Jaargang 25 No. 129



Edouard Merino, *Insight*, 1989, cibachrome print mounted on aluminium, title card with text: "EDOUARD MERINO Insight 1989", photograph: 120×180 cm (framed), title card: 4,5×11 cm

(advertisement)

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Exhibition Extended until 27/11

DOMINIQUE GONZALEZ-FOERSTER ASTROCYTES

Jan Mot Petit Sablon / Kleine Zavel 10 1000 Brussels, Belgium (advertisement)

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Exhibition 04/12-29/01 Opening 04/12, 2-6 pm

EDOUARD MERINO INSIGHTS

Jan Mot Petit Sablon / Kleine Zavel 10 1000 Brussels, Belgium

Insights by Edouard Merino

BRUSSELS, OCT. 18 – In anticipation of our show with works by Philippe Thomas, signed by Edouard Merino, we publish here below an excerpt from *Interviews Between Philippe Thomas and Stéphane Wargnier* (1995) that is included in the book: Paul Bernard, Emeline Jaret, Philippe Thomas, Stéphane Wargnier, *The Agency*, Mamco. Geneva. 2021.

Philippe Thomas: (...) between the Pompidou and the CAPC there was the show Insights in New York [at the Curt Marcus Gallery, November 29 to December 23, 1989], and Epreuves d'artistes (Artist's Proofs) in Paris [Claire Burrus gallery, September 19 to November 5, 1988]. But, to resume the continuity of the narrative: after having shown its concepts with Sujet à discrétion, and after having marked its opening with the creation of the agency, the concept had to be put into operation if I was going to manage to bring together all the threads of this story in New York, and I was very committed to making sure that that happened. I had no interest in leaving the New York scene with nothing more than a proposition, and I was determined to have proof [of the agency's efficiency]. The Art History in Search of Characters ads had been shown, but what I wanted was to make a very specific project signed by American collectors. And there we find our entry point to a third category of works, which consists of detailed projects. I had imagined using photographs that I had taken during the installation at the Cable Gallery, without in any way disrespecting their status as documents, since they were taken during the show, in December 1987. I kept a few, with the idea of treating them as fairly sizeable still-lives.

They were shown by two artists [Jay Chiat and Edouard Merino, in Insights]. Because there were some small details in each photograph that allowed viewers to believe that they were inside this agency, called readymades belong to everyone®, it was by the same token possible for them to turn things around and tell themselves that the insistence of showing these small details must be motivated by the fact that they carry some sort of message. The image is pierced once again: beyond the simple act of seeing the agency, spectators were led to ask themselves if the agency was not in fact supplying them with the proof of its existence, since the two [artists] signatories [of the photographs] could only be clients [of the agency.] Perhaps, and in accordance with a certain logic, they are no more artists than I am.

Stéphane Wargnier: That was the first time that works, as would happen again later, were there primarily to serve as clues, indeed as proofs of the existence, in the real, of the agency's activities.

PT: At the same time, the difficulty was in how to give them a certain interest. What seemed interesting to me was to work on the notion of the still-life, which all too often is thought to be entirely cut off from the real even though, in the past, most still-lives actually had a utilitarian function: they were used as shop signs, for example. That was the case with *Insights*. That opposition, by which I mean the process of working on pieces that somehow acquired the function of clues — a process that undoes their simple status as images, the only point of view allowed by denotations — struck me as increasingly important.

SW: It's always the idea of a double reading.

PT: Yes, that's what's most important, that [interpretation] is always caught between two possibilities.



Pierre Bismuth at the Centre Pompidou in Paris

PARIS, OCT. 18 - On the occasion of Pierre Bismuth's solo exhibition Everyone is an artist but only the artist knows it (Centre Pompidou, Paris, until 28/02/22) a catalogue was published with texts by Bernard Blistène, Marie-José Sondeijker, Dessislava Dimova, Dieter Roelstraete and Asad Raza (24×19×2 cm. hardcover, 128 pages, FR/EN). It was produced with the support of West Den Haag (a.o.) where the second part of this exhibition will take place from 25/03 till 10/07. Below is an excerpt of the conversation between Jean-Pierre Criqui, the curator of the exhibition in Paris and Pierre Bismuth that is published in the catalogue.

