeu tient compte du déroulement chronologique de l'action (avec ou sans diapositives; le tracé peut être une figure abstraite, linéaire et mémorisée).

- 2 - Version originale: A Carignan même, l'interprète parcourt le circuit naturel, existant. La durée de la pièce est fonction du temps réel de parcours. L'environnement sonore et visuel est utilisé tel quel.

- 3 - Version intérieure: Pour un espace vide suffisamment grand ou un ensemble d'espaces vides communiquant entre eux. L'interprète trace à même le sol (à la craie, au fusain, au crayon...) le circuit en entier. Il interrompt son tracé au point de jonction de la route et des ponts. Puis ayant choisi son matériau musical et délimité la durée de parcours, il réalise la pièce dans l'ordre convenu (diapositives, bande sonore et texte; pour un ou plusieurs participants.)

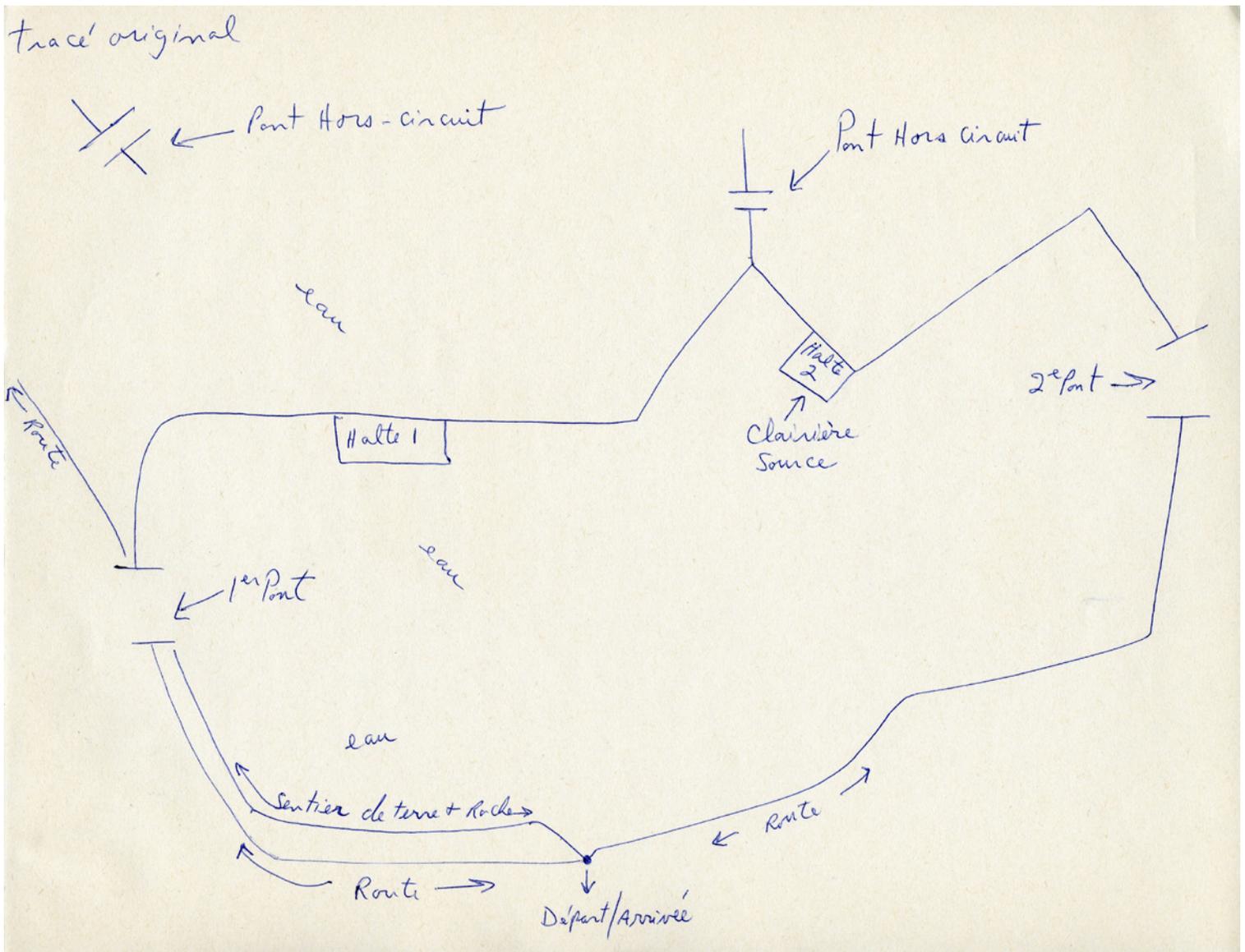
However, this mapping goes beyond this work, I will suggest, to encompass a complete oeuvre.



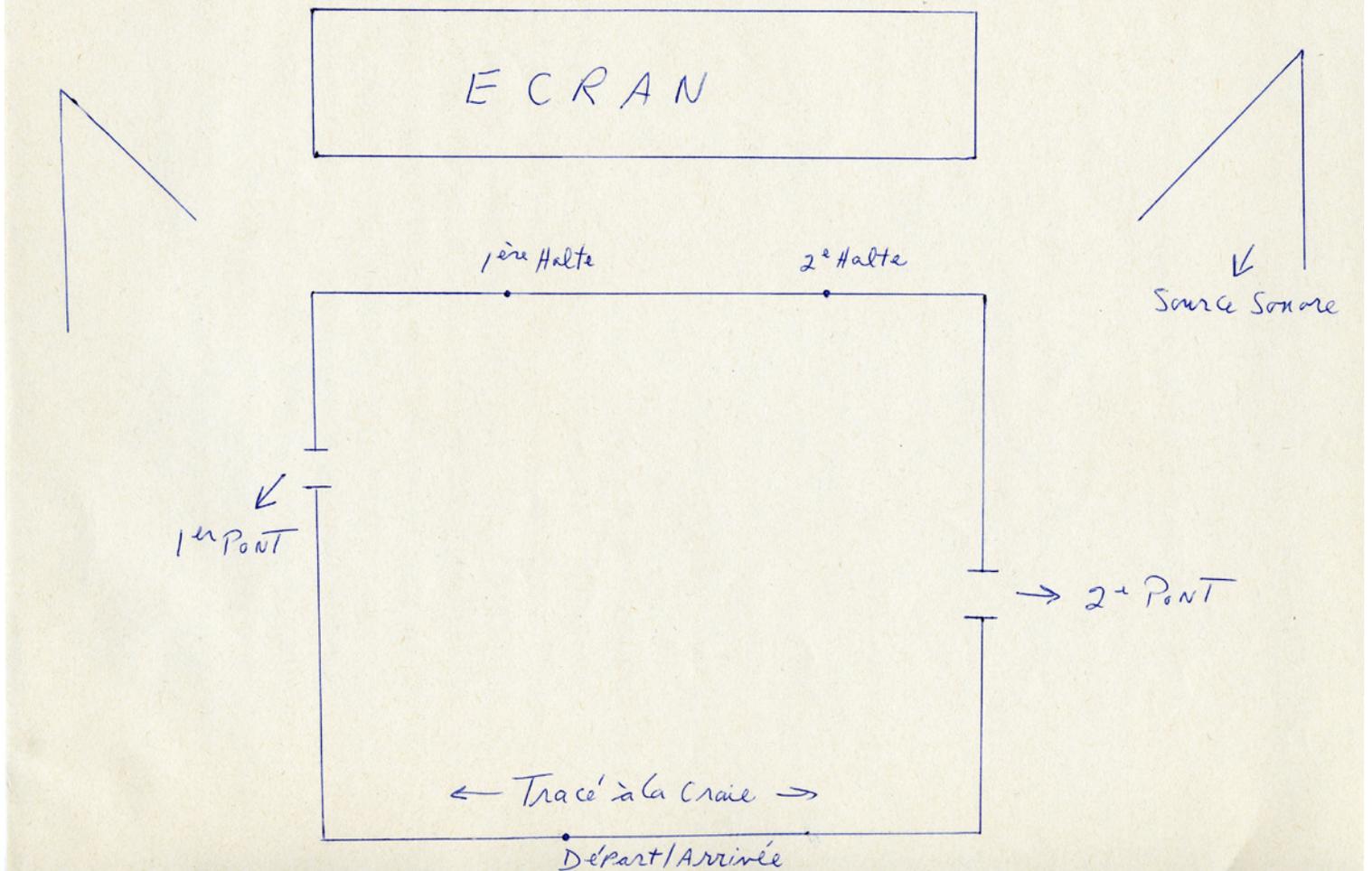
The first, titled “Version Mentale” is a perfect geometric representation of that route: a circle with two breaks representing the bridges and points representing the resting places and start/end (enter/exit) location. This latter point was captioned “Interprète fixé au point de départ/arrivée. Le cercle constitue le tracé mémorisé”—stating that this “map” is not so much the product of a bird’s-eye view or a pure ideal geometric shape. It is, on the contrary,

a radical mnemonic projection outward from a specific location on Earth. One might describe it as the platonic representation of the *idea* of performing a circuit from the viewpoint of a home base but designed to take place within the context of a mind that had not necessarily experienced Carignan.

The second, titled “tracé original” is a simple map of the circuit with its principal features (bridges, sightlines, and resting places). The drawing would serve as a map for anyone wishing to “perform” the circuit.



Version d'intérieure



The third, titled “Version d’intérieure” is a performance layout schema. It functions as an abstraction of the original map or trace and a reformatting of the circular geometry of the mental version so that they can fit into another geometric space, that of a hypothetical architectural environment. The ideal circular form of the first mental performance and the detailed map of the second would be translated/transposed by chalk, charcoal, or crayon onto the floor, and the performer would act out the routine in terms of a graphic circuit with appropriate actions at each of its major sites. This schema reveals a dimension of the performance that was obscured in the final version: the fact that it could

function as a musical score. What is also interesting about this last “map” or trace is its hybrid nature—the fact that musicians, technician, and sound equipment are not identified or located but are noted in different coding systems. The direction of the sound is indicated, almost literally, as an abstract speaker icon, and the presence of a screen is marked in terms of shape and relative size. The bridges are indicated by breaks in the circuit (a device borrowed from electrical diagrams) and the rest areas by points (a system of coding borrowed from geometry). The hybrid nature of the coding system is not so apparent in the other two drawings, but the clarity of the performance schema allows one to reconsider the other two drawings in light of these different systems and also as different forms of musical scores. The three drawings represent not only different versions of the performance and different scores, but also the salient stages in a mental process whose field of intuitive and factual references extends into different disciplines (from music and electrical engineering to architecture and performance art) and language systems (from cartography to architecture, geometry, and electrical circuit diagrams). In the first drawing, the original map or trace is translated into an ideal mental form that highlights its utopian symbolic origins in the circle’s perfect geometric form, although it is punctuated with the markers of the important geographic and technological fixtures of the original circuit (bridges, rest places, and others). Note that the breaks representing the bridges also double as breaks in an electrical circuit. This utopian figure, with its references to different coding systems, is then adapted to an imaginary architectural location by being translated into a rect-

angle in the third drawing whose form gravitates toward the shape of a square (another ideal form). The rectangle is accompanied by a short sentence stating that it should be materialized, on site, in a chalk outline (“tracé à la craie”) with the bridges, rest places, and departure and arrival point, indicated in their proper sequence, symmetrically deployed, and appropriately coded on the rectangle’s four sides. Although this procedure—this translation from paper and ink to chalk (or charcoal or crayon) and floor—was not adopted for the 03 23 03 performance, the path of translation that is recorded in the three diagrams mimics the process of abstraction that any technology—including the human mind—operates on reality; it moves from the realm of experience to the realm of ideas; and it mimics the experience of the oscillation between reality and dream, presence and absence, cosmic unity and enlightenment versus metaphysical obscurity that Gervais experienced when he sat under the trees and listened as attentively as possible to the sounds of nature in his original and private daily routine. But it also does much more. For the coding systems point to the disciplines of cartography, architecture, geometry, music, and electrical engineering and their diagrammatic practices, with electrical engineering pointing the way to the world of modern sound recording and transmission. Hence we return, full circle, to Gervais’s childhood and his father fixing radios and televisions on the kitchen table and in the backyard shed.

The 03 23 03 catalogue contains the final performance script and photographic documentation of *Carignan: circuit-les ponts*. The information presents the elements of a multifaceted performance that was composed of audio,

slide, graphic, and live music/performance elements. The actions that composed the actual performance—performed by the artist and his two musician friends, accompanied by a  sound technician—were presented chronologically in the catalogue. The presence of the cartographic and textual origins of the performance were acknowledged (translated) in various ways in the actual performance: the real-time reproduction of the second original trace drawing, accompanied by a recorded narrative history of the performance, slide documentation of the circuit, including bridges and rest places (presented in silence), the sentence “Rien ici-base n’existe séparément” coupled with the sound of a car journey (that had been recorded on Gervais’s return to Montreal from his second week in Carignan), the latter accompanied by key words and phrases extracted from *The Upanishads*. (Other selected key words and phrases were written on walls and panels during the performance, including the sentence “There is a bridge between time and eternity,” which was graphically linked to the first bridge in the “tracé original” drawing.) Natural environmental sounds were also presented at key moments. The performance continued with music solos and duos (corresponding to bridge crossings and the first Carignan rest place). The route between resting places and bridges (treated as interludes) was represented by the recorded sounds of walking. The interludes were distinguished by live music solos. The first rest place was referred to by a live duo. The second rest place was also linked to the sentence “So that he sees no dream,” and the sentence “He does not return” marked the passage across the second and last bridge. The return to the point of

departure was accompanied by a tape recording of *Roche*, Gervais's 1976 composition for rock and piano.¹⁵

It is clear from the documentation and published scenario  that the performance mapped out a mnemonically framed, multisensory life-cycle journey through an intertwining of textual, visual, instrumental, and ecological narratives. These were also the components of an extended translation process that took the form of a thematic deconstruction and spatial redeployment of the constituent elements of Gervais's documentation of the second, reconstructed version of the first week's afternoon routine at Carignan. It also included extraneous elements such as slides (of flutes and of Gervais reading and playing an instrument) that were taken elsewhere and integrated into the final slide sequence of the live performance.¹⁶

Gervais's 03 23 03 catalogue performance script and its accompanying "narrative of origins" was a stripped-down version of the unpublished draft that eliminated the metaphysical and cosmic discourses at the performance's origins, with the effect that these references were effectively sublimated in the sequence of actions, music, slides, and diagrams. Their essence was nevertheless transmitted by the isolated words and sentences that populated the acoustic and visual spaces of the performance.

Carignan: circuit-les ponts was a translation, an invention, the product of a mind that was tracing its own translational itinerary between an original private vacation routine and a

15. Email communication, November 22, 2011.

16. Ibid.

final public performance in the context of 03 23 03. I have used the words “translation” and “invention” deliberately because a first embryonic performance script was intuitively  explored in the company of recording technologies and it was therefore mediated (translated) by them, and one suspects that the first week’s routine was “staged” for the purposes of documentation. This is a small but important point because it highlights this performance’s artificial–mental, indeed conceptual–nature, notwithstanding its roots in the real world, with its basic cosmic life cycles of day/night and birth/death. The conceptual foundations of *Carignan: circuit–les ponts* were already visible in Gervais’s first-draft scenario and its suite of drawings, produced in 1976. This foundation is the circuit, with its dual references to walking and electricity, and, ideally, the circle, because this geometric figure is able to embody, more than any other geometric form, the cosmic, metaphysical, and local worlds that can sometimes be mapped out by a daily routine, with the infinite possibilities of its simple, evocative form. If *Carignan: circuit–les ponts* provided Gervais with the means to circumscribe the significance of this basic figure in an unprecedented way, then it also provided him with a basic graphic conceptual form and logic upon which to build all his subsequent work. We can hardly be surprised, therefore, to see so many circle-based references to electrically and electronically driven technologies of sound reproduction, from turntables to tape recorders, storage and playback media such as vinyl records and CDs (or their absence, in the case of Gervais’s works featuring empty CD cases), or other less common circle-based material artefacts of music culture, such as metronomes,

with their arc-based markers of time. Nor should we be surprised to be confronted, in his work, with the omnipresence of the graphic outline of the circle. For as the mental version of *Carignan: circuit-les ponts* implies, every basic cycle of existence can be understood in its terms. I would like to suggest that *Carignan: circuit-les ponts* brought this articulation of circle and life, art and metaphysics into conscious coexistence and that it is through this coexistence that Gervais was able to isolate a visual vocabulary and language that fused the metaphysical ambitions of visual metaphor with the speculative objectives of epistemology. Perhaps it is here that Gervais's work approaches most closely LeWitt's canonical yet paradoxical definition of conceptual art as an intuitively conveyed machine-, system-based idea or concept art form.

An inventory of key words and concepts associated with Gervais's practice since the mid-1970s would include archive, circuit, circle, cosmos, darkness, death, idea, light, life, memory, metaphysics, mental space, music, trace, and translation. It would also include electricity, bridges, rest places, and places of cosmic meditation. The world that this language could describe would be that of a mind-centred culture of music: a music culture as a Batesonian ecology of ideas in which mind and environment are cybernetically unified through the circulation of ideas.

The interior economies of many of Gervais's works can be seen as analogical circuits of thought, of ideas, that are facilitated by the transmission of key words. They also embody the circuitous traces of mental itineraries (perambulations) whose governing trope is the circle. Perhaps the most complex portrayals of these economies are

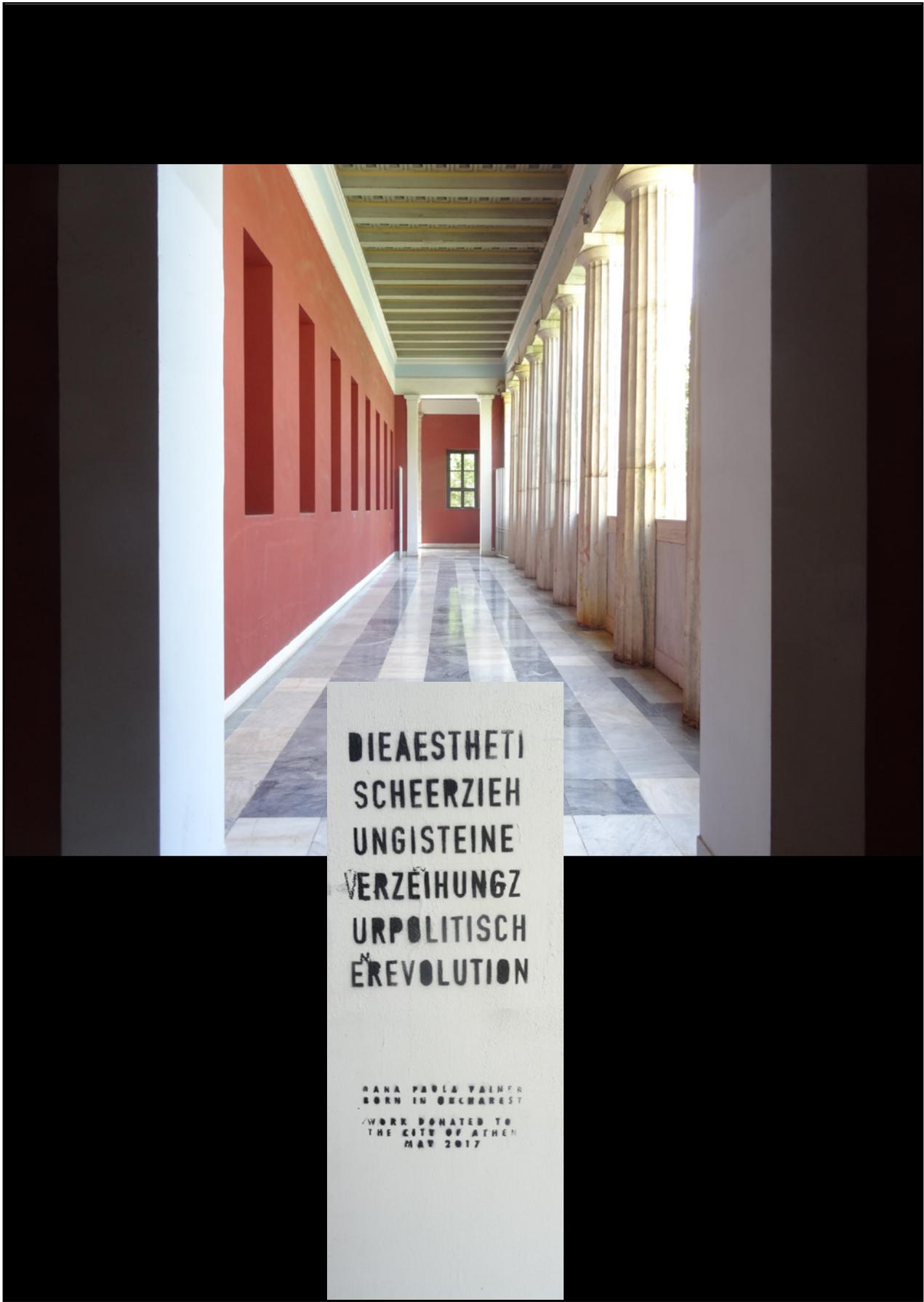
to be found in works that display the history and culture of an economy of music and sound reproduction (records and electronic systems through which sounds are circulated  and transformed). *Carignan: circuit–les ponts* not only expresses this economy but, one can argue, is one of its purest cartographic representations. The importance of this work was highlighted by Gervais in his early draft scenario when he noted, “D’une certaine façon, on peut penser qu’un authentique créateur ne réalise qu’une seule pièce dans sa vie, qu’il ne dit qu’une seule chose qu’il répète de façon diverse, du simple au complexe et vice-versa, jusqu’à la fin. À titre d’exemple, voici comment je réalisai CARI-GNAN : CIRCUIT-LES PONTS.”¹⁷

17. Gervais, undated draft, 2.

STEALING FROM ATHENS



0101 PAOLA VAINER
IN GUMAREST
WORK DONATED TO
THE CITY OF ATHENS
MAY 2017



**DIE AESTHETI
SCHEERZIEH
UNGISTEINE
VERZEIHUNGZ
URPOLITISCH
EREVOLUTION**

**ANA PAULA VAINER
BORN IN BUCHAREST
/WORK DONATED TO
THE CITY OF ATHEN
MAY 2017**





HOWL BY ALLEN GINSBERG

BEST MINDS OF MY GENERATION DESTROYED
STARVING & HYSTERICAL NAKED, DRAGGING
THROUGH THE NEGRO STREETS AT DAWN LOOKING
FOR ANGEL HEADED HIPSTERS SEARCHING FOR THE
STABLE DYNAMO IN THE MACHINERY OF THE

WORK FOR THE BLACKHOLE
WHERE ALL NATURAL LAWS
ARE INVALID

" I AM A SINGULARITY
I HAVE NO HUMAN MEE
NO MAN CAN SET ME FREE
NO MAN CAN PAY ME FEE
I AM A LOCK WITHOUT A KEY
A SINGULARITY

