

126–129

Jaargang 16 No. 83

[illegible]

• During the summer, **Pierre Bismuth** travelled to Los Angeles to complete the primary shooting for a film whose working title is *Where is Rocky 2?* (2012), in which he hires a real private investigator to search for a mysterious artwork hidden in the California desert.

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level of the other three with money, telephone, and gas a more serious concern. Incorporation of environmental issues, and a

The Human Voice

Manon de Boer in conversation with Raimundas Malašauskas



• **Manon de Boer**, *one, two, many*, 2011, 16mm film transferred to HD video, 16:9, stereo, 21'38" loop

BRUSSELS, MARCH 2011

Manon: I remember one of your questions was about where I am and about trajectories that brought me there. I've been thinking much about 'what is a voice' lately. But, when you start thinking of it you realise a voice is part of so many things. There is language, also very much tone and the enchantment of the singing voice in opera or music, the political voice, etc. I'm a bit lost, which is a good state of being for the moment.

Raimundas: What I like about a state of being lost is one's total involvement in it. What is your experience of it?

M: Yes, it's true that it's a total involvement, which for me has to do with a state of uncertainty that's almost physical as if I feel my body consists of millions of small particles, which could suddenly evaporate or take on another form. This involvement is also the drive to consider everything as a possibility, to discover new connections, to be open.

R: What are your preferred tools to ap-

proach the smallest particles of being?

M: Sound and breath, which could be a voice. I hope to encounter a person or a piece of music or an image on which I can focus and articulate the different thoughts on the voice and think about it more in cinematographic terms and develop a work from this.

R: Your films ultimately are portraits, aren't they? Suely Rolnik, Sylvia Kristel, Jean-Luc Fauchamps playing John Cage's 4'33. How do you decide on focusing on a specific character? Does that person stand for a specific idea or a period for you? Or you believe in the singularity of their life?

M: Actually in all my work it's really an encounter with a person or something else, more than a subject or a theme, which evokes the desire to develop a work. An encounter in the sense of someone or something the person does or thinks that affects me and heightens the experience of life or being. It's sometimes difficult to point out what it exactly is that I'm touched by. For example I met Sylvia Kristel at a party of

friends and I was really fascinated about the way she was telling stories. When I asked her if I could start recording things with her I recorded those monologues where she speaks each time about her life in a city she's lived like Paris, Los Angeles, Amsterdam, etc. I only used Paris for the film.

R: Why? Because it is a one of the most portrayable cities?

M: It does have a very cinematographic quality, but the reason was that her stories about Paris were relating the most to a collective memory of her. The period in Paris is when she did the *Emmanuelle* films and when she was together with the writer Hugo Claus.

R: What was the way she told it?

M: Whenever she spoke about her life each time she invented a story anew with certain facts that were fixed. One can say that what's interesting is the way memory works and how narration plays a role and that one never remembers the same thing in exactly the same way. But I think the thing

that fascinated me most is the freedom she feels when telling a story, not caring much about truth, it's more about the pleasure of telling a story. What also fascinated me is that she has an ironic distance towards her life, that she doesn't calculate, she takes things as they come, which also makes her free. The way I made that film was in fact very much influenced by her personality. I didn't have a plan, I just started collecting material, first the monologues as voice recordings, then I made some super-8 films of her and when I decided to start to use the monologues of Paris I filmed a bit in Paris and it was only then that I started to construct the film and decided on her voice-off without image of her when she's speaking, using images of Paris, using the two monologues one after the other etc. So I started to edit and then went back to film.

R: What about Sueli Rolnik and "Resonating Surfaces"?

M: It was also a real encounter. I met her through a friend and the things she spoke about, both personal and theoretical, were things I recognized as having always been important for me, but never so well articulated, like for instance what she says about micro-politics, vital energy and the experience of being, but also many new things which stimulated my thinking and evoked the desire to do something with her to be able to think about it through making a work. Making a work is then a way to engage in this encounter and by creating something it's also living it and understanding things better.

R: And then this knowledge affects your ways of living?