Jean-Pierre Criqui: My sense is that, parallel to your interest in conceptual art and what could be called your rather Dadaist take on that, it was your work on cinema that brought you to a kind of artistic maturity. What would you say about that?

Pierre Bismuth: Honestly, I don't know. It may be that you see a form of artistic maturity in one part of my work more than another, but personally I just couldn't say. Perhaps the first thing is to go back to how this relation to cinema started. Towards the end of the 1980s I had the feeling that whenever I wanted to make something, I didn't know how to go about it, whereas as soon as I thought of something else then I was immediately involved in lots of interesting activities. So I ended up capturing some of these moments when you create something without realising it. One of the ways I found of doing this was to record the moment when you choose synonyms from the computer's thesaurus when writing a text (What, 1994; Beyond, 1994; What Beyond, 1995). For me, this was the degree zero of creation: when you choose one thing to replace another. From there, I became interested in the activity of transcription. I had the idea of asking a typist to transcribe aural information, as in Post-Script (1996), and later, The Party (1997). The only reason I used a film sound track was because I was looking for a dynamic source. The film itself meant nothing to me. But there it was, I now found myself on board with all the artists who were interested in cinema: Eija-Liisa Ahtila, Fiona Banner, Stan Douglas, Pierre Huyghe,

Christoph Draeger, Douglas Gordon, Steve McQueen, Joachim Koester, Mark Lewis, Sharon Lockhart, Matthias Müller, Christoph Girardet, Candice Breitz, Omer Fast, Christian Marclay, etc. That brought me to attention, and I was very happy about it, but over the years that followed I always made it clear when I could that my work was not particularly about the cinema. And when, at last, I had managed to set out my practice away from this cinema question, I was awarded an Oscar in Hollywood! At that point I effectively gave up trying to clarify my position, and it may be this capitulation to cinema which, for you, marks a certain artistic maturity.

By "maturity" I was referring to that kind of "haziness" that you mentioned, but it strikes me that the term is ambiguous, at the very least, insofar as there is a kind of "immaturity" that could be claimed for work like yours (in the books of Witold Gombrowicz, for example, notably in his 1937 novel Ferdydurke, there is a kind of apology in favour of immaturity as the irreducible vestige of childhood – especially in art). As someone somewhere must already have said, "To mature is to decay a little," and that's not really a prospect to relish.

That's quite true. But what do you mean exactly by a "Dadaist take" on conceptual art?

I mean that the procedures you take from it are often applied to a very marked sense of the absurd, of the burlesque – of an urge to "deflate" pervaded by a spirit of playfulness that is shared by children and Dada or Neo-Dada artists.

Yes. I really like the term "deflate," I can totally identify with that. It's also a big operation of neutralising meaning — and that, come to think of it, is not really the current trend. Artists nowadays are more likely to deal literally with societal issues, and assert the fact. Speaking of which, when there was the Francis Bacon show at the Centre Pompidou I read his interviews and they reminded me that not so long ago, in 1992, an artist could still assert that they could not and did not have to explain their work. That seems unimaginable now. But to come back to the immaturity you mentioned, it's probably also a cause or a consequence

of the fact that I am happy to find myself in fields that I don't fully grasp. Experience has shown me that the things I chance upon are often better than anything I could dream up. So, I like it that chance should determine my choices. And that's precisely why I found myself making cinema. One day, Michel Gondry asked me to write a short synopsis, and I did. After the Oscar in 2005, I was asked if I didn't have an idea for a feature film. I put forward a vague project and later I set about making it (Where Is Rocky II?, 2016).

