

BIENS COMMUNS 1

ACQUISITIONS RÉCENTES

PETER DREHER
ROMANE HOLDERRIED KAESDORF
JUGNET + CLAIRET
NATACHA LESUEUR
MOO CHEW WONG
EXPOSITIONS MONOGRAPHIQUES

19 OCTOBER 2011
— 15 JANUARY
2012

cycle

THE ETERNAL DETOUR

2011-2012 autumn-winter sequence

mamco

Musée d'art moderne
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PRESS KIT

Press Release

Mamco, the Eternal Detour Cycle, the 2011-2012 autumn-winter sequence, 19 October 2011 - 15 January 2012

For the 2011-2012 autumn-winter sequence of the L'Éternel Détour (The Eternal Detour) cycle, Mamco is pleased to present *Biens communs 1* (Public Property 1), a selection of recent acquisitions, as well as five monographic shows devoted to artists from Germany, France and Malaysia.

Biens communs 1

In eighteen years of activity Mamco has managed to acquire over 1500 works of art. This dynamic has sparked in us the desire to show an important part of the collection, bring the choices the museum has made to the public's attention, and point up the coherence of those choices. *Biens communs 1* will give way next year to a second part, *Biens communs 2*. Both exhibitions are a chance to display works that are indeed public property, that belong to everyone because of Mamco's status as a public museum, and so by definition ought to be held in common and shared by one and all. Putting our recent acquisitions on display is a way of highlighting the museum's approach and promoting artists and art forms that exist well outside the art market and the dominant trends.

Biens communs 1 is especially open to large-scale works like **Adel Abdessemed's** dreamlike *Habibi*. Shown in 2004, this seventeen-meter-long levitating skeleton impresses, delights and finally compels viewers to question their own bodies. Featured twice in 1999 and 2007, **Xavier Veilhan's** *La Forêt* (The Forest) is back for a third viewing, generating once again its intimate, playful and poetic atmosphere within the museum. By transferring the depiction of a well-known place, the artist is able to carry out a true translation and recreate another "forest." With its near silence Veilhan's forest points up sensations connected with our senses of hearing and touch. Installed on rails, the immense creatures of **Alain Séchas's** *Les Chats* (The Cats), already seen in 2002 and 2009, are once again tirelessly chasing each other round and round. Like skaters, they glide about the gallery, passing in front of huge bitingly funny cartoons done by the same artist. Offering a different atmosphere, **Jan Fabre's** *Le Carnaval des chiens de rue morts* (The Carnival of Dead Stray Dogs) is a gift to Mamco, which is showing the work for the first time. Stuffed dogs, confetti, bows—the party is frozen in place around a long table that creates a dynamic diagonal line across a dark room. Gloomy and disturbing, this installation, which verges on a theater set, stands at the center of Fabre's work in the plastic arts. It is also part of the *Constellation Jan Fabre* (Jan Fabre Constellation), a joint event mounted with Arsenic and ADC.

In the spirit of the museum's groups of artworks, **Philippe Gronnon**, a photographer of reality and objects, concludes his exhibition of 2003 and 2010 with an ensemble of works that focus in particular on sand castles and manure piles. Meanwhile, in the wake of a 2004 retrospective and the addition of new gifts to the museum, Mamco is pleased to present a new show highlighting **Guy de Cointet's** work on typography, line and color. The creator of a colorful world that often borders on the lavish, the photographer and Genevan writer **Patrick Weidmann** first exhibited at Mamco in 2003; the museum has followed this artist for many years and now Weidmann has put together a group of recent works for Mamco. **Noël Dolla** and **Pascal Pinaud**, originally from southern France, work in deconstructing painting and analytical abstraction. A highly radical artist and former member of the Supports / Surfaces group, Dolla was featured at the museum in 2003. Here he is exhibiting a mix of old and new works. Pinaud, seen at Mamco in 2001 and 2010, has installed a "drawing greenhouse" this time, providing visitors the chance to linger over for once what there is to see on the back of images. As part of post-abstraction, **John Armleder's** recent works question painting itself. And finally, black-and-white drawing also has a place among the featured work thanks to the pieces being shown by **Silvia Bächli** (featured in 2006) and **Didier Rittener** (seen in 2010).

In conjunction with the above-mentioned shows, the museum is also pleased to present five monographic shows currently on view in the museum's galleries:

Peter Dreher (1932, Mannheim) lives and works in the Black Forest region of Germany. He studied at Karlsruhe's Staatliche Akademie der Bildenden Künste. Dreher's work on series, entitled *Tag um Tag guter Tag* (Day after Day Good Day), exists outside current fashions and trends, and is an echo of rule-inspired artists of the 1960s like On Kawara and Roman Opalka.

"At first, this series was supposed to involve between five and six pictures done with the idea that it isn't necessary to change motifs in order to feel the urge to paint," Dreher explains. For over thirty years, from 1972 on, working in a 25 X 25 cm format the artist has painted over 4500 glasses of water, all of them apparently similar and in the same position. His *Tag um Tag guter Tag* project, whose title is drawn from the words of the Buddhist master Yunmen Wenyan, documents reality but also renders that reality abstract. Dreher doesn't feel as though photography has exercised any influence on his work; he is akin to Andy Warhol when the American artist declared, "I'd like to be a machine."