M: Yes, it does, but it's subtle. Something Sueli has written several times about is the paradox between the experience of the world through perception (based on the recognition of pre-ordered forms) and sensation (meaning the open-ended contact with the flux of physical phenomena). When those two experiences of the world don't match it evokes a state of panic or a feeling of being lost we just spoke about above. And according to her this evokes the desire to create new forms or to resist to existing forms in order to continue living. Her theory is more complicated than this, but it's something I recognized and which has made me accept this state of being lost from time to time as part of life.

R: I assume this theory may apply to many unresolved cognitive and physical intersections.

M: In Sueli's story in 'Resonating Surfaces' she connects this theory indirectly to a personal story about the voice. When she was in exile in Paris, Deleuze wanted her to study the screams of death in the opera's

Lulu and Wojcek to discover how the voice is the locus of vital energy. It's about trauma and how a system of power, like the dictatorship in Brazil at the time, can cut off the access to the voice (her voice in the Portuguese language) and by this to vital energy. My interest right now in the voice is already there in this film, but I feel could do something else with it or work with it more directly.

R: Would your interest embrace the idea of a collective voice or do you find this trope too much of an empty construct?

M: I'd have to think about it a bit more, but a collective voice to me only speaks out from time to time in a specific moment not as an idea, like the voice itself as a breath of air and then it's gone.

R: It strikes me sometimes how someone's voice may change depending on the language a person speaks at the moment. Linguistic structures have this power of framing the voice, yet sound may determine the image construction as it does in your films, doesn't it?

M: I remember another question of your about how do I decide to make a cut. It always has a necessity, but it's difficult to recall the reasons. Reasons are often that at certain moments it needs a movement or a static image, or distance, a point of view from above, or proximity, but mostly it's based on how the rhythm of the different layers work together to create different temporalities that both connect and create their own space and time. Like in 'Dissonant' or 'Attica' it's the length of the film roll or in 'Two Times 4'33"' it's the length of the performance. Or in 'Presto, Perfect Sound' it's the cuts in the soundtrack that determine the cuts in the image. I like this element of not controlling it, that there's another logic that determines a beginning or end of a sequence and that this isn't an esthetic decision.

'Sylvia Kristel, Paris', 'Resonating Surfaces' and 'Think about Wood, Think about Metal' (my new film) have a lot of editing in the image, sound and text. With 'Sylvia Kristel, Paris' and 'Resonating Surfaces' I started with editing the interviews. With Sylvia I kept the monologues as they were I just added some pauses and with Sueli I edited a lot taking fragments of text from different interviews. With 'Think about Wood, Think about Metal' I started with editing a big part of the sound. The editing of the images was then based on this first layer of text or sound, but it's not directly connected to it, it's a layer that runs parallel to the text, like the sound track. All three layers (image, sound, text) are for me autonomous spaces, which connect through rhythm and flow. The images in those films are for me very much potential spaces, where something could happen or have happened which are

indirectly related to the story told.

R: What is the story of 'Think about Wood, Think about Metal'?

M: It's a portrait of an American percussionist, Robyn Schulkowsky, who started her studies in the Seventies (like Sueli and Sylvia). She moved to Europe and worked with and knew very well John Cage, Morton Feldmann, Stockhausen and composers like this. She speaks about the different attitudes in composing in music and a bit about herself. There's much less text than in the other two films, but a lot of space for her music, you hear her playing almost continuously. For me it's a film about what it is to listen.

R: Listening faculty is rather emancipated in your films. Recording and playback quality contribute to that a lot. Sometimes in your film installations I feel like in a high-tech sound recording studio. You must be thinking a lot about the multiple dimensions of sound recording, don't you?

M: It's very much George van Dam who stimulated this. He's the person with whom I developed the sound tracks of 'Sylvia Kristel-Paris', 'Resonating Surfaces' and 'Think about Wood, Think about Metal' (and who composed parts of them) and who's the violinist in 'Presto, Perfect Sound'. He's a perfectionist when it comes to sound. Working together with him I started to hear more and more the different dimensions of sound recordings. When you're in a studio working on sound and concentrating on all the little different little tones and the way they open up space, is a state of sensitivity that's probably comparable to certain drug experiences. And then of course I want to convey this experience to the viewer, but it's impossible to create exactly that same situation outside the sound studio. I never heard all there is in the sound tracks of my films in an exhibition situation or even in cinema.