Yes, it seems to me that, to begin with at least, vou didn't work on cinema but with it, like a material whose actual nature was of no great importance to you (I'm thinking of your invention of a kind of "found drawing" by following the hand of an actress in a film or of a public figure in a filmed report). But your relationship to cinema is a complex one (we'll leave aside the Oscar for your contribution with Michel Gondry to the screenplay of Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind. 2004), because you later made Where Is Rocky II?, and are currently working on another feature film. Could you say a bit more about these very diverse way in which cinema informs your work, and where you stand in relation to it today?

Once again, it was my chance encounter with Jean-Claude Carrière that led to me working with him on the adaptation of a screenplay he wrote with Luis Buñuel in 1976 (adapted from Là-Bas, a novel by Joris-Karl Huysmans that Buñuel had long been interested in, but for various reasons he didn't get further than the script). Here I should point out an aspect of my working method that speaks volumes about what I look for in artistic practice, whether in art itself or in cinema. As I said, projects come along rather by chance, but once I've started on a project I no longer question its justification. I become a machine that executes, since my principle is basically to find myself, almost against my will, engaged in an activity. This constitutes both a method and the actual structure of the works. In Following the right hand of ... the meaning and content of the films are completely eluded: feature films are used simply as drawing machines. In Where Is Rocky II? the artist Ed Ruscha is just a pretext for producing action. That is a constant in my work: action comes before meaning. The point is not to look for the meaning of life but simply to appreciate the way in which life creates meaning. And that's why I don't like to have to choose the subject or object of my work.



Pierre Bismuth, Everyone is an artist but only the artist knows it, installation view at Centre Pompidou, Paris, 2021. Photo: Julia Wielgus

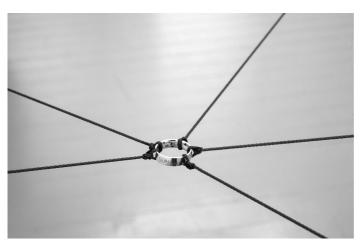
In a nutshell, existence precedes sense.

The choice of object or subject becomes secondary, in any case, because it is what I do with it that is decisive, and that often leads me to take practical detours, like when you use a door to make a table. That's why I start mainly from already existing productions. There are enough signifying things as it is, and rather than add more we should be eliminating them, or recycling what already exists.

The most obvious examples are the Unfolded Origamis (2003-4), printed images that are used as simple paper, or again the Newspapers (2000-1) in which the images of the "headlines" are duplicated. Or again, the new series Variations on the Theme of Nations (2019–21), in which the motifs of national flags are used to create "pictorial combinations." All this is done with no hint as to how the juxtaposition of two national symbols is to be interpreted. All these misapplications also go back to what you were saying about children's games. Over the last year my son, for example, has been playing a lot with my umbrella. He pretends it's a gun. He has his own toys, but he prefers to use the umbrella. So we probably do have a deep need to appropriate things. But I think this detournement is interesting only if it is brought about by a use, only if it does not arise from a simple mental game.

Excerpt from Jean-Pierre Criqui, Pierre Bismuth, *Dialogue*, in: *Pierre Bismuth*. *Everyone is an artist but only the artist knows it*, Centre Pompidou, Paris, 2021 (24×19×2 cm, hardcover, 128 pages, FR/EN). Available for purchase at Centre Pompidou's bookshop and webshop, as well as on *by-association.online*

Making an inner vision visible Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster



Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, *Astrocytes*, installation view at Jan Mot, October–November 2021 (detail). Photo: Philippe De Gobert

The below text is a fragment of a conversation we had with Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster in summer as she was preparing her current exhibition at the gallery Astrocytes (extended until 27/11).

