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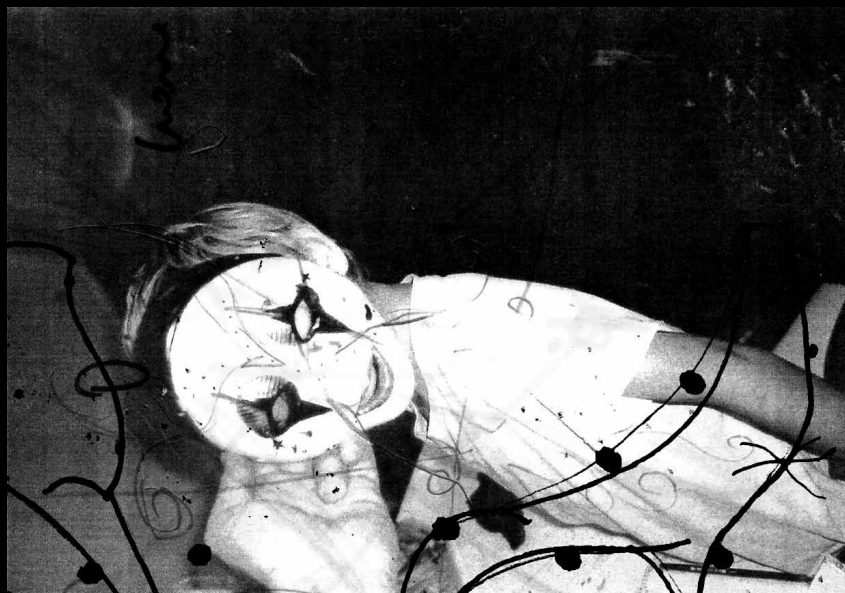
David Douard

REVUE DE PRESSE | SELECTED PRESS

CURA.

**SPOTLIGHT
DAVID DOUARD
IN CONVERSATION WITH
EMMA ENDERBY**

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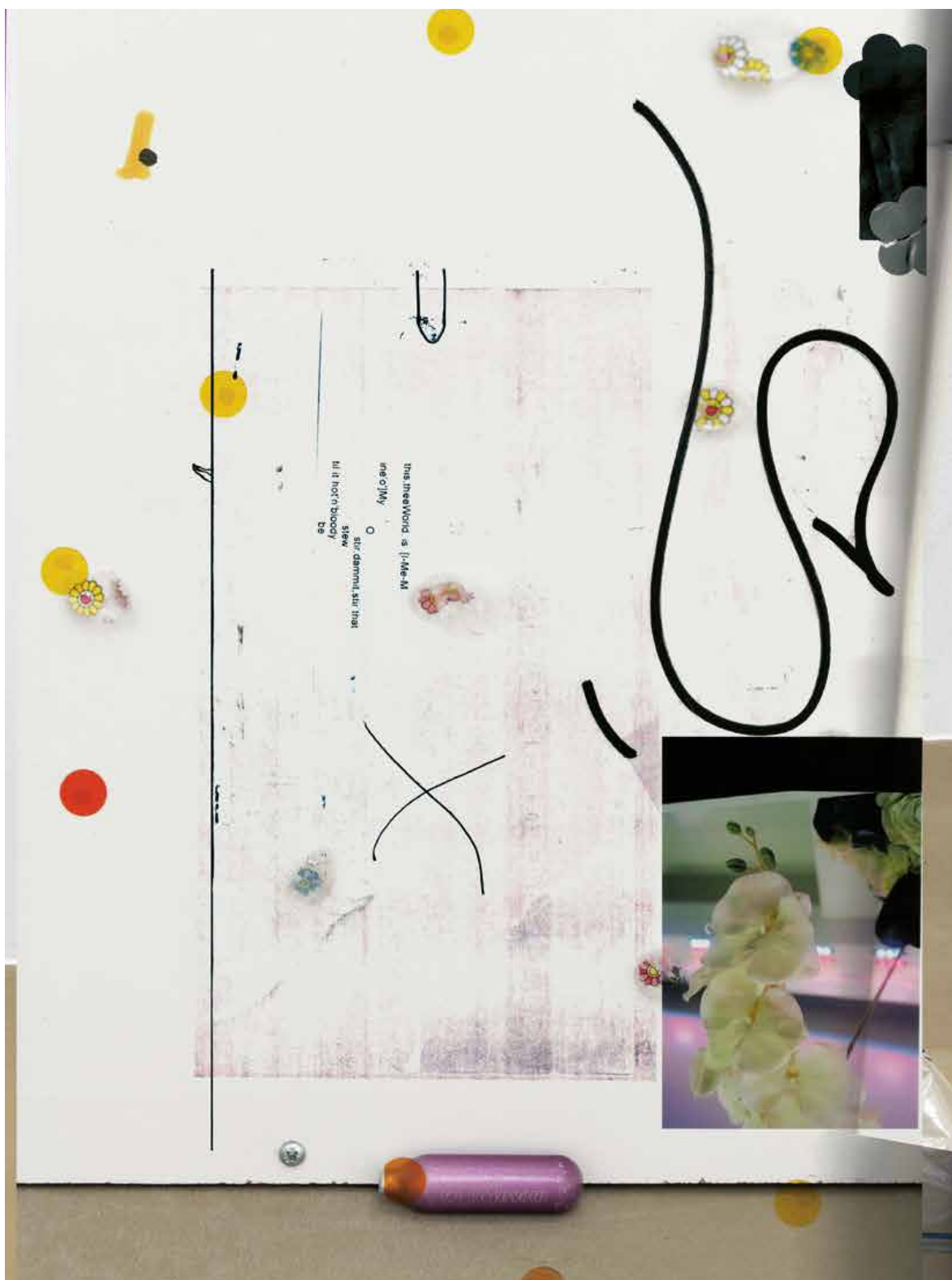