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Between meditation and emotion, this demanding routine has made it possible for Dreher to develop both his virtuosity and his impulse to paint. By depicting an everyday object that is available to anyone, he demonstrates that we don't see things as they are but rather solely through the filter of their functionality. Thanks to *Tag um Tag guter Tag*, the artist has succeeded in preserving a perception of reality intact and transmitting it.

Romane Holderried Kaesdorf (1922-2007, Biberach an der Riss) was an artist specialized in drawing and painting who only gained recognition late in her career in Germany. She studied at Stuttgart's Academy of the Arts before returning to her native town. The wife of the lawyer and painter Julius Kaesdorf, she was instrumental in putting together exhibitions of her work, which earned her important art prizes and awards. She is likewise the mother of Domenika Kaesdorf, whose own sculptural work in textiles was shown in 2011 at Mamco as part of the *Hôtel Sarkis* exhibition.

For some sixty years and through 2000 pieces, Holderried Kaesdorf developed her work around the human figure. Drawing was at the forefront of her activity; between 1960 and 1970, she liked to depict figures in unexpected situations while surrounding them with familiar objects. Akin to Dada and art brut, the paintings from this period abound in representations of women, men and children, in most cases shown as grotesques. She spent the 1970s focused on the male figure, and then from 1980 until her death she shows a keen interest in the female figure.

With humor and a rare sense of observation, Holderried Kaesdorf elaborated a world that was at once nonfigurative and fantastical in *Bleistift im Kopf* (Pencil in the Head). Influenced by German expressionism, her universe served as an inspiration for the Strasbourg dance company Dégadézo notably. Through her practice of the minor art of drawing, Holderried Kaesdorf stands in the tradition of artists like Elisabeth Llach and Cathryn Boch who have been shown at Mamco.

Anne Marie Jugnet and Alain Clairet (La Clayette, 1958, Saint-Maur-des-Fossés, 1950) have lived and worked together since 1997. Settling first in Paris and later Santa Fe, they have sought to understand through their art how certain words, artifacts and images are born in a contemporary reality that is already oversaturated. Exhibited at Mamco in 2003, their work has led them to reflect on the questions surrounding representation and gives rise to a kind of "permanent revolution of pictorial language." The two artists wonder, for example, what stays behind when the television is turned off.

They have employed both digital images and damaged film stock in their art.

In *Un abrégé* (A Summary), the two artists have included sculptures, paintings, works in neon light, watercolors and marble clouds... Between the subtlety of craftsmanship and sophistication, the show is an anthology of their output of the past ten years.

Already featured at Mamco in 2001, the photographer **Natacha Lesueur** (1971, Cannes) has proved to be one of the most promising artists of her generation.

In *Je suis née etc.* (I Am Born Etc.), Lesueur is showing several projects, including a collection of photographs featuring the Brazilian-born actress and entertainer Carmen Miranda. In the photos the artist rides rough shod over the signs of Miranda's "exoticism," inspired by the traditional women's costumes of the Bahianese, who are largely the descendants of slaves. Lesueur is venturing down the path blazed by Cindy Sherman, and if her work seems slight and inconsequential at first glance, it is in fact built around the principle of the visual pitfall. Once viewers move beyond their initial impression, they discover that to the highly colorful costumes and make-up, and the stereotypical poses, the artist likes to add makeshift ornaments, headdresses and decorations that are often organic, natural and perishable. Bones, various accessories, flowers, fruits and vegetables, and animals are carefully arranged, even though they will end up eventually decomposing. By stressing a fleeting, neo-baroque esthetic, Lesueur criticizes the importance of appearance; her images become poisonous. This process allows her to construct a model that the artist then pushes to the point of abstraction and beyond, to deconstruction. Shaped around the portrait and questions connected with identity (male-female, old-young, inside-outside), the show also features older work by the artist, which falls between humor and seriousness, pieces devoted to food, sleeping people, mouths and peals of laughter.

Je suis née etc. also boasts a monograph written by Thierry Davila and published by Mamco, called *Natacha Lesueur. Surfaces, merveilles et caprices*.

Living and working in Paris, **Moo Chew Wong** (1942, Malaysia) is a painter-printmaker who studied at Paris's École des beaux-arts before going on to teach printmaking at the Villa Arson in Nice. Wong is a painter of urban landscapes and his

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artistic approach, influenced by expressionism, is based on the harmony that he creates between the rhythm in his work and the settings surrounding it. In this context he has thoroughly internalized Montaigne's remark, "I do not paint the being, I paint the passage." He treats painting as if it were a performance in which he is there to capture a moment. Like the art of calligraphy, there is no place for having second thoughts and reworking what is done, it is all in the acuity of the eye and the speed of the gesture. While everyday he is turning out prints that depict life on the rue des Abbesses in Paris, he has also painted the seedier neighborhood of Saint-Denis and the Roissy-Charles-de-Gaulle airport.

Wong, featured by Mamco at Europ'Art in 2004, also realizes works in the exhibition venue itself. A regular visitor to shows held at Mamco, he has selected a piece each time he has dropped by, such as Dan Flavin's neon works, which he interprets in his own manner by painting on canvas that is laid out directly on the floor. "I paint from life. I've always painted from life, forcing myself to never rework my canvases in the studio. To paint from life, for me, doesn't entail maintaining an aggressive practice but rather setting myself a constraint, and developing in the pictorial process a new relationship with the idea of the model and time." Wong's work is always created in the same day. With a show entitled *Version non conforme* (Non-exact Version), it is also a piece of the museum's history that is being put on display.