PARIS, AUG. 20 – I came across the word "astrocyte" researching about Covid-19 last year in February 2020. Astrocytes are less famous than neurones in our understanding of how the brain works but their importance has been constantly re-evaluated in the past years. I love the cosmic and stellar reference and even before mention ing Endodrome, I want to mention the Cosmodrome (2000), a XXL light and sound environment which is imagined like a trip in outer space. Endodrome being more like a trip into inner space, a voyage inside, a VR experience staged like a seance.

A few years ago, I had a vision of a constellation of rings occupying the gallery space in an unusual way, which means making it impossible to walk through the space and look at the exhibition as usual. I imagined the circulation space, the central void becoming the most important aspect, somehow reversing attention to another dimension

The multiple rings are engraved with multiple words and connected through multiple strings form a thoughtspace (maybe more like a thoughtform?) but it's not a room. This project is part of an ensemble called « visions » which includes the *Volcanic excursion* at the secession in Vienna and *la chambre humaine et la planète close* which will be on view in Paris (Galerie Chantal Crousel, 03/09–09/10/2021). Astrocytes has connections with the *bibliothèque des cubes en bois* (2021), in the way it invents a system to display thoughts and connections.

The words which are part of *Astrocytes* and engraved on the rings, they are extracted from a kind of « virus diary » which is a series of notes/quotes collected almost every day about our pandemic/syndemic time.

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Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, *Astrocytes (edition)* (Dedicated to Diane Arbus), 2021, 2 sheets of paper (A4), cardboard folder, ink; certificate of authenticity, ed. 50 + 5AP. This edition will be available for purchase on in our collaborative webshop BY ASSOCIATION. Visit: by-association.online

Francis Alÿs. As Long as I'm Walking



Francis Alÿs. As Long as I'm Walking, installation view at the Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne (CH), 2021

LAUSANNE, OCT. 15 – Francis Alÿs. As Long as I'm Walking at the Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts in Lausanne (CH) presents an overview of the artist's video work of the last thirty years, with an emphasis on one of the central themes in his practice, namely walking.

Through his seemingly insignificant walks, Francis Alys not only reimagines the city, he also creates narratives, spreads rumors, maps the social fabric of the place through actions that are sometimes short sometimes carried out over long distances or many hours, by turns dragging, pushing or carrying an accessory that stands in for a clue to reading the fable spun by the body in motion.

While Francis Alÿs figures as a protagonist in most of his early videos, he moves behind the camera in a series of works begun in 1999, the *Children's Games*. In these videos, shot in a number of countries, the imaginary spaces of childhood blend with the fictional spaces of the artist, offering him an entry point when dealing with

unknown situations or contexts. During his first trip to Kabul in 2010, for instance, Francis Alÿs observed children playing and filmed one of their favorite games, which was the inspiration for *Reel-Unreel* (2011), one of the core works to come out of his explorations in Afghanistan. It is featured in the Lausanne show along with paintings and works on paper. In this project, as in his city wanderings, the artist reveals the deeply subversive potential of play and fiction, while making it possible, short of refashioning reality, to imagine and see it differently.

A catalogue is published on the occasion of the exhibition: Francis Alÿs. As Long as I'm Walking, Nicole Schweizer (ed.). With texts by Julia Bryan-Wilson, Luis Pérez-Oramas, and Judith Rodenbeck, and an introduction by Nicole Schweizer. Co-ed. Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts of Lausanne and JRP Editions, Geneva, 2021 (2 editions FR. and EN.), 160 p., 277 ill.

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In Brief

Textiles and books from the collection of **Seth Siegelaub/Egress Foundation** are included in the exhibition *EURASIA* – *A Landscape of Mutability* at the M HKA in Antwerp. The exhibition seeks to map innovative practices and exchanges that reflect the plurality of cultures, collaborations and conceptions of Eurasia (08/10/2021–23/01/2022).