THE STABLE DYNAMO IN THE MACHINERY OF THE



From: Lieven Meyer [meyerlieven@hotmail.com]
Sent: Monday, August 28, 2017 9:40 AM
To: Tomas, David
Subject: documenta fuck off

49 posters transferred from the Polytechnio, Athens



DT: Mon 8/28, 7:37 PM

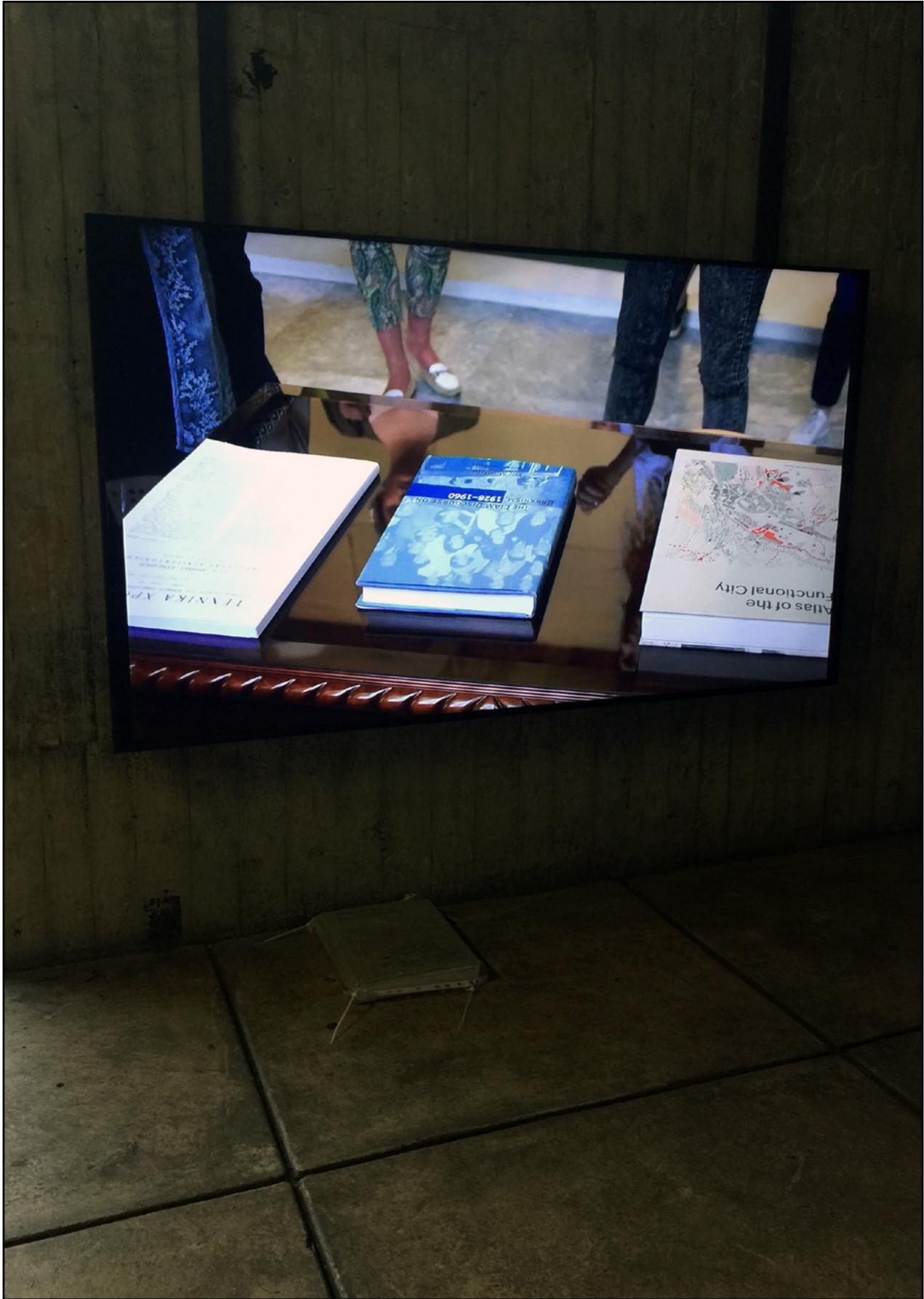
Are those your posters?? I just thought they might be by someone else???

LM: Mon 8/28, 7:41 PM

I had to transfer them through the web (using a pdf file from the author's website: diarriktes.wordpress.com), so they do not stem physically from Athens.

I also transferred the book from the installation at the university in Athens to the Kassel art academy, wrapped up in a way similar to the books hanging at the Parthenon...







DT: Mon 8/28/2017, 9:06 PM

So you lifted them off his website and printed them and posted them in Kassel??

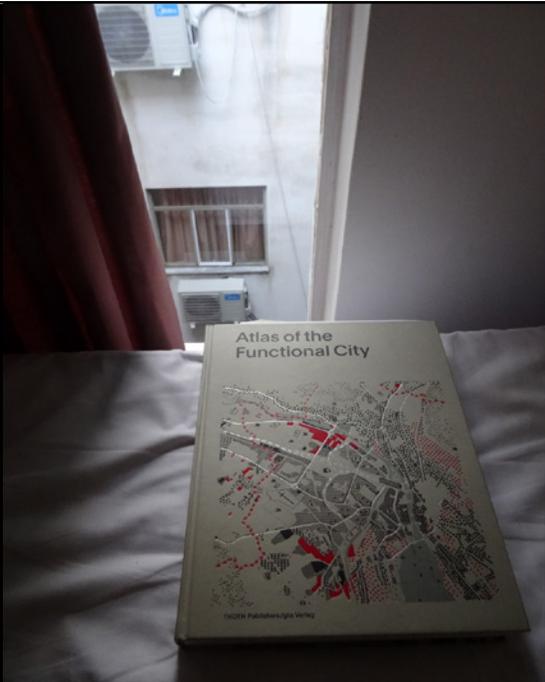
LM: Tue 8/29/2017, 8:44 AM

Exactly. Because as soon as u try to remove them, u tear them up. I only saw a few on the campus, too, so I decided to reproduce them by using the original files, that I happened to find on the website written on the bottom of each poster. That was the only way to place them in the context of the Kassel Documenta.

LM: Tue 8/29/2017, 8:57 AM

The interesting part is that the Greek language makes them unreadable to the majority of the D14 visitors/ Kassel people. Still the author is clear, and the point is clear: D14 fuck off! In this context, the Greek language connects to the authority of the subject of D14 excluding the visitor or even the whole event. I am surprised that after 10 days they still have not been removed as a temporary intervention. But also they are excluded and integrated by the exhibition context which makes them a little untouchable. At this point the critique is not as much weakened as it happened in certain artworks as a part of the exhibition.





DT: Tue 8/29, 9:41 AM

How do you feel about the book transfer?

LM: Wed 9/6, 1:27 PM

It was the best way for me to deal with the subject of D14.

DT: Tue 8/29, 9:41 AM

Do you think it's successful politically speaking?

LM: Wed 9/6, 1:27 PM

The major political impact I noticed as a spectator of D14 was an individual experience of blame, especially when visiting Athens. Lifting the Atlas increased this experience of blame by detaching me somehow from the role of a global art trotter and transferring myself to a larger, less individual scale.

DT: Tue 8/29, 9:41 AM

How does the transfer operate in relation to your initial act of theft??

LM: Wed 9/6, 1:27 PM

I wanted the theft to become an expression of what D14 represented besides its political claim, how it was perceived by the local people as well as the visitors. To share the blame as a common issue, I had to transfer the Atlas to Kassel.

DT: Tue 8/29, 9:41 AM

I also presume that the theft of 'Atlas of the Functional City' set the stage for your poster intervention in the sense that it authorized a similar act of 'borrowing'?

LM: Wed 9/6, 1:27 PM

Talking about necessary information, the boundaries between stealing and borrowing apparently get blurred. The same thing happened to a book called the Penis Book in a youth center in the north of Germany. It was replaced regularly, because it was stolen every once in a while. The replacement was a pedagogical strategy of providing important information by permitting their theft. As the Atlas was part of a site specific installation at the Polytechnion in Athens, a place full of anti-Documenta vibes, it made sense to transfer the posters along with it. I idled at the campus for quite a while due to the weight of the Atlas inside my backpack. That's how I stumbled over these posters on some doors and walls. I asked a student to translate them for me and wondered if they had already been posted on social media or hang physically in Kassel. Placing them eventually in the heart of the D14 venue in Kassel provided a visible and contextual anchor to the act of shrugging off the Atlas.

“D14 ‘came’ to meet the south and art will save itself and will save others. D14 came to a country that has no state, no plans, no army, no police, no interests. Greece means beaches, self-pity, mountains, Frapes, smoking cigarettes in bars. D14 gives us water and soap, so we can clean ourselves. Szymczyk came to Greece to meet us - that is alright, and Preciado sees us, the people, like exhibits, and he will use us as a footnote, and that is ok, because the artists pay the rent: workshops. We have become a curating material worth 70 million. D14 represents the teeth of this city’s middle class people, and its artists are like common tourists and even worse like Mousakas and plastic Tsoliades. Athens is not an abstract meaning of crisis. It does not have the atmosphere of a humanistic catastrophe. It is not artistically arrogant, nor has it a character of collective self-pity. It is the materialism of the metropolitan social relations. It is the real place and time of everyday discipline, denial and dignity of the multinational proletariat. The realization of the war between classes is another line next to the hype of barbarianism. The rest is just for the idealists and the pompous people.”



**FROM MATERIAL CULTURE
TO AN ANTHROPOLOGY OF RESISTANCE
IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY:
A BRIEF OUTLINE.**

Given the replacement by digital capitalism of the materially based consumer logic of industrial capitalism with its own dematerialized computer-governed consumer logic;

given the progressive replacement by digital capitalism of machine-based control systems of industrial capitalism with its own computerized control systems;

given progressive dematerialization by digital capitalism of face-to-face social interaction in favour of machine-mediated human interaction;

given the systemic cultivation by digital capitalism of autonomous machine-to-machine communication in place of human-to-human and human-to-machine communication;

given the quest by digital capitalism to replace autonomous human social agents with autonomous artificial intelligence systems;

given the impact of computerized digital technology on the question of the human body's socio-cultural and politico-economic autonomy;

given the imminent dangers of a global Western digital hegemony in the production and distribution of material culture and symbolic systems in general;

it is now of paramount importance to treat all human artefacts as cultural agents of socio-political resistance because their material characteristics—their concrete presence in the world—enable them to resist the quest under digital capitalism

to reduce all material products of socio-economic activity to a homogeneous condition of digital existence and control by reducing them to patterns of digital information. Notwithstanding the fact that all material artefacts can now be mapped and translated into digital information, what remains in the physical world, what has been left behind as useless information, as not worthy of digital translation, bears witness to other methods of being in the world, and therefore to the fact that other times, spaces, and histories have been possible and necessary for human survival and for the socio-cultural and politico-economic evolution of Homo sapiens in all its different iterations. An anthropology of resistance in the arena of material culture is not limited to and defined by the study of material culture. It seeks out new methods of analysis and patterns of meaning in objects and human artefacts that have been “left behind” by a digital culture.

What does it mean to practise an anthropology of resistance in the twenty-first century? It means to explore how artefacts have and can lay claim to different times, spaces, and symbolic domains, and how they can and have laid claim to them in order to oppose and resist governing configurations of meaning as defined by other dominant material and symbolic systems of beliefs, customs, and traditions. An anthropology of resistance mines and undermines hegemonic formations in the name of alternative methods of conceiving of the world and the place of human activity in it.



CHRISTOPHER D'ARCANGELO

(geb. 1955, New York; gest. 1979)

Post No Art (um 1975)

Farbe auf Ätztglas
Privatsammlung, Berlin

(b. 1955, New York; d. 1979)

Post No Art (ca. 1975)

Paint on etched glass
Private collection, Berlin

POST
NO
ART

INFORMAZIONE
PER IL VISITATORE
PER INFORMAZIONI
PER INFORMAZIONI





Αρχεία Christopher D'Arcangelo
(1965-2003): Ντοσιέ Α
Ποικίλο αρχχειακό υλικό

Fales Library and Special Collections, New York
University
Ιστορική Cathy Weiner και D'Arcangelo Family
Partnership

Christopher D'Arcangelo

Το 1975 ο Christopher D'Arcangelo (1955-1979)
επιχείρησε μια σειρά από μη εγκεκριμένες ερσεις σε
μεγάλα μουσεία της Νέας Υόρκης. Η αναρχική εγλωση
που τις συνόρευε, όπως και όλες τις μεταγενέστερες
παρεμβάσεις του D'Arcangelo μέχρι τον πρόωπο θάνατό
του, έσπασε ένα μακροχρόνιο ταμπού του αναρχισμού
ως νομιμοποιημένης πολιτικής ιδεολογίας και θεωρίας,
όπως επισημαίνονταν από τη δημοφιλή επάνοδο του
αναρχισμού στο πλαίσιο του πόνκ. Ο D'Arcangelo όμως
σεν ήταν outsider σε ό,τι αφορά τη σύγχρονη τέχνη.
Μολονότι σεν είχε εκθέσει ποτέ ξανά τη δουλειά του,
εκείνη την εποχή ήταν βοηθός των καλλιτεχνών Στίβεν
Αντωνάκου και Daniel Buren, καθώς και βοηθός στην
John Weber Gallery που τότε είχε ανοίξει πρόσφατα,
εκπροσωπώντας μεταμινιμαλιστικούς και εννοιολογικούς
καλλιτέχνες τόσο από τη Βόρεια Αμερική όσο και από
την Ευρώπη. Η δουλειά του D'Arcangelo, την οποία
τεκμηρίωσε επιμελώς ο ίδιος, μαρτυρεί τη μοναδικότητά
του ως καλλιτέχνη και τον έντονο διάλογο και την
αντιπαράθεσή του με τον κόσμο της τέχνης ενόψει της
αυξανόμενης θεσμοποίησης του στα μέσα της δεκαετίας
του 1970.

Dean Inkster

Christopher D'Arcangelo Papers
(1965-2003): Binder A
Divers archive material

Courtesy of Fales Library and Special
Collections, Peter Nadin, Cathy Weiner
and the D'Arcangelo Family Partnership

Christopher D'Arcangelo

In 1975, Christopher D'Arcangelo (1955-1979)
undertook a series of unauthorized actions
in New York's major museums. The anarchist
statement that accompanied them as well as all
of D'Arcangelo's subsequent interventions
until his untimely death breached a long-standing
taboo of anarchism as a legitimate political
belief and doctrine, reiterated in anarchism's
popular re-emergence with the advent of
punk. D'Arcangelo was not, however, an outsider
in regard to contemporary art. Although he
had not previously exhibited his work, he was,
at the time, an assistant to the artists Stephen
Antonakos and Daniel Buren, as well as at the
recently opened John Weber Gallery, represent-
ing a roster of post-minimal and conceptual
artists from both North America and Europe.
D'Arcangelo's work, which he diligently documen-
ted, is thus testimony to both his unique
status as an artist, and the intense dialogue
and debate within the art world in view of its
increasing institutionalization in the mid- to
late 1970s.

Dean Inkster

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Mao Zedong literary notes sold at auction

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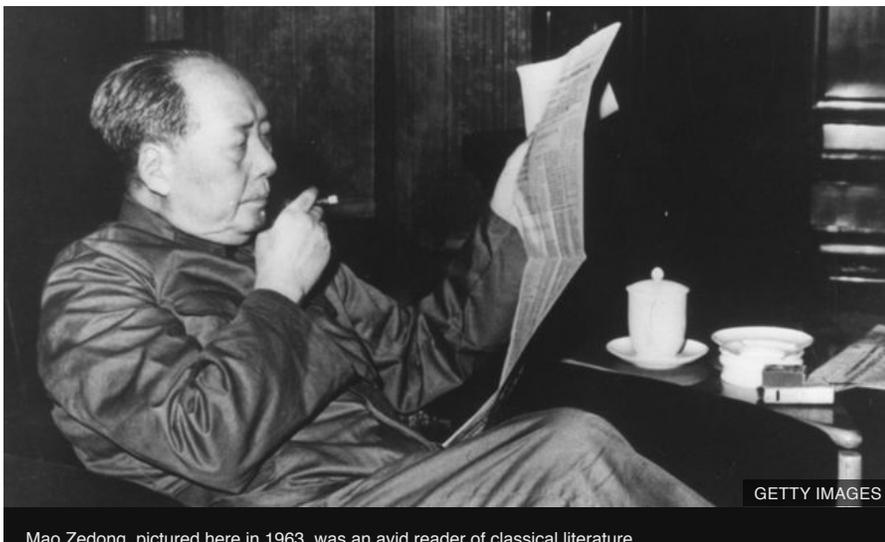
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11



GETTY IMAGES

Mao Zedong, pictured here in 1963, was an avid reader of classical literature



Fee



A collection of handwritten notes by Mao Zedong, the founder of modern China, has been sold at auction for 10 times its estimated price.

The notes, written in 1975 to a professor who had been hired to read to Mao, were sold at Sotheby's in London for £704,750 (\$910,000).

The auction house said the manuscripts were of the "utmost rarity".

The notes relate to classical Chinese literature and poetry, something the Chinese leader was known to enjoy.

They were written the year before Mao died, as his health deteriorated.

His sight was failing and he struggled to read, so requested the presence of a literary expert to read to him.

A scholar, Di Lu, was found, and the two began meeting. But because Mao was having trouble articulating words, she asked him to write his thoughts down on a notepad to ease communication.

The notes were the product of these meetings and offered, Sotheby's said, "numerous valuable insights into Mao's thinking on literature".

Mao Zedong led the Chinese Communist Party, which defeated the Kuomintang in 1949 and founded the People's Republic of China.

As a young man he worked in Peking University Library and was known throughout his life as a keen reader and writer of classical literature, despite his revolutionary political values.

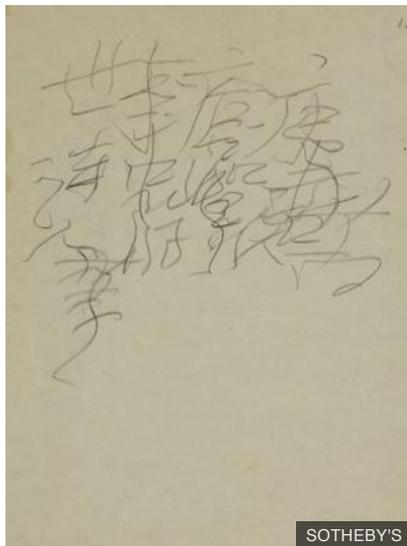
Sotheby's did not disclose the buyer's identity but said that there had been interest in the notes from around the world.

Gabriel Heaton, a books and manuscripts specialist from the auction house, said they gave "an indication of Mao's cultural hinterland, of his interests far beyond politics and his deep knowledge of classical Chinese literature".

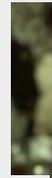
Asked why they had gone for a much higher price than the £60,000-80,000 estimate, he said manuscripts written by Mao were "exceptionally rare on the market, which makes it very difficult for us to estimate them in the first place".

Interest in items linked to Mao was strong, particularly in Asia and China, he said.

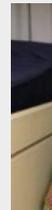
Earlier this year, a silkscreen portrait of him by Andy Warhol fetched \$11m at auction in Hong Kong.



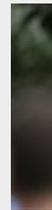
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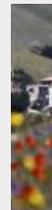
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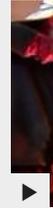
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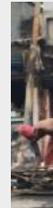
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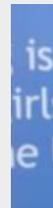
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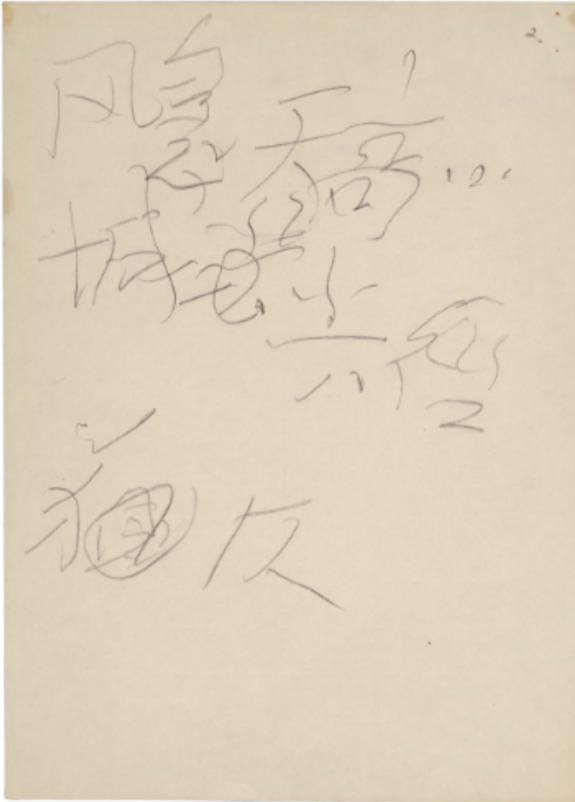
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Sotheby's

English Literature, History, Children's Books and Illustrations, including The Garrett Herman Collection: The Age of Darwin

London | 11 Jul 2017, 10:00 AM | L17404



LOT 28

MAO ZEDONG

AUTOGRAPH MANUSCRIPT NOTES ON CLASSICAL CHINESE LITERATURE, including the titles or first lines of poems by Li Bai ('Difficulty of the Shu Road') and Du Fu ('Ascend' and 'Tallest Buildings Inside the City of Baidi'), a quotation in praise of Du Fu by the contemporary writer Guo Moruo, quotations from another Tang poet, Bai Juyi, and also from the Han dynasty poem 'Ling Du Fu', and the title of a work ('Zi Yang Gang Mu') by the scholar Zhu Xi, which Mao associates with Daoism, 9 pages, text on rectos only, eight in pencil and one in red crayon, three of the manuscripts with explanatory notes by Professor Di Lu subscribed in pencil, in Chinese, various sizes (four leaves 265 x 190mm, four leaves 210 x 150mm, and one leaf 155 x 95mm), 1975, staining to two leaves [with:] Prof. Di Lu, autograph manuscript notes of her meetings with Mao, recording their discussions of classical poetry, Tang Dynasty literature (with his particular love of Li Bai),

Odes of the Han dynasty, linguistics, and his contempt for the traditional curriculum and the elite study of classical culture ("...We need to promote modern Chinese [writing]..."), in Chinese, 7 pages, folio (265 x 195mm), text on rectos only, 26 July 1975; [also with:] Poems by Sa Du Ci. [n.p., n.d.], small folio, blue wrappers, INSCRIBED BY MAO'S WIFE JIANG QING in pencil in Chinese ("for Chairman to read"), and a small bundle of typescripts and press cuttings relating to Di Lu and Mao

ESTIMATE £60,000-80,000 GBP

Lot Sold: 704,750 GBP

CATALOGUE NOTE

REMARKABLE NOTES REVEALING MAO'S DEEP CONTINUING INTEREST IN CLASSICAL CHINESE

LITERATURE. Mao's love of poetry was kindled during his adolescence at Dongshan Upper Primary school in his native Hunan in the years before the Xinhai Revolution. A voracious reader, Mao's first employment on arrival in Beijing in 1918 was as an assistant at Peking University Library, where the librarian was the early Chinese Communist Li Dazhao. Compatriots recalled that in the desperate period of 1927-28 when Mao was with the Red Army in Jinggangshan, rare moments of calm would be spent discussing poetry with comrades such as Zhu De and Chen Yi. Mao even had especially large pockets made for his military jacket so that he could always have a book with him. Mao was himself a capable poet, although the authorship of some of the works attributed to him in his lifetime has been disputed. As early as 1917 he was writing poetry when he spent a month of the summer on a walking tour of Hunan, begging food and lodging. He continued to write through the long years of war: his most famous poem, 'Snow', is said to have been written on his first aeroplane flight, travelling to meet Chiang Kai-shek after the Japanese surrender in 1945. He continued to write even after the foundation of the PRC. Throughout his life Mao preferred classical forms, even when this went against socialist realist orthodoxy. Thus the publication of a selection of his poems in the magazine *Shikan* [Poetry] in 1957 has been interpreted as a signal of the nascent Hundred Flowers Campaign. Mao's love of literature was a constant throughout his life. Henry Kissinger has recalled that in Mao's residence, the Chrysanthemum Fragrance Study, "manuscripts lined bookshelves along every wall; books covered the table and the floor; it looked more the retreat of a scholar than the audience room of the all-powerful leader of the world's most populous nation" (quoted in Short, *Mao: the Man who made China* (2017), p.609). By 1975, however, when these notes were written, Mao was an old and sick man. Politically, the dominant issue for Mao himself and those around him was the succession. His sight was failing so his ability to read was reduced, and he had increasing difficulty articulating words. He was heavily dependent on his confidential secretary, Zhang Yufeng, to read to him and interpret his speech to others. Zhang's competence did not reach to classical literature so Mao began to find himself cut off from the cultural traditions that held such deep meaning to him. The Party Central Committee was tasked with finding someone who could read classical works to Mao, and they requested Beijing University to send them a list of teachers at the Department of Chinese Literature.