PETER DREHER

Day by Day good Day, Tag um Tag guter Tag, Jour après jour bonne journée

Born in Mannheim in 1932, the German artist Peter Dreher has been producing a pictorial body of work since the early 1970s that involves series of paintings in which each composition treats the same motif or theme. Mamco is pleased to present two series of canvases, including his most widely known, *Tag um Tag guter Tag* (Day After Day Good Day). *Tag* makes clear that Dreher's work is akin to that of a painter of simple popular images, operating in terms of repetition and accumulation, that is, the repetition of motifs, formats and gestures; and the accumulation of views that overwhelm the eye.

Dreher often quotes the observation by the Japanese artist Hiroshige that a beautiful landscape provokes boredom whereas daily objects, in their sheer banality and mediocrity, possess the singular capacity to appear different over and over again. The series of one hundred paintings that the museum is exhibiting – *Tag um Tag guter Tag* – obey Hiroshige's remark in several ways. First, there is the choice of motif. In 1972 Dreher painted his first empty glass, posed on a table in front of a white background, a banal object if ever there was. Later, in 1974, he decided to repeat this gesture but according to a precise operating procedure: each picture must measure 25 X 20 cm, the glass must be set up in the same way, he must paint the object on a 1:1 scale, and finally he must realize two series (one at night and the other during the day). The way this work is exhibited never varies, i.e., the small paintings are hung one after the other at eye level, forming a continuous, and dizzying, straight line. Today, nearly 5,000 pieces of *Tag um Tag guter Tag* have been painted, the display at Mamco giving merely the general outlines of a project that continues to develop. The result blends technical know-how (the craft of the old-time painter of images) and the automatic nature of the highly repetitive, cumulative gesture, the patience of the work and the programmatic character of putting it into practice. It links the possibility that is inherent in painting – its application by the artist and its appreciation by the viewer – with the experience one has of accumulation, even saturation. From all appearances Dreher considers the work of the eye to be infinite and that he is only producing differences from one glass to the next and from one image to its double, a double that is never identical. In his work then there is a curious mix of an attention to the humbleness of an object – and its celebration – that a Giorgio Morandi would not have disavowed; and an execution à la Andy Warhol, which levels gesture in order to empty it of as much expressiveness as possible (to paint like a machine could well have been an artistic program shared by the German artist and his American counterpart). The result is visually unplaceable in time. Without reading the labels, one would indeed find it impossible to say when these small-format paintings were painted in the series – or in time – because they are not pictorially dependent on any gesture that freezes them in a certain chronology or even any circumstance that connects them to history. The second series of small paintings comprises eighty pictures in exactly the same format (15 X 10 cm).

The motif here is also a tall clear glass, but in this case a sprig of clover, which gives its name to this group of works (*Die Kleeblume*), is set in the water-filled container. Dreher paints the decomposition of the plant over time, its putrefaction, and visually introduces, through the linear display, the experience of time, painting in time, and a narrative. These two collections illustrate in a particularly coherent way what lies at the heart of Dreher's work, namely, the impossible attempt to exhaust a motif. There are, moreover, quite a few motifs (Dreher has painted house interiors, a doll, landscapes and seascapes; he has drawn the portrait of the writer Robert Walser several times). Each painting is the experience of that impossibility, of learning the lesson it has to teach. The artist, furthermore, has in fact devoted a large part of his time to teaching, quite often putting it ahead of his own career, as if learning – that is, repeating and repeating again – was a key part of his development as an artist (he taught, for example, the German painter Anselm Kiefer at the Staatliche Akademie der Bildenden Künste in Karlsruhe). And what basically do these paintings transmit if not the idea of painting as a daily practice, of art as a silently heroic practice that draws from this abnegation the possibility of being dizzily a *teacher*?

Extrait de texte

« In the 1960s, you were not an artist any more if you painted realistically. Then in Venice in 1964, at the Biennale, I saw Pop Art for the first time, and I was happy, you can't imagine. It was quite late. I didn't know the work before — and I loved Jasper Johns, Oldenburg. Great, great experience. But it had come from America, which I adored since I was a child. They were great things that Warhol did. I think he was a great artist. Then, on the other end, there's On Kawara and Opalka. Some people compare me with them. Opalka writes millions of numbers. It's something else because On Kawara and Opalka are working with signs. I'm working with reality. My idea was only to paint something in the way painters did 35,000 years ago, say they painted elephants. Then, when the work was finished, it was forgotten. They had to do the painting again and again and again. So it was one, then five, then a thousand. But the idea was not a series. The idea was just a lifetime, doing something in your lifetime, doing it with concentration, and showing that it's not necessary to change the reason, the motive. »

Peter Dreher by Lynne Tillman
BOMB 57/Fall 1996

Repères bibliographiques

HOLSTEN, Siegmund, *Malerei des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Bestandskatalog Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe), Karlsruhe : Petersberg, 2011.

LUX, Katrin, *Peter Dreher : la paix dans un verre d'eau*, in *Encore, la force de la répétition*, (Catalogue de la galerie S65) Sion, 2011.