R: What about repetition as a structural device?

M: I often use repetition in editing or in the concept of the structure of a film like in 'Two Times 4'33"', because by repeating something it's never the same the second time and it's a way to speak about the flux or change in life, it's a way to become aware of different experiences of time, it's a way to create doubt, it's a way to insert history in the experience of the present or break the chronology of time, and many more things.

R: What is the longest it took for you to produce a work? And why?

M: 'Sylvia Kristel-Paris' took me about three years to make, because when I started recording stories with her I didn't know yet what I would do with it and only slowly from the material I collected the idea for a film developed. And 'Think about Wood, Think about Metal' also took about three years, be-

cause I had a child in between and less time to work. But the fact that it has been made with some gaps in time allowed me to take distance from time to time and make decisions I otherwise wouldn't have made.

R: These sort of 'gaps' should be created all the time as they create space for a movement – whether in time, or in perception or between elsewhere and here.

M: I remember your question if I was interested in martial arts. I used to live opposite a building where there were classes in the martial arts. I think you visited me once there, but I don't know if you've seen them. The building had very big windows so I could see exactly what was happening inside. In summer when the windows were open I always heard them shouting, which was very impressive, especially when they used sticks and each movement was accompanied by a deep shouting plus the sound of the sticks. In winter the windows were closed so it was just a silent performance of those movements. It's funny that you ask me the questions, because it fascinated me a lot at the time, I probably watched it daily for a few minutes or longer, but I never felt the urge to get to know more about it.

R: Where are you at the moment in terms of your interests and pursuits? Where did you arrive there from? (I am interested to follow a trajectory of a course of something, for example, one thing transforming to another, rather than analyzing two things separately. As isolated entities (whether they are ideas or intensities, or simply A and B) they could be flat, but perhaps the route that takes you there is what creates the multileveled experience.)

This interview was conducted via e-mail in March 2011, when Manon de Boer started working on the film one, two, many, commissioned by dOCUMENTA 13 and co-produced by the gallery. A shorter version was published on Mousse 28, April 2011. With thanks to Mousse and Raimundas Malašauskas.

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Opening
1/9, 11-15h

Exhibition
4/9-27/10

MANON DE BOER
ONE, TWO, MANY

Jan Mot
Gob. José Ceballos 10
Col. San Miguel Chapultepec
11850 México D.F., México

(advertisement)

128

Screening
20/9, 19h

MANON DE BOER
AT
CINEMATEK

In collaboration with Auguste Orts

Rue Baron Hortastraat 9
1000 Brussels, Belgium

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127

Opening
7/9, 16-19h

Exhibition
8/9-27/10

DOMINIQUE
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FOERSTER
AND
TRISTAN BERA

BELLE COMME
LE JOUR

Jan Mot
Rue Antoine Dansaertstraat 190
1000 Brussel Bruxelles, Belgium

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BELLE COMME LE JOUR (2012)

Tristan Bera

A prequel to Luis Bunuel's *Belle de Jour* (1967) & Manoel de Oliveira's *Belle Toujours* (2006) It's the story of Séverine before she married Pierre and became Belle de jour. Staying at the Hotel Regina next to rue de Rivoli she goes to visit the Louvre and has a deeply disturbing conversation with a complete stranger. He tells her a story about a saint and a bitch which makes a devastating impression on her...

BELLE COMME LE JOUR is the story of a young Parisian student, a passionate movigoer in the 2010s and a Catherine Deneuve lookalike who reenacts her favorite movie scenes. With outfits by Nicolas Ghesquière for Balenciaga It's also a New Wave story A retro film played by the young Juliette de Ferluc magnetically obsessed by fashion photographer Giasco Bertoli, also a lookalike of Marcello Mastroianni.

