

Des histoires en formes

8 June - 7 September 1997

This exhibition has been organized by l'Ecole du MAGASIN (Lili Laxenaire, Mari Linnman, Ingrid Martraix, Gabi Scardi)

The subject bears on a generation of artists born in the 1960s and 1970s, and has been fuelled by a desire to understand their approaches and methods as so many independent propositions. Each one of the artists' propositions represents an independent line of thought and a specific sensibility, but all these itineraries are connected by a shared concern - a concern involving an attentiveness to life, and the encounter with the real world, different aspects of which are emphasized, ranging from the most tangible to the most mysterious.

Twenty-five European and American artists have been brought together for this exhibition.

Bigert & Bergström (Sweden)

The early days of the collaboration between these two artists were influenced by the idea of utopian projects that were hallmarked by an obsession with creating artificial worlds. The public could move about freely within architectural sculptures, containing different natural environments and different climates. When they left Stockholm for Berlin in 1995, the focus of their work shifted to areas of a more mental than physical nature. The works on view in are pieces from a show titled "Bubblemum Pink". This is the name given to a colour used in prison psychiatry in the United States. It would seem that if an extremely aggressive person is incarcerated in a cell of this colour, he instantly calms down. But if that person stays in the cell too long, the effect is reversed, and the prisoner can fall into a state of dementia.

Marc Boucherot (France)

His area of activity mainly involves projects which might be described as "wild" or "untamed", or, at the very least, surprising. He has thus set about methodically attacking (backed up by flour and eggs) the narrow-gauge train that chugs its way to the various neighbourhoods of Marseilles, packed with sightseers. He is currently working on a specific project for Grenoble which will be ready by the end of the exhibition in September 1997.

Umberto Cavenago (Italy)

He produces his works, through technical methods and skills borrowed from the industry, but the sole purpose of his altogether functional machines is to meet the artist's need to lend substance to his work. They merely produce-and convey-ideas.

This tension between the functional and the non-functional, recurs in the restrictive effect of his works in relation to the space in which they are set: they invade the space, break through it, and penetrate it, as in «Nastro Trasportatore » [Conveyor Belt]. His works are often turned in the direction in which the earth spins, the sun turns and time passes. In «A prova di scemo», he introduces for the first time a curved anthropomorphic form, with

these objects which are meant to be useful for moving faster, but which, on the contrary, become an impediment because of their weight, which turns them ironically into a sculpture.

Gilles Chétanian (France)

After several years, his work currently pivots around the conversation exchanges during walks, conferences, as well as kitch-hike rides. What is left of these interventions are the participant's memories. Gilles Chétanian will be present ten days during the summer (12/6, 19/6, 15/7, 16/7, 20/8, 21/8...) and available for discussions, a coffee or visit.

Marie Denis (France)

She explores the encounter between nature and culture. Marie Denis has chosen to exhibit outside, opposite the entrance, on the other side of the parking, where there is a huge cage containing gas bottles, and a bird's nest. She is interested in an urbanistic approach, that she pushes to its most absurd extremes. For example, she extended the white lines in a car-park over shrubs planted nearby, by using the leaves which she turned over to reveal their paler colour on the underside. With «Le baiser» [The Kiss], she spied on a couple kissing in a phone booth, and, when they had gone, photographed the condensation misting the glass as proof of their passion.

Ricardo De Oliveira (Brasil)

His work focuses on the creation of an image. In his photographic approach, Ricardo de Oliveira sets out to depict unreal and strange atmospheres, deriving from everyday landscapes and environments, in which time seems suspended, and where the onlooker finds himself searching for an event or action happening off-screen. It has been a natural progression from photography to film, a medium which enables him to introduce suspense and intrigue. This spirit informs the trilogy, "Joy House" (1994), "The Jogger" (1995), and "Alice" (1996), three films shot in 16mm and shown on video screens.

Olivier Dollinger (France)

He raises questions about the loss of landmarks and autistic forms of communication. At the Magasin, he shows, "Andy &..." (1996), diaporama, where many people inter-act with a dummy used for Red Cross first-aid training. In a previous work, the artist tried to resuscitate it by all possible means. Here Andy is left to other people in order to provoke a personal exchange.