Expositions individuelles (sélection)

2010

Peter Dreher - Papierarbeiten
Städtische Galerie Fruchthalle, Rastatt
Mark Quint Contemporary Art San Diego USA

2009

Galerie Foth, Freiburg

2008

Institut für Kunst und Handwerk Lehnin
Hotel Rheinsberg
Kunstverein Ulm
Museum Erfurt
Galerie Wagner + Partner Berlin

2007

Athen Biennale, Athen, Griechenland
«Beachcomber Shores» HERRMANN & WAGNER, Berlin
The Approach, London, Großbritannien

2005

Galerie Katharina Krohn, Basel, Schweiz

2004

Galerie Herrman & Wagner Berlin, «Phenomenon of Time»
(mit Thorsten Hallscheidt) 2004galerie ars alta, St. Märgen

2003

Quint Contemporary Art, San Diego, «Real»
The Athenaeum, La Jolla, California
Mark Quint Contemporary Art, La Jolla, California

2002

Patricia Sweetow Gallery, San Francisco/USA
Art Frankfurt: Galerie Wehr: One man show Peter Dreher
Städtische Galerie Freiburg: Dreher - früher
Galerie S 65, Köln
Galerie Krohn, Badenweiler
Galerie SPHN, Berlin

ROMANE HOLDERRIED KAESDORF

Bleistift im Kopf

Considered private and personal during the artist's lifetime, Romane Holderried Kaesdorf's graphic oeuvre came to light several years ago and is enjoying posthumous fame among the young generation of German artists. The modest home in Biberach where the Kaesdorfs settled, witnessed in the immediate postwar years, the growth of a singular body of work that missed nothing of the fits and starts marking the wider art world. For confirmation of this, one need only look to the osmosis that took place with several figures from the artistic avant-garde, literature and cinema.

Starting in 1960, drawing became a day-to-day discipline for Holderried Kaesdorf. Over two thousand drawings done on unbound sheets gradually came to fill their living space. Holderried Kaesdorf was interested in everything that cropped up before her eye, the everyday stuff making up her daily existence. She learned to paint and draw at the Arts Academy of Stuttgart, and that training soon opened new perspectives for her. With her husband, the painter Julius Kaesdorf, she visited a show in Munich featuring work by the impressionists and discovered "whole continents." She took in Max Ernst and the surrealists with interest, and was amused by the celluloid extravagances of Laurel & Hardy. She read Beckett, Kafka, and savored the poems and vignettes of the Russian writer Daniil Kharms or Daniel Charms (he used several pen names). A few decades later it would be pop and conceptual art that caught her eye; her most recent drawings show that influence.

Full of human figures and shot through with a sly humor, these works are observational drawings, drawings based on keen observation. Yet under the cover of merely translating the banal, the drawings have the capacity to tip the day-to-day world over into a disturbing strangeness thanks to the repetition of certain gestures, the overlaying of various motifs, and the incongruity of the situations. The lines separating beauty and ugliness, good and evil, the real and the surreal are swept away. The works drawn or painted in the 1960s, for instance, show the influence of James Ensor and George Grosz. From the former she kept the taste for masks, "the flight from reality" and the "modern anxieties." From the latter she borrowed the distortion of bodies, the ironic distancing of a recurrent unease, and the sense of drama, which casts a shadow of suffering and self-mockery over the work.

Holderried Kaesdorf's graphic work developed in series. In the 1970s she was drawing passive men. Archetypal figures, they embody the bourgeois, the civil servant, or the model, forced into extravagant, uncustomary poses. Their relationship to objects has something Kafkaesque about it. Faceless, they are saddled with grotesque names, Ludwig Schmauss (Ludwig "feast"), Alfons Moll (Alfons "soft" or "minor key") and Franz Merk (Franz "note"), included in the titles scribbled at the bottom of the drawings. The titles, moreover, constitute an additional mystery rather than a key to interpretation, with their literalness often only serving as a descriptive caption.

In the 1980s female figures predominate. They are figures without any modeling, hastily drawn to pin down the idea just when it pops up and before it flits out of existence. All of them seem to embody the artist's double. The fantastical motifs that surface in these drawings lend them their uncanny character and hard edge. Drawing that is forceful, intimate, twisted in knots depicts a world "in which figures knock into each other rather than mix," where the splitting of the image is at once a mirror and the other, harmony and threat. When the faces are whole, you can read resignation there, the faded or hallucinated dreams of the figures painted by Paula Modersohn-Becker.

In this world, where the background is rarely sketched out, where the white of the blank page acts as a setting, bodies or parts of bodies face off with objects, confront each other, are sized up in terms of their surface, and test the link that connects us with the world of those things that we produce and whose symmetry is modeled on the symmetry of our own bodies. Equipped with accessories and artificial limbs, her figures stand beside accumulations of metonymic objects with which they dance strange ballets. An oar evokes the sea, a journey that is metaphorical, dreamt of... and it is the world that bursts into the enclosed space of the page.

Extrait de texte

« Romane Holderried Kaesdorf arbeitet über Gefühle. Ein singuläres Gefühl oder die Vorstellung davon können bei ihr eine Zeichnung auslösen, die Zeichnung plötzlich verwirren. Das Kleid verwendet sie als Bildfläche, sein vages Rechteck wird bei ihr ein schlampiges Bild im Bild, dessen leeres Feld ihr die Möglichkeit gibt, ein Gefühl mit dem Bleistift sichtbar zu machen. Die Zeichnung entwirft das Kleid. Die Ahnung von einem seelischen Geschehen wird an die Stoffoberfläche buchstabiert wie der Blick in einen Maschinenraum. Das Kleid ist auch häufig Schauplatz einer Abstraktion mitten in der Zeichnung : Eine abstrakte Bildfrage wird innerhalb des Kleidumrisses behandelt und manchmal über die Stoffkonturen hinausgetragen und auf ein Möbelstück ausgedehnt. Frau und Möbel verschmelzen unter der Membrane des Kleides. Auf anderen Zeichnungen hacken grobe Striche seinen Umriss auf, der offene Raum bricht zwischen den Strichen ins Kleid, raubt der Figur ihre Leiblichkeit».