As a result of this request, Di Lu (1931-2015), a classical Chinese scholar from Mao's native Hunan, was brought to see Mao. When they first met on 26 May 1975 Mao recited to her a poem by the Tang poet Liu Yuxi then explained that he wanted someone to read him classical works. They talked of Liu Yuxi but Di had difficulty understanding what Mao was saying. On later visits she asked Mao to write his thoughts into a notepad to ease communication, and she also made her own notes of the conversation. These unique manuscript notes are the fruits of these meetings. The notes provide numerous valuable insights into Mao's thinking on literature. Not surprisingly, his attention is mostly focused on the intersection of poetry and politics. He quotes approvingly from the Tang poet Bai Juyi on the moral necessity of the poet to describe contemporary society, and praises Du Fu as the poet saint of his generation for his

concern over the plight of common people (although he has nothing but contempt for his tendency to, in Mao's words, cry like a baby at every opportunity). He dismisses the glib claim made in a Han dynasty poem ('Ling Du Fu') that panegyrics are not written for weak rulers, citing works such as the Han 'Nineteen Old Poems', 'The Seven Scholars of Jian'an', and the 'Songs of the South' as examples of poems written in praise of weak Emperors. His favourite poet of the Tang dynasty was Li Bai, and he drew Di's attention to lines from 'Difficulty of the Shu Road' which he sees as having particular political resonance. AUTOGRAPH MANUSCRIPTS BY MAO ARE OF THE UTMOST RARITY ON THE INTERNATIONAL MARKET.

Issue Date 20 November 2017

CHRISTIE'S

CONDITION REPORT

Sale No 14879

Sale Title Post-War and Contemporary Art

Sale Date 12 December 2017

Further to your recent enquiry, we are pleased to provide to you the condition report(s) you requested. This report has been prepared by Christie's specialists and is no substitute for physical examination by you and/or your advisors. Christie's specialists are not trained restorers and the report set forth below is not a comprehensive condition report prepared by a professional conservator. While we make certain observations on the work which we trust are helpful, we recommend you consult your own restorer for a more complete report. Prospective purchasers should bear in mind that this report will not disclose any imperfections which may only be revealed during the course of subsequent restoration. This report is provided to you as a courtesy and Christie's is not responsible for the accuracy or completeness of this report. Buyers are reminded that Christie's warranties with respect to property are limited as set forth in our Conditions of Sale and do not extend to condition.

Lot

153 Art & Language (Active since 1967) *Two Black Squares – The Paradoxes of Absolute Zero* signed and dated "TWO BLACK SQUARES – THE PARADOXES OF ABSOLUTE ZERO" M Ramsden 1966' (on the reverse) oil...

The canvas, stretcher and attachments are in generally good condition. There are some minor abrasions to the matte paint layer, two to the extreme edges and one linear, approximately 2cm. in length, to the upper left quadrant. Faint stretcher bar marks are visible along the edges. When examined under ultraviolet light, there is minute pinpoint retouching to two minor hairline abrasions to the lower horizontal edge. Subject to the foregoing, it is our view that this work appears to be in generally good condition.

We thank you for your interest in the forthcoming sale. We remind you again that all property is sold 'as is' and should be viewed personally by you or by your professional adviser before the sale to assess its condition.







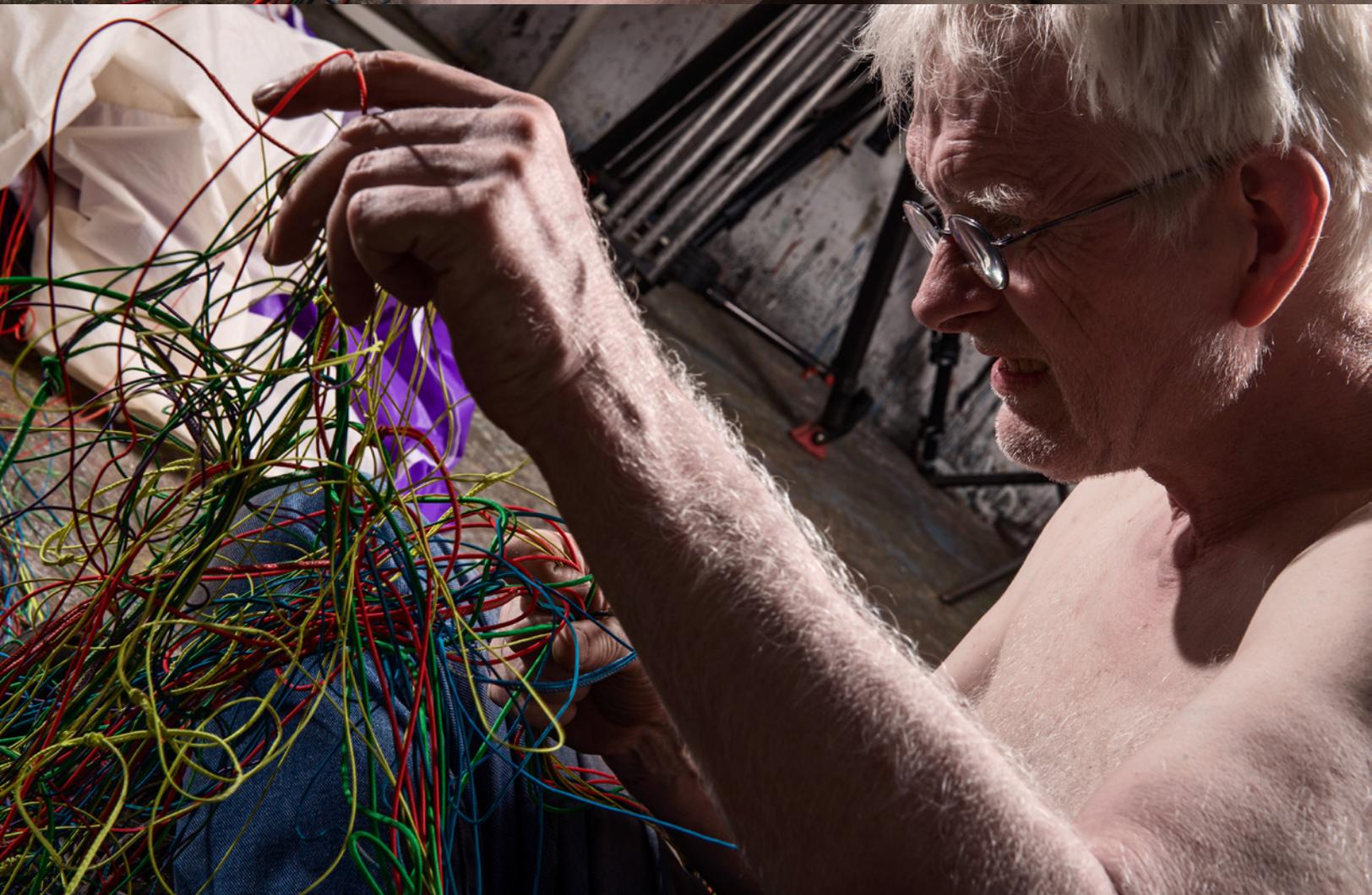
*Christian Forget,
pilote de parapente
malvoyant*

MATTHIEU BROUILLARD







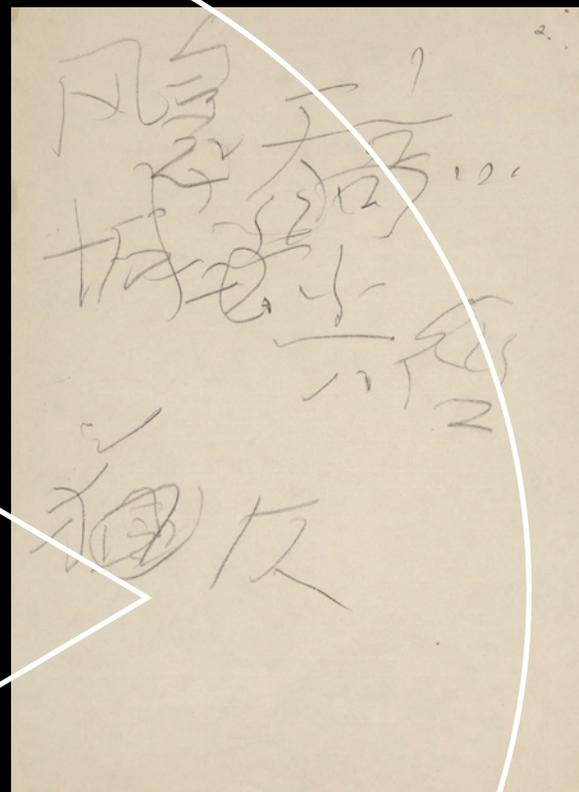








LOT 28
Mao Zedong,
Autograph manuscript notes on
classical Chinese literature



SOTHEBY'S

*English Literature, History, Children's Books
and Illustrations, including The Garrett Herman*

Collection: The Age of Darwin

London, July 11 2017, 10:00 AM

Lot 28, Mao Zedong (1893 – 1976)

*Autograph manuscript notes on
classical Chinese literature, 1975*

Estimate 60,000 – 80,000 GBP

Lot sold 704,750 GBP

(Hammer Price with Buyer's Premium)



Un soleil difficile

François Lemieux

VOX, centre de l'image contemporaine

2017.01.14 – 2017.03.18

Opening January 14th, 2017 at 4 p.m.



François Lemieux, still extract from *Efface tes traces*, 2016, 2016. Courtesy of the artist.

This new exhibition of works by [François Lemieux](#), which includes a film made specifically for the occasion, examines the multiple uses of the metaphor of transparency, and the changes it has undergone since the 1920s. In glass architecture, transparency initially was a symbol of a positive social transformation—a radical political emancipation, even—before undergoing rapid evolution and transfiguration, eventually nurturing a fair share of the dreams of objectivity, optimization, fluidity, acceleration and hygiene so characteristic of our modern world. Through the meaning, the paradoxes and the imagery that it mobilizes, transparency informs not only contemporary ethical and political representations but also industrial aesthetics, architecture, communications, as well as abstract algorithmical and statistical machines. It is the embodiment of a new, mythical, entirely “wired” space, as seen in the connectivity of smart cities, cloud-based informatics, and big data: a world emancipated from the material, that has become transparent to itself. Using these perceptible evidences, the exhibition seeks to identify what the concept of transparency can tell us about the dreams that haunt the era we live in.

[Website](#) | [Instagram #centre_vox](#) | [Facebook @Vox, centre de l'image contemporaine](#)

Sophie takes Mr. Taut's letter from her pocket.



She wonders how and why this sheet of carbon paper is here in her hands.



François Lemieux, *Un soleil difficile*

ROBIN SIMPSON

Friend,

Azzeddine Soufiane. Khaled Belkacemi. Aboubaker Thabti. Mamadou Tanou. Ibrahima Barry. Abdelkrim Hasane. All were killed on the evening of January 29, 2017, at the Centre culturel islamique de Québec (CCIQ), located in Québec City's Sainte-Foy quarter.

Seven months later, in July, the town of Saint-Apolinaire rejected the CCIQ's proposal to create a Muslim cemetery. It was a decision made by way of a referendum in which just forty-nine of the municipality's six thousand inhabitants voted. Their decisions swayed by a door-to-door campaign by the racist group La Meute.¹

In early August, Régis Labeaume, the mayor of Québec City, quickly coordinated the sale of a plot of land to the CCIQ for this purpose.

1. Isabelle Porter, "Cimetière musulman : le groupe La Meute actif dans le comité du non," *Le Devoir*, July 18, 2017.

An article in *Le Devoir* reporting on the sale summarized the mayor's rationale, as given at a press conference:²

La tête de porc déposé devant le CCIQ l'été dernier, les actes de vandalisme ciblant les mosquées du Québec ; il n'y a pas là matière à instaurer un système de sécurité ou à lancer une campagne de sensibilisation, a jugé le maire.³

Boufeldja Benabdallah, co-founder of the CCIQ, followed up: “Ça ne nous a même pas effleuré l'esprit,” a aussi déclaré Boufeldja Benabdallah. ‘On ne veut pas jouer le jeu en installant un système de sécurité.’”⁴

Labeaume's intention, I think, was to keep focus on the cemetery as a means of decoupling its ground-breaking from the assaults that preceded it. He was aiming to frame the cemetery as just and ordinary—that is, as uneventful—in the midst of violent events. Yet, in implying a disassociation from the pending judicial answers to those events, he also conceded to their terms of engagement. To say that

2. Marie-Michèle Sioui, “Cimetière musulman à Québec : ‘un baume sur la tragédie,’” *Le Devoir*, August 5, 2017.

3. The pig's head left in front of the CCIQ last summer, the acts of vandalism targeting mosques in Quebec—this isn't a question of installing a security system or starting an awareness campaign, surmised the mayor; my translation.

4. “It didn't even cross our mind,” added Boufeldja Benabdallah. “We didn't want to play this game by installing a security system”; my translation.

this isn't a question is, in some sense, to say that the pig's head, the vandalism, the murders, and the burning of the car belonging to the president of the centre, Mohamed Labidi, that same week⁵ were all questions to begin with. Which is to say that these questions deserve an answer at some point.

Those questions were part of a violent recruitment call to transparency. Labeaume's suggestion, through disavowal, that they could be answered through mechanisms of liberal clarity such as a public-awareness campaign or a security system further compounded the fantasy that the CCIQ and its constituency embodied a form of opacity set against this transparency.

I would like to think that Benabdallah heard this when Labeaume attempted to answer on his behalf. And despite how the newspaper framed it, he didn't answer, amend, or react to Labeaume. "It didn't even cross our mind... We didn't want to play that game," was instead pronounced as an exit, a bridge, and a balm.

Remember that at the end of July, not long after the referendum in Saint-Apollinaire and roughly a week before the land sale, the Israeli state began removing security equipment, including railings, gates, scaffolding with cameras, and metal detectors to the entrance to the Al-Aqsa mosque in occupied east Jerusalem after a long protest by its Muslim constituency.

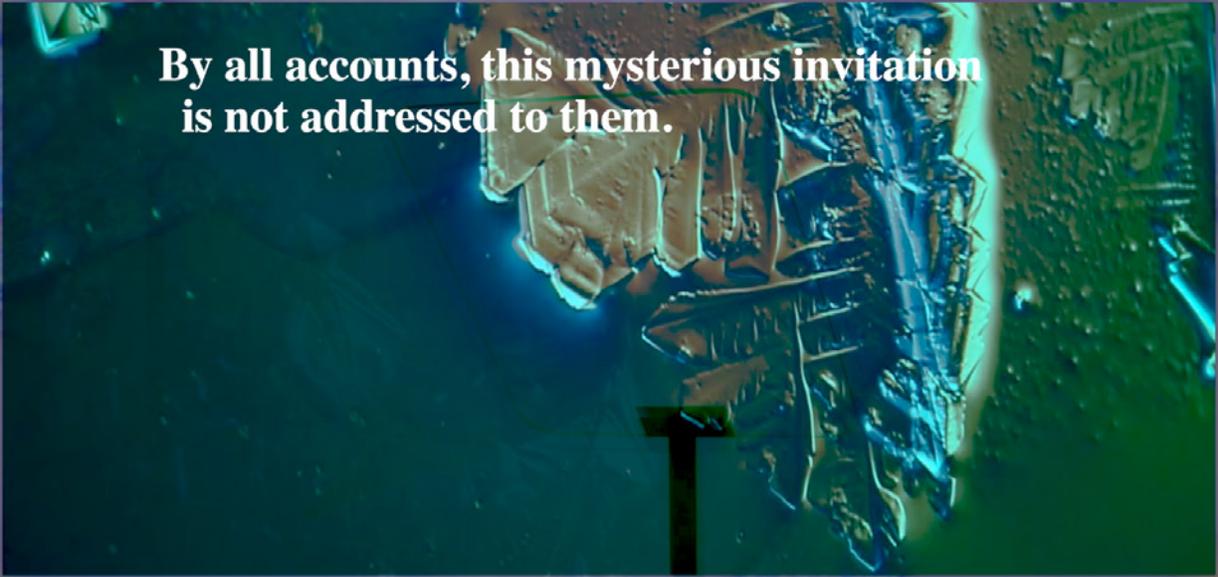
Sainte-Foy to Jerusalem: We will not play that game.

5. "La voiture du président du Centre culturel islamique de Québec incendiée," *Le Devoir*, August 30, 2017.

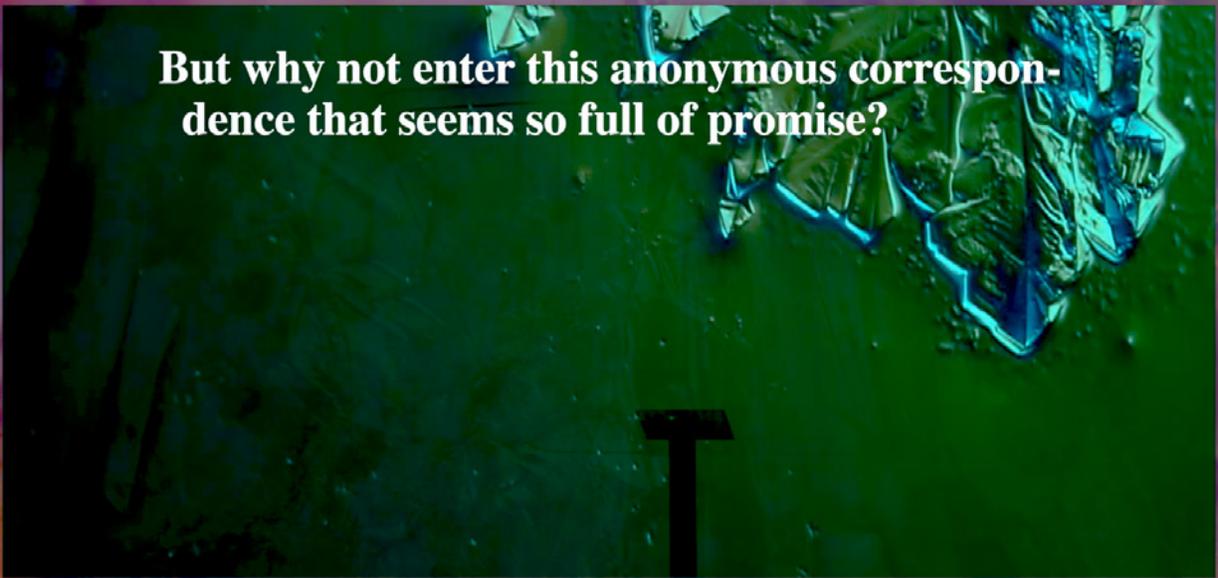
Two weeks before the killings in January, we started the year with your exhibition, *Un Soleil Difficile*, at Vox, centre de l'image contemporaine here in Montreal. In this exhibition you offered an archaeology of the concept of transparency from antiquity to the present. It was accessed through a history of glass architecture from the myth of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, to the perennial example of the Crystal Palace, the utopian projections of German architect Bruno Taut, through to the transmutation of the use of glass in International style, to corporate architecture, and finally leading us to today's algorithmic surveillance.

Underlying this was an argument for opacity. Opacity as it is found in the folds of Baroque sculpture and architecture. Opacity in those provisional and incidental spaces that emerge where the surface of a single plane meets but doesn't break. Opacity as it is shared among a furtive circle of friends. Opacity as our body gone opaque, steeled against extractive and parasitic capital that tracks and draws upon the minutiae of our movements, our emotional tics and ties, and our panicked attention.

Your exhibition had already been on my mind for the last half of 2016. You were working on it intensely and had asked me to write a short text to accompany it. Together we watched fragments of two of the four video interviews you had shot with philosopher and lawyer Mireille Buydens and architecture historian Rosemary Bletter. You shared a draft script co-authored with Marie-Douce St-Jacques, about a group of friends who reinitiate Taut's dream of an expressionist architecture, and a changing list of what might go in the main space, which



**By all accounts, this mysterious invitation
is not addressed to them.**



**But why not enter this anonymous correspon-
dence that seems so full of promise?**

was shaping out to be a sort of foyer to the smaller projection room, a waiting room populated with concrete analogues to your carefully crafted video.

I was encouraged by you to read a segment from Brecht's reader—or, our preferred translation, hand oracle—for city-dwellers. Just the first part about running from the train station. About abandoning your friends, entourage, or chaperones. Finding an inn. Renting a room. Locking the door and refusing to answer any knock. A poem urging you to cover your tracks.

I read this and wrote to you a few days after the American election from a hotel room in Belfast, Northern Ireland. It was difficult to think about opacity as a strategy in a city riven with walls, in the wake of the promise for more walls.



And truthfully, at that moment, I had little interest in entertaining an idea of opacity. Where I hesitated was on the idea of opacity as an answer to transparency. As a reaction to transparency. As a retort. It all sounded like it was still in the service of transparency, permitting transparency to set the rules.