«Untitled» (1997) is the result of a meeting with a communication consultant which brings the artist back to the genre he is more known for: the self-portrait.

fordacity (France)

The projects of fordacity opt for a network of cities throughout the world and thus involve a geography of their actions. This is a touring project, performed in a way that is suited to each city. As part of the exhibition fordacity is proposing a performance installation based on one of its productions the book «Cuisines

sur Rue – Récits et recettes des jours de fête» [Street Cooking - Holiday Tales and Recipes]. A vocabulary table, voices, sounds, music, smells, food.

Fabrice Gygi (Switzerland)

By borrowing his materials from activities such as travel and sport in extreme conditions, from temporary urban fixtures, and from official events, he conveys codes linked to the precarious habitat, to conservation, and to social order. In the exhibition, the visitor finds him/herself face to face with large air-filled bolsters- "Airbags" (1996)- and a structure in a public place - «Tribune» (1996)- simultaneously placed near an exit. Both works borrow their motif from sport and fairs, and convey an increasing feeling of threat and safety. The artist however refers the art system to its social context, and the spectator to his/her condition as a citizen.

Jens Haaning (Denmark)

His work involves an often unsettling vision of reality that quite naturally puts artistic institutions in awkward positions. For instance: "Watch out" (1994) is a piece made for the Nicolai Wallner gallery: two German shepherds chained up in the exhibition without the public being acquainted with the character of the dogs, or the length of the chains.

«Middelburg Summer» (1996). The Maras Confectie clothing factory of Vlissingen, fills the De Vleeshal exhibition rooms in Middelburg (Netherlands). It is not just the workshops which have been moved, but the offices, canteen, and also on. The workers, of different nationalities, some of whom are illegal, carry out their usual work schedules. Jens Haaning offers free entrance tickets to foreign visitors.

Maria Hediund (Sweden)

Her large colour photographs feature parts of her apartment. These details of her everyday life are blank and stripped of all decorative and personal signs. For each picture, her camera has recorded the troubling presence of traces left by somebody who or something which is no longer there.

Geir Tore Holm (Norway)

This artist creates installations based on his Lapp origins, and on the oppressive way that Norway has dealt with this culture. He illustrates how this domination has penetrated to the very heart of his family home, where his parents only use the Lapp language privately between themselves, and refuse to teach it to their children. In a way this involves the consequences of an inner denial of the thing denied.

Natacha Lesueur (France)

Through her photographs, she offers us a new way of looking at the body and, more particularly, the woman's body.

Every device is up for grabs (illusions, make-believe) when it comes to lending the body a new image and developing a new eye.

A violet is thus replaced by caviar scattered over a face, and finger nails are turned into spears, with a different design for each nail, feminine attributes which become sharp weapons.

Jonathan Monk (Great Britain)

His artistic areas of concern swing from a revisitation of the history of modern and contemporary art to a use of the day-to-day. This everydayness is made up of simple, commonplace acts and moments. His actions and projects take place in bars or, as in "Waiting for Famous People" (1996), in the Arrivals of an airport, where he makes a bold attempt to be waiting for Dali, Duchamp, or the Sex Pistols. Jonathan Monk's way of looking at these laughable events reveals a fragility by way of the device of displacement. It is the fragility of a solitary neon dot "A Full Stop written in blue neon" (1997) on a wall, the sole remnant of a sentence that has wiped off, an improbable message.

Melik Ohanian (France)

His instruments are images, film, sound and social conflict. «White Wall Travelling» (1997) encompasses the artist's main themes. The film shot in Super 16, can be defined on three levels: an image (optical travelling), words (mental travelling), and a soundtrack (sound travelling). The only link between these three features is their length. The second piece «Invisible North-, West, South, East (1997) shows a new development in his work, with the image disappearing and becoming sound. The presence of the visitor acts as a trigger.

Bruno Pelassy (France)

For this exhibition, he has taken up once again with the atmosphere he created for the Freaky Pet Shop (1994, Chez Valentin, Clichy). On that occasion, he "sited" kinds of mobile sculptures, commonly known as "creepy crawlies", in a large un-lived-in apartment. He played on the strange nature of the place and the disturbing presence of these sculptures, filled with motors which produce jerky movements, squeaking, and scurrying about... «Sluts» is a gathering of new "creepy crawlies", no longer in an abandoned place but in an exhibition. Here, they play the part of disruptive elements, not unlike free election, and delicate parasites mimicking a state somewhere between agony and hysteria.