KAESDORF Domenika, « Tarnung des Körperlichen » in FINK Joseph, *Romane Holderried Kaesdorf. Bilder, Zeichnungen*, Lindenberg im Allgäu, 2007

Expositions individuelles (sélection)

2011

Desden, Institut français

2008

Biberach an der Riss, Museum

1995

Ulmer Museum, Ulm

Galerie Landesgirokasse, Stuttgart

1994

Kunstverein Rheinfelden

1993

Otto Galerie, München

Repères bibliographiques

PFAFF-STÖHR, Annette, *Romane Holderried Kaesdorf*, in Bodensee-Hefte, 9/1989, Seite : 60-65.

REINHARDT, Brigitte, *Romane Holderried Kaesdorf. Bilder* (Ausstellungskatalog Ulmer Museum), Stuttgart : Cantz, 1995.

A Summary

Anne Marie Jugnet and Alain Clairet have been working together since 1997 and are currently based in Santa Fe (USA). Through their art, the two explore the origin of meaning, that of images, first and foremost. Artisanal and sophisticated at one and the same time, their work has found expression in a range of media and techniques, including sculpture, painting, watercolor, neon, silkscreen and photography. In conjunction with *Biens communs 1*, Mamco is featuring a fine selection of their output called *Un abrégé* (A Summary).

Among the singular pieces being shown by Jugnet and Clairet are a number of small white clouds. They are in fact sculptures and are made from Carrara marble, the very same employed by Michelangelo. These sculptures first took shape around photographs that Clairet shot over the New Mexican desert from a Cessna airplane flown by Jugnet. Laid over a support, the wispy shapes may appear light and fluffy, but pick them up and one immediately feels their weight and density. There is an arresting discrepancy then between the appearance of the artwork and its material reality. That is, what one sees rarely matches reality as such, which probably doesn't exist. The Baudelairian character of the sculptures ("the marvelous clouds," as Baudelaire famously celebrates them) shouldn't overshadow the production process, which is an essential part of their creation, a process that makes it possible to shift from the photo to something with volume, a translation of a two-dimensional image into a heavy, dense material. Indeed, complex operations involving a translation of some sort lie at the heart of the artists' work. This holds as well for another category of painted clouds; the mushroom kind produced by atomic bombs. They form a series done in 2007 – serial work is a recurrent presence in their artistic output – that consists of a number of elongated paintings, each of which takes as its starting point a photograph (in this case drawn from the Internet) that is reworked with a computer design program so that it can be enlarged infinitely without loss of definition. After a number of manipulations, Clairet and Jugnet obtain a "realist" depiction of their starting point, one that proves quite process-oriented, but without the work of the human hand being consigned merely to the final result. Indeed, this fascination with process and procedure, which also entails a reappropriation of technology, obliterates the body (as Jean-Louis Schefer put it, "The painter doesn't bring his body here"). Other examples of clouds include those done in watercolor by the artists in 2007. These small-format works, colored red, also took shape around photographs, pictures of clouds that figure

in works of Chinese art and which the artists shot in the Shanghai Museum. The logic of transference eventually led to this painted result. Such is the case too, of the artists' small red suns from 2006. For the origin of these works we need to look in a fresco by Fra Angelico that is on display in San Marco in Florence. Sampling and transposition play an important role in Jugnet and Clairet's art. The two artists however, do lay down precise rules for groups of pieces. If one considers only the atmospheric dimensions of their work, the skies, which make up several series (*Villa Arson*, 1997; *Cordoba*, 2002), were produced according to a given procedural framework. First, the sky had to be photographed in a certain urban context. Next neither airplane, cloud, nor bird can appear in the shot. The resulting image is akin to a blue monochrome, although in this case we have an impossible monochrome since the photographed sky can never exactly achieve an azure color (the luminosity of the atmosphere, the curvature of the sky and so on rule that out). In this, one can glimpse one of the dimensions of the couples' art, i.e., the idea of occupying a zone of visual experience that leads to producing images in which their own failure is contained. What counts is to work in a paradoxical manner, where things verge on the possible. As Jugnet and Clairet see it, "It's not by questioning form that we intend to create new forms, but rather by inventing new conditions for them to emerge. This gives rise to other figures and possibilities. Our thinking about art lies in that questioning of the image, at the limit of its exhaustion."

Extrait de texte

« Nous disons fréquemment que nos peintures parlent d'image, et nos photographies de peinture. La peinture donne à l'image le temps de la réflexion, le temps de ne pas être « juste une image ». Elle lui offre un autre statut. C'est sans doute également pour cette raison que nous faisons des photos de ciel, parce qu'il faut contempler le ciel. Dans ce cas, c'est le ciel que l'on regarde et non pas les photographies ; tandis que, dans les peintures, ce que l'on contemple c'est la peinture au-delà de l'image. [...] Il y a toujours un effet de contemporanéité entre les disciplines. Notre représentation du monde est toujours contemporaine. De notre côté, nous cherchons également à être à contre-courant, à rebours. Ainsi, nos photographies parlent de peinture, du monochrome. Elles sont une tentative illusoire de créer une image idéale – de l'ordre des idées. À l'ère du numérique, et de façon réactionnelle, alors qu'il est un peu tard, elles tentent de repousser les limites de l'argentique. »

Entretien par Elisabeth Lebovici, *Screen paintings. Peintures d'écran*, 2001-2004, Isthme éditions, Paris, 2004

Repères bibliographiques

SALOMÉ, Laurent (préfacé par), *www.jugnetclairer.com*, Paris : Isthme éditions, 2005.