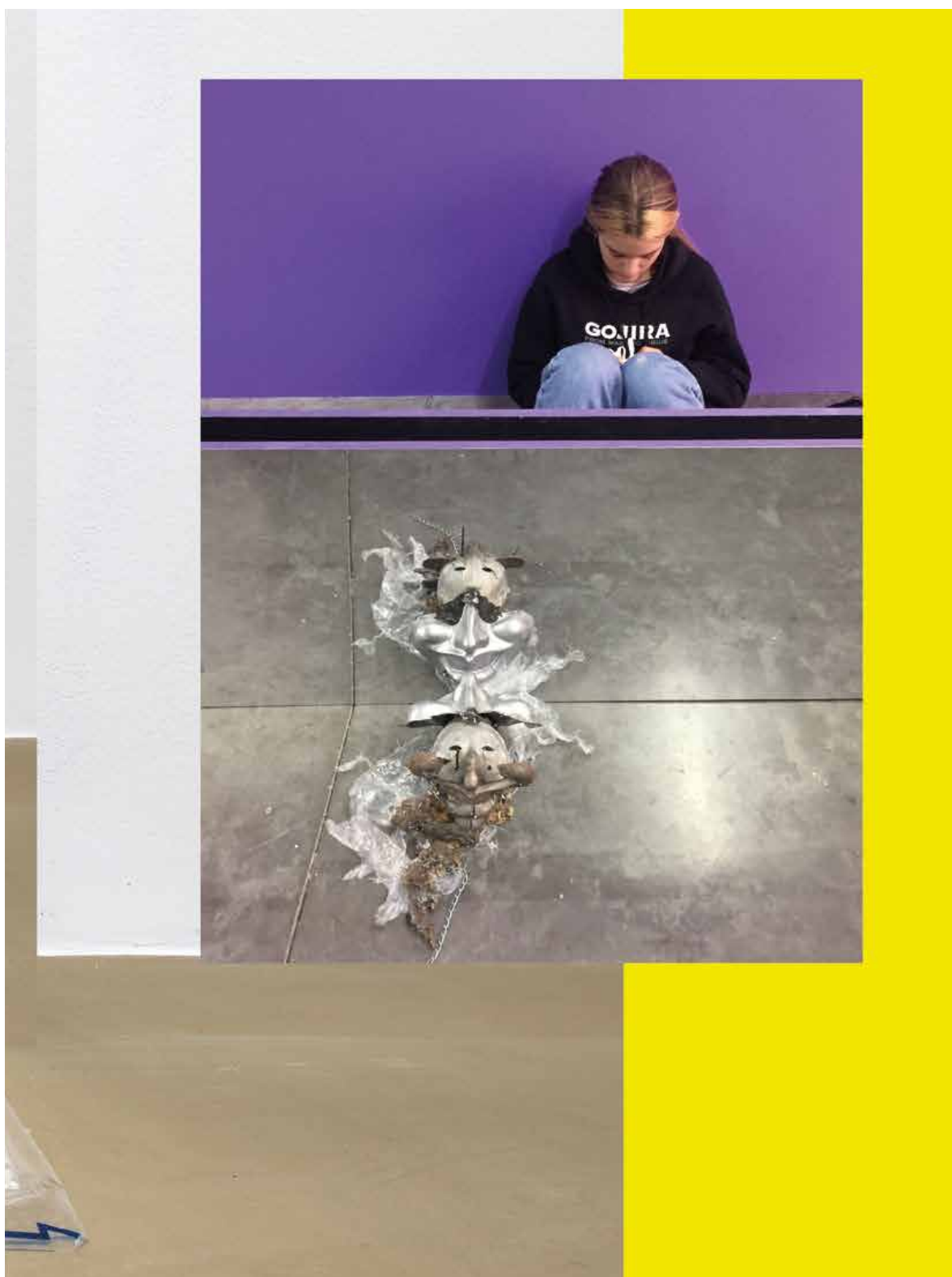


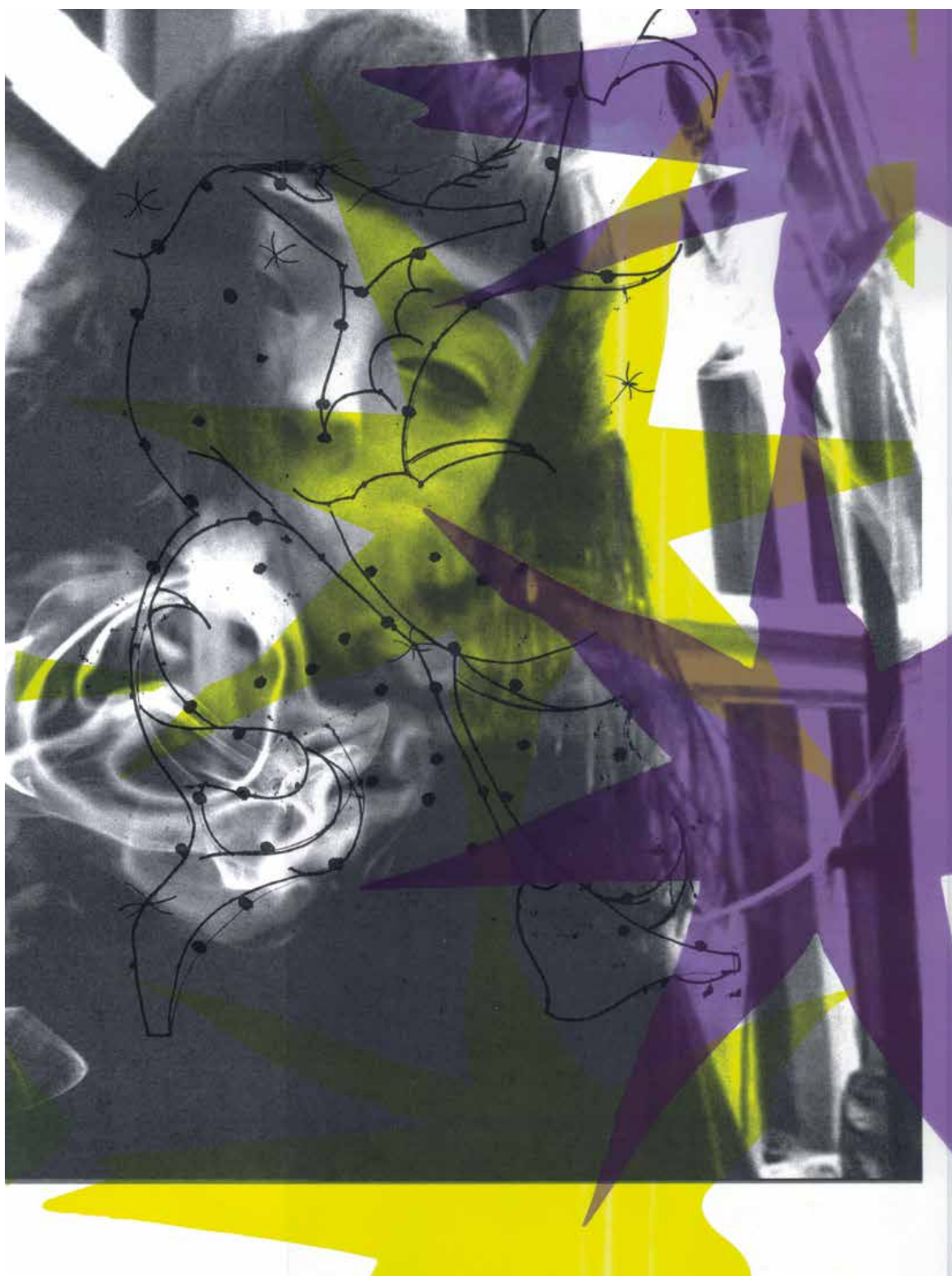






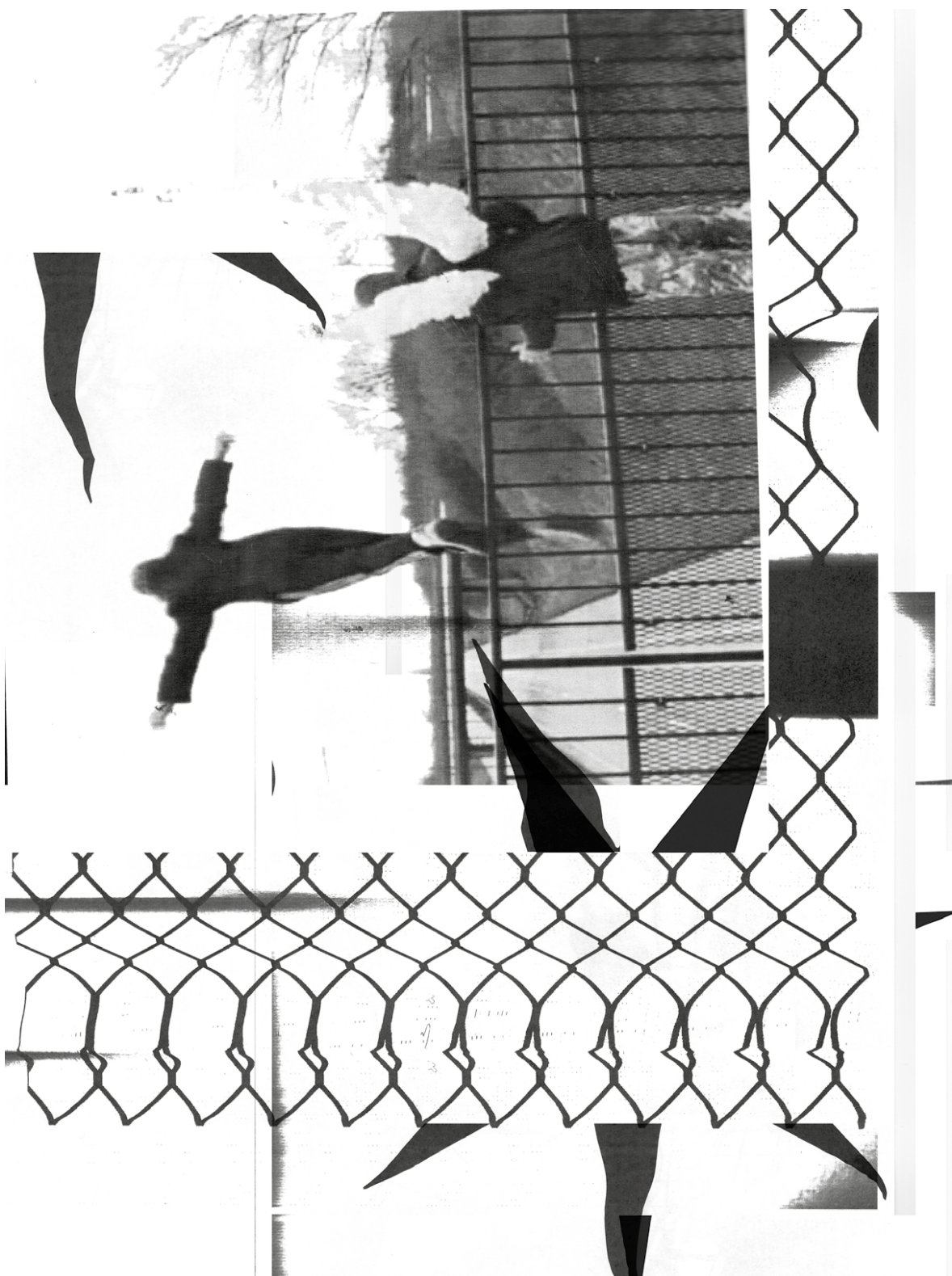






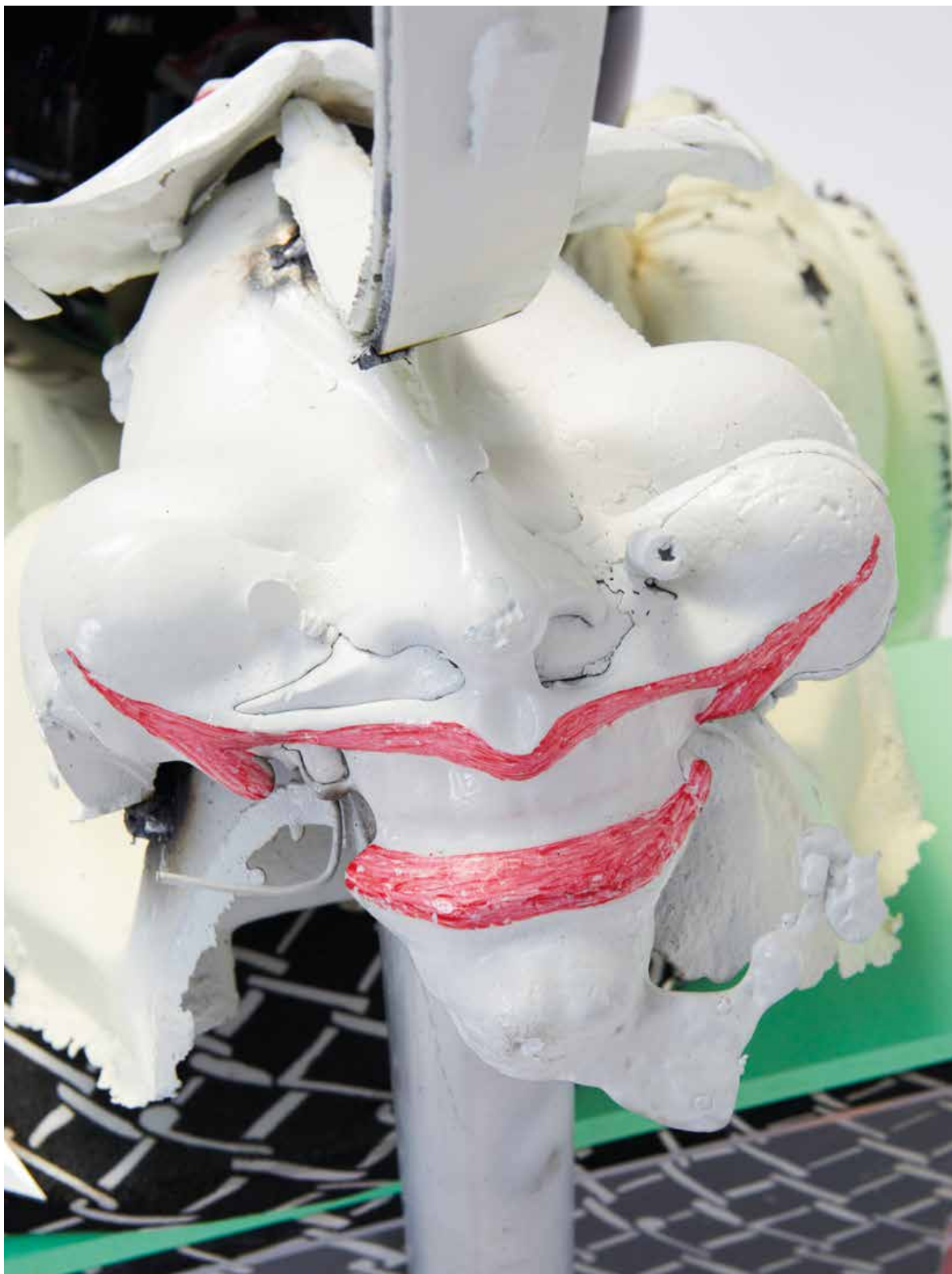


Scan from collage (black and white), 2020 (p. 171) DD, ACHÈTE LE NACPA à LEUPIS AMES, KFG, B, 2023 (detail)
Photo: Roman März (pp. 172, 173) Courtesy: the artist UNFOLD, 2023 (detail) Photo: Jiajun Deng
Courtesy: the artist and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris (pp. 174-175)





Graphic composition with images from O' il Lulaby, Frac Ile-de-France, 2020 Courtesy: the artist (pp. 176-177)
Scans from collages, 2023 Courtesy: the artist (pp. 178, 179, 180) SO, 2014 (detail) Courtesy: the artist (p. 181)



EMMA ENDERBY Where are you in the world?
DAVID DOUARD Right now, I'm in the south of France, in my father's house.

EE In Perpignan?
DD Yes, I am staying one week here. I enjoy it. My father, who is a gardener, is here too. I live in a big garden.

EE That somehow makes sense with your work.
DD Oh, do you think?
EE Yeah, and maybe we can begin from there... What's always struck me about your work, something that I personally appreciate, is that there is no antagonism between the so-called digital and the real. This aspect resonates with me. I've often found it kind of strange when people talk about the digital and the physical as if they aren't the same thing—the digital holds the physical and the physical holds the digital.

DD You're right. Actually, it's funny that I'm here right now. I was watching TV, had a computer quite early and played video games a lot here. So I remember I put at the same level the TV, the screen, and the window... I put digital reality at the same level as the flowers outside, the animals, the wind, the sun, everything. That was really important for me to have those things together at the same level. Later I was thinking about how it could be possible to translate this materiality of the digital and its emotional effect. I was watching a lot of TV then, so the outside was corrupted by what I saw through technology—the TV, the computer, the internet. I guess that's my generation. I figured out that I could use this new platform to express myself and enter a space where I could exchange with other people. I realized that I could also connect with people through this platform and not only be passive with it. So I started to work from this feeling. That was my departure point. It was not about the knowledge of technology, but about the emotion and feeling that you have from your experience with technology. That's why I like Fluxus—they made dead objects, but alive inside. It's a failure, something is wrong, something doesn't work. I like that.