I was and remain interested in the question of rejecting transparency as the measure of opacity. And, vice-versa, in rejecting a transparency that must be guaranteed by opacity. This I'm learning from Denise Ferreira da Silva and her understanding of what she terms "the transparency thesis" found at the core of the post-Enlightenment I, the sure and possessive I that is inaugurated by the assignment of an opposite, an opaque Other, kidnapped, dispos-

sessed and made object to confirm the subject: a nobody but a body, so some body can be somebody.⁶

I'm also thinking about how theorist and poet Fred Moten drops the "i" for an "e" in anti. This move toward and into the ante-normative is the crux of his argument in a 2015 lecture titled "Blackness and Non-performance." In this talk he examines the 1857 case of Betty, a slave who is declared free but decides to return to her owners in Tennessee—an act rejecting the judicial offer to enter into the contract of a possessive "I." In another instance, Moten describes Adrian Piper's performance at Max's Kansas City, in which Piper, blindfolded, nose and ears plugged, hands gloved, all flesh covered, doubled down on objecthood, becoming object twice over, sinking like a depth charge into the miasma between subjectivity and objectivity.⁷

Post-Enlightenment transparency delivered raciality to the world. And this transparency can't do without. Yet this is absent from the genealogy that you and your interlocutors sound out. From architecture through to algorithms, the conversation you coordinated at once antagonizes and rests on an even universalism that suggests that everyone under modernism vying for an exit is starting from the same standpoint and that the leap into opacity is made by way of transparency.

6. Denise Ferreira da Silva, "No-Bodies: Law, Raciality, and Violence," *Griffith Law Review* 18, no. 2 (2009): 212–36.

7. Fred Moten, *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003)

In your video, Rosemary Bletter describes the intentions of Taut and the members of the Glass Chain as anti-rational. Through a long exchange of letters, the anonymous members of the group traded notes on fantastic crystalline cities, on the affective and just power of coloured glass and the light it casts. This anti, their anti, looked to cut a line back into the imaginary foundation of modernity.

The first time I wrote to you I wondered if my hesitation was too reactive on the question of opacity. I wondered if I was behaving like the dinner guests in Brecht's poem. Insisting that you stay at the table and sit within the bracket. I wondered if my skepticism was forcing us both to hold on to that "i":

We note 
 That you drive the conversation faster
 You seek the word which will let you
 Make your exit
 For it's a point with you
 Not to attract attention.
 You rise mid-sentence
 You say crossly you want to go
 We say: stay! and we realise
 That you're the fifth wheel.
 But you sit down.⁸

8. Bertolt Brecht, "Ten Poems from a Reader for Those Who Live in Cities," in *Bertold Brecht: Poems*, eds. John Willett and Ralph Mannheim (London: Eyre Methuen Ltd., 1976), 131–50.

Or am I echoing Édouard Glissant's audience's cries of barbarism in response to his "clamour" to the right to opacity for all.⁹

My question to you is, if we're to refuse our assignments as individuals and all the technologies of instantiating the human within a modern frame, if we're to make an exit, then why leave transparency behind? Is transparency really the sole property of the Enlightenment onward? Isn't it a question of the grafting of the individual to transparency, a violent process that calls out an allotment and division between the transparent and self-possessed and the opaque and affectable others? Is it not the bind between transparency and opacity, tethered in affirmation and denigration, that is the problem? Not simply transparency on its own but the insidious bracket that it forms in its assignment and enforcement of opacity.

Or as M. NourbeSe Philip asks in her "Journal Entries Against Reaction," how to "create a place where I can write from a position of statement—first statement—and not reaction, because reaction implies that I am being determined by what I oppose."¹⁰ Sounding something like Moten's ante, Philip's first statement isn't some reset to an originary enunciation, but a point of address that doesn't

9. Édouard Glissant, "For Opacity," in *Poetics of Relation*, trans. Betsy Wing (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 189–94.

10. M. NourbeSe Philip, "Journal Entries Against Reaction," in *Frontiers: Essays and Writings on Racism and Culture* (Stratford, ON: Mercury Press, 1992), 59–71.

**They dream of common spaces and infra-
structures made of bad weather.**



Everything will need to be transformed;



engage the bracket, that instead steps out into the world and draws from “the grime and gold of the human spirit.”

“It didn’t even cross our mind.” Listen again to how deftly Benabdallah leaves the seemingly inexhaustible and violent recruitment call to transparency in the hands of the mayor, leaving that tight little bracket as the caustic little object in the world that is: “We didn’t want to play this game by installing a security system.”

We could guess that to the mayor’s ears Benabdallah’s statement must have sounded something like a repetition, if not a refusal, a reactive and late explanation for inaction.

Perhaps the sense of belatedness, to which the newspaper contributes by qualifying Benabdallah’s statement as an addendum to the mayor’s assessment, this supposed lateness signals that first statement. A statement that comes from knowledge of the ruthlessness of transparency. A statement pronounced from the antechamber of experience. But I would like to think that what Benabdallah does in this statement is claim a space, an expansive and communicative one known and understood without the aid of surveillance, without the necessity for evidence, without a trace.

If there is an exit through opacity, a way of sharing in an opacity that isn’t positioned as the guarantee of transparency, is there also the possibility of a transparency unbound? A transparency that leaves no trace through its opposite. Imagines no inversion. Needs no opacity. Has no necessity. No guarantee. No negative. No other. Draws no line by force or force. A transparency unenforced among no bodies.

If both transparency and opacity are imaginative and novel acts in the “theatre of reason” of post-Enlightenment thought, as Ferreira da Silva terms it, then per-

haps there is also an exit via transparency? Can it be pronounced over again as opacity can be?

Think about how Frantz Fanon seizes upon and claims his narcissism, holding on to the subject and its failures, when faced with a leveling biocentrism within post-war psychotherapy:

When one reads that after the age of twenty-nine a man can no longer love and that he must wait until he is forty-nine before his capacity for affect revives, one feels the ground give way beneath one. The only possibility of regaining one's balance is to face the whole problem, for all these discoveries, all these inquiries lead only in one direction: to make man admit that he is nothing, absolutely nothing—and that he must put an end to the narcissism on which he relies in order to imagine that he is different from the other “animals.”

This amounts to nothing more nor less than *man's surrender*.

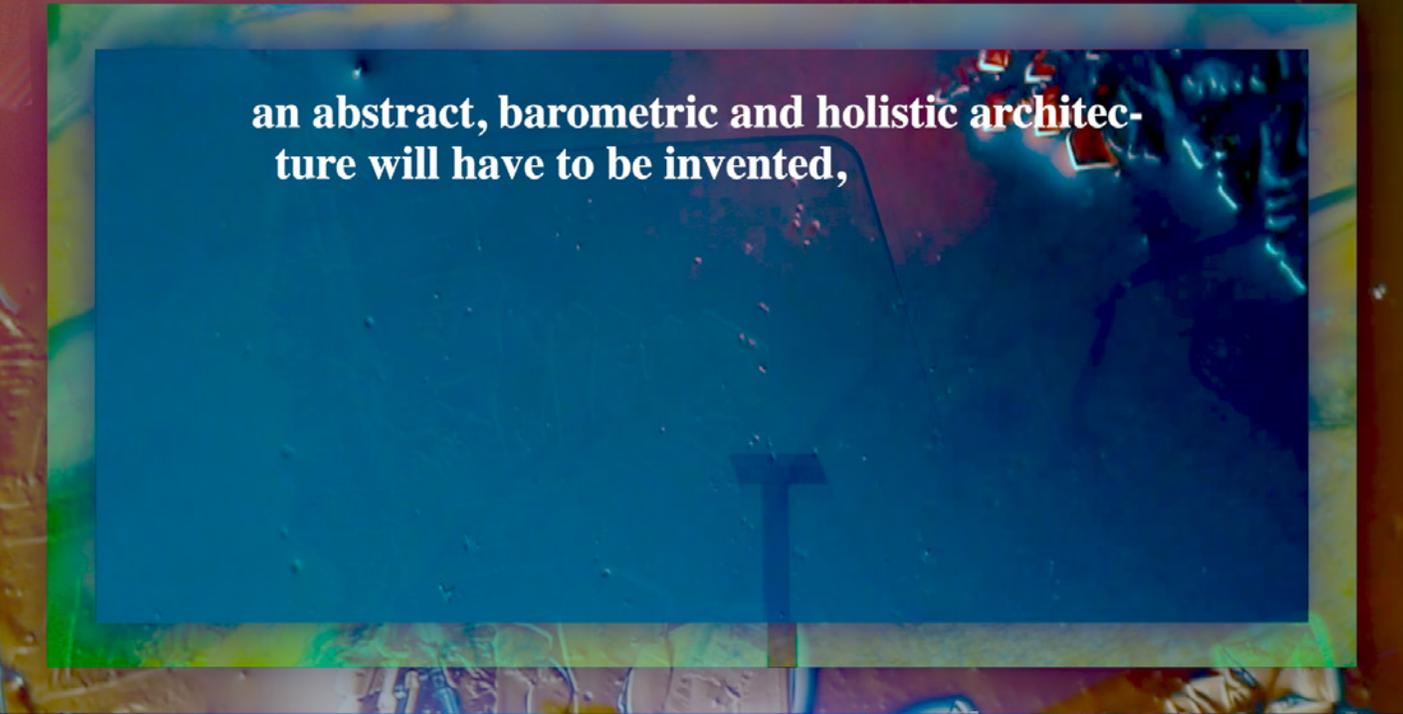
Having reflected on that, I grasp my narcissism with both hands and I turn my back on the degradation of those who would make man a mere mechanism. If there can be no discussion on a philosophical level—that is, the plane of the basic needs of human reality—I am willing to work on the psychoanalytical level—in other words, the level of the “failures,” in the sense in which one speaks of engine failures.¹¹

11. Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (London: Pluto Books, 2008), 12.

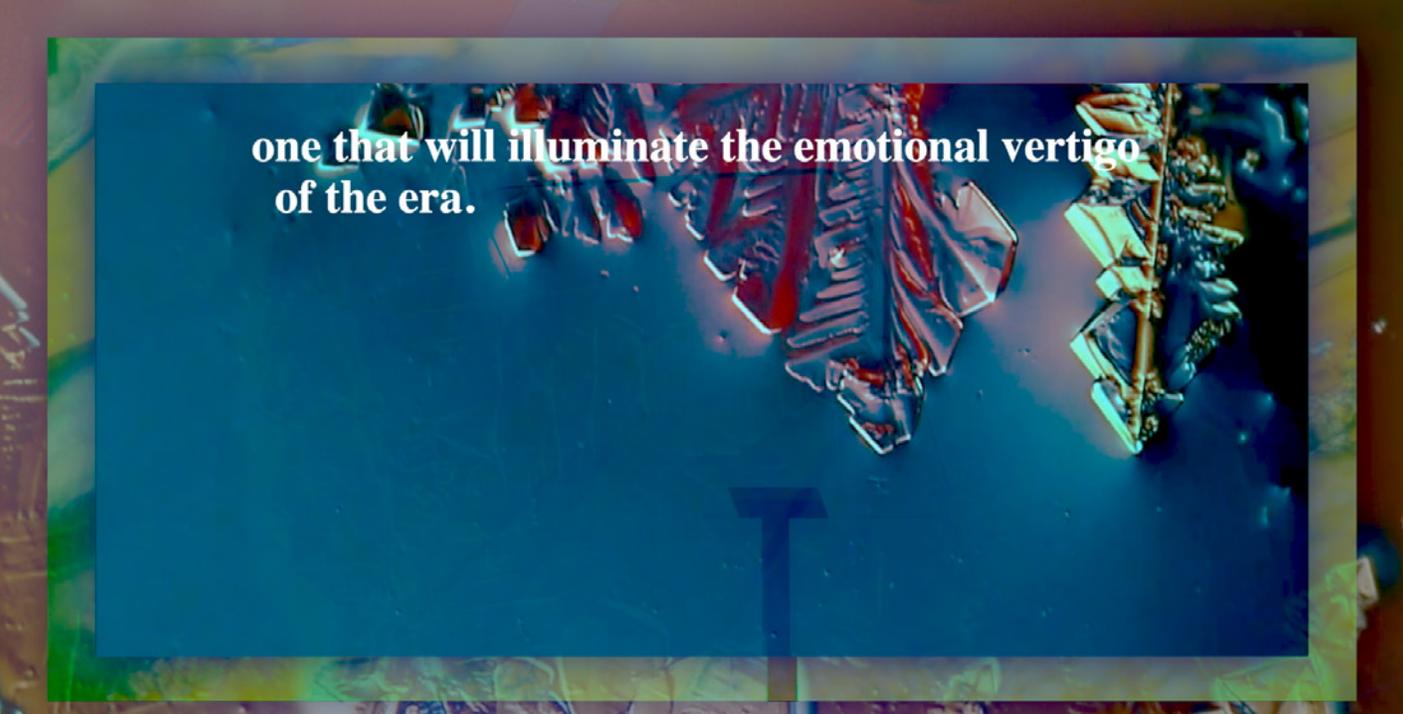
This biocentrism was, of course, one stop on the path to today's algorithmic governance, which you examine in your video—in particular, your closing conversation with Antoinette Rouvroy. Fanon was confronted with the contract between behavioural sciences and cybernetics coming together then, on the other side of the Second World War. This is also an important reminder that the pervasive mechanisms of algorithmic capital were refined through enslavement, dispossession and war.

In one instance, surveillance and algorithmic capital have everything to do with a piercing and all-illuminating transparency. But maybe it's not about things becoming more transparent under this gaze. Maybe things are only becoming more opaque. If algorithmic capital feeds off of a biocentric partitioning of behaviour and relations. If it carves up bodies and affect, in order to makes us “absolutely nothing” and then sweep up the traces. If Big Data is the apex of the transparency thesis from Solomon to the Enlightenment to liberal possessive individualism. Is it, then, less a question of how we're hedged into transparency than of how transparency is concentrated not through its distribution but through the assignment of opacity so that individuals, through bodies, interrelations, and the rhythms felt in-between, become or remain nothing more than sites of extraction. And under this optic, in many respects, we are simply the privileged end users, the terminal consumers of and subjects to a technology long prototyped on everyone who was designated property by those who were self-possessed and propertied.

I think this question of who makes the leap from transparency into opacity is paramount if you're a somebody



an abstract, barometric and holistic architecture will have to be invented,



one that will illuminate the emotional vertigo of the era.

in a world of no-bodies. If transparency is left intact and you find your exit in opacity, in the fold, then your exit has been primed by a ruthless transparency. But if you're a somebody in this modern configuration and you say there is another opacity to pronounce, can transparency not also resound in that same clamour that Glissant called for? Is there a way to effect an entanglement of transparency and opacity? Of the grime and the gold?

In the end, watching your video over, it became clear that what you're looking to investigate is precisely the theft of transparency from the world. Architecture serves as one means, one drama, to trace the usurpation of transparency. From its easy calibration with Protestantism and capital, its renewed communal promise in German expressionist architecture, through to the atomization, exploitation, and employment of our emotions, interrelations, and actions as motors for value under algorithmic capital.

Considering the ruthlessness of transparency, an idea of its recuperation at this stage is understandably an uneasy suggestion. This unease in its recovery is best played out in your and Marie-Douce's scripted scenario running in parallel to the theories laid out by your interlocutors. Through these episodes, a group of friends are spurred into revolutionary reverie after finding a copy of Taut's initial letter. Prior to its discovery, the group was sitting with the knowledge of some sort of revolution to the north, the excitement of the event curbed by a persistent pessimism and disenchantment. The letter offers some respite, and as they read it over they get carried away by the dream of another, unbound transparency.

You present these intervals by way of an image of the “presidential” model of teleprompter, which appears to the viewer as an angled sheet of glass on a stand but that in fact reflects for the reader text presented on a screen fixed to its base. (Fittingly, the technology behind it comes from nineteenth-century carnival shows and haunted houses.¹²) Standing in for a figure of authority, appointed or otherwise, the teleprompter is set against a shifting background of pastel-hued crystals, expanding in all directions to the edge of the frame.

I wrote to you in advance of your exhibition to ask, Why is opacity thought of as the default evasion of surveillance? Could transparency be about allowing passage? A state of being communicative without distortion, without resistance or friction, free from the discord and contact that might otherwise solicit or break off a trace? In the way that water is transparent to sound, maybe transparency is about conveying, carrying, supporting, and maintaining fidelity between and within bodies. Maybe transparency is about passing along and sharing objection. Maybe it’s about how we object together.

I would add now that maybe it is also about how we grieve.

Benabdallah said the cemetery was a balm to tragedy.

12. Marie Luckhurst and Emilie Morin (eds.), *Theatre and Ghosts: Materiality, Performance and Modernity* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

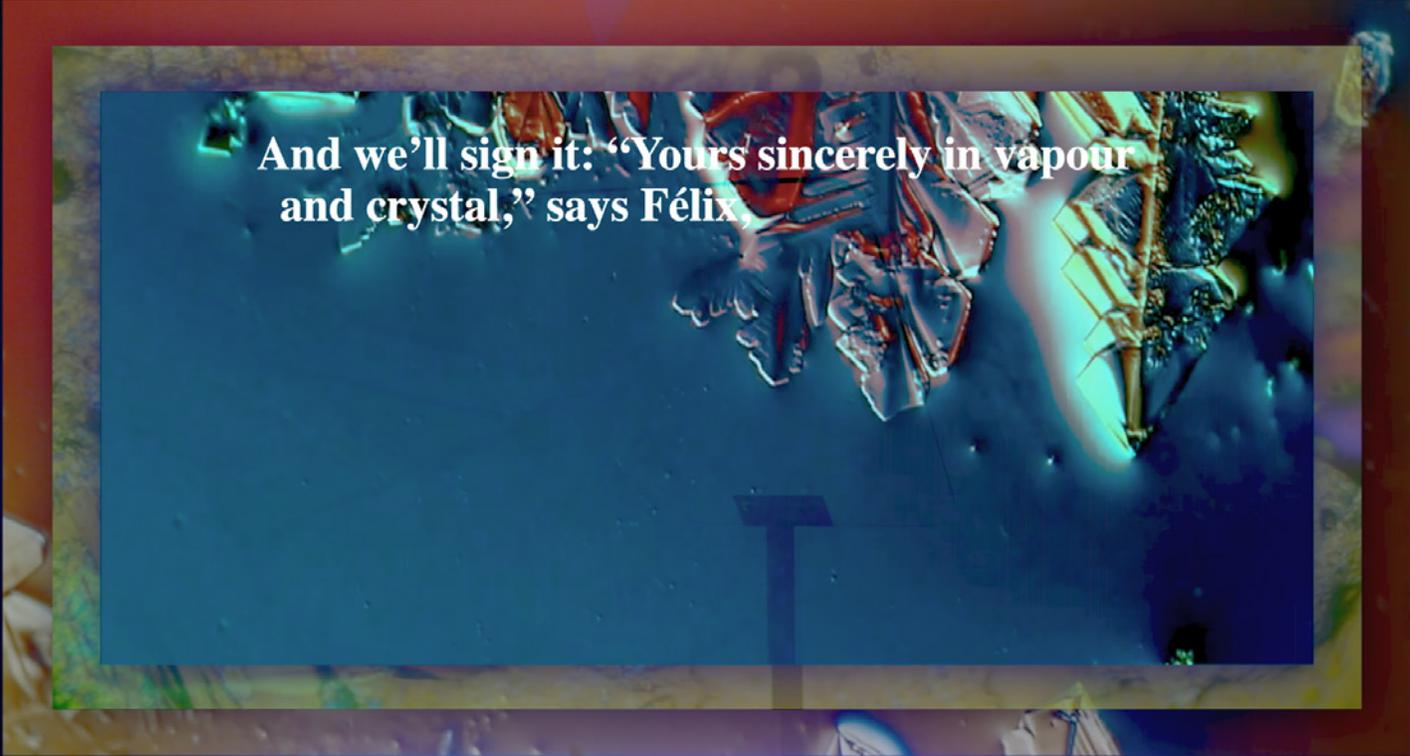
In his nocturnal sonnet on the winter equinox, John Donne wrote in the darkness of the shortest day of a general balm drunk to soothe grievance:

The sun is spent, and now his flasks
Send forth light squibs, no constant rays;
The world's whole sap is sunk;
The general balm th' hydroptic earth hath drunk¹³

You've written before about a raft as metaphor for anarchism, of binding together and forming a provisional vessel by which to buoy the immediate circumstances. I want to think about this in the face of fascism, which also evokes binding together, its Latin root being *fascis*: bundle. And in this sense I want to continue to think with you against this desertification, to imagine not only the ways we can come together but how we might drink and lose ourselves in this balm to resubmerge ourselves in a transparent body that carries us along with our objection.

Yours,
Robin

13. I was introduced to this poem by Fred Moten during a workshop titled *The General Balm* coordinated by *The Capilano Review*, October 24, 2015, Vancouver. John Donne, "A Nocturnal upon St. Lucy's Day," Poetry Foundation, accessed January 2, 2018, <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44122/a-nocturnal-upon-st-lucys-day>.



And we'll sign it: "Yours sincerely in vapour
and crystal," says Félix,



François Lemieux, stills from *Un soleil difficile*, 2017.
Courtesy of the artist.

The Sentience of Movement, Necrophilia, and the Unhistorical



DAVID TOMAS

A recent exhibition by Philippe Hamelin at the Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery, Concordia University, raises some interesting questions about the perceptual or sensorial tensions generated by visual and sensory cues—between the sense one might have of something being familiar, that is nevertheless re-presented as an image, and simultaneous feelings of estrangement or defamiliarization associated with that sense.¹ In this exhibition, Hamelin poses these

1. *Carnations*, Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery, Concordia University, August 30–October 21, 2017. Curator: Michèle Thériault.

questions in a series of different works and thus within tensions generated under specific, yet shifting, conditions of representation. Of the eight works presented at the gallery, seven are computer-generated animations, one of which is an extensive wall-sized three-panel hypnotic spectacle of dancing naked humanoid figures. Each work probes the frontier between the human and non-human through its own ecology of images, sometimes with the addition of sound, but does so in a way that raises a primordial question: in the modulated, yet calculated—programmed—flux of images, and sounds, that can define a work, what is the function of movement and how does it project the spectator into a zone in which human identity is suspended outside a teleology of human evolution, outside an overarching history of humanity, even though each work clearly maps a threshold between human and post-human, present and future?