SCHEFER, Jean-Louis et MICHAUD, Philippe-Alain, *Anne Marie Jugnet + Alain Clairet – Décrire le reste*, Luxembourg : Casino Luxembourg – Forum d'art contemporain asbl, 2008.

Expositions individuelles (sélection)

2010

« Still Life – Los Alamos », Serge Le Borgne Gallery, Paris

2008

« Keep Watching the Sky », Serge Le Borgne Gallery, Paris

« Décrire le reste », Casino Luxembourg, Luxembourg

« Beau Fixe », EVO Gallery, Santa Fe, New Mexico

2007

« On The Horizon », Dunn & Brown Contemporary, Dallas

2006

« Cent8 », Serge Le Borgne Gallery, Paris

2005

« Côte à côte », Centre d'art contemporain, la synagogue de Delme, France

« Switch », Musée des Beaux-Arts, Rouen

2004

« Leblanc », Stepcznski-Blancpain Gallery, Genève

« R.V.B », Stéphane Ackermann Gallery, Luxembourg

2003

« A.F.A.A. », Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Paris

« Santa Fe », cent8, Serge Le Borgne Gallery, Paris

« F.W.J. », curated by Claire Burrus, Centre Culturel Français, Milano, Italy

« Alpine », Mamco, Genève

« Cadiz », Centre de la Photographie, Genève

NATACHA LESUEUR

Je suis née etc.

Since the early 1990s, Natacha Lesueur has been building on an approach to photography in which the body and food are recurrent elements. This is not, however, reason enough to place her work in the camp of body art or eat art. Rather, the images produced, notably the most recent – visually they make quite a noise – amount to an exploration of multiple aspects of the decorated body, which is itself carefully arranged in a setting. It is an arty, enhanced body, both radiant and disturbing.

Apart from three photographs shot in the first decade of this century, Lesueur has chosen to focus on her most recent images (those dating from 2010 and 2011) in the current show. The richest series is her most recent, which she worked on for two years, and concerns Carmen Miranda, a Hollywood star of the 1940s and '50s. The Portuguese-born Miranda had grown up in Brazil and was nicknamed the "Brazilian Bombshell" in her heyday on screen, when she embodied exoticism from the Western point of view – just as in Hollywood she represented the success of a woman from the southern hemisphere in a country up north. She made a name for herself in entertainment for mass audiences by playing the samba dancer, very often as pure caricature, and regularly sporting a headdress fitted out with a full tray of fruit (the tray of delicacies proffered by native women in Bahia), whilst dressed in flashy outfits inspired by traditional Brazilian costumes. Lesueur has taken this figure as the starting point for an exploration of the image of women. The model who plays Carmen Miranda in Lesueur's series was in fact pregnant when the photos were being shot, and her physical transformation, as the artist puts it, "is part of the project's development, with the photography capturing her transitional states." In this series of images then, viewers are also looking at the most complete expression of femininity and its clichés, from maternity and "fatal" beauty, to budding beauty and the smile that is often perfunctory, even obligatory. And yet, something like a flaw disturbs this extravagant exoticism. The fruit in the compositions atop the model's head is rotting, the flowers of these elaborate multilayered constructions are wilting, and the decoration seen in the background behind the image is very often rudimentary. These are all signs of entropy at work. Indeed, Lesueur's world is not picture perfect. We often catch a glimpse of both a suppressed violence and, as is the case in this series, a strange beauty that is both appealing and repulsive. For the first time the artist is showing two video pieces and a film, all three devoted yet again to Carmen Miranda. The model playing the former star is filmed as if she were a mechanical doll that runs without making a sound. A plaster bust completes these iterations of the character. Constituting a survey of the techniques that make it possible to produce a portrait, these iterations likewise scramble different ages and references (we readily skip from Hollywood to "classical" sculpture). Miranda represented to an extreme

degree the manufactured woman exploited by the logic of show business and spectacle. Her tragic early death (heavy drinking destroyed her health) is included in these depictions somehow, for collapse looms behind the constructed pose. *I am born etc.* features other recent images as well. Photos of elderly women, for example, picture them bursting out laughing, their teeth coated in varnish. The smiles, both unnerving and indicating great health, waver between spontaneity and a state of tension. Lesueur has produced these images while displaying once again an especially sharp sense of composition and setting. The colors of the models and the backgrounds, like the poses struck by the figures, combine to lend the pieces a classical decorative craftsmanship that exists side by side with the unsettling eeriness of the colored mouths. Finally, the artist fills out the current selection with a number of older photos. Men, relatively rare in Lesueur's work, are featured, including one who is sleeping and another who is naked but wearing a helmet. The face of the former displays visible marks – are these dream drawings inscribed directly on the skin (dermography), or abstract traces of his innermost turmoil? The other man is facing the viewer and the phrase written on his helmet makes the image – and the photographed body – something that can be both seen and read. It is another way of treating the body as the origin and ultimate horizon of plasticity.