EE Do you ever think about Robert Rauschenberg as well? I was just thinking about his *Combines* while you were speaking, how they are time capsules in a way, but are also speaking about the anonymity in the world of reproduction, the world of information, and our emotional attachment to them. I'm referring to common images and our relationships to them when they work and fail. His work came to my mind while you were speaking and I was wondering if it's ever been a reference for you.

DD Rauschenberg, yes. But I came to his works later, at the beginning I was more inspired by Broodthaers. In the end, it was more conceptual. And it became something material, but it was unintentional at the beginning.

EE Right. I think Rauschenberg said something about a picture being the real world for him when it's made from the real world. But I guess you don't intend to represent the real world through the materials you are working with, but rather the emotional reality of these things in our world. One thing that I think is interesting though is the anonymity related to both of these artists, Broodthaers and Rauschenberg—materials are anonymous through their commonness. Clearly, that's been something that you've

been drawn to and worked with a lot. When you source online conversations, poems or images to make them become your material, they're often anonymous.

DD Yeah, it came from the beginning again, and my intention to be an artist without any actual intention. I came from graffiti. I did a lot of graffiti here in the south of France, and I remember the way the use of language was important to me because this form of expression entails the corruption of language. I found it important for me because, as Burroughs said, when you cut up the newspaper, you cut up society. Graffiti was like that for me, even if I was not aware of Burroughs at that time. I was very inspired by this idea of making a mark on society. Graffiti is a presence in the street, in the city, using language, but for myself. And, of course, it's related to anonymity. When I started to discover all of those things online, and to make objects with them, I was inspired by the Anonymous movement, because I found the same energy in graffiti as on the internet platform. It started with Facebook and some blogs. It was very helpful at that moment to read some writers who were using a collage of blog texts—Dennis Cooper, for example. It is again a matter of borders, because the words and the language in the plaster were like a form of vitality, like a ghost inside the material. Anonymity is essential for me because it's a part of my work, which is political somehow—through anonymity I can use a mask. I also think about the destruction of an ego in a work. When I started doing research about poetry online, the most important aspect was the people who chose avatar names or anonymous comportment online. I found this silent presence really interesting. Who knows? Who cares about that? But it is still there and I investigated how it could be present and material in my work.