Alex Pinna (Italy)

Alex Pinna's work has to do with his idea of childhood. He is up in arms against the myths which adults try to impose on children. Beneath the smiling appearance of his opposition lurks a subversive and boat-rocking power. He attacks the bourgeois heroes whom Walt Disney has imposed on an entire generation, and challenges the idea of life that style conceals unprecedented violence beneath a flimsy surface. In «Mi è sembrato di vedere un gatto» [I Thought I saw a Pussy Cat], the insufferable Tweety Bird this time ends up by "losing his feathers once and for all".

Børre Saethre (Norway)

Børre Saethre is interested in the life you start living somewhere between childhood and adolescence. The point where kids start to deal with the discovery of sexual desire, and when they start having "real adult secrets". In "It's a Mind Game" (1997), Staehre shows an enormous desolated mattress of white foam-rubber, stretched tight to the wall, and two small LCD -monitors, each inside off a small glass-bubble. Next to this is a large glass-bubble containing a worn-out pillow. Real cumshots cast in silver are spread over the pillow. On the other side of the carpet there are a cubic altar with burning incense that provide a sweet smell in the room.

Alessandra Spranzi (Italy)

For her, photos create a link between fixity and surprise. In "Tornando a casa" (1996) [Going Back Home], there is something different about the usually so comforting home atmosphere. Nothing moves, just a flame burns. So we might think that this flame is possibly lit within us, like a noiseless little revolution which might shatter our illusions and the peaceful stillness of our reality.

Alix Stewart Lambert (USA)

She is showing two new works which are part of an on-going project that reveals a subversion to social representations, identity issues and social branding. After acting as a basketball coach, Alix Stewart Lambert keeps exploring the issues which build a personality. At the Magasin she shows the one of a tattoo artist. The film projected in the Auditorium combines the documentary and the action movie in the pure American tradition.

Sidney Stucki (Switzerland)

His work involves several media. As a contemporary artist, he exhibited regularly in Switzerland since 1988. As a figure in the Geneva techno scene, going by the name of DJ Sid, he has made several records under the Mental groove label. On the curved wall of the galleries, Sidney Stucki presents a form resembling an organic mass and constituting elements of painting, which seems to grow and change with each appearance and "to be fuelled" by the music which serves it.

Vibeke Tandberg (Norway)

With a series of snapshots, she illustrates her well-balanced life as it is lived with her best friend-herself. Together, they go on small journeys, spend a few weeks in the summer at their house in the country, visit their parents, and so on. It is only when Vibeke Tandberg takes an unexpected photo of Vibeke Tandberg, having a pee in the grass, that she seems to be alone.

Alessandra Tesi (Italy)

In her photos of impersonal, anonymous environments (hotels, waiting rooms) and in her serie of details «Rosso HE1» ... «Rosso HE5», the situations she records take on a disconcerting aspect, and have the power of unsettling the everyday point of view. A

magnetic energy issues from things and catches the eye, leaving it nowhere to take refuge. Colour seems to become concentrated of its own accord in the lens. Alessandra does not use filters, or other photographic devices. Objects become threatening, refusing their state of subordination.

John Tremblay (USA)

He tries to reintroduce the positions, asserted in painting during the 80s. While, for example, Peter Halley enclosed the viewer in his prison series paintings, John Tremblay opens up the pictorial space. The kinetic-pop paintings, with their silkscreened oval forms, absorb the eye. The spectator's vision is disturbed and lead into the picture, where the view cannot stay still. The monochrome "Watery Domestic", (1993) and coloured « W. E. L. O. V. E. U.S. », (1997) backgrounds illustrate this optical exploration.

Cesare Viel (Italy)

Cesare Viel's work is a sort of declaration of individual existence. His artistic expression and his life share the same reality. The artistic process is identifiable solely by the identity of the place (museum, gallery...) where the work is shown. The media imp/iced (writing, video, voices, etc) are adapted in each instance to the specific nature of the "message-project". «In una stanza per Sé» [A Room of One's Own], outside and inside continually merge, shifting from macrocosm to microcosm. The work titled «Provare» [Trying] (shown in the Bookshop) involves taking an ironical look into oneself, but once again trying to find the subtitle and emotional connection between one's own subjectivity and that of the spectator-between narration and description.