Extrait de texte

« La nourriture est un matériel organique d'une grande richesse plastique (couleurs, textures), et porteur d'une symbolique forte. C'est un matériau susceptible d'être accommodé, adapté, transformé en vue de traiter du corps en tant que matière, matière d'image, support de la parure, siège de l'apparence, aire de la construction du sujet. Mais en l'utilisant, je cherche à créer une relation de proximité avec le public. La nourriture nous est familière, elle nous accompagne chaque jour, c'est une source de plaisir, comme les paysages en purée qui nous remémorent des activités alimentaires enfantines. [...] Je joue sur l'appartenance à la même famille de la nourriture et du corps (matière vivante, chair), mais la mise en rapport des deux, par l'apposition de l'une sur l'autre, (la nourriture sur le corps), débouche sur une mise en scène de l'échec de l'assimilation de l'un à l'autre. [...] mes accommodations, mes arrangements (terme que j'emploie pour mes sculptures alimentaires), n'ont pas pour objet de tromper le regard mais de lui proposer de mettre en œuvre son exactitude, de faire en quelque sorte le point par une focalisation plus ou moins progressive. D'où l'importance du format et des deux temps de lecture : de loin on voit une coiffure, un sourire, un portrait, un volcan ; de près, on voit de la purée de potiron, de la colle, des marques en forme de plume, etc. »

Entretien : Rémy Kerténian, août 2007

Natacha Lesueur, *Je suis folle de la bouche de fraise*, Toulon, (Maison de la Photographie : Catalogue d'exposition), 2008.

Repères bibliographiques

DAVILA, Thierry, Natacha Lesueur. *Surfaces, merveilles et caprices*, Genève : Éditions Mamco, 2011.

DURAND, Régis, *Attention à la figure* in L'art contemporain et la Côte d'Azur, un territoire pour l'expérimentation, Dijon Les Presses du réel, 2011.

Expositions individuelles (sélection)

2012

Ne me touche pas, Frac Languedoc-Roussillon, commissaire: E. Latreille, Montpellier

2010

Musée d'art et d'histoire et chapelle des pénitents bleus, *Casanova Forever*, FRAC Languedoc Roussillon Narbonne

2009

Vitrine des galeries Lafayette, commissaire : E. Lavigne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris

2008

Tokyo-arts, boutique Van Cleef & Arpels, Tokyo
Degustarte avec Diana Theocharidis, Polyforum Sequeiros, Mexico
Moins, ce ne serait pas assez, CPPM, Nîmes

2007

Maison de la culture, commissaire : H. Besacier, Bourges, *La femme que j'aime semble porter un masque certains jours*, Galerie Charlotte Moser, Genève
Je suis folle de ta bouche de fraise, Maison de la photographie, Toulon

2006

Installation en milieu urbain, Gwangju, Corée
Institut français de Valence, Espagne

2005

Galerie Clara Sels, Düsseldorf
Arrangement Culinaire, incidental projects, Agentur, Amsterdam
Galerie Praz Delavallade, Paris

2004

Uomo, CAN, Neuchâtel

2003

Galerie Charlotte Moser, Genève
Sei, Villa Medici, Rome
Galerie Française, Rome

MOO CHEW WONG

Uncertified Copy.

If the dreary figure of the art copyist – gray overalls, greasy palette, stained easel, standing before a masterpiece in a museum of old masters – is familiar to us, it is an altogether different impression with the dynamic silhouette of a painter bent over a canvas laid directly on the floor and cheerfully tracing out in colored pigment the shapes of a contemporary work of art in front of him. Be it a grid of fluorescent tubes by Dan Flavin, a wrecked Alfa Romeo by Bertrand Lavier, or a self-portrait by Martin Kippenberger, the copies done over the years in Mamco by Moo-Chew Wong are anything but exact with respect to their models.

Just as newspaper columns speak as much about the columnists behind them as the events they relate, Wong's paintings are as much about the vitality of pictorial expressivity as they are about the artworks to which they devote their cannibalistic exercise in admiration. The result is a paradoxical, subjective and erratic archive of exhibitions held at Mamco, a funhouse mirror that distorts the institution's choices and a fanatical, inappropriate memory of its fleeting paradigms.

Is Moo-Chew Wong an anachronism? He is advanced in years and practices painting – oil painting – of figurative pictures painted from nature, stark colors in which black is abundant, worked in impasto, brushes and painter's knives, quickly done, sometimes almost indecipherable, always incomplete, in manic periods of work, a race against time, the fading light or the intensity of capturing the image, all of that with the elegance of the sage of yore suddenly seized by a frenzy, jubilant, who is, it would appear, redoing the grand gestures of the painter, as if it were the first time, as if he had never had any other studio or venue than the moment.

We owe it to Master Wong to have looked at the contemporary through the mistakenly obsolete lenses of expressionist modernity and the sense of an urgency for which his performances provide an oddly up-to-date form.