The question of the function of movement in perceptual and cultural processes is in urgent need of aeration. We live in a visual environment whose economic evolution is based on an unprecedented acceleration in the production and circulation of images. This numbing visual flux has effectively undermined our capacity to critically engage with images, for they are no longer products of a historical consciousness but, increasingly, are the by-products of automated machine processes and human behaviour that mimics those processes in affectless celebration of the idea of communication, or community. Is it possible that most of the images produced by humans and machines escape historical inscription and appropriation not just because they are banal, but also because they are of limited use? Because

they are the products of a culture increasingly fascinated and dominated by a logic of instantaneous obsolescence—*of a continuous death of images*, as Snapchat’s perverse capitalization of a social-networking system based on the short-term existence of transmitted images suggests. Although the question of the death of the image does not appear to be directly addressed in Hamelin’s exhibition, his works betray its phantomatic presence. Each work is haunted by a necrophilic aura—or atmosphere. The image in movement suggests an erotico-copulatory desire for “life” but also serves as a mask for death’s looped rhythmic convulsions. The fact that an erotic dance of life with death plays itself out within each spectator’s libidinal economy as well as on screen, in synchronicity, is significant. Hamelin poses the question of the socio-necrophilic functions of movement in the representation of life forms at the interface of human and non- or post-human. What is the relationship between an image that is fixed in space and time and an image in movement? What is the relationship between an image in movement and the effervescent motion of the digital grain that might serve as the substance of its materiality in a video animation? A similar question can be posed when one interacts with automatons or, more recently, advanced humanoid forms of artificial-intelligence–based robotic systems, the primitive forms of autonomous intelligent organizations that might eventually challenge or replace *Homo sapiens*. How is the illusion of life cultivated and maintained in these artificial systems? What are the relationship, the tension, and, ultimately, the play between the fiction and reality of life and death in the wider social space of a digital economy and culture? How is this rela-

tionship adopted as a precondition for new social practices and life forms? To engage with Hamelin's exhibition and its sections (works) is to accept being placed within a non-linear science-fiction narrative, with its bitter-sweet apocalyptic undertones and the promise of synthetic and other forms of life.

Hamelin's exhibition can be experienced as a multifaceted science-fiction event composed of eight distinct chapters that picture the threshold between the human and post-human from different visual and affective points of view: bodies that have no organic substance (*Les amis (à l'infini)*, 2014/2017), forms that appear to embody intelligence (*Sci Fi Haïkus*, 2012 –), quasi-amorphous organic forms that suggest a laboratory origin (*Scène 2 (découpage)*, 2014/17 ; *Vivariums*, 2017), and a camouflaged environment inspired by op art (*Camouflage bureaucratique (prédateur)*, 2013).

The narrative propositions exist outside of the realm of naïve post-human representations, and yet they feed off common technologies of representation, their imaginative possibilities, and a stereotyped repertoire of images. But they do so according to a logic of programming and rendering that is subject to the possibilities suggested and imposed by a creative culture of errors.² Although the exhibition's subject matter seems to be intimately related to a necrophilically impregnated post-human world, its focus is on the human and its limitations, not necessarily

2. The role of errors was discussed with the author during the course of the exhibition.

what lies beyond, even though almost all the works propose experiences that suggest a world outside of traditional human agency and inhabitation. Thus, one must not treat these works as if they were distant from the human body. Each binds its viewer with its visual proposition through a sensorial, seductive economy of simulated necrophilic agency and desire. This economy does not impose its will on *Homo sapiens*. It seduces the senses and infiltrates a historical consciousness through the sensory machinations of a range of rhythmic tempos. Through the paradoxical fault lines of each sensory experience, one intuits the presence of a strange alien force animating an experimental science-fiction world. But one also senses the limitations of one's own body as sensory field and historical agent.

Carnations (the exhibition's curious, ambiguous title whose network of connotations includes flesh and gods) provides a set of computer-generated contact sites that resonate perversely, in the shadows, with modernism's love affair with the utopian possibilities of industrial manufacture, automation, and the futuristic promises of a machine culture, as either reference, allusion, counter-proposition, or echo. Its most direct reference would be *Les amis (à l'infini)*, in which dancing figures animated by scintillating digital bytes are strange eyeless bas-relief representations of their human referents, mutations that exist in between two references: (close friends) and post-human avatars of a program and a complex process of computational rendering and its unforeseen patterns of errors.



Vivariums, 2017 (vue de l'installation). Crédit photo : Paul Litherland, Studio Lux
© Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery, Concordia University, 2017

But the pod-like forms of *Vivariums* and the inert glistening slab of digital meat in *Scène 2* also trigger a complex dialogic web of allusions concerning the existential paradoxes of intelligent organisms—avatars of hidden programs—encased within the two-dimensional prison of digital representation, the former in their separate observational spaces, the latter trapped in the in-between non-dimensional space created by the fusion of an original mythic cinematic reference (the second scene of Jean-Luc Godard's classic 1963 film *Contempt*) and Hamelin's digital interpretation. Brigitte Bardot's naked body is therefore subject to two artificial gazes, in *Scène 2*, even before it reaches the eyes of a viewer in 1963 or in 2017: her lover Paul, played by Michel Piccoli, and Godard's clinical cam-

era-eye mapping out the trajectory of the director's/cameraman's gaze(s) incarnated in the camera's circulating tracking lens as it circumnavigates Bardot's nude body. But the cynical, titillating multilayered cinematic gaze has now been replaced by the sensuous neutered "cold blooded" para-human digital gaze of Hamelin's virtual camera as it circumnavigates a voluptuous mass of simulated red meat that has been digitally crafted—programmed—in place of Bardot's mythic, but cinematically mediated, nude body. *Scène 2* presents each of its viewers with a schematic meta-history of programmed vision and simulated sexual stimulation conveyed by a carnivorous tracking shot that loops around its mythic object of desire: a virtual eyeball that soaks into its dark interior the artificial light rays that guarantees the presence of a sensual body through a trajectory that also mimics a nonexistent lover's devouring gaze.

Image fixe tirée de *Scène 2 (découpage)*, 2014 - 2017, animation d'images de synthèse, courtoisie de l'artiste



But those light rays were never in contact with a body of red meat, the amorphous body associated with Bardo's body—a virtual reference composed of a psychic web of association cultivated by a camera movement and an accompanying sound track. We are invited into a world in which the rules of digital representation determine the form of an artificial world that mimics, but cannot replace, the “real” one that it copies so diligently. But that “real” world is also a construction: a film.

There is a necrophilic foundation to this simulated world (after all, nothing is alive—or was ever alive—all is artificially evoked—referenced—conjured into a mind's eye by the magic of computer programs), one that is captured in a subtly disturbing fashion in Hamelin's com-

puter-generated images, in which the suggestion of life is counterbalanced by the scintillating patterns of digital matter that seem to dance to another conception of “life”—or what it could become. Illusion and materiality seem to host different forms of intelligence united in a common objec-



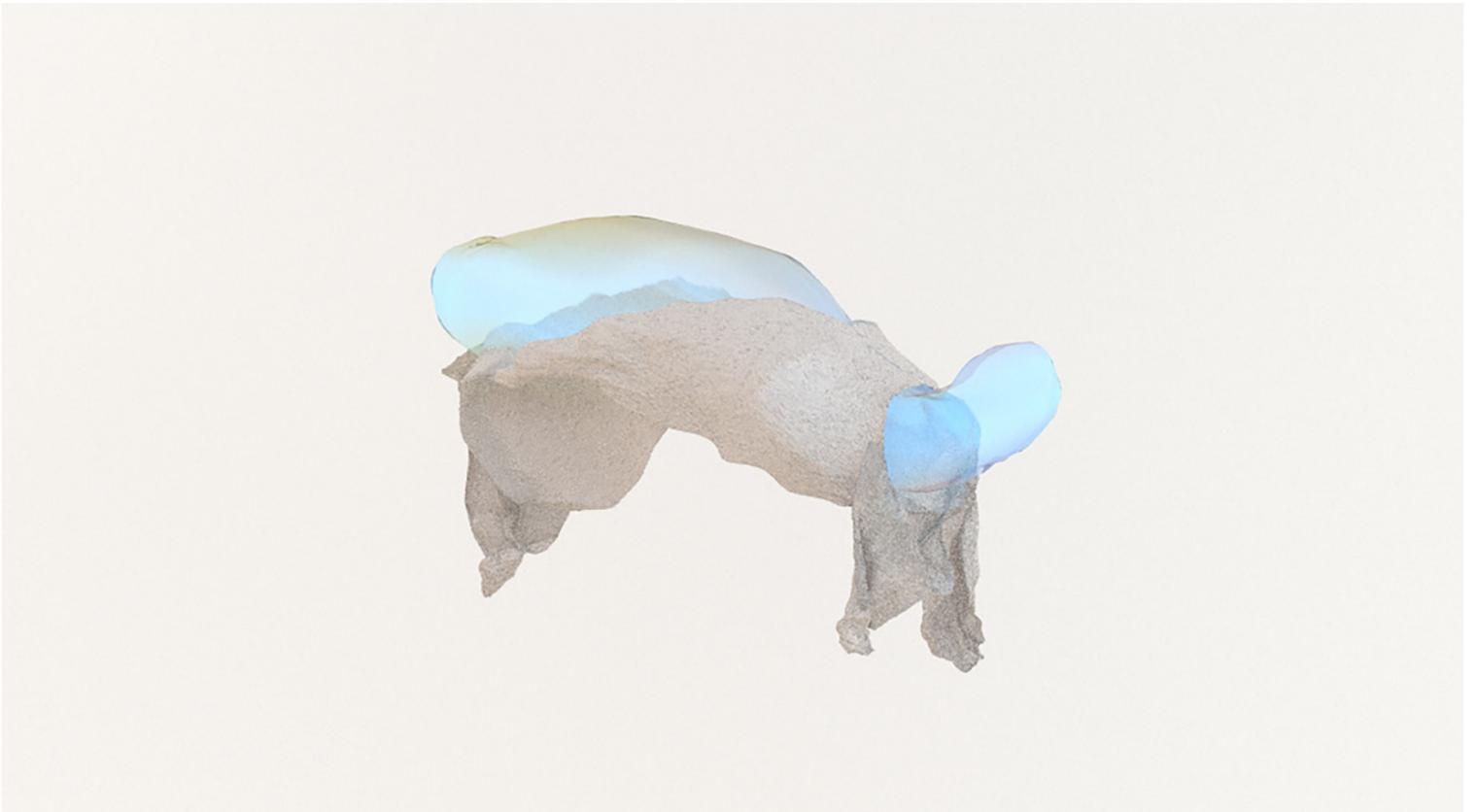
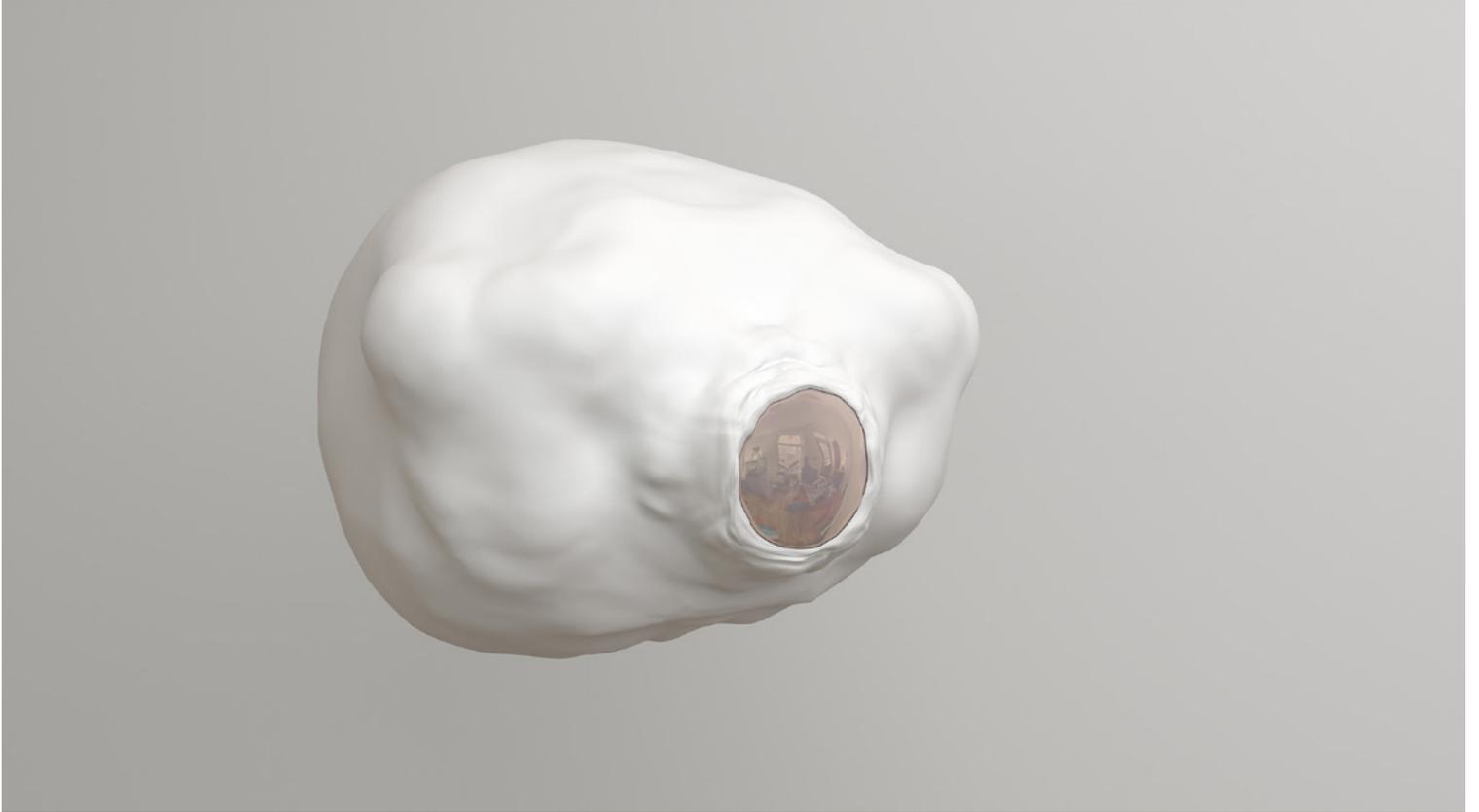
Translation, 2012 (série Sci Fi Haikus, 2012-).
Crédit photo : Paul Litherland, Studio Lux
© Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery,
Concordia University, 2017

tive. Our eyes engage not with a world of the living dead (actors on a screen) but, on the contrary, with a dead world of living images in which the bridge to our world is provided by images of human bodies in movement (*Les amis (à l'infini)*). Then there are also its abstract surrogates: (monoliths in *Sci Fi Haikus* that resemble the one in *2001: A Space Odyssey*), or the virtual cameras that mimic the human eye's functions and desire-guided sensory activities (*Scène 2*).

But we must not forget, as we move through the gallery space, that that movement is also a perambulating interface between worlds, between present and future, history and non- or un-history, as the gestating or pod-like forms in *Vivariums* also suggest.

In addressing the uses and dangers of history, Nietzsche has argued that it is necessary to selectively forget to be able to embrace a present in its fullness.³ Forgetting the past is a prerequisite to existing in the present in a pure state of unmediated spatiotemporal actuality. It is, moreover, to be able to pursue uninhibited human activity and, most importantly, to promote human happiness through that activity. Nietzsche's distinction and his quest for a balance between the historical (with its complex modular hold on the present) and the unhistorical (or the capacity to strategically forget the past and thus neutralize its multilateral influence on the present) was conceived in relation to spe-

3. Friedrich Nietzsche, "On the Use and Abuse of History for Life," in *Untimely Meditations*, ed. Daniel Breazeale, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge University Press, 1997).



Images fixes tirées de la série *Vivariums*, 2017, animation d'images de synthèse, courtoisie de l'artiste

cific nineteenth-century models of the human and of life. Life can no longer only be associated with *Homo sapiens*' dynamic teleological socio-historical evolution. It is now being challenged by other forms of life and wills to power, like those that are on display in *Carnations*, in which digital illusion and digital medium perform to an uncanny necrophilic rhythm, whether almost imperceptible (*Vivariums*) or hypnotically seducing (*Les amis (à l'infini)*). We are, nevertheless, still human, still *Homo sapiens*, still subject to our own will to live and will to power. We continue to pursue our individual and collective quests for happiness. However, the concept of life has become increasingly antiquated over the last seventy years. The definition of life has been contested as alternative models of the future, including that of an intelligent, automated computer-conveyed future, have jockeyed for a privileged position from which to impose a deterministic will on the present. The future has replaced the positive and negative influences of the past with its own science-fiction propositions and promises of happiness.

If we follow Nietzsche's argument concerning the uses and dangers of history, then we are placed in an awkward location in the exhibition space—a shifting *dead centre*, shifting points of historical suspension, of inertia, between the human and non-human, for the few moments or minutes that we view each work. We are *historical* agents who have been displaced—dislocated—from one world to another; as the future's imaginary representatives actively mesmerize us and fix us in their rhythmically ahistorical present. For it is not so much a past consisting of sophisticated references to friends or films that is the subject of these works. One

senses, beyond these references, that the mesmerizing sea of pixels is articulating an undefinable will to life, to power, and to happiness. We must, moreover, not forget that if that sea of effervescent movement, on each screen surface, creates an interface between worlds, between present and future, between a historically defined present and another non- or un-historical *present*, then it does so according to a necrophilic logic. For the post-human is, precisely, simultaneously *post*-human and *post-human*: a sensing of the non-human, the unhistorical in the human and historical, at the place of maximum stillness in a pendulum swing between the historical and unhistorical, human and unhuman (to paraphrase Nietzsche's terminology).

Carnations proposes different para-descriptive filiations, within each work, but it does so according to the unfolding logic of one prime motive force: movement—movement that evokes life, but also embodies life, albeit under different parameters of reference. What Hamelin has achieved in *Carnation* is to have transfixed the viewer in an absolute yet divided present at a crossroads between a human history and a post-human science-fiction one. He has also demonstrated how movement itself can have an embodied sentience and post-human identity; that it can reveal, under special conditions a paradoxical will to live, to power, and to happiness.





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MARCEL BROODTHAERS

UN JARDIN D'HIVER

PRIVATE VIEW
TUESDAY 26 SEPTEMBER 2017
6 – 8 PM

27 SEPTEMBER – 18 NOVEMBER 2017

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UN JARDIN D'HIVER, 1974
INSTALLATION WITH 36 'KENTYA' PALMS,
6 BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOGRAPHS OF 19TH C. ENGRAVINGS,
16 FOLDING CHAIRS, 2 VITRINES WITH 16 ORIGINAL 19TH C.
ENGRAVINGS AND CATALOGUES, 1 RED SISAL RUG ROLLED,
1 MONITOR WITH CAMERA ON PEDESTAL
MAXIMUM ROOM SIZE: 900-1400 CM / 354 3/8-551 1/8 IN
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Press Release

Marcel Broodthaers Un Jardin d'Hiver

Hauser & Wirth London, North Gallery

27 September – 18 November 2017

Opening reception: Tuesday 26 September, 6 – 8 pm



'In order to circulate in art, to function as an artist, there is a law: one has to be dressed in the fashion of one's time.'

– Marcel Broodthaers, 1974

Hauser & Wirth presents Marcel Broodthaers' 'Un Jardin d'Hiver' (A Winter Garden) (1974), a seminal installation belonging to the artist's *Décors* series created in the last years of his life. The gallery first staged 'Un Jardin d'Hiver' in Zurich in 1998 and this exhibition will once again pay tribute to this artist. A major contributor to the inception of conceptual art as a genre, Broodthaers holds a significant place in the historical narrative of contemporary art. His practice was largely concerned with two issues: the status of art as a commodity, and the impact of the museum on discourses surrounding artistic practice as well as on their reception. 'Un Jardin d'Hiver' is a subtle indictment of the authority of cultural institutions. In this work Broodthaers draws a link between Europe's imperial history and the cultural hierarchies dictated by museums and galleries, thereby framing art as a sphere susceptible to colonisation.

For the *Décors* series, Broodthaers inhabited the role of sceneographer, creating disquieting theatrical compositions using domestic objects. 'Un Jardin d'Hiver' parodies a traditional museum or gallery space modelled on the late 19th-century palm court, once popular in wealthy European homes. A descendent of the *Wunderkammer*, the palm court marked the transition of private collection to public museum. Broodthaers' assembly of potted palms, framed images of different categories of animals (elephants, camels, insects, exotic birds), and antique display cases clearly tie the installation to that period of colonial conquest, characterised by a passion for collecting and classifying unusual objects from around the world. Yet, the room also evokes

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a tired, modern museum space – in one corner a television monitor displays a closed circuit film recorded by a surveillance camera. Installed amongst the plants and a few rows of chairs, the monitor mimics the coupling of decorative decoy and surveillance that so often marks banal spaces that hover between public and private, such as waiting rooms, offices or lobbies. The potted palm, once an exotic symbol of power, by the mid-1970s had become the most commonly available type of decoration used everywhere from banks to cafes. In another corner, a neglected red carpet hints nostalgically at former glory and ceremony.



The museum pastiche that Broodthaers creates is rich in historical connotation, evoking the evolution of the art institute model and shifts in accepted modes of display. He reminds the viewer that the origin of the museum is inextricably linked to Europe's colonial past; taste, culture and value are inherently dictated by socio-economic forces. This line of thinking explains the artist's wider rejection of the creative trends at the time – for Broodthaers, the once-radical premise of Duchamp's readymade, for example, had ossified into a new institutionalism. In the period that Broodthaers was making the *Décors*, he was one of many artists experimenting with what is now constituted site-specific art. When 'Un Jardin D'Hiver' was unveiled in 1974, the adjoining rooms featured in-situ works by Carl Andre, Daniel Buren and Richard Long. Broodthaers' highly ornamental Winter Garden was at odds with the Minimalism and Conceptualism that dominated the show; their spare, clean, often industrial work represented the contemporary international standard of how art should look. The turn-of-the-century design follies of 'Un Jardin D'Hiver' find a curious echo in the 'site-specificity' of such art in the 1970s. Broodthaers was alluding to the idea that avant-garde conceptualism had, just like the exotic objet d'art and the readymade that came before, been colonised by the museum.

About the artist

Marcel Broodthaers's (1924 – 1976) spent the first 20 years of his adult life living as a poet in Belgium and dealer of antiquarian books. In 1963 he famously began producing works of art as an ironic gesture. On the occasion of his first exhibition, he declared: 'I, too, wondered if I could not sell something and succeed in life. I had for quite a while been good for nothing... Finally the idea of inventing something insincere came to me and I got to work immediately.'

The artist worked with paint, sculpture and installation but never forgot his linguistic inclinations; he continually used both language and image to explore structures of meaning, or in humorous wordplay. Broodthaers was also a prolific filmmaker, producing over 50 short films ranging from comedies and melodramas to documentaries.

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In addition to the Décors series of his late career, Broodthaers is perhaps best known for his witty assemblage-sculptures that utilise chosen materials. Empty mussels, eggshells, coal and bricks were his signature motifs, communicating simplicity and poverty in the face of big business, mass production and cultural homogeneity.

Major solo exhibitions include 'Marcel Broodthaers: A Retrospective', Museum of Modern Art, New York NY (2016) which travelled to Museo Reina Sofía, Madrid, Spain (2017) and K21, Dusseldorf, Germany (2017); 'Marcel Broodthaers', Friedericianum Kassel, Kassel, Germany (2015); 'Marcel Broodthaers', Monnaie de Paris, Paris, France (2015); 'Le Corbeau et le Renard, Revolt of Language with Marcel Broodthaers', Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Basel, Switzerland (2014); 'Marcel Broodthaers. L'espace de l'écriture', MAMbo, Bologna, Italy (2012); and 'Marcel Broodthaers', Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles CA (1989) (Travelling Exhibition).