© M HKA, Courtesy Stichting Egress Foundation Amsterdam

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The Hunter College Art Galleries are presenting Life as Activity: David Lamelas (03/11-18/12), an exhibition marking David Lamelas's first solo show in New York in more than a decade. It brings together sculpture, film, and photography made across many decades and locations. Among others, Situación de cuatro placas de aluminio (Four Changeable Plaques) (1966), Limit of a Projection (1967), The Violent Tapes of 1975 (1975), and two films, The Desert People (1974), and The Invention of Dr. Morel (2000). Showcasing the ways in which Lamelas makes us aware of how the stories we tell ourselves are shaped by encounters with space and time, all of these works invite us to participate in scenarios in which container, contained, observer, and observed become blurred. On the occasion of the exhibition, a publication has been produced including essays and previously unpublished materials from the artist's papers. The catalog will be available for purchase via University of Chicago Press and on our webshop BY ASSOCIATION.

Sven Augustijnen's work, AWB 082-3317 7922 (2012) will be on view during S.M.A.K.'s next exhibition The Little Catalogue of the S.M.A.K. Collection | The Exhibition opening on October 30th in Ghent (BE). More than 350 children worked with the museum to organize this exhibition while selecting 80 works from the collection.

Augustijnen's work consists of a bicycle (a 'typical' Congolese means of transport) loaded with bags of charcoal, an essential source of income for residents of Katanga, but also a symbolic remnant of the tree against which Patrice Lumumba was executed. The bicycle was originally positioned in the Citadelpark, opposite the 'Moorken'. This black statue is a controversial monument from 1888 that depicts the Congolese boy Sakala, who was brought to Belgium as an exhibit in 1884. He died in Congo shortly afterwards. AWB 082-3317 7922 is an allusion to the bike's air freight reference number. The work not only recalls the dark past, but also links in with the contemporary post-colonial debate.

Tris Vonna-Michell and Diana Kaur's project is on view on BY ASSOCIATION, the gallery's new webshop (till December 31st). They are presenting Mount Analogue, a Stockholm-based publishing space, curatorial, editorial agency and analogue studio they initiated in 2010. Their publication of artist's editions is characterised by a close, long-term collaboration with each artist, in which the print media is the premise and the focus. To learn more about the project or to receive updates from our webshop, please visit by-association.online.

Agenda

Francis Alÿs

El tiempo en las cosas. Salas de arte contemporáneo, Museo Amparo, Puebla (MX) 28/02-31/12; The Little Catalogue of the S.M.A.K. Collection | The Exhibition 'Part 1', S.M.A.K., Ghent (BE), 26/06-06/03; Variables d'épanouissement, Centre de Création Contemporaine Olivier Debré, Tours (FR), 23/07-02/01; 2021 DMZ Art & Peace Platform, Korea's Demilitarised Zone (DMZ), Unimaru (KR), 15/09-15/11; Yi / Chair Season, Zhi Art Museum, Chengdu (CN), 15/09-10/04; Colección Jumex: Temperatura ambiente, Museo Jumex, Mexico City, 07/10-13/02; WFMM, ZABEL-Tirana Biennale, Tirana (AL), 14/10-22/11; Francis Alÿs. As Long as I'm Walking, Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne (CH), 15/10-16/01 (solo); The Principle of Hope. Inside-Out Art Museum. Beijing, 16/10-27/02; Border Barriers Typology, Peter Kilchmann, Zurich (CH). 16/10-22/12 (solo); Comics Trip! Collection Lambert, Institut d'art contemporain, Villeurbanne/Rhône-Alpes (FR), 29/10-30/01; Sandlines, The Story of History, Sydney Film Festival, Sydney (AU), 03/11-21/11 (screening); Beyond Borders, Koroška galerija likovnih umetnosti, Slovenj Gradec (SI), 10/12-20/03; There is Nothing Inevitable About Time, Tavros, Athens, 12/01-19/02

Sven Augustijnen

The Little Catalogue of the S.M.A.K. Collection | The Exhibition, S.M.A.K., Ghent (BE), 30/10–17/04