Extrait de texte

« La gestualité et le matérialisme puissants dont sont empreintes [l]es peintures [de Moo Chew Wong], offrent au premier regard l'évocation d'une violence expressionniste : ici une fulgurance coloristique fauve, là un empâtement brossé à la De Kooning, ailleurs une informalité bourbeuse à la Fautrier. Mais ces références fugitives sont déstabilisées et comme emportées par un maelström dont la force fait littéralement éclater le subjectivisme dont elles furent historiquement porteuses. En ce sens, la machine picturale conçue par l'artiste agit à la manière d'une centrifugeuse où se déconstruisent les éléments de vocabulaire qui donnaient une forme repérée, un style, au pathos pictural de l'occident. [...] Wong renoue de curieuse façon avec [une] vieille nécessité de la peinture impressionniste : il peint "sur le motif", devant le paysage, des tableaux exécutés sans repentir ni relâche, d'une seule venue, dans le temps imparti par la durée d'un après-midi et souvent jusqu'après la tombée de la nuit. Quels que soient les formats utilisés, des grands diptyques aux séries de petits tableaux, les parties de peinture obéissent aux règles de cette loi unitaire. [...] cet athlétisme pictural où le désir de la représentation se consume dans la dépense physique oblige aussi à une économie drastique des moyens de la peinture elle-même. [...] l'artiste s'inscrit [ainsi] jusqu'au bout dans la logique de l'ascèse qui programme le dénuement de sa relation picturale au paysage. »

Jean-Marc Réol, *La violence faite au savoir*, mai 1992

Repères bibliographiques

AMINE, Patrick, *Moo Chew Wong. Scène/Action-Landscape*, Paris : Trafic Galerie, 2008.

SUCHÈRE, Éric, *Moo Chew Wong* (Catalogue de l'espace d'art contemporain Camille Lambert), Juvisy sur Orge, 1997.

Expositions individuelles (sélection)

1997

Espace d'Art Contemporain C. Lambert, Juvisy-sur-orge

1996

Musée du Petit Format 8, Belgique

1995

« Imaginatifs », L'atelier Parisien, Galerie Alessandro Vivas, Paris

1993

Ocre d'Art, Châteauroux

1992

« Paysage urbain », Galerie de l'école, Villa Arson, Nice

Mamco Events

November 2011

Thursday 1

— 12:30 p.m., QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS with... Nicole Schweizer, conservatrice au Musée cantonal des beaux-arts de Lausanne.

— 6:30 p.m., VOIX OFF, Caroline Bergvall reads a selection of her texts.

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Friday 4

— 8 p.m., CHAPEAU AU MAMCO, Contemporary Bal in favor of the Mamco's collection organised by the Association of Friends of Mamco, Geneva Ports Francs (fee on inscription).

Thursday 8

— 6:30 p.m. REMARKS by Christian Bernard on the exhibitions.

Thursday 15

— 6:30 p.m., REMARKS on Natacha Lesueur's exhibition by herself and Thierry Davila and presentation of his monograph published by Mamco.

Thursday 22

— 6:30 p.m., VOIX OFF, Catherine Weinzaepflen reads a selection of her texts.

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December 2011

Thursday 6

— 12:30 p.m., QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS with Marion Tampion-Lajarriette, artiste.

Thursday 13

— 6:30 p.m., VOIX OFF, Claude Rutault reads his texts.

January 2012

Thursday 17

— HAPPY BIRTHDAY, ART !
Programmation surprise to celebrate the 49th Anniversary of art proclaimed by the artist Robert Filliou.

— 6:30 p.m., VOIX OFF, Patrick Beurard-Valdoye reads.

February 2012

Thursday 7

— 12:30 p.m., QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS with... Geneviève Loup, historienne de l'art, enseignante d'histoire et de théorie de l'image en mouvement à la HEAD et à l'École cantonale d'art du Valais.

Evening openings

For the first Wednesday of each month, the museum has extended evening hours, from 6 to 9 p.m., with free admission. At 7 p.m., free guided tours in French and English.
— Wednesday 2 November and 7 December 2011, 4 January and 8 February 2012.

Free-admission Sundays

For the first Sunday of the month, free admission and guided tours at 3 p.m. Free access to the game « Not Only Kids Play » in L'Appartement on a proposal of the Collective « Not Only Kids Play » (Master option TRANS, HEAD, Genève).
— Sunday 6 November and 4 December 2011, 5 February 2012.

Events for children

Guided interactive tours for 5- to 10-year-olds and their family (45 min.).
— Wednesdays at 3:15 p.m.
— the first Sundays of the month at 11:15 a.m., 6 November and 4 December 2011, 4 January and 8 February 2012.

Events for toddlers

The first Wednesdays of the month at 3:15 p.m. An introductory culture tour (20 min.) for 2- to 4-year-olds and their family.
— Wednesday 2 November, 7 December, 4 January and 8 February 2012.

Museum guides

Staff guides are ready to assist visitors weekends and during special evening hours. Unless otherwise specified, all Mamco events are free.

The events for children and for toddlers enjoy the generous support of Fondation Hans Wilsdorf.

The special evening hours enjoy the generous support of Fondation 1796, the foundation of Lombard Odier Darier Hentsch & Cie.

Press Office

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The museum is open Tuesday through Friday from noon to 6 p.m., the first Wednesday of the month until 9 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Closed Mondays as well as the 24, 25 and 31 December and the 1st January, .

Regular admission CHF 8.–

Reduced admission CHF 6.–

Group admission CHF 4.–

Partners

Mamco is overseen by Fondamco, which is made up of Fondation Mamco, and the Canton and City of Geneva.

Fondamco would like to thank all its partners, both public and private, and in particular l'Ambassade de France à Berne, le Consulat Général de France à Genève, le Fonds cantonal d'art contemporain, la Fnac, Fondation Coromandel, Fondation de Famille Sandoz, Fondation 1796, Fondation Valeria Rossi di Montelera, Fondation Hans Wilsdorf, Hôtel La Cour des Augustins, Hôtel Bel' Espérance, JTI, J.P. Morgan Private Bank, Sotheby's, Teo Jakob..

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