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Marcel Broodthaers
Un Jardin d'Hiver
1974

Installation with 36 'Kentya' palms, 6 black-and-white photographs of 19th c. engravings, 16 folding chairs, 2 vitrines with 16 original 19th c. engravings and catalogues, 1 red sisal rug rolled, 1 monitor with camera on pedestal
Maximum room size: 900 x 1400 cm / 354 3/8 x 551 1/8 in

Marcel Broodthaers
Un Jardin d'Hiver (detail)
1974

Installation with 36 'Kentya' palms, 6 black-and-white photographs of 19th c. engravings, 16 folding chairs, 2 vitrines with 16 original 19th c. engravings and catalogues, 1 red sisal rug rolled, 1 monitor with camera on pedestal
Maximum room size: 900 x 1400 cm / 354 3/8 x 551 1/8 in

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MARCEL BROODTHAERS
UN JARDIN D'HIVER

Hauser & Wirth London
23 Savile Row
London W1S 2ET



Un Jardin d'Hiver, 1974

Installation with 36 'Kentya' palms, 6 black-and-white photographs of 19th c. engr pedestal
Maximum room size: 900 x 1400 cm / 354 3/8 x 551 1/8 in

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Un Jardin d'Hiver (detail), 1974

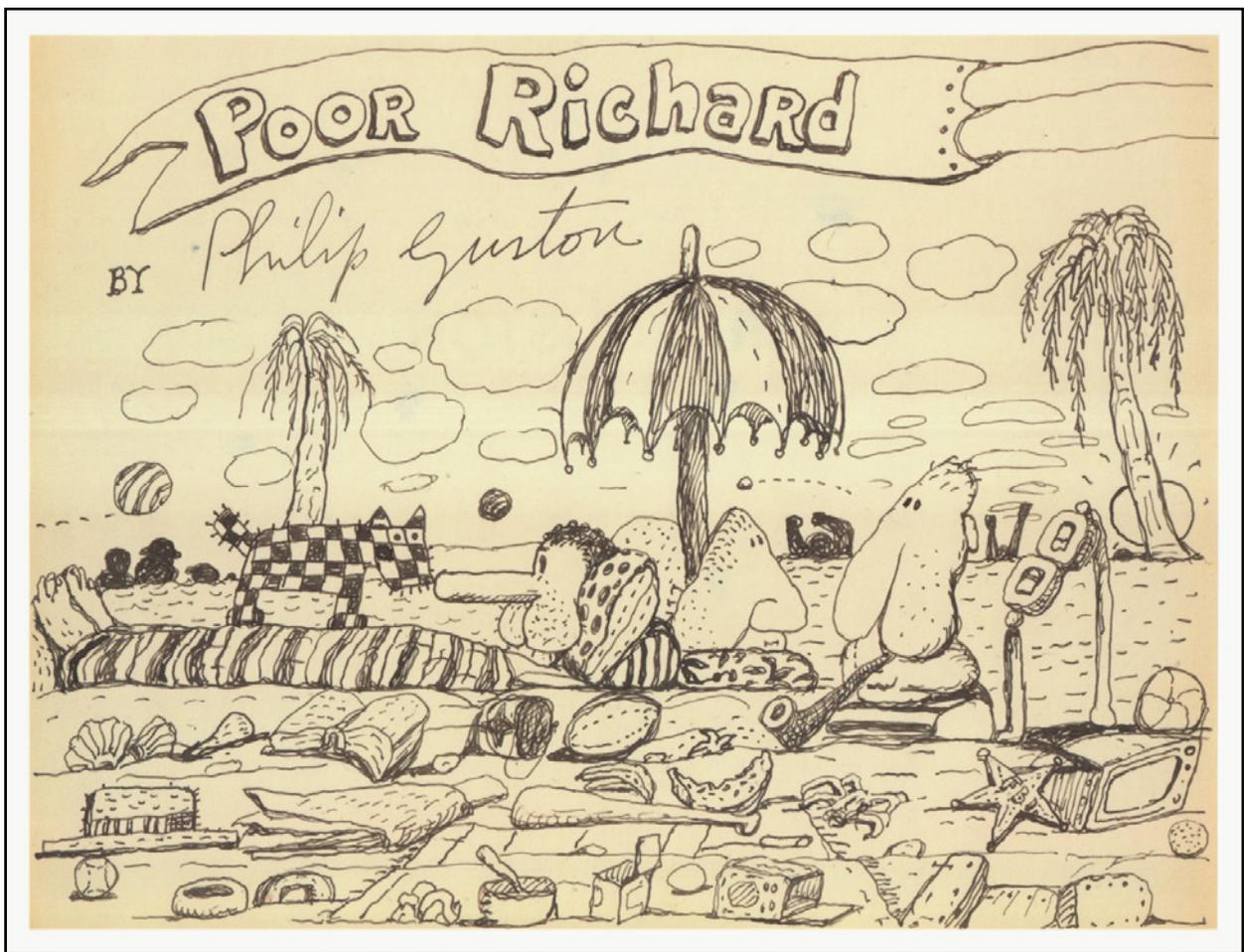
Installation with 36 'Kentya' palms, 6 black-and-white photographs of 19th c. engr pedestal
Maximum room size: 900 x 1400 cm / 354 3/8 x 551 1/8 in

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Un Jardin d'Hiver, 1974

Archival Installation view, 'Carl Andre, Marcel Broodthaers, Daniel Buren, Victor Burgin
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PHILIP GUSTON

LAUGHTER IN THE DARK
DRAWINGS FROM 1971 & 1975

PRIVATE VIEW
THURSDAY 18 MAY 2017
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19 MAY - 29 JULY 2017

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UNTITLED (POOR RICHARD), 1971
INK ON PAPER
26.7 x 35.2 CM / 10 1/2 x 13 7/8 IN
© THE ESTATE OF PHILIP GUSTON
PHOTO: GENEVIEVE HANSON

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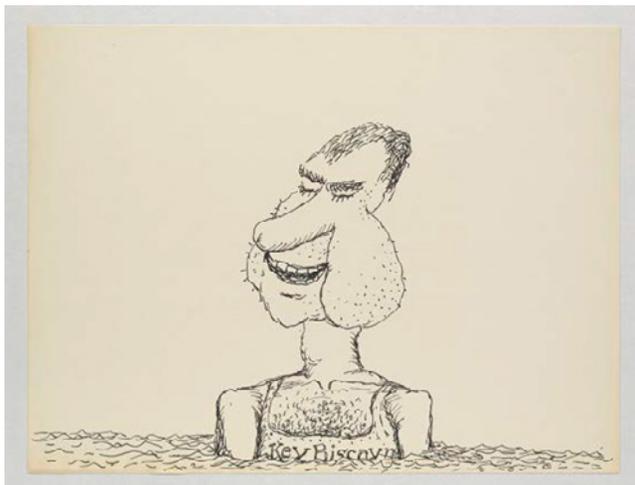
Press Release

Philip Guston Laughter in the Dark, Drawings from 1971 & 1975

Hauser & Wirth London, North Gallery

19 May – 29 July 2017

Opening reception: Thursday 18 May, 6 – 8 pm



'Guston found in Nixon the perfect embodiment of world-historical perfidy, and in satire a way out of his hopelessness regarding the corrupt state of art and politics. Guston's Nixon drawings, alternately, can serve as similar inspiration today. This is art used as a scalpel while the world is on a knife's edge.'
– Christian Viveros-Fauné

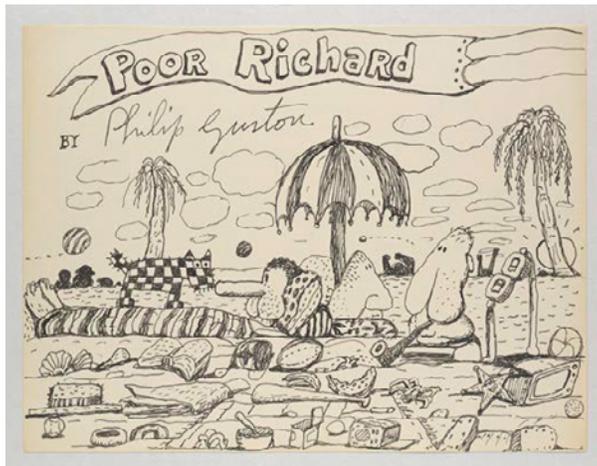
Hauser & Wirth London presents 'Philip Guston. Laughter in the Dark, Drawings from 1971 & 1975', an exhibition devoted to the late artist's satirical drawings of the 37th President of the United States: Richard Nixon. Co-curated by Sally Radic, of The Guston Foundation and Musa Mayer, the artist's daughter, the show features over 180 works depicting Nixon and his cronies, including Guston's infamous Poor Richard series and over 100 additional drawings. It is a reconfiguration of the presentation first shown at Hauser & Wirth New York in 2016 and reviewed to great critical acclaim – Apollo magazine: 'a body of work that has both historic specificity and biting, contemporary relevance'. This marks the first time the entire body of work has been presented together in the UK and is also the artist's first solo show in London since 2010. The exhibition is accompanied by a book from Hauser & Wirth Publishers that expands on the 2001 publication from The University of Chicago Press, and features new texts from Musa Mayer and Debra Bricker Balken.

These trenchant works were created at an historic moment, amidst the tumultuous political climate of the early 1970s, as the United States suffered under the weight of civil unrest and social dissent following the assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr and Senator Robert F Kennedy, the chaos of the 1968 presidential election, and the enduring violence and brutality of the Vietnam War. In his studio in Woodstock NY, Guston's distress over the political situation was fuelled by conversations with his friend, the writer Philip Roth. The artist and the writer shared an intellectual disposition for the mundane 'crapola' of American popular culture, and in Nixon they discovered a subject they could each mimic and animate in art. During the summer of 1971, Roth had recently completed 'Our Gang', an outlandish political satire of the Nixon administration. Putting pen to paper, Guston similarly engaged in an artistic pursuit of the embattled president, turning toward the immediacy

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of drawing and revelling in the power of expressive line. The works in 'Laughter in the Dark' can be viewed within the distinguished tradition of political satire and social commentary by artists such as Hogarth, Daumier, Goya, and Picasso. Seeking a language to resolve a pictorial crisis that was at once personally and politically engaged, Guston's adaptation of the comic-strip style of caricature emerged at a pivotal crux in his artistic career.

In May 1971, Philip Guston returned from an eight-month sojourn in Italy following the scathing critical response to his October 1970 Marlborough Gallery exhibition in New York. That first showing of his late figurative paintings had been assailed by critics and admirers of high Modernism as an act of heresy, a fully-fledged betrayal of abstract painting. Unravelling and deflated by attacks from critics like Hilton Kramer, who publicly denounced Guston as 'A Mandarin Pretending to Be a Stumblebum' (the headline of his biting New York Times review), the artist lamented the art world's rigidity. 'It was as though I had left the Church,' he stated at the time. 'I was excommunicated.' Less than one year later, Guston would return to the US with his immersion in figuration and the aesthetic of transgression only reinforced by criticism. The works on view in the exhibition were created at this pivotal moment of Guston's personal and artistic journey.



The presentation opens with 'Alone' and 'In Bed II', two paintings from 1971 that culminate Guston's outpouring of satirical Nixon images over the months of July and August that same year. Developed through the language of caricature, these works propose a new pictorial order that conveys both the pathos of a fraught inner terrain and the impossible turmoil of the exterior world. Each painting renders a solitary figure lying awake in bed, caught in an introspective state of contemplation and foreboding. These pictorial compositions suggest parallels between images of the young Nixon rendered in Guston's Poor Richard series and the artist's revealing self-portraits of later years. Noted by Charles McGrath in *The New York Times*: 'The Nixon drawings share some of the vocabulary of the late Guston paintings, but have a larksome quality all their own. As the critic Peter Schjeldahl has pointed out, they're hilarious but also compassionate in their way.' The lexicon of images that first animated his Nixon drawings, here begins to substantiate the themes and iconography that give such potency to his late work.

The exhibition continues with the Poor Richard narrative from 1971, as well as works from *The Phlebitis Series* from 1975. Guston shared with Philip Roth great contempt for the newly elected Richard Nixon. This unwavering sentiment would intensify when *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* published the so-called 'Pentagon Papers' in June 1971, revealing incalculable lies that had been fed to the American public about the country's decades-long involvement in the Vietnam War. Nixon's attempt to prevent the leaked documents from further disclosure – a decision overruled by the Supreme Court – exposed his character to satire and served to foreshadow the revelations to come with the Watergate break-in and the cover-up that eventually brought Nixon and his administration down. In a witty rebuttal to the president's posturing, Guston caricatured Nixon's self-mythologising identity, sly political manoeuvres, and disposable morals into a farcical cartoon canon. Aptly

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summarised by Juliet Helmke of *Modern Painters*: 'the drawings hit you in the gut. They're so simple and emotionally loaded... They're worth the time in contemplation, despite, or even because of, the gloom that they might incite'.

Works from Guston's sketchbooks offer a closer look at the artist's working process and the development of his imagery. Here Guston's parodies of the president's humble upbringings and dirt-poor youth in the drawing of a locomotive engine billowing with black smoke. As the train departs from the ocean waves and exotic palm trees of the California coast, it reminds us of Nixon's determined path toward early political success. To complete the dramatic scene-setting Guston borrows the phrase, 'It seems like an impossible dream...' from Nixon's 1968 Presidential Nomination Acceptance Speech at the Republican National Convention, and memorialises it in clouds. In sketches where Nixon himself is depicted, Guston exaggerates anatomical attributes, notably Nixon's famous five o'clock shadow, defiant gaze, swollen jowls and ever-growing nose. Nixon's 'schnoz' is rendered as phallic morphology, becoming a visual cue for Guston's condemnation of the president's obscene deceits.



While Guston's narrative follows Nixon from his youth to his eventual resignation of the presidency in 1974, the primary fuel for the Nixon drawings came from the events of July 1971. Encouraged by his trusted National Security Advisor, Henry Kissinger, Nixon announced plans to visit China and establish a new era of statesmanship and political relations. Dumbfounded by the hypocrisy of a man who had built his career upon a virulent anti-Communist stance, Guston conceived a slew of skits and sketches related to the voyage Nixon would take when visiting China in February the following year. The president is depicted nose-deep in a manuscript of mock-Chinese text, scheming and plotting in preparation. As the president frolics and plans for the hoopla of a fantastical 'Asian Tour,' never far from reach are his sidekicks Kissinger, Vice President Spiro Agnew, and Attorney General John Mitchell. As parallels to Nixon's nose, Guston dreams up personifying attributes for each of these cronies: Agnew becomes a conehead, Mitchell dourly smokes his pipe, and Kissinger is represented only by a thick pair of rimmed spectacles.

Selecting 73 drawings from his scores of Nixon caricatures created in the summer of 1971, Guston edited the compositional chronology that makes up the *Poor Richard* series. Guston had originally intended to publish this sequence as a book, but a deep-seated ambivalence prevailed about these highly personal and politically profane works. In the three decades that followed, only a handful of the drawings – images produced two years before the Watergate scandal and three before Nixon's political demise – were publically seen: In 2001, the *Poor Richard* series of 73 drawings were at last exhibited together and published in a volume of the same name by the University of Chicago Press.

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Guston would return to the subject of Richard Nixon once more in his practice in 1975. After Nixon's resignation under the threat of impeachment, Guston produced a final series of savage political drawings about the president. Poor Nixon is rendered as a 'victim' of the Watergate scandal he himself created and the revelations on the White House tapes he had ordered. The president's phlebitis-afflicted leg – an ailment from which he suffered severely – is gargantuan, bandaged, and weighted. In the rarely exhibited painting 'San Clemente' (1975), Nixon, red-faced and inflamed, appears in agonising pain, dragging himself across the California beach with a self-pitying tear rolling down his cheek. Bunkered at his 'Western White House', the former leader of the free world has become a symbol of self-disgust and shame. Completed five years before the artist's death, this remarkable painting stands as a monument to despair, and a meditation on aging and mortality.

About the artist

Philip Guston (b. 1913, Montreal, Canada, d. 1980, Woodstock NY) is one of the great luminaries of the 20th century, whose commitment to producing art from genuine emotion and lived experience ensures its enduring impact. Guston's legendary career spanned half a century and his paintings – particularly the liberated and instinctual forms of his late work – continue to exert a powerful influence on younger generations of contemporary painters. One of the most celebrated proponents of Abstract Expressionism, Guston shocked the art world in 1970 when he first exhibited a new body of figurative work, rather than a continuation of the gestural abstraction for which he had gained great acclaim.

Major solo exhibitions include: 'Philip Guston. Painter 1957 – 1967', Hauser & Wirth New York, 18th Street (2016); 'Philip Guston Retrospective', Royal Academy, London, England (2003), which travelled to Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York NY and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco CA in the same year; 'The Drawings of Philip Guston', Galleria Nazionale D'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Rome, Italy (1988) (travelling exhibition); 'Philip Guston' (retrospective exhibition 1930 – 1979), Whitney Museum of American Art, New York NY (1980) (travelling exhibition); and 'Philip Guston (retrospective exhibition 1941 – 1962), Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Netherlands (1962), which travelled to Palais des Beaux-Arts, Paris, France; Whitechapel Gallery, London, England; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles CA; and Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York NY in the same year.

On the occasion of La Biennale di Venezia 2017, Galleria dell'Accademia in Venice is showing 'Philip Guston and The Poets', a significant presentation exploring the artist's oeuvre in relation to major 20th-century poets. It remains on view until 3 September 2017.

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Untitled (Poor Richard)
1971
Ink on paper
26.7 x 35.2 cm / 10 1/2 x 13 7/8 in

Untitled (Poor Richard)
1971
Ink on paper
26.7 x 35.2 cm / 10 1/2 x 13 7/8 in

Untitled
1971
Ink on paper
35.6 x 27.9 cm / 14 x 11 in

In Bed II
1971
Oil on canvas
106.1 x 204.5 cm / 41 3/4 x 80 1/2 in

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Photo: Genevieve Hanson

PHILIP GUSTON LAUGHTER IN THE DARK, DRAWINGS FROM 1971 & 1975

Hauser & Wirth London
23 Savile Row
London W1S 2ET



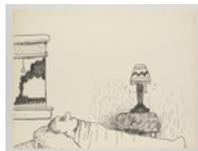
Untitled (Poor Richard) – Philip Guston, 1971

Ink on paper
26.7 x 35.2 cm / 10 1/2 x 13 7/8 inches
© The Estate of Philip Guston
Courtesy the Estate and Hauser & Wirth
Photo: Genevieve Hanson



San Clemente – Philip Guston, 1975

Oil on canvas
172.7 x 186 cm / 68 x 73 1/4 in
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Courtesy the Estate and Hauser & Wirth
Photo: Christopher Burke



Untitled (Poor Richard) – Philip Guston, 1971

Ink on paper
26.7 x 35.2 cm / 10 1/2 x 13 7/8 in
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Untitled (Poor Richard) – Philip Guston, 1971

Ink on paper
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Untitled (Poor Richard) – Philip Guston, 1971

Ink on paper
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Untitled (Poor Richard) – Philip Guston, 1971

Ink on paper
26.7 x 35.2 cm / 10 1/2 x 13 7/8 in
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Untitled – Philip Guston, 1971

Ink on paper
26.7 x 35.2 cm / 10 1/2 x 13 7/8 in
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Untitled — Philip Guston, 1971

Ink on paper
26.7 x 35.2 cm / 10 1/2 x 13 7/8 in
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Photo: Genevieve Hanson



Alone — Philip Guston, 1971

Oil on canvas
132.1 x 237.5 cm / 52 x 93 1/2 in
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Courtesy the Estate and Hauser & Wirth
Photo: Genevieve Hanson



In Bed II — Philip Guston, 1971

Oil on canvas
106.1 x 204.5 cm / 41 3/4 x 80 1/2 in
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Courtesy the Estate and Hauser & Wirth
Photo: Genevieve Hanson



Untitled — Philip Guston

Ink on paper
61 x 48.3 cm / 24 x 19 in
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Photo: Genevieve Hanson



Untitled — Philip Guston, 1971

Ink on paper
27.6 x 35.2 cm / 10 7/8 x 13 7/8 in
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Courtesy the Estate and Hauser & Wirth
Photo: Genevieve Hanson



Untitled — Philip Guston, 1971

Ink on paper
27.6 x 35.2 cm / 10 7/8 x 13 7/8 in
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Photo: Genevieve Hanson



Untitled — Philip Guston, 1971

Ink on paper
35.6 x 27.9 cm / 14 x 11 in
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Untitled — Philip Guston, 1971

Ink on paper
27.6 x 35.2 cm / 10 7/8 x 13 7/8 in
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Nixon: A Chronology

1913

Richard Milhous Nixon is born in California, spends his early years working in the family grocery store. Attends Whittier College and Duke University Law School.

1948

After serving in the US Naval Reserve during World War II, Nixon is elected to the US Congress, and earns national renown as a member of the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), successfully prosecuting the case against Alger Hiss, a Soviet spy.

Under Senator Joseph McCarthy's lead, HUAC is notorious for accusing artists, writers and others for ties to the communist party, resulting in widespread blacklisting.

1950

Nixon wins a seat in the US Senate, and becomes known for his global anti-Communist stance.

1952

60 million Americans watch Nixon's famous 'Checkers' speech on TV. Defending against accusations concerning a secret political fund, disclosure of his modest personal finances brings overwhelming support.



'Why do I feel so deeply? Why do I feel that in spite of the smears, the misunderstandings, the necessity for a man to come up here and bare his soul as I have? Why is it necessary for me to continue this fight? And I want to tell you why. Because, you see, I love my country. And I think my country is in danger.'

1952 – 1960

Serves as Eisenhower's Vice President for two terms, travels widely.

1960

Narrowly loses presidential bid to John F Kennedy (JFK).

1960 – 1967

Nixon returns to California, practices law and loses bid for governorship.

'You won't have Nixon to kick around any more, because, gentlemen, this is my last press conference.'

1963

JFK is assassinated in Dallas TX; Lyndon Johnson becomes president.

1967

Protests against the war in Vietnam increase. President Johnson announces he will not run for re-election. Nixon accepts the nomination for president with his 'Impossible Dream' speech at the Republican Convention.

'As we look at America, we see cities enveloped in smoke and flame. We hear sirens in the night. We see Americans dying on distant battlefields abroad. We see Americans hating each other, fighting each other; killing each other at home. And as we see and hear these things, millions of Americans cry out in anguish. Did we come all this way for this?'

'My fellow Americans, the long dark night for America is about to end.'

1968

Martin Luther King's assassination leads to riots in more than 100 cities. Anti-war protests become widespread across college campuses. Presidential candidate Robert Kennedy is assassinated.

Demonstrators and police clash violently at the Democratic Convention in Chicago IL, at which Hubert Humphrey is nominated.