Pierre Bismuth

Pierre Bismuth. Tout le monde est artiste mais seul l'artiste le sait, Centre Pompidou, Paris, 20/10–28/02 (solo); Everybody is an artist but only the artist knows it, West Den Haag, The Hague (NL), 25/03–10/07 (solo)

Andrea Büttner

John Dewey, Who?, New Presentation of the Collection of Contemporary Art Museum Ludwig, Cologne (DE), 20/08–ongoing; Donation Outset (The KW Production Series), Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach (DE), 26/09–13/02

Manon de Boer

On a Warm Day in July / One, Two, Many / Attica / Dissonant, LOOP festival Barcelona, Zumzeig cinema, Barcelona (ES), 19/11 (screening); Ghost Party (duo with

Latifa Laâbissi), Frac Rennes (FR), 21/01–15/05; Frac Franche-Comté's Collection (title to be confirmed), Frac Franche-Comté, Besançon (FR), 22/01–30/04; Manon de Boer in Conversation with Latifa Laâbissi and Laszlo Umbreit, Museum Dhondt Daenens, Deurle (BE), 12/02–22/05 (solo); Down Time, Kunsthal Aarhus (DK), 18/02–27/03 (solo)

Rineke Dijkstra

Tomorrow is a Different Day, Collectie 1980-nu, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, ongoing; Art of Sport, Copenhagen Contemporary, 25/03-24/10; Eregalerij van de Nederlandse fotografie, Nederlands Fotomuseum, Rotterdam (NL), 09/06ongoing; Art with a View: 25 years Proximus Art Collection, Proximus headquarters, Brussels, 18/09–19/12; Mother!, Kunsthalle Mannheim, Mannheim (DE), 01/10-06/02; Masculinities: Liberation through Photography, FOMU, Antwerp (BE), 21/10-13/03: Diversity United: Contemporary European Art. Berlin. Moscow. Paris., New Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, 23/11-09/03

Mario Garcia Torres

La poética del regreso, MARCO Museo de Arte Contemporánea de Monterrey, Monterrey (MX), 12/03-ongoing (solo); Antonio's Dream: A Journey Through Art and Textile, Fondazione Antonio Ratti, Como (IT), 10/10–31/01

Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster

Blow up-James Spader par Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, ARTE TV, 03/11-ongoing, Endodrome, Luma, Arles (FR), 26/06-ongoing, Astrocytes, Jan Mot, Brussels, 09/10-27/11 (solo)

Joachim Koester

Fotografisk Center 25 Years, Fotografisk Center, Copenhagen, 28/08–24/10

David Lamelas

Collection 1940s–1970s, MoMA New York, New York City (US), 24/10–ongoing, Life as Activity: David Lamelas, Hunter College Art Galleries, New York (US), 02/11– 18/12 (solo)

Sharon Lockhart

Sharon Lockhart: Noa Eshkol's Movement Notation, Guggenheim Bilbao (ES), 04/11– 27/02

Tino Sehgal

trust and confusion, Tai Kwun Contemporary, Hong-Kong, 23/10–05/12

Philippe Thomas

Edouard Merino, *Insights*, Jan Mot, Brussels, 04/12–29/01 (solo)

Tris Vonna-Michell

Mount Analogue with Diana Kaur, by-association.online, 01/09-31/12 (online project)

Seth Siegelaub / Egress Foundation

Interwoven Histories, ROZENSTRAAT, Amsterdam, 04/09–25/10; EURASIA – A Landscape of Mutability, M HKA, Antwerp (BE), 08/10–23/01

Also represented by the gallery

stanley brouwn

Ian Wilson



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JAN MOT

Petit Sablon / Kleine Zavel 10 1000 Brussels, Belgium tel:+32 2 514 1010 office@janmot.com www.janmot.com

> Wed-Fri, 2-6.30 pm Sat, 12-6 pm and by appointment

Colophon

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