BELLE COMME LE JOUR is an existential film which explores the first fictional encounter of a legendary screen & life couple and their love filmography Catherine Deneuve & Marcello Mastroianni, the ultimate image of a cinematic passion

BCLJ

is a Paris-based film museum which puts together Victor Fleming's *Gone with the Wind* Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo* & *Marnie* Claude Autant-Lara's *En cas de malheur* Roman Polanski's *Repulsion* Luis Bunuel's *Golden Age*, *Belle de jour*, *Tristana*, *That Obscure Object of Desire* Jean-Paul Rappeneau's *La Vie de château* François Truffaut's *Mississippi Mermaid*

Alain Resnais's *Last year in Marienbad* Marco Ferreri's *La Cagna* Jacques Demy's *Peau d'Ane* Tony Scott's *Hunger* Brian dePalma's *Dressed to Kill* Manoel de Oliveira's *Belle toujours* in the frame of the Venus de Milo's room in Louvre

Like in *Last Year in Marienbad* repetition becomes a way to enlighten cinema. With music inspired by Wagner's *Tristan..* & Bernard Hermann's *Vertigo* and composed by Ari Benjamin Meyers

BELLE COMME LE JOUR

is the story of S. like the study of a masochistic clinical case, A young girl who has a secret trauma and has to have a double life which questions pleasure and submission. With a cover of Velvet's Underground's *Venus in furs* by Arto Lindsay "Strike dear Mistress and cure his heart"

The film *Belle comme le jour* (2012) by Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster and Tristan Bera will be on display at the gallery in Brussels from September 7 to October 27, 2012.



• Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster and Tristan Bera, *Belle comme le jour* (2012), HD video, colour, sound, 12 mins.

Summer Thoughts

Sven Augustijnen

The following is a letter by Sven Augustijnen to curator Marta Kuzma, taking its cue from the latter's participation to Documenta 13. Written for "23 Skidoo", A Prior Magazine, November 2012.

Brussels, 23 July 2012

Dear Marta,
how are you doing?

We didn't really get the chance to talk in Kassel but Dirk made sure that you stayed in my mind for some time. When I bumped into him at the Fridericianum asking if he had seen and knew of those tapestries, he answered, "that's Marta's [choice], a Norwegian or Danish artist or something".

I am writing you not only to thank you for this great contribution, but also to say how struck I was by reading your essay on the works of Hannah Ryggen and learning that, beside exhibiting *Etiopia*, a response to Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia, next to Picasso's *Guernica* at the 1937 Paris Expo, she later "hung her tapestries on a clothesline outside her house in Oslo in full sight of Nazi soldiers"!

What entered my mind was not only the act itself, but also the coincidence that a certain Léon Degrelle, leader of the Belgian fascist party REX, could have been one of these Nazi soldiers, as he escaped to Oslo after being sentenced to death in absentia in Brussels on the 29th of December 1944. Moreover, on the night of 9th of May 1945, when Western Europe was celebrating liberation, he had the genius idea of commandeering the airplane of a certain Albert Speer and fly South at a low height over the North Sea, the Netherlands, Belgium and France. He finally reached the Spanish border where, out of fuel, he made a final crossing over Mount Urgull and let his airplane slide into the Bay of La Concha, San Sebastián, Donostia.

With a broken arm and several fractured ribs, he found refuge in Franco's Spain, where—despite an extradition demand by the Belgian government and several abduction attempts—he lived for the rest of his life and died at age of 87 in 1994.

Hitler himself hung the SS-Ritterskreuz around Degrelle's neck for being one of the few who survived the battle of Tcherkassy. "If I would have had a son, I would have liked him to be like you", would have been the words of the Führer. Mystifying the rest of his life on these words, he became an inspiration, and his house a haven, to many fascists around the world.

I don't know if you remember the time we met with Dirk in a restaurant near Avenue Louise in Brussels. I realize now that the former Brussels headquarters of the SS (in whose caves Jews and resistance fighters were tortured) is just around the corner from there. I am not sure if the restaurant existed during the war, but the cobblestones of those streets were definitely walked by Rexists, if not by Degrelle himself, who, by the way, held his mass meetings of the *Légion Wallonie* at the Palais des Beaux-Arts de Bruxelles! I don't know why, but I'm suddenly imagining a show by you on the rise of Fascism in Europe. The airplane of Speer was a Heinkel He 111, in case you want this on the roof of the Beaux-Arts... *Guernica* was exhibited at the Beaux-Arts in 1955; I know this because I recently found a photo of Patrice Lumumba standing in front of the painting during his first trip to Belgium.

By the way, yesterday was the anniversary of the Breivik massacre. Were you in Oslo then?