With Spiro Agnew as his running mate, Nixon wins the election, becoming the 37th US President in January 1969.



1969

After an Army cover-up, the American public learns of the My Lai massacre, in which as many as 500 Vietnamese civilians, including women and children, were murdered by American soldiers under the command of Lieutenant William Calley, the only soldier charged with the crime.

Nixon commutes Calley's sentence from life at hard labour to house arrest, then pardons him in 1974.

1971

The 'Pentagon Papers', a government study documenting three decades of secret US military involvement in Vietnam, are leaked to *The New York Times* and *Washington Post*. Nixon's attempt to prevent their release is blocked by the Supreme Court.

At Nixon's request, a voice-activated recording system is installed in the Oval Office, the Cabinet Room and his private office.

1972

With the assistance of National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger, historic rapprochement is accomplished with Nixon's visit to what had been referred to as 'Red China'. This new relationship shifts the balance of power with the Soviet Union.

'We have unlocked the doors that for a quarter of a century stood between the United States and the People's Republic of China.'

Five men are arrested for breaking and entering the offices of the Democratic National Committee headquarters at the Watergate complex in Washington DC.

'I can say categorically that...no one in the White House staff, no one in this Administration, presently employed, was involved in this very bizarre incident.'

The FBI reports that the Watergate break-in is part of a campaign of political spying and sabotage on behalf of the Nixon re-election committee.

Nixon defeats George McGovern, winning a second term with a landslide victory.

1973

US military engagement in Vietnam ends, but Paris Peace Accord fails and fighting continues.

Senate Watergate Hearing subpoenas the White House Tapes.

Citing executive privilege, Nixon refuses, but is overruled.

'People have got to know whether or not their President is a crook. Well, I'm not a crook. I've earned everything I've got.'

Investigation into additional 'dirty tricks', as they were then called, eventually reveals the bugging of offices and the ordering of FBI, CIA and IRS surveillance of an 'enemies list' of political opponents and activist groups, compiled by Nixon and his aides.

1974

Transcripts of the tapes are released, followed by the tapes themselves. They reveal Nixon's lies about the Watergate break-in and cover-up. The tapes also record Nixon's profanity, as well as his frequent racist, anti-gay and anti-Semitic remarks to his aides and confidants.

Nixon resigns the presidency under threat of Impeachment.

'To leave office before my term is completed is abhorrent to every instinct in my body. But as President I must put the interests of America first.'

One month later, Nixon is granted a 'full, free and complete' pardon by his successor Gerald Ford.

Ultimately, 69 people involved in the Watergate affair and the cover-up are indicted, and 48 are found guilty of criminal activities.

Nixon contracts phlebitis while under subpoena in the trial of his former aides Haldeman, Erlichman and Dean.

1975

Saigon falls to the North Vietnamese army, ending the war.

1978

'Some people say I didn't handle it properly and they're right. I screwed it up. Mea culpa. But let's get on to my achievements. You'll be here in the year 2000 and we'll see how I'm regarded then.'

— From a speech to the Oxford Union, on a visit to the UK.

1994

Nixon dies after publishing many books, travelling and lecturing widely.





KK
LT

ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΟ ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΟ

Declaration for Rights of Refugee Ramblers

1. For the right to ramble, wherever, across the world
2. Passing unmolested through cities, towns and villages
3. To walk peacefully, rest safely and move freely to other places
4. Celebrating the pleasures of the road, by resisting all unnecessary oppressions and blockages
5. To cross and regress highways, runways and platforms without fear of death
6. Working together, to find pathways to active participation in other communities
7. To share hospitably and humanely in the earth's simple but finite resources
8. Calling all planetary citizens to walk in step, as one, against fear, against uncertainty, without division
9. To reclaim Europe's humanity in the face of proliferating borders and regulations
10. By extending the commons, the open space, a right for all to ramble freely.

ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟ

DOCUMENTA 14 IS LIKE:

A. THE WORLDS FAIR

B. THE EUROGROUP

C. THE EUROVISION

D. ALL OF THE ABOVE

ΕΙΡΑΝΕΥΣΗ



ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΟ ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΟ



by ILIANA FOKIANAKI AND YANIS VAROUFAKIS

June 7, 2017

“We Come Bearing Gifts”—iLiana Fokianaki and Yanis Varoufakis on Documenta 14 Athens

April 8-July 16, 2017



Created in 1955 by artist and curator Arnold Bode, Documenta sought to advance the cultural reconstruction of Germany within the postwar European order. Reoccurring every five years, it has since unfolded into a periodic forum for contemporary art. When Adam Szymczyk was appointed artistic director of Documenta 14 in November 2013, he proposed calling the exhibition “Learning From Athens,” opening it first in the Greek capital and then in its traditional home in Kassel. Four years later, with the Greek exhibition now underway and the German edition about to open, iLiana Fokianaki and Yanis Varoufakis share their views on the show, its development, and its implications.

iLiana Fokianaki: In the beginning, when it was first announced that Documenta 14 would be held in Athens, I believed there was a purpose to the experiment. How would a rigid institution be transformed by its curatorial team living and operating in a city of crisis? I thought that the moment one performs such a “move” there must be a particular reasoning behind the relocation, as well as the selection of the location. Two years later, and with the exhibition now open, I am still unable to answer the question of “why Athens?” At the same time, I am starting to feel numb towards what has been presented as a mutually beneficial idea for both guests and hosts, maybe even more beneficial for the Athenian hosts.

Yanis Varoufakis: To begin with there is a sinister parallel with privatization. In 2015, fourteen regional airports, extremely lucrative ones as Santorini, Mykonos, and so on, were sold to one German majority state-owned company as part of the Troika’s privatization drive. Recall that privatization became all the rage in Europe with Margaret Thatcher. Yet Thatcher would have never approved this kind of privatization. Why? Because her argument for privatization was that it enhances competition. Well, you do not enhance competition when you give all the airports to one company; this is enhancing monopoly!

So from a neoliberal point of view this was not a neoliberal privatization. And let’s not forget that we’re talking about Fraport, a state-owned company. Effectively, the Greek regional airports were nationalized, but by a different nation! And let’s take a look at who paid for this privatization/nationalization: the announced price was 1.2 billion euros, which was presented as an influx of capital into cash-starved Greece. But Fraport purchased these airports with loans from Greek banks, which were either recapitalized by the Greek citizens or guaranteed by the Greek state. So it’s like me coming to buy your house, but having you pay for it. Or, rather, making you guarantee the loans I get from the banks, in order that I can pay you for your house. If I fail to repay them, you’ll act as my guarantor. You would laugh if I proposed this to you. It is nothing short of preposterous! But in Greece and in the EU this is presented as substantial privatization, as a gain for the country and proof that Greece is being normalized. Yes it is normalized, but as something worse than a colony.

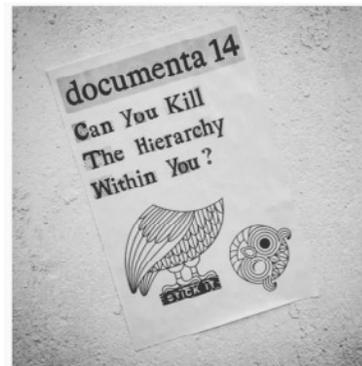
I gave the example of Fraport because we have a similar phenomenon with Documenta. Documenta supposedly came to Greece to spend, but instead they sucked up every single resource available for the local art scene. The few resources that Greece’s private and public sectors make available to Greek artists, like the Aegean Airways sponsorship, went to Documenta. The Athens municipality gave Documenta a building for free. Many hotels donated rooms for free. Buildings at the Athens School of Fine Arts were made available for free, and now the graduating students have nowhere to host their degree show. The National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens (EMST) did charge Documenta, but the amount was ludicrously small—a token. And, as Greece’s private and public sectors were handing out all the resources normally available to Greek artists and art institutions to Documenta, its artistic director had the audacity to say out loud that he is not interested in the local art scene but is only interested in Athens. This mindset and practice transposes the Fraport mindset and practice from the world of airports to the art world.

Documenta did bring some resources from Germany but, overall, it has been an extractive process. Documenta took a great deal more from Athens—from both its

<http://www.art-agenda.com/reviews/d14/>



1 Logo of Documenta 14.



2 Poster in Athens, Spring 2017.



3 Graffiti in Athens close to the site of the presentation of Ross Birrell’s *The Athens–Kassel Ride: The Transit of Hermes*, 2017.



4 Rasheed Araeen, *Shamiyaana—Food for Thought: Thought for Change*, 2016–17.

private and public sector—than it gave. Adding the veneer of a left-wing narrative against neoliberalism to a purely extractive neocolonial project that’s framed as a gift to Greece is adding insult to injury.

iF: This is why the analysis of the institution, the power relations it embodies, and the theoretical proposition it offers interest me more than the exhibition itself. Primarily, a well-branded German cultural institution like Documenta represents the imperium, but also capital, since inclusion in such a show adds commodity value to the artwork. This creates a dynamic that is, a priori, not neutral. So to look at it through the current political spectrum of the EU: a politically, financially, and socially charged binary is created by deciding to bring this German institution to, not just any financial periphery, but to the very periphery that embodies the other half of this binary: Greece. Not to mention the Second World War, which makes it a historically charged binary as well.

So the institution carries an exhibition with a mandate. And the exhibition denies (or chooses to ignore) this binary. Through this exhibition, the institution claims that we are amidst a political and economic war, manifested in Greece’s referendum and the bodies that filled the streets, events that deeply influenced this edition of Documenta. It claims to offer a public service to its audiences. To quote Paul Preciado:

One of the difficulties (and beauties) of making this exhibition was the decision of its artistic director, Adam Szymczyk, to collaborate only with public institutions in Athens. In conditions of war, the institutional interlocutor of the exhibition can be neither the establishment, nor galleries, nor the art market. On the contrary, the exhibition is understood as a public service, as an antidote against economic, political, and moral austerity.(1)

However, anyone who lives in Greece today is aware that the notion of a public service is a joke—and by extension, the establishment itself. As is the notion that the state-funded institution, as a physical space or even as a metaphor, can be an antidote to economic, political, and moral austerity. Any mildly progressive Greek will tell you that the public services represent and promote these austerities, under the umbrella and the absolute fetish of a national identity. A national identity that has been built by fetishizing ancient Greece. I found references to this glorified past—“the origin of civilization”—in many of the opening speeches and curatorial texts, but also in some of the works. It reminded me vividly of the eighteenth-century Grand Tour, with all the Anglo-Saxons coming to Italy and Greece to find the roots of Western civilization, doe-eyed and in awe of the ancient ruins.

On the other hand, if you examine the idea of “a public service” as a gift, then we are talking about a blind spot—coming from, hopefully, good intentions. But, as we know, the road to hell is paved with good intentions. Because in fact claiming that you are offering a service (as a gift), when operating from within a mega-institution, positions you immediately as a benefactor. Even more so when this institution represents all that we have described above. Adding into the mix the veneer of a left-wing narrative against neoliberalism makes it even more problematic. What valid political claims can we actually make as cultural practitioners when operating within, and being fed by, a capitalist structure with very well-defined power structures and power centers, in terms of enabling discourses and artworks? A performative element of a left-wing narrative was also quite apparent in the decision to situate the Documenta team in Exarcheia, which is known as an anarchist neighborhood.

YV: There is nothing new to that, and we know this well. Near the coast of Attica there is an awful island called Makronisos, an island of exile on which thousands were tortured and many died during the 1940s civil war. There are tourist trips now to Makronisos, which even offer an inmate’s menu. I have no doubt that there is a lot of demand for this type of tourism, where you get embedded into the context of others’ suffering. In Brazil they also have “favela tours,” as I think they call them, in which tourists experience “life in the favela.” This is not too different from how most Greeks see Documenta 14. They see how art tourists, including the Documenta curators, come to live in their disaster zone for a while, smell the Exarcheia smells and hear its sounds, before catching their free Aegean Airways flights to Kassel to do their proper business.

iF: Greece differs from all the countries of the European south, since it is the only one with no heavy industry, and this has also contributed to the crisis. It is also a country with a political history of constant upheaval, with the shortest history of modern democracy in the European Union (from 1974)—elements that very much explain its failure to achieve the financial stability and prosperity of other countries that entered the EU in the 1980s.

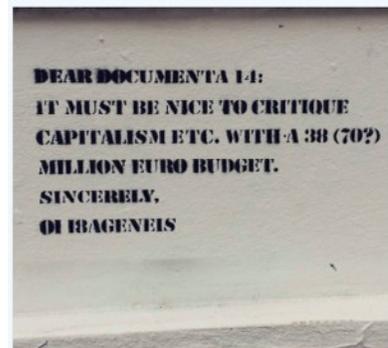
Since the reinstatement of the Greek state in 1821, Greece has been under the wing of the Franco-German axis, with a German king appointed, with the tragedy



5 Posters in Athens, Spring 2017.



6 The Lgbtqi+ Refugees in Greece group with the replica of the oath stone of Roger Bernat’s *The Place of the Thing*, 2017.



7 Graffiti in Athens, Spring 2017.



8 Lgbtqi+ Refugees in Greece groups with the replica oath stone from Roger Bernat’s *The Place of the Thing*, 2017, which they stole in a gesture of protest. Photo courtesy Lgbtqi+ Refugees in Greece.

of Asia Minor in the 1920s where the French, the English, and the Russians meddled in the conflict with Turkey, then a dictatorship that ended during the Second World War, and then the civil war that lasted until 1949, induced by the British, who had a stronghold in the country and basically did not want the Communist wave to spread down to the south. After the Communists were expelled from the country, murdered, or sent to concentration camps, the conservatives—amongst them former collaborators of the Nazis—ruled with some help from far-right-wing paramilitary groups that murdered politicians such as Nikos Beloyiannis, who was immortalized in a Picasso sketch of the time, and Grigoris Lambrakis, whose story is portrayed in Costa-Gavras's 1969 film *Z*. And then after such a turbulent political ride, we ended up with a second dictatorship in 1967, which gave birth to what today is the neofascist party Golden Dawn. Since the reinstatement of democracy in 1974, we have tried to generate a healthy economy through a corrupt political system, through a supposedly socialist government that undertook a failed project and built a maze of bureaucracy. Instead, we ended up with the 2004 Olympic Games, which brought to the surface a somewhat "hidden" financial crisis, which accelerated in 2009 and is still deepening. This is the backdrop against which the announcement of Documenta 14 in Athens was received with intense criticism but also praise. During the press conference, Documenta's CEO Annette Kulenkampff called the exhibition a gift to Greece.

YV: No gift to Greece from Germany is possible. Full stop. Ever! Why? Any sentences that begin with "Germany does X" or "Germany gives X" or "Germany takes X" are wrong and the thin edge of the racist wedge. Because there is no such thing as an anthropomorphic Germany (or Greece for that matter, or France) that can act, give, or take away. There are many, many Germanies. There is Wolfgang Schäuble's Germany, the Germany of German DiEM25 members,(2) the Germany of working-poor Germans, of German bankers, etc. So that statement by the CEO of Documenta should be further interrogated with questions such as: "Which Germany? The German state? German capital? Particular donors?" There are many interests that feed Documenta financially.(3) So I would need a clarification as to what type of gift. Otherwise, I find the statement offensive and inaccurate. If the gift came from Schäuble, for example, let's remind Kulenkampff that Schäuble got a huge gift from Greece, because over the last five to six years Germany—the federal state of Germany—has been borrowing from the markets at zero percent interest, whereas it should be 3 percent. This amounts to hundreds of billions of euros, and this is due to the Greek crisis, which forced the European Central Bank to push the interest to negative or zero rates, and the savings to the German federal government from the Greek crisis are stupendous. So if we want to do a proper accounting as to who is gifting whom, let's do it, but let's not come up with insupportable generalized inaccuracies.

iF: There are of course the complaints by the locals, accusing Documenta's artistic director of not involving the Greek art scene, not representing it, not consulting it.

YV: I disagree. I don't believe they had any obligation to consult anyone. I am an internationalist. I don't believe in borders. I don't believe Athens belongs to the Athenians exclusively and that anyone from Kassel or Venice or New York needs to get permission from the Greek authorities or local art scene to be here. I do not even believe this is necessary even as a gesture of courtesy. I do not believe in these mechanisms by which one secures legitimacy to do things in any European country. If this were so, DiEM25 would not have come into existence. We inaugurated DiEM25 in Berlin without the permission of anyone in Germany, except of course our German comrades. I don't think we had any obligation at all to get permission from the local authorities to be there and present our ideas.

My problem is not that Documenta did not contact Greek society through official or unofficial channels. I am quite happy when people, of their own volition, decide they want to come over to Athens and do things. My criticism is of how they did it. And the mind-set which they brought to this place. I fear that their mind-set here is inimical to internationalism.

iF: The binary between north and south Europe is a profitable one for a "classical" institution such as Documenta to exploit. Athens is just the place to experiment, after its seven very public years of financial chaos. Now there is the fetish of the crisis. This might even unintentionally reinforce the narratives of austerity. Referencing the Greek financial crisis so intensely appeals to all the precariats of the art world and to the middle- and upper-class museum directors and art lovers who are all very curious to see what a country that does not play ball with the EU can become. It is a voyeuristic desire to consume the crisis and the suffering of others, which is nothing new.

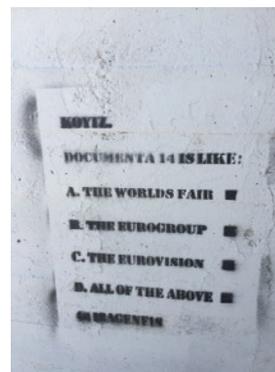
Of course, within the strict confines of the five still relatively prosperous neighborhoods where most of the venues and artworks are situated, this has not really been achieved. In fact, most visitors have asked me the same thing I have



9 Graffiti in Athens, Spring 2017.



10 Graffiti in Athens, Spring 2017.



11 Graffiti in Athens, Spring 2017.

1 Logo of Documenta 14. Design by Studio Laurenz Brunner, Berlin.

2 Poster in Athens, Spring 2017.

3 Graffiti in Athens close to the site of the presentation of Ross Birrell's *The Athens-Kassel Ride: The Transit of Hermes*, 2017.

4 Rasheed Araeen, *Shamiyaana—Food for Thought: Thought for Change*, 2016–17. Canopies with geometric patchwork, cooking, and eating, Kotzia Square, Athens, Documenta 14. Photo: Yiannis Hadjiaslanis.

5 Posters in Athens, Spring 2017.

6 The Lgbtqi+ Refugees in Greece group with the replica of the oath stone of Roger Bernat's *The Place of the Thing*, 2017. Photo courtesy Lgbtqi+ Refugees in Greece.

7 Graffiti in Athens, Spring 2017.

8 Lgbtqi+ Refugees in Greece groups with the replica oath stone from Roger Bernat's *The Place of the Thing*, 2017, which they stole in a gesture of protest. Photo courtesy Lgbtqi+ Refugees in Greece.

9 Graffiti in Athens, Spring 2017.

been hearing for the past seven years: Where is this supposed crisis? The precariat of the ecology of the art world seems to be part of the problem, as Sven Lütticken argues in his new book *Cultural Revolution: Aesthetic Practice after Autonomy*: the structural revolution of capitalism occurred through an economic but also cultural transformation. So to declare the Greek referendum and the events that followed it as the *raison d'être* for the exhibition in Athens,(4) when Documenta collaborated closely with those who supported the “Yes” campaign (including our current mayor, Giorgos Kaminis), is problematic.

YV: The point is not *that* they came but rather *how* they came to Athens, whom they went to bed with (metaphorically), and how they used a seemingly progressive left-wing critique of what is happening in Greece to willingly or unwillingly propagate the very process that is causing the country's crisis. In the name of seeking solutions they became part of the problem.

IF: According to Documenta's artistic director, Adam Szymczyk, Athens operates as a paradigm or a metaphor. Athens stands for the Global South, which I find intriguing but also problematic. I fear that the Global South—as it is recognized by cultural practices, political discourse, and social theory—can become a grouping of the Other, thus generating a continuation of “othering.” The curatorial statements use an anti-neoliberal rhetoric, which is very pro-internationalism, to underline unity and the expression of multiple voices. They question notions of origin and nationality; they talk about the global white patriarchal forces that wish to crush minorities, indigeneity, etc. So this institution presents an exhibition that claims to unite the precariats, the disenfranchised, the dispossessed, and the indigenous of the world: “We (all) are the people” read the words on the poster Hans Haacke produced for Documenta 14—against all these nationalistic neoliberal powers. So Athens is the metaphor for all that, and is in this case compared to Lagos or Guatemala City.

YV: This is why I like Schäuble! He put it very succinctly when in some press conference he suggested that Greece is to Europe what Puerto Rico is to the United States. When Jack Lew, the American treasury secretary under Obama, criticized Germany for its insistence on austerity in Greece, Schäuble suggested that the US (or “the dollar zone,” as he put it) and the EU trade Puerto Rico for Greece! Your depiction of this mind-set, according to which Greece represents the Global South, is accurate and is shared by Germany's federal finance minister.

IF: The problematic aspect is that this discourse—“all the others are the same”—smells like First World didactics. This approach of “let's unite or group the precariats” under an anti-neoliberal, or liberal, narrative—doesn't matter which—becomes a priori dangerous. And this is a real problem, because we should be united in recognizing difference. Of course, on the other side of this you have the nationalists and the neofascists, and I wonder where to stand between these two positions—one position that hastily groups all the precariats, indigenous, and minorities together, and the other that claims “we are undeniably unique and incomparable.” However, I wonder if I'd like it if I were a citizen of Lagos or Guatemala City and someone compared my condition to that of an Athenian.

YV: On the one hand, Athens actually looks like Paris if you compare it to Lagos, though it is degenerating quickly. On the other, the trajectory of countries like Nigeria isn't necessarily pushing them toward desertification. The great difference is the static versus the dynamic. Countries like Nigeria have a dynamic which may lead them either to disaster or to development, whereas the Greek dynamic is one that I call “Kosovization,” of turning Greece into a protectorate, just like Kosovo, where young people all leave and the place is a real estate opportunity, with pensioners starving and northern European pensioners enjoying cheap old folks' homes by the seaside. So maybe Nigeria and Lagos have advantages compared to Greece and Athens. At the dynamic level, not at the static.