EE I remember that feeling, those early days of AOL chat rooms and MSN Messenger where everyone was anonymous in a sense. Although it came with darkness in some ways, I kind of loved that you could project whatever you imagined or hoped onto this person, you could make them whoever you wanted them to be. I guess that's the danger too.

I'd like to ask about architecture and environments. I had just seen the Isa Genzken exhibition at MoMA, and then I got on the train and went to the SculptureCenter and I saw a show of yours for the first time. I remember thinking that made so much sense that those two shows were on at the same time in the city. I'm sure it was not remotely intentional by the curators. I thought about your work in relationship to Genzken's, post *Fuck the Bauhaus*, where she started making these insane objects, materials, colors, recreating architectural skyscrapers and the city streets. Your show was also about the city, and the kind of urban systems that are essential but that you don't necessarily experience, like sewage. I saw a connection in you both abandoning—or maybe shredding is a better word—ideas around order and power. For me, this was really tied to the way that you were thinking about architecture. So, I just wanted to hear your thoughts about that relationship and how this aspect has become more and more present in your work.

DD Thank you. I remember I saw that show too at the time. That was a great experience. Architecture is important, always. And yes, it's become very









important recently, more and more. I think when I started to do it, it was the extension of sculpture, let's say, like volume in general, with the idea to create an environment for sculpture. I do believe that in contemporary art we can build things with an idea of corrupted architecture, things that are schizophrenic and about the thoughts that we have at the time. The public and the private space are intertwined, and I'm super excited by that. The colors of the wall in the private space and then fences in public spaces. My work mixes these realities to build the experience of the space.

EE You just mentioned color. That's another element that has always struck me about your work and environments. We have just experienced with *brat*, yet again, how color can capture a moment, a vibe, a collective feeling. I would like to hear more about color, because you've used it since the beginning in very direct ways and it plays a very prominent role in your work. How do you connect those colors to the kind of wider emotional state that you're creating with your works?

DD I really enjoy working with colors in my studio, with a particular attraction to colors that are not pleasant to live with. The colors used for administration interest me the most, and especially the ones we find in children's schools and globalized modern cities. There is an emotional artifice in the use of colors that fascinates me. What I do most often is to think of color as an emotion that diffuses into the sculptures, like a form of contamination. This allows me to conceive the exhibition space as a fluid place, where the environment is connected to the objects it hosts. In my opinion, this is what we do as humans.

EE You've been in shows or made works about the mirroring of essential things in our lives or systems that aren't necessarily visible or seen, like the sewage system or transport, or generally ideas about public space. It's interesting that you've been included in a few shows that look at that type of abstraction artists are exploring. Infrastructure, architecture and technologies are being explored through abstracted terms because they're often abstract to us. There isn't a kind of transparency in the way that we operate in the world, at all. A friend of mine once called this approach "infrastructural aesthetics," a definition I liked. This feels really relevant to your work, that kind of layering and abstracting of information to create an experience of a thing. I would like to hear about how you see abstraction in those terms.

DD That's a good question. It's hard to explain. I often think about the right to respond we have in the face of the dictatorship of industrially produced objects. The emotions we maintain about something like an IKEA table, for example, fascinate me; it's a visible form of our state of mind on an object. It becomes the foundation of our lives. I like to understand an object in that way. When I start to make an object, I have an idea. And it's a lot about the collage, and how you can have an object, which is like a ready-made, something I bought or found in the street. I turn it on every side, see every shape, and it becomes something else and then it starts to have different elements around it, until it finally becomes abstract. I also realized that my objects are hard to catch or understand—it's not about being intentionally

obscure but more about using abstraction as a form of resistance in the world. I am also looking for something when I'm making an object that I'm still learning about—this new object doesn't exist in the world, but it comes from that which already exists. My use of abstraction comes from not wanting to shape the object in a political way—objects don't have to say anything to the world, although they of course contain something. I really like abstraction as a form of resistance to objectivization, but then the object always has something to say.

EE It makes sense. Something I've often felt when I've looked at your work is that there's this kind of dizziness. Your use of abstraction connects to this dizziness. You talk about abstraction as a form of resistance, but there's also a radical refusal of any kind of consistency. One might recognize something, or connect things in a work, but then it also breaks apart with contradictions.

DD There is a certain desire to highlight a form of inefficiency, softness, a weariness of being, while using the shapes or materials of power, like a corruption of thought. I see passivity as a form of resistance to the forced march of the world. That's probably why the adolescent world fascinates me so much, and why I constantly return to it to capture images and postures.

EE Right, like your interest in adolescence is tied so concretely to the nature of your work. The process of coming of age is messy, contrary, abstract—efficient only through inefficiency—but in the end it takes form.

DD I believe objects are receptacles, witnesses of life, and my work is to make these objects emit their contained energy, without ever confining them. This goes through multiple contradictory states in which I have established my language. Talking about adolescence and its attitudes, I also think of this in-between state, a suspension where doubts and questions arise. A state that, as you said earlier, isn't "consistent," but carries a strong will with it.

For me, adolescence doesn't stop at adulthood but extends and affects us beyond the boundaries of age. We are immersed in this floating state and try to make something out of it.

And while this state may be something difficult to live with, I believe that something interesting can always emerge from it.

This sense of floating is already a desire to refuse to conform to what is given, to remain in between. Inconsistency has a political meaning, from which something positive can be drawn: a force for change.

When I create forms, when external elements come into my work, I try to corrupt their initial destination to make them more undecided, more ambiguous. From abstraction, or inefficiency, and sometimes even from absurdity, a kind of truth often emerges. I believe we need to learn to let go, allowing things to unfold without trying to control everything. It's also a belief in the capacity of works of art to make life gentler. I must feel so much anger at times, considering the world in which I live, that even a simple plastic flower can calm me down. It all depends on the importance we give to things.

EE I was triggered by this thought when you

mentioned the dirty flower. I was recently rereading a text by Mike Kelley about the uncanny, and I was trying to think, what is that now? What Kelley was trying to connect to is this Freudian understanding, where there's this perversion of mass culture or the fear of the thing that generates it. And I guess I get that same feeling when I look at your work. You already used this word — contaminating.

DD That's a nice compliment. Yeah, Mike Kelley!!! I am also a big fan of Tetsumi Kudo. Maybe the key point to understand what can be an uncanny today is to go back to Kudo, I guess. Like this pollution, and corruption of technology. He was very visionary about the world we live in today, wasn't he?

EE For sure. And the way Kudo criticized the unique status of the human being, for example.

You have curated a group show at CURA's Basement Roma space, which makes sense, given also the way you work. I was curious to hear about your approach to this show as a network, which is how it feels.

DD I really enjoy working on collective projects. This is an exhibition that reflects my generation, shaped by my emotions about how those around me do things, and we all inspire each other. I think it makes sense today. The starting point was this Winnie the Pooh by Nicolas Ceccaldi, which I've lived with in my apartment for a while. I wanted to talk about the global state of alienation through connected objects and their underlying control over bodies. I also wanted to showcase Dennis Cooper's animated GIF novel, captured from his blog. The idea here is to use today's visible tools and turn them into poetry and emotion, with a strong adolescent aesthetic present throughout. I also invited Valerie Keane to show a sculpture, where I was thinking about the ornament of imagination. I was imagining someone on their bed, lying, and thinking about something, and then I wondered how I could materialize this. Valerie Keane's sculpture for me was the ornament that you need to have inside your head, and inside your body, to be strong enough to grow up, after the Winnie the Pooh childhood moment [*laughs*]. The sculpture is like an armure, but it's just a sculpture, you cannot wear it, it's just there. I also invited Antoine Trapp, who is working with an artificial intelligence platform, which he is trying to cannibalize, the machine cannibalizing itself. He creates an image with this, which is quite beautiful, he makes research binders with it. I was super inspired by this idea of the machine cannibalizing itself, like a solitary machine by Duchamp or something.

EE In the exhibition there is also sound, as always in your work. I was watching the Louvre video you made. It is so good, like a Pokémon zombie situation in the museum, and that basically is the experience one has there, right? A zombie on a Pokémon quest but the Pokémon is Delacroix. The sound in it is so hyper and catchy and dark and weird. I'd like to hear about how sound plays a role within your work and exhibitions.

DD Yes, sound is very important. I do music on the side, as well. For this video, the Louvre one, I used a feed recorder. And then I put some other sound that I made on it, like emotional things that I had inside of me when I was in the Louvre. But in general, when I'm working with sound, it's like a stuttering—a sound that is like a promise of

something but it never comes. Through sound, one is always aware of something going on in the exhibition space, it draws attention. And it becomes something that I don't control. I do some beats on my computer and then also in the space, but it's not just one speaker, I try to put speakers everywhere. It's a challenge for me to make a silent object. Sometimes the sound is literally inside the sculpture. For me, it's to create attention for the viewer, so they pay attention to something going on. Which is also about time. Because when viewers come into the space, they are on their own time, but the sound can put pressure on that time, so it's about attention and time. It's like color, actually—it's like, "Hey, something is happening here." But as the sound is never complete, it's a surprise. I use a lot of silence too, so people don't know when the sound comes in. I like this deception, you know, I like when people ask, "What is it? Why?" I think I can't do a show without sound now. I love that.

EE Sound, object, architecture, color, are creating this attention, but also movement? There's a sort of choreography in how you can move people in space.

DD It's all of that. And attention is important for the object. To pay attention. It also reminds me of the political ideas that I want to put in my work. I'm interested in political movements that cannot be captured. By definition, sculpture captures life, but the goal is to render things muted and underground so they become more corrosive and powerful over time. I really like the idea of something being haunted by a thought, but that thought never being fixed. It's a challenge I love when working with objects. That's why sound, colors, and environments are important, as they reveal and affirm the presence of an absence, which feels accurate to me in relation to the world I live in. It's about challenging objectification while using its own power structure. It's that idea of abstraction, again.

EE Yes, that's why I love the Joker mask so much. It only shows a smile, but it contains so much of our time. It hides a vitality that dances in silence. We can dance with it if we give it attention.

GLow', replica, 2024 (detail) Courtesy: the artist (p. 182) Carte Blanche à David Douard with Nicolas Ceccaldi, Valerie Keane and Antoine Trapp, inner GLow' replica (installation view), Basement Roma, 2024 Photo: Daniele Melajoli/Courtesy: the artist and Basement Roma (pp.184-185) Optimized Heart (installation view), UCCA Center for Contemporary Art, Aranya Gold Coast, Beidaihe, China, 2023 Photo: Sun Shi/Courtesy: the artist, UCCA Center for Contemporary Art and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris (pp. 186-187)

032c

David Douard Turns YouTube Comments Into Poetry

For artist David Douard, a seemingly profane YouTube comment can be turned into poetry that is then turned into a sculptural assemblage.



Referencing the history of science, technology, animism, and urban landscapes, Douard's diverse interests are being reflected in his multi-medial, eclectic installations. In conversation with Claire Koron Elat, the artist talks about digging through the dark web, living in Paris' suburbs, and the relationship between the private and domestic.



CLAIRE KORON ELAT: You often reference anonymous conversations, poems, and photos from the internet in your work, which serves as the basis for your sculptures and installations. I was wondering if you could describe this process, and how these poems become physically present in your sculptures.

DAVID DOUARD: The initial intent was to interact with people online, and to use this as the material for sculptures and installations. I decided to connect the materiality of sculpture with the digital content. It is interesting to keep the flow between these different elements, found objects, readymades, poetry, google images, sound pieces, and then make a collage out of it. It's interesting to turn these elements into something physical and present them in a space. My work is a lot about contamination and corruption – that's why it's important that everything exists on the same level.

CKE: Who are you having these conversations with? Are there specific platforms or forums that you're accessing?

DD: At the beginning, it was all anonymous. For example, I was looking at comments on YouTube. I think language is the most important authority in culture, so I find it interesting to attack it in some way, to chew on it.

I used to do graffiti in the streets, and it made me realize that the content of the sentences you're spraying on walls is actually not that important. It's important where you place it and how you do it, so it's about conceptualizing the language on the walls. Changing a word is like working on society. This is what William S. Burroughs did when he was making cutups, he was acting on society. I think that graffiti is able to corrupt the city. It's a form of resistance.



CKE: I also read that you're specifically interested in the dark web.

DD: It's been a long time since I last accessed it. I don't go there anymore. But geek culture is interesting. I found it interesting to build my own computer and enter the dark web with this computer. But I'm not a specialist. I'm not interested in technology only. Sometimes it's just a point of departure, a way to think about an object and make sculpture.

CKE: You're also part of a generation that grew up with the internet. Do you feel like this is why it's inevitable that you also include the internet and virtual spheres in your work?

DD: It's interesting to be part of this generation, because we also lived during a time without the internet. I grew up in the south of France, and my father was a gardener. I kind of have the same interest in nature as I have in computers. I remember when I went online as a child and played some game or did research and then went outside to look at trees and flowers, I had the same emotions. This is why the physical and digital exist on the same level in my art. For me, everything is connected and there is no separation. It's almost like technology is inside us, it's an inherent part of our thinking. Perhaps that's why people think my work is post-apocalyptic or science fiction, but to me that's not the case. I would say it's more about the interstices.

Tetsumi Kudo's work and the concept of mutation is very inspiring for me. I put a lot of things and objects together that should not be together. It all slowly melts and comes together as one block, which becomes the sculpture.



CKE: You were describing language as a tool for disruption. Do you feel like, when looking at your work, language needs to be added to it or that it needs to be contextualized through language?

DD: I like when language is something that goes into the work, gets corrupted again, and then goes out. But sometimes sculpture doesn't need any words. When I work with language more directly, the text is almost like an ornament for the object. I like when there are incomplete words somehow present in a sculpture.

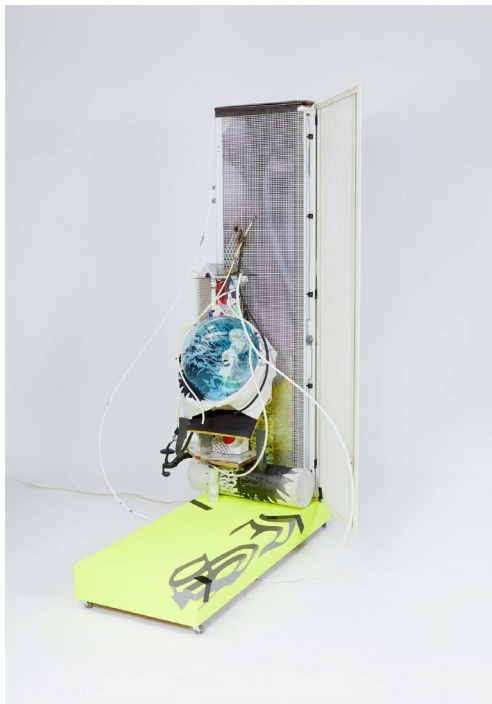


CKE: In your works, you also combine elements of the domestic with urban spaces. In what ways is the relationship between the domestic and the public also important for you? I was thinking about this question, especially when you were talking about living in Aubervilliers, which is quite stigmatized in Paris.

DD: You're right. It is part of my experience that I lived there, and it was important be in a suburb that is so stigmatized by the media and society. The key point of my practice is taking spaces and making spaces your home.

CKE: The public and private are also quite political juxtapositions. In an art context, you can apply this to exhibiting in commercial galleries versus public institutions – both spaces have very different agendas.

DD: I think when you're making an object, you propose within your sculpture something that is hiding, something that's not there. That is what I believe. There is a form of protection within the object, it can work in whatever the context is. For example, the sculpture *UN'FOLD* (2023), which I showed in a group show at Capitain Petzel consisted of a pedestal and a frame. I combined elements that have a certain authority in art, and then aim to corrupt them through a glass bowl, which is also part of the sculpture, and other objects that are more poetic. The duality between these elements give the work a kind of autonomy, even though there is an inherent contradiction. And it doesn't matter where this work is shown – in a commercial gallery, an alternative space, or a public institution.



FRIEZE

‘Crumbling the Antiseptic Beauty’ Shatters the Sterile Veneer

At Fondation Pernod Ricard in Paris, David Douard curates a show featuring 13 artists that frames collective practice as something sticky and uneasy



‘Crumbling the Antiseptic Beauty’ sees artist-curator David Douard channel the poetics of movement and cross-pollination, which animate his sculptural practice, into a group show of unlikely and mysterious rewards. It constellates mostly pre-existing work by 13 artists in Douard’s orbit to gesture towards the stimulation and polyvocal affect generated by the shared-studio environment. Though Douard’s practice remains entwined with the ‘post-internet art’ label, this show is suggestive of the rough-and-ready analogue media that have long inflected his work – think graffiti and fanzines – and named after a beloved 1982 record by jangle-pop outfit Felt. Like the music of that band, this show dares you to succumb to its accumulated disorientations.

A liquid unease permeates our path from one artwork to the next. Obstructions appear both in the form of Marie Angeletti’s *Polished Balls* (2023), which are scattered throughout sections of the exhibition, and in the imposing white blinds with which Douard has partitioned the space, such that we peripherally sense many works before we fully encounter them. There is uncertainty as to whether we’re being invited to wander into this or that corridor, or where a display of one artist’s work stops and another begins.

Such a subordination of individual pieces into an architectural-affective framework characterized by contingency and trepidation makes for a welcome stickiness at a moment in which the institutional art world's fetishization of 'collective practices' has assumed its own uncritical orthodoxies. Here, the overarching logic is not exactly collectivist but perhaps ouroboric, works feeding each other in ways that demand the viewer pursue their own imaginative fancies.



'Crumbling the Antiseptic Beauty', 2024, exhibition view. Courtesy: Fondation Pernod Ricard, Paris; photograph: Martin Argyroglo



'Crumbling the Antiseptic Beauty', 2024, exhibition view. Courtesy: Fondation Pernod Ricard, Paris; photograph: Martin Argyroglo

Dylan Huw
'Crumbling the Antiseptic Beauty' Shatters the Sterile Veneer
Frieze, June 10, 2024.
<https://urlr.me/hjBr5>

The latent erotics of such an environment are drawn out by the presentation – on a PC workstation – of Morag Keil's *Potpourri* (2013), which fuses mock paparazzi and home-video footage in a coolly ironic commentary on stardom, capital and consent. The voice-over of Keil's film resounded as I browsed Jacques-Elie Chabert's 2001 photographs of an apartment the late Pascal Doury shared with fellow artists, which likewise speak to our moment's obsession with retracing the collective psychic upheaval that accompanied our recent transition from analogue to digital documentation. Overlooking the 27 platforms of the adjacent Gare Saint-Lazare are two 2024 paintings by Guillaume Dénervaud, *Les blés sédatifs* (Sedative Blues) and *La gare Saint-Lazare* (St-Lazare Station), the show's one clear instance of site-responsiveness. The canvases translate the station's commingling of light and industry into brushstrokes evocative of dancing particles. Nearby, Benjamin Lallier's *untitled leather sofas* (2023), doused in black acrylics, face the white nothingness of the space's walls, their eeriness intensified by the wiry shadows of Clémentine Adou's *Daddy long legs' hands* (2023–24), a structure whose spindly metal frames, bent like a wind-beaten umbrella, form a kind of focal point to the exhibition.



'Crumbling the Antiseptic Beauty', 2024, exhibition view.
Courtesy: Fondation Pernod Ricard, Paris; photograph: Martin
Argyroglo

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The show's dominant affect of corrupted office-space sterility suggests Douard's devotion to chance and to us forming our own associations between the artworks, the space's imposing demarcators and fellow visitors. In this regard, it feels in conversation with similar artist-curated group exhibitions which draw from diverse practices to evoke the slipperiness of 'collectivity' in contemporary networked society – including those which have in recent years become central to James Richards's practice. A reconfiguration of Richards's immersive sound collage *Migratory Motor Complex* (2017), originally mounted for the reverent environs of a Venetian church, acts as a coda. Enveloping visitors within six surround-sound speakers, it's one of several works which subjugate the corporeality of the observer-listener to the forceful agency of the exhibition's spatial apparatus. At one point, a voice repeats the refrain: 'Begin again, begin again.' So, I do: I reverse my path through the exhibition, this time photographing hitherto-unnoticed details, as if to forensically document instances where its clinical (almost antiseptic) cool reveals moments of potentiality – even something like beauty.

Numéro art

Ses œuvres, accumulations hybrides et post-modernes, ont contribué à définir l'esthétique de la décennie écoulée. Plus pertinent que jamais – on en veut pour preuve le group show dont il est le commissaire à la Fondation Ricard –, l'artiste français a accepté de réaliser pour *Numéro art* une série de collages, fanzine et carnet de notes personnel évoquant la "source d'énergie" qui l'anime.

Consisting in hybrid, Postmodern accumulations that merge image and text, the organic and the technological, his work has helped define the aesthetic of the past decade. Now more relevant than ever – as demonstrated by the group show he recently curated at the Fondation Pernod Ricard – David Douard has produced for *Numéro art* a series of collages, fanzines, and personal notebooks that derive from the "energy source" that feeds him.

David Douard

x

Numéro art

Texte
Ingrid Luquet-Gad

Collages
David Douard

Graphisme
Thomas Bizzarri & Alain Rodriguez

Ingrid Luquet-Gad
David Douard

Numéro art, N°14, April–August, 2024, p.146-159.







Ingrid Luquet-Gad
David Douard
Numéro art, N°14, April—August, 2024, p.146-159.



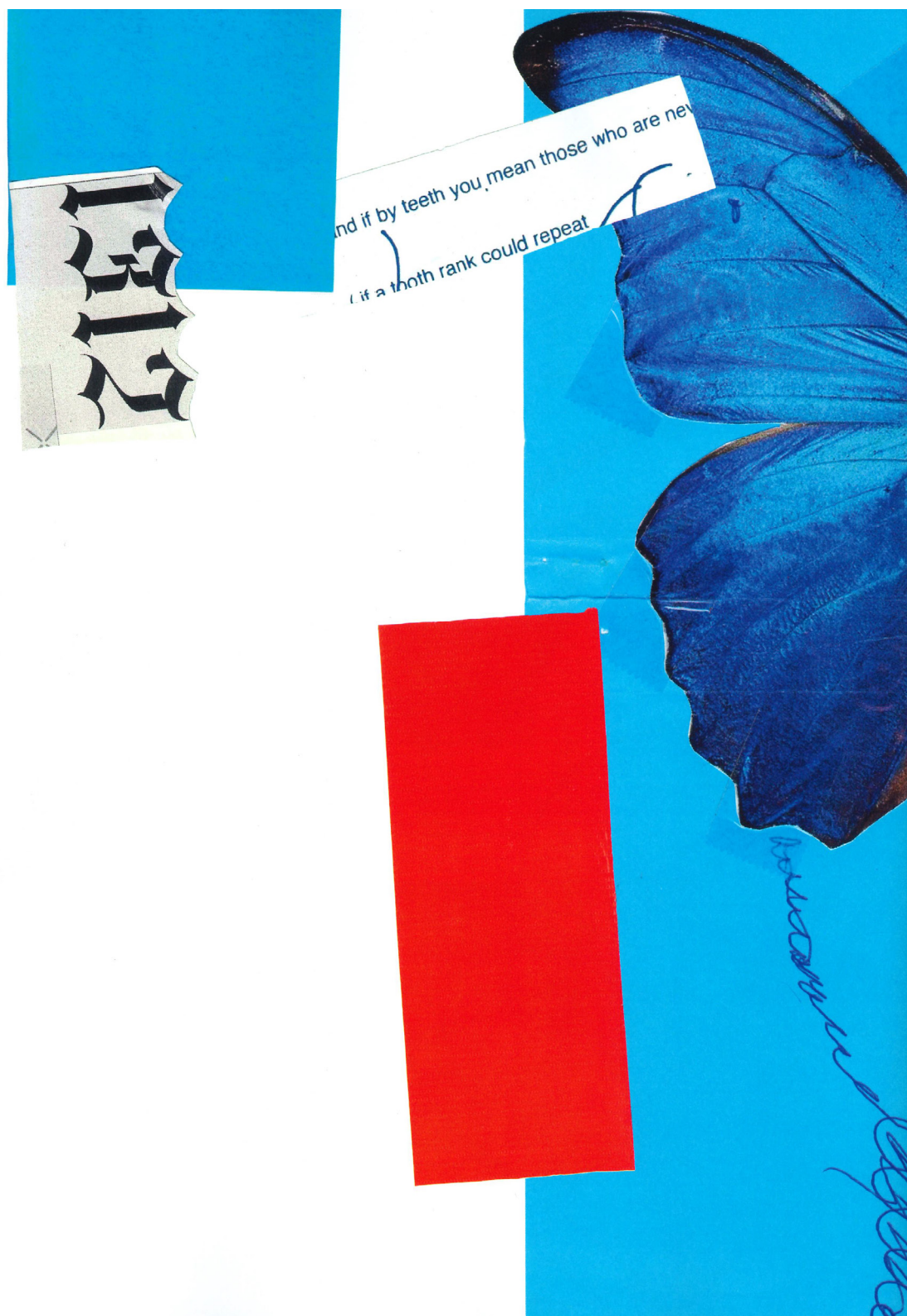


Ingrid Luquet-Gad
David Douard
Numéro art, N°14, April—August, 2024, p.146-159.





Ingrid Luquet-Gad
David Douard
Numéro art, N°14, April—August, 2024, p.146-159.





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FR Dans la cour des ateliers collectifs de La SIRA à Asnières-sur-Seine, un camion vrombit dans la bruine. Il est sur le point de partir, enserrant divers rebuts. Des faux départs, d'ex-promesses d'œuvres. Sauf que voilà, en cette mi-février, David Douard fait le tri. Ça doit partir : *"Là, je range tout parce que j'ouvre une nouvelle série de pièces. Je fonctionne comme ça : j'ouvre et je clos."* Depuis quelque temps, l'artiste semblait bel et bien préparer quelque chose, rôdant dans les à-côtés, comme un insecte opérerait sa mue ou un système informatique sa mise à jour. Des signes annonciateurs, il y en avait eu : en 2023 voyaient le jour deux publications qui amorçaient la réanimation d'archives-zombies. Une monographie dans le cadre de son exposition à la Fondation Serralves à Porto l'année précédente, qui comprenait un insert de collages réalisés par l'artiste. Puis une

seconde, collages et Xerox toujours, qui retraçait cette fois-ci l'ensemble de sa pratique de 2012 à aujourd'hui.

On y renouait avec les éléments qui avaient contribué à définir une décennie : la culture du Web 2.0, la déhiérarchisation des sources, la virilité pathogène ou les avatars sans visage. Pour le-la spectateurice, cela avait peut-être commencé par la rencontre avec ces humanoïdes aux ventres boursoufflés, condamné-es à charrier le trop-plein de paroles entravées. Ou devant les eaux noires de fontaines en plastique, suintant d'une rumeur toxique. C'était en 2014, lors de la première grande exposition de l'artiste à peine diplômé des Beaux-Arts de Paris trois années auparavant. Avec *Mo'Swallow*, au Palais de Tokyo, un univers retors et crispé, mutant car malade émergeait.

David Douard l'avait composé en orfèvre de l'ordinaire, prélevant ses images et ses bribes de textes dans les broussailles des forums Internet et du bitume périurbain. Puis, tout cela avait continué à se resserrer, tenu sur la lame d'un rasoir : vers plus d'abstraction, avec des assemblages comme irradiés d'une énergie sourde. À Paris, entre les murs de la Galerie Chantal Crousel (*O'DA'OLDBORIN'GOLD*, 2019 et *O'LULABY*, 2021) ou encore au FRAC Île-de-France – Le Plateau (*O' Ti' Lulaby*, 2020), les expositions évacuaient tout élément trop reconnaissable, préférant dès lors suggérer des atmosphères par des espaces d'attente, de gestation ou de préparation à une insurrection inconnue. D'autres éléments arrivaient alors dans sa typologie : des veilleuses rougeoyantes en verre drapé de tissu, ou des grillages dardés de breloques ferrailleuses.



Canary Feel It (2022) de David Douard. Aluminium moulé, cage en fer, aluminium, métal, tissu en fibre de verre sérigraphié et chaussures, 230 x 180 x 195 cm.

EN In the courtyard of the SIRA workshops in Asnières-sur-Seine, a truck revs up in the drizzle. Piled high with rejects and false starts – the broken promises of never-realized works – it is about to pull away. We're in mid-February, and David Douard is having a clear out. Everything must go. "I'm tidying the place up because I'm starting a new series of pieces. That's how I work: I open one thing and close another." Lurking in the verges, like an insect in metamorphosis or a computer undergoing a system update, he's been cooking up something for a while now. There were warning signs: two 2023 publications that reactivated sleeping archives; the 2022 monograph for his Serralves Foundation show in Porto, which included collages; then more collages and photocopies that revisited his entire body of work from 2012 to the present.

Looking at them, one reconnected with everything that helped define the past decade: Web 2.0 culture, the de-hierarchization of sources, pathogenic virality, and faceless avatars. For the viewer, it perhaps began through an encounter with his pot-bellied humanoids, condemned to bear an overflow of impeded, hampered words. Or maybe it started by the dark waters of his plastic fountains, oozing toxic noise. That was in 2014, at his first big show, which he put on just three years after he graduated from Paris's École des Beaux-Arts. Titled *Mo'Swallow*, and shown at the Palais de Tokyo, it revealed a tense, twisted, sick, and mutant world. Like a goldsmith of the everyday, Douard fused it all together using images and snippets of texts gleaned from the tangles of Internet forums and from the asphalt of the urban fringes.

As time went by, Douard's assemblages became tighter; balanced on a razor's edge, they throbbed with a quiet energy. In Paris, at the Galerie Chantal Crousel – 2019's *O'DA'OLDBORIN'GOLD* and 2021's *O'LULABY* – or at the FRAC Île-de-France – Le Plateau (*O' Ti' Lulaby*, 2020), his shows excluded anything that was too recognizable, instead conjuring up atmospheres through spaces of expectation, gestation, and preparation of some unknown insurrection. Other figures made their appearance in his typology, such as glowing glass night lights draped in fabric and fences adorned with scrap-metal charms.

Today, Douard says, he feels as though he's "starting again, a bit like with the Palais de Tokyo." He's set up an office for himself at SIRA, where he sorts, categorizes, and

David Douard

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Aujourd'hui, David Douard dit justement avoir l'impression de "redémarrer, un peu comme avec le Palais de Tokyo". À La SIRA, l'artiste s'est aménagé un bureau : c'est là qu'il trie, classe et organise une matière qu'il avait jusqu'ici gardée soustraite aux regards. "J'ai une pratique de fanzines que je n'ai jamais vraiment montrée. Ce sont souvent des carnets de recherche, que j'approche cependant avec l'énergie du fanzine. Souvent, j'imprime des images Google que je mets en rapport avec des couleurs, des slogans et des formes qui vont devenir les points de départ de sculptures", détaille l'artiste. Il feuillette un carnet : "Ici, ce sont des filles masquées à la webcam, des recherches de logos, des visuels d'un film de Gregg Araki. Ces superpositions sont très spontanées, travaillées directement à

l'imprimante hyper basique." S'il montre ces collages aujourd'hui, c'est un peu par hasard. En préparant sa monographie portugaise, les graphistes Thomas Bizzarri & Alain Rodriguez ont l'idée d'un livre à partir des collages. Ils entreprennent de scanner les fanzines pour faire vivre ailleurs cette matière, dont provient également la série que l'artiste a conçue pour Numéro art. "Avec ces fanzines, c'est comme si je montrais la source d'énergie. Normalement, un artiste doit veiller à ne pas tout donner, or maintenant ça peut sortir car les choses ont décanté."

À partir de mai, David Douard investira la Fondation d'Entreprise Pernod Ricard à Paris. À nouveau, après sa participation à

l'exposition du 14^e Prix de la Fondation en 2012, mais sans redite. "Dans l'exposition, je ne montre rien moi-même. C'est une exposition collective, conçue par un artiste, qui montre la discussion formalisée qui existe entre les artistes." La carte blanche, intitulée *Crumbling the Antiseptic Beauty*, étend l'invitation à treize artistes : Clémentine Adou, Marie Angeletti, Grichka Commaret, Guillaume Dénervaud, Pascal Doury, Garance Früh, Gabriele Garavaglia, Isa Genzken, Morag Keil, Benjamin Lallier, Melody Lu, Pascale Theodoly et James Richards. Avec la plupart, il entretient un dialogue au long cours, et avec certain-es, il a aussi partagé un atelier. "J'ai construit cette exposition comme j'aurais pu le faire pour l'une des miennes, c'est-à-dire en pensant à ce que

OT (Kappa) [2022] de David Douard. Plexiglass, métal, aluminium, tissu, papier et écran de télévision, 300 x 150 x 190 cm.



organizes his material, which, until now, he had kept hidden from view. "I have a fanzine habit that I've never really shown. Often, they're research notebooks that I approach with the energy of a fanzine. I frequently print out Google images that I then associate with colours, slogans, and shapes that will become the starting point for sculptures," he explains, flipping through a notebook. "Here there are girls with webcam masks, logo searches, visuals from a Gregg Araki film. These superimpositions are really spontaneous, created directly using a very basic printer."

It's a bit of an accident that he's now showing these collages: while he was preparing his Portuguese solo show, the graphic designers Thomas Bizzarri and Alain Rodriguez came up

with the idea for a book based on his collages, and started scanning his fanzines so that the material could exist elsewhere (it's also the source for his *Numéro art* series). "With these fanzines, it's like I was revealing the source of my energy. Normally, an artist should be careful not to show everything, but these can come out now because things have settled down."

Starting in May, Douard will once again be exhibiting at Paris's Fondation d'Entreprise Pernod Ricard, following his participation in the 14th Prix de la Fondation in 2012. But there'll be no repeats. "I'm actually not showing anything myself. It's a group show, organized by an artist, that focuses on the formal discussion that exists between artists." *Crumbling the Antiseptic Beauty* features 13

practitioners – Clémentine Adou, Marie Angeletti, Grichka Commaret, Guillaume Dénervaud, Pascal Doury, Garance Früh, Gabriele Garavaglia, Isa Genzken, Morag Keil, Benjamin Lallier, Melody Lu, Pascale Theodoly, and James Richards – most of whom Douard has long been in dialogue with, and some of whom he has shared a workshop with. "I put this show together as I would have done one of my own," he continues, "by which I mean thinking about what I wanted to say about the world at a given moment."

This past autumn, Douard developed a taste for collaborative work when he undertook the exhibition design for *THEY*, at Dijon's Consortium, curated by Stéphanie Moisdon with students from the École cantonale d'art de

David Douard

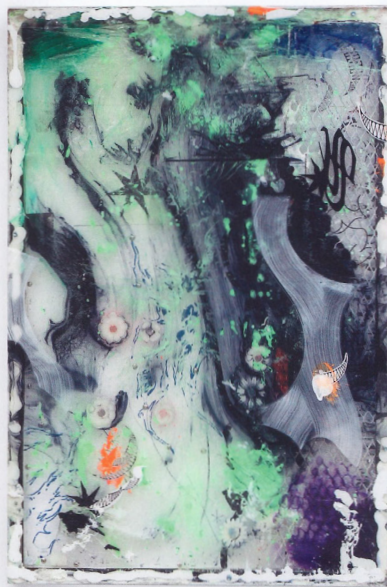
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je voulais dire du monde à un moment donné.
À l'automne, l'artiste prenait goût au travail collectif en réalisant la scénographie de *THEY* au Consortium à Dijon, une exposition curatée par Stéphanie Moisdon et réalisée avec les étudiant-es de l'École cantonale d'art de Lausanne (ÉCAL). Cette énergie a mené à une nouvelle phase de pensée et de production. Lorsque le centre d'art Basement Roma l'invite, il réfléchit d'abord à un format d'exposition collective. Cela deviendra finalement une collaboration avec la New-Yorkaise Valerie Keane : *"Nous travaillons autour de l'idée d'ornement, une présence qui nous sécuriserait comme une armure."* Au moment où nous nous entretenons, la narration est en place : *"Au centre, j'imagine un tout petit jouet*

que j'ai trouvé, une effigie de Casper les yeux grands ouverts. Cette dynamique du regard va mener jusqu'à une installation totale. En ce moment, l'espace accueille une exposition de Jon Rafman avec un sol noir. J'aimerais le garder pour que sa présence contamine les œuvres : les miennes touchant encore le sol, les siennes qui gravitent en suspension."

Entre les premières expositions de l'artiste et aujourd'hui, c'est évidemment aussi le monde qui a changé : la part d'ombre des espaces virtuels s'est amenuisée, les formes de résistance à l'hypervisibilité se sont perfectionnées. Douard s'est lui-même engouffré dans d'autres chemins de traverse. *"Je me suis rendu compte que les artistes autour de moi mettent en place un*

système pour mieux accepter le réel. Il s'agit de le corrompre par l'imagination, avec l'idée que l'introspection permettra d'y retourner avec davantage de douceur." Cela rejoint ses obsessions du moment : le mouvement du *shifting*, sorte d'autohypnose pour se projeter dans une réalité désirée, les beats et l'esthétique de cauchemar codé de *dreamcore* et tout ce qui orchestrerait un ralentissement général du réel. Ces formes intérieures de résistance au capitalisme 24/7, l'artiste les décante pour mieux les faire émerger prochainement : cela sera en 2025, lors de son exposition solo à la Galerie Chantal Crousel. Et ensuite, il quittera Paris, sans doute pour New York – pour aller un changement d'horizon à ce nouveau commencement.



Core -, (2024) de David Douard. Bois, résine époxy, peinture acrylique, verre acrylique, équerre, objets en plastique, papiers, impressions sérigraphiques, autocollants, papiers imprimés et grille en métal, 120 x 79 x 7 cm.

Lausanne (ÉCAL). This energy has now sparked a new phase of reflection and production. When invited to exhibit at the Basement Roma art centre in Rome, he initially considered a group-show format, but ultimately developed a collaborative project with New York-based artist Valerie Keane. "We worked around the idea of ornament, a presence that would protect us, like armour." At the time of his *Numéro art* interview, the narrative was in place. "In the middle, I imagine a tiny toy I found, an effigy of Casper with his eyes wide open. This dynamic of the gaze will culminate in a full-scale installation. Right now, there's an exhibition by Jon Rafman in the space, with a black floor. I'd like to keep it so that its presence contaminates the works, with mine still touching the floor and his suspended in mid-air."

Obviously, in the time since Douard first started exhibiting, the world has changed: the dark side of the virtual has lost some of its sting, and forms of resistance to hypervisibility have been perfected. Douard himself has branched out into other paths. "I realized that the artists around me were putting a system in place to better accept the real. It involves corrupting it with the imagination, and the idea that introspection allows you to return to it with more gentleness."

This ties in with his current obsessions: the "reality-shifting" movement – a kind of self-hypnosis designed to project the practitioner into a desired reality – as well as the beats and codeine-tainted nightmare aesthetic of *dreamcore* and everything that

might help a general slowing down of reality. Douard is thinking through these internal forms of resistance to 24/7 capitalism so that they will bear fruit in 2025, during his solo show at the Galerie Chantal Crousel. And then he will quit Paris, no doubt bound for New York, in a move that will add a change of perspective to this bright new beginning.

Crumbling The Antiseptic Beauty, exposition collective sous le commissariat de David Douard, du 7 mai au 13 juillet à la Fondation Pernod Ricard, Paris VIII*. Exposition personnelle de David Douard de juin à septembre à Basement Roma, Rome. David Douard est représenté par la Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris III*.

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klima

Pour ce nouveau numéro de Klima, l'artiste David DOUARD propose une série de collages extraits de son prochain livre *UN'Fold*, un corpus de plus de dix années de recherches accés sur l'utilisation des mots et des images et leur circulation au sein de son travail. Il s'agit d'une recherche d'énergie constante et quotidienne, collatérale à sa production d'œuvres et d'expositions. Ce flux se nourrit de l'agglomération de différentes typologies d'images: photos de famille, dessins, références, notes, émanations de visages ou de motifs en gestation. Les pages se déploient sans sens de lecture défini ni chronologie particulière. Tout s'interpénètre, comme un fanzine toujours ongoing. *UN'Fold* sera publié à l'automne 2024 par la maison d'édition Zzz basée à Paris et dédiée à la production et à la diffusion d'objets éditoriaux singuliers.

David DOUARD est un artiste français basé à Paris. Le langage est la source principale de son travail et agit comme un matériau en tant que tel. Les textes et les poèmes qu'il collecte sur Internet sont manipulés, transformés et deviennent ainsi un flux/fluide vital qui alimente ses sculptures. Par ce biais, il redéfinit un nouvel espace social, hybride, en pleine mutation. Son travail est régulièrement montré dans le cadre d'expositions personnelles et collectives par des galeries et institutions internationales. David DOUARD a été résident de l'Académie de France à Rome (Villa Médicis) en 2017 et reçoit le prix Fondazione Ettore Fico, il est aussi enseignant à l'École nationale supérieure d'arts de Paris Cergy.

For this new issue of Klima, the artist David DOUARD offers us a series of collages taken from his next book *UN'Fold*, a corpus of more than ten years of research on the use of words and images and their circulation within his work. It is a constant and daily search for energy, collateral to his production of works and exhibitions. This flow is nourished by the agglomeration of different typologies of images: family photos, drawings, references, notes, emanations of faces or motifs in the making. The pages unfold without a defined reading direction or particular chronology. Everything interpenetrates, like an always-ongoing fanzine. *UN'Fold* will be published in the fall of 2024 by the Zzz publishing house based in Paris and dedicated to the production and dissemination of unique editorial objects.

David DOUARD is a French artist based in