Looking forward,
Sven

(advertisement)

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Art Fair
18/10-21/10JAN MOT
AT
FIAC

Grand Palais, Paris

In Brief

Following a six-month residency in the Georgian estate at Gibside (UK) with the Trust New Art program of the National Trust, **Tris Vonna-Michell** will present his new work at BALITC, Gateshead (UK) from October 8 to November 9.

The work *Our Castelli Collection* (2011) by **Mario Garcia Torres** entered the collection of the FRAC Nord-Pas de Calais, Dunkirk (FR).

On the 14th of September, **Douglas Gordon** will receive the Käthe-Kollwitz Prize 2012. The prize, awarded by the Berlin Academy of Arts, will celebrate the artist's seminal contribution to media art.

Sven Augustijnen will be among the core artists featured in the upcoming issue #31 of *Afterall Journal*. His practice will be explored in two essays by Sophie Berrebi and Robrecht Vanderbeeken.

From September 7 to 9, the gallery will participate in the Brussels Art Days. The gallery will be open from 16 to 21h from September 7 and from noon to 19h on September 8 and 9. More information: www.brusselsartdays.com

On September 20, at 19h, there will be a screening of three works by **Manon de Boer** at Cinematek Brussels: *one, two, many* (2012), *Dissonant* (2010) and *Two Times 4'33"* (2008).

Agenda

Sven Augustijnen

Masterpieces in the MAS. Five centuries of images in Antwerp, MAS, Antwerp (BE), 17/5-30/12; *TRACK*, Ghent (BE), 12/05-16/9; *Pop-up*, Musée d'Ixelles, Museum van Elsene, Brussels, 20/6-9/9; *Spectres*, Filmfestival Oostende, Oostende (BE), 7/9-15/9 (screening); *Viewpoint. A Closer Look at Showing*, Huis Marseille, Museum voor Fotografie, Amsterdam, 14/9-9/12; *Spectres*, Artists Space, New York (US), 26/9-27/9 (screening); *Spectres*, Yale Art Gallery, Yale (US), 2/10 (screening).

Pierre Bismuth

Theatre of Life, Contemporary Art Centre, Torun (PL), 18/5-18/10; *The Whole World is Watching*, Le Magasin - CNAC, Grenoble (FR), 2/6-2/9; *Neon. La materia luminosa dell'arte*, MACRO, Rome, 20/6-4/11; *Motion Capture. Drawing and the Moving Image*, Lewis Glucksman Gallery, Cork (IRL), 27/7-4/11; *Without (Jonathan Monk)*, Meessen De Clercq, Brussels, 7/9-27/10; Graphology, Art Exchange, University of Essex, Colchester (UK), 1/10-3/11.

Manon de Boer

dOCUMENTA (13), Kassel (DE), 9/6-16/9; *John Cage and... John Cage as Visual Artist*, Museum der Moderne Mönchsberg, Salzburg (AT), 14/7-7/10; *Silence*, The Menil Collection, Houston (US), 27/7-21/10; *It's moving from 1 to it*, Brukenthal Museum, Sibiu (RO), 31/8-30/9; *AXENEO7*, Québec (CA), 6/9-21/10; Cinematek, Brussels, 20/09 (screening); *Sounds Like Silence*, HMKV at the Dortmund U, Dortmund (DE), 25/9-6/1; *One, Two, Many*, Doclisboa, Lisbon, 18/10-28/10 (screening); Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia (US), from 23/11; *Two Times 4'33"*, Cité de la Musique, Paris, 15/12 (screening).

Rineke Dijkstra

Arte torna arte, Galleria dell'Accademia, Florence (IT), 8/5-4/11; *Megacool 4.0. Youth and Art*, Künstlerhaus k/haus, Vienna, 14/6-30/9; *Rineke Dijkstra: A Retrospective*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 29/6-3/10 (solo); *Passing Time*, The Salina Art Center, Salina (US), 17/8-19/10; *Decade: 2002/2012*, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo (US), 31/8-6/1; *Face to Face*, Istanbul Modern, Istanbul (TR), 2/10-20/1; *Elles: Women Artists from the Centre Pompidou, Paris*, The Seattle Art Museum, Seattle (US), 10/10-13/1.