I also find it remarkable that Documenta's narrative in Athens is anti-neoliberal. Speaking from my 2015 experience, I had the terrible task of negotiating with creditors whose objective was not to recoup their money. What I was proposing to them was consistent with neoliberal policies, because the crisis was at such an advanced, deep stage that it took a finance minister from the radical left to propose Reaganite and Thatcherite policies: cut your losses, reduce tax rates when both employers and employees are bankrupt, etc. Indeed, when you have low tax revenues and companies and households that are bankrupt, banks that are bankrupt, and actually a state that is bankrupt, and you have very high tax rates, it is not a left-wing economic policy to increase tax rates. It is just madness, from both a left-wing and a neoliberal perspective. So I was proposing to supposedly neoliberal creditors—the International Monetary Fund, Mario Draghi's European Central Bank—substantial reductions in tax rates, which is what neoliberals supposedly advocate. Remarkably, they would not only turn these policies down, but try to portray me as recalcitrant. Why? Because they

10 Graffiti in Athens, Spring 2017.

11 Graffiti in Athens, Spring 2017.

Judy Chicago's “PowerPlay: A Prediction”

SALON 94, New York

Július Koller's “Subjektobjekt”

GALERIE MARTIN JANDA, Vienna

ARCOMadrid 2018

ARCOMADRID, Madrid

Singapore Art Week

VARIOUS LOCATIONS, Singapore

were not even interested in neoliberal policies, they were solely concerned with a nineteenth-century-style power play—a postmodern version of gunboat diplomacy. In this context, the critique of neoliberalism that Documenta is trying out in Athens is totally out of place. In 2017 Greece, neoliberalism’s failure is evident in the rejection by neoliberal institutions of neoliberal policies! A delicious paradox that Documenta is utterly blind to, because if they were to talk about the real tragedy unfolding in Greece today, an off-the-shelf critique of neoliberalism would not suffice. They would have to dig deeper, and thus run the risk of discovering the role of the German-led policies combining authoritarianism, large loans to bankrupt banks and governments, and savage burdens for the weakest of citizens in places like Greece but also Germany. Such a “discovery” would risk upsetting Documenta’s sponsors, who remain untouched by the (irrelevant) off-the-shelf critique of neoliberalism.

In short, coming to Athens to talk about “neoliberal powers that wish to destroy Europe” is to miss the point spectacularly. It is like the Greek Communist Party which, stuck in the 1960s and ’70s, blames all of Greece’s ills on American imperialism, while having nothing to say about the Troika, Berlin, Paris, Brussels, or Frankfurt. Like the Greek Communist Party, Documenta ignores the fact that Greece is the most brittle part of a European monetary union set up by the Franco-German axis. A union so terribly designed that it led to a massive, inevitable crisis and, moreover, to the denial of that crisis once it erupted—a denial that took the form of toxic new bailout loans for the bankers and austerity for the majority of the people. When Documenta comes here and talks about neoliberalism with no mention of Deutsche Bank, Société Générale, the awful Troika process, the Eurogroup, etc., it is choosing to be irrelevant. It is choosing to fight the last war against Europe’s Deep Establishment in order to avoid exposing the latter’s current war against decency and rationality. If I were the Troika, I would be very happy with the Athens Documenta. It would add legitimacy to my endeavors by sending art tourists to a disaster area of the Troika’s making. I would not be in the slightest upset by its critique of neoliberalism as long as there is no critique of ... the Troika! As I intimated above, neoliberalism is not even being practiced by the Troika. What the Troika is practicing in Greece is punitive illiberalism.

IF: But this is presented as financial “aid,” as doing Greeks a favor by first tolerating us and then saving us. This is also the case with Documenta. I recently had a visit from a group of master’s art students from The Hague to the gallery where I work, and they were troubled by Rasheed Araeen’s work in Kotzia Square, *Shamiyaana—Food for Thought: Thought for Change, 2016–17*, which is basically a communal cooking and eating ritual that happens twice a day. While the artwork was taking place, an invigilator was trying to explain to a hungry Greek pensioner that he had to stand up and give his seat to the students, because this was not a food bank but an artwork. I am sure the artist had the best of intentions, but sadly it fed into this narrative of solidarity, and “helping the crisis situation” in a locality that cannot understand this artistic discourse, or the simulation of a communal kitchen and free food being distributed under the auspices of an artwork. This is a recurring problem of socially and politically engaged participatory art practices. This narrative of aid, of solidarity can become quite dangerous, when in fact there shouldn’t be aid but a mutually understood exchange. Of course there was a lot of money spent on this exhibition, but in Athens the expenses were mostly for its production, for the salaries of the staff who moved here, their transport, stipends, etc. The institution did give jobs and know-how to locals they hired as employees—and we can debate whether they were paid handsomely or not, or whether they received German-level salaries, etc., and indeed there was an incident with invigilators that, through the intervention of the artistic director, was solved. While I know of people who were not paid well, I also know of some people who received good salaries. And the decision to come here generated revenue, the staff did rent apartments, did spend money in this country: no doubt about that. I am assuming they spent more than anticipated, to be fair.

Nonetheless, to go back to the beginning, in 2015 at the Moscow Biennale you commented that Documenta 14’s arrival in Athens was “crisis tourism.” I must admit that I thought this was hasty. I wondered why you made that statement so early on, without “proof of presence” yet. I wonder whether we can call it crisis tourism, or even cultural imperialism, because I really do not think that we can call it cultural colonialism.

YV: I called it disaster tourism I think, but crisis tourism is the same thing. The distinction between the two is vague. When you have, in a peripheral country, the kind of disaster that we have, this is part and parcel of the neocolonial policy, which brought about the crisis.

IF: So, in fact you do consider it a neocolonial practice.

YV: Absolutely. There is no doubt about it. It is nineteenth-century power politics, or gunboat diplomacy, utilizing the financial sector. The people of Greece elected a government to challenge the terms of a loan agreement whose policy framework had already failed and the creditors arrived by private jet before unceremoniously telling the new finance minister that “if you insist on renegotiating our loan agreement we are going to close down your banks within weeks.” Think about it: in the nineteenth century, if a government had insisted on resisting their will, they would have sent gunboats or troops to Piraeus and started bombarding. Is today’s version significantly different? Our situation is not even neocolonialism. It is pure colonialism.

iF: However, in the case of British colonialism, it was done with much more violent means.

YV: I’m not sure if the means were more violent, just more inefficient. Violence is unnecessary, inefficient today. As Bertolt Brecht once said, “Why send out murderers when we can employ bailiffs?” Similarly we can ask: Why use Panzer tanks when you can use a button to close down all the ATM’s of a stricken nation? This is the undercurrent: the subjugation of a people and a government to the imperatives of creditors who wanted effectively to use the state’s unsustainable debt as a means by which to get their hands on particular assets. Like the airports, the ports, everything with value. Which is currently happening. When cultural organizations from the core come to the periphery, where the disaster is taking place, under the circumstances we are discussing, this is disaster tourism. And neocolonialism. It is exactly the same story.

iF: I generally question the sovereignty of the Greek state throughout the last fifty years. The way you have publicly portrayed the events from March 2015 onwards suggests that this sovereignty barely exists now, with the referendum offering more proof. The theme of Documenta 14 is “Learning from Athens,” and there was a decision to include historically charged spaces, such as the Museum of Anti-dictatorial and Democratic Resistance, as well as the Polytechnic School of Athens, where the uprising of November 17, 1973 took place. But when it comes to why Greece is in this financial and political state today —this was blatantly omitted from Documenta. I think that the elephant in the room when we talk about the Greek financial crisis is the why and the who, and these were missing from the exhibition.

YV: You are spot on. There has been no attempt to understand the political and economic history of Greece. But I find it unproductive to try to push this line forward. My conclusion is that the best way to deal with it is this: any attempt to nuance the narrative on Greece feeds the trolls—those who want to say “ha, the Greeks want constantly to excuse themselves for their failures, they want to shun their own responsibilities and refuse to modernize; they demand their right to be premodern and to be fed by European money.” That is what you get the moment you bring forward the argument of how we fell into the net of the crisis: you lose the argument. The only thing you can say is, “Folks, imagine if we had not entered the Euro in 2000. Would Documenta be taking place in Greece today? No. Why? Because there would be no crisis.” The moment you say this they cannot continue to play the game of blaming the victim.

iF: It is the classic narrative that emerges, both in the cultural field and the political field, when one raises the kinds of issues we have discussed: the marginalization of opinion, the dismissive attitude towards the “complaints” or “rantings” of the Greeks. Funnily enough, it was Preciado who called this phenomenon the “pathologization of all forms of dissidence.”(5)

YV: Oh, the story of my life. I also felt that when discussing this crisis. How do you stop yourself from becoming the raving loony, the sole voice of dissent? We are in a situation that resembles the late Soviet era. In 1983, the USSR still had the capacity to enforce a unitary narrative through its media, a narrative of a “single party line everywhere.” But, at the same time, there was a major disconnect between that unitary dominant party line and what people actually thought. It is similar in Greece today: the state is happy with Documenta, they think it will bring tourism in, but when I talk to people on the streets about it, they reject it with venom. The only way of avoiding becoming the lone enraged dissident is to connect with public opinion.

iF: Public opinion has been vividly demonstrated by the myriad graffiti. Yet, I am not sure that the majority of the public rejects it with venom, the reason being another form of disconnect: the general public does not even know it’s here. The realization of the exhibition was such that unfortunately it will fail in what most of the small local art institutions were hoping for: to breed a new, larger audience for contemporary art. Documenta’s undelivered message will be ours to realize, in politics and in art.

(1) Paul B. Preciado, “The Apatride Exhibition,” *e-flux conversations*, April 10, 2017, <https://conversations.e-flux.com/t/paul-b-preciado-the-apatride-exhibition/6392>.

(2) DiEM25 describes itself as a “pan-European, cross-border movement of democrats” dedicated to the “repair” of the EU. See <https://diem25.org/what-is-diem25/>.

(3) Documenta has never published detailed financial accounts of expenses and incomes, just a general figure for total expenditures. But it surely receives more than just state funding. In fact, an official announcement from the office of Documenta states that “the business plan for documenta 14 covers a five-year period. During this timeframe, documenta and Museum Fridericianum gGmbH receive 14 million euros from the City of Kassel and the State of Hessen, both of which are shareholders, and 4.5 million euros from the German Federal Cultural Foundation (Kulturstiftung des Bundes). The remaining 18.5 million euros needed to finance documenta 14 must be raised by documenta and Museum Fridericianum gGmbH in the form of proceeds from the sale of admission tickets, catalogues, and merchandise and through sponsors, additional funding, and grants.” As *Artforum* reported on March 22, 2017, Ms. Kulenkampff has requested more state funding. See <https://www.artforum.com/news/id=67355>. It is unclear whether this funding will be put toward the current edition of Documenta.

(4) Preciado, “The Apatride Exhibition.”

(5) Ibid.

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Yanis Varoufakis is a Greek economist, academic, and politician who served as the Greek Minister of Finance from January to July 2015, when he resigned. Varoufakis was also a Syriza member of the Hellenic Parliament for Athens B from January to September 2015. In 2015 he co-founded, with Srećko Horvat, the pan-european political movement DiEM25.

OLU OGUIBE
Biafra Time Capsule (2017)
documenta 14
EMST—National Museum
of Contemporary Art, Athens





Biafra Time Capsule (2017)
Books, archival objects,
mixed media

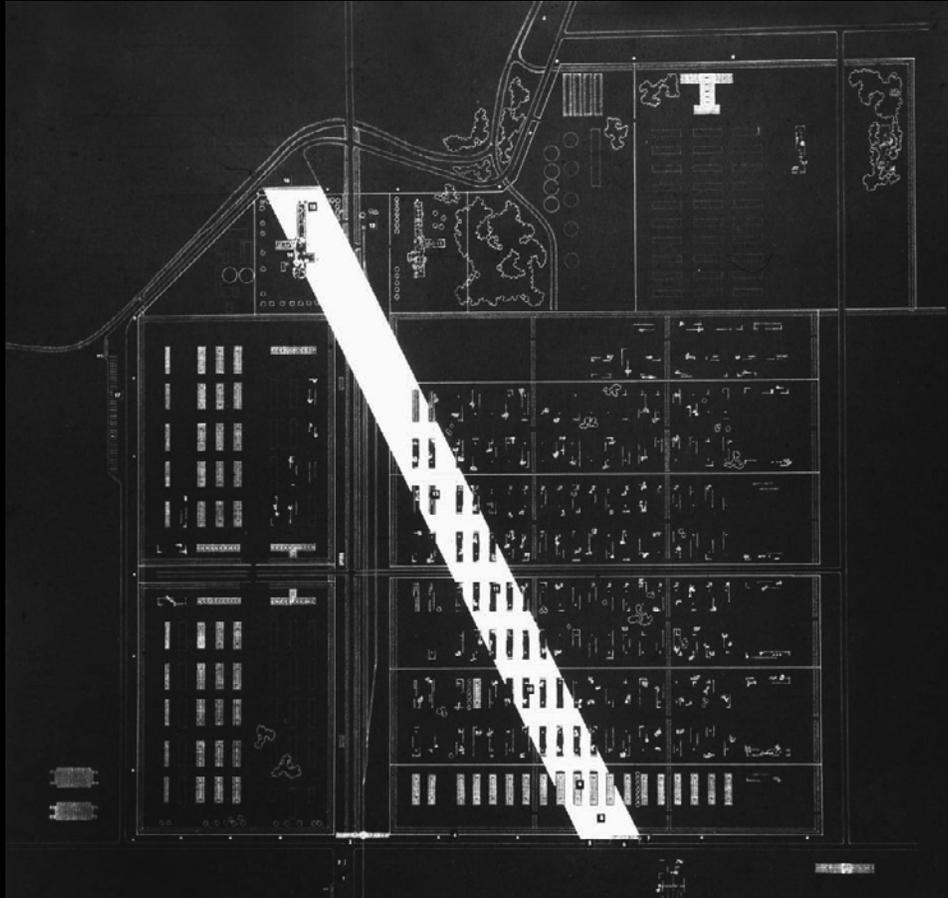
Olu Oguibe

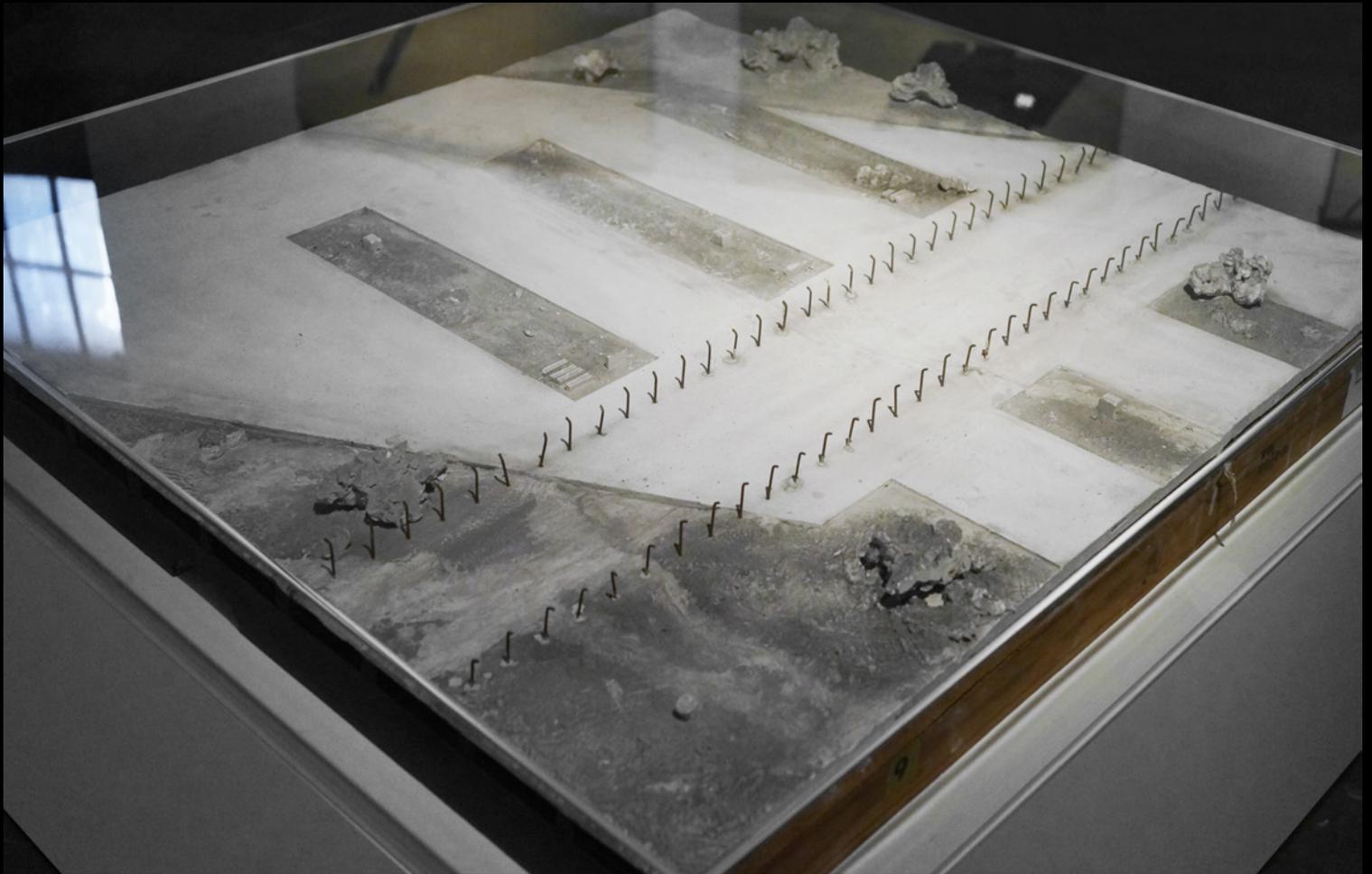
Biafra Time Capsule
(Χρονοκάψουλα της Μπιάφρας,
2017)
Βιβλία, αντικείμενα αρχείου,
μεικτή τεχνική

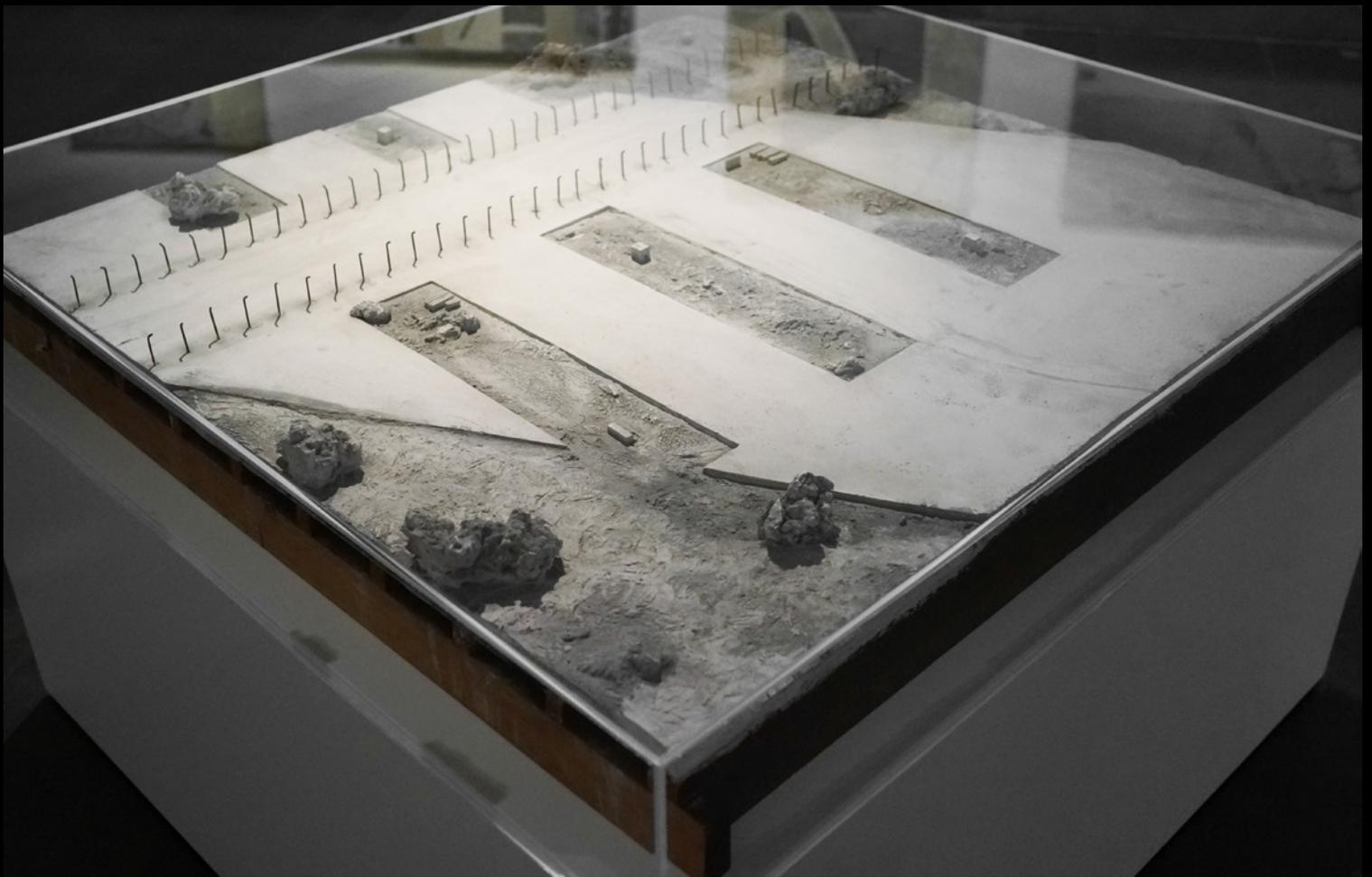




OSKAR HANSEN
Design for the Monument to the
Victims of Fascism in Auschwitz-Birkenau (1957)
documenta 14, Torwache, Kassel







PDF is an electronic storage and distribution platform. Its format has been chosen for its ability to facilitate rapid, economical distribution.

PDF is a mixed metaphor. It is a construction site and a ruin. It serves as an archive of the yet to be and as the ruins of what has been or will not be. It is a contemporary cabinet of curiosities, a mixture of analyses, documents, statements, points of view, fragments, conflicting temporalities, and exotic traces.

PDF's is the product of an age of uncertainty and instability. Its calendar of production is random. It has no set deadlines for the publication of its issues or limits for the length of the information that it presents.

PDF has a standard structure and set of categories that mimics an imaginary ideal: a future of intellectual discipline, rigour, power, and influence. How these categories are used, however, and what they contain, varies in the interests of PDF's ambiguities, its porous frontiers, and its indiscipline.

PDF est une plate-forme électronique de stockage et de diffusion. Son format a été choisi en raison de sa capacité à faciliter une diffusion rapide et économique.

PDF est une métaphore brisée, un site de construction et de ruine. Il sert d'archive pour ce qui est à venir, et de ruines de ce qui a été ou de ce qui ne sera pas. C'est un « cabinet de curiosités » contemporain, un mélange d'analyses, de documents, d'énoncés, de points de vue, de fragments, de temporalités conflictuelles et de traces exotiques.

PDF est le fruit de notre époque d'incertitude et d'instabilité. Son calendrier de production est aléatoire. Il n'a ni date d'échéance pour la publication de ses numéros ni limites sur la longueur des renseignements qu'il présente.

PDF possède une structure standard et un ensemble de catégories qui reproduit un idéal imaginaire : un avenir fait de discipline intellectuelle, de rigueur, de pouvoir et d'influence. Toutefois, l'utilisation et contenu de ces catégories varient selon les avantages qui sont liés à son caractère ambigu, à ses frontières perméables et à son indiscipline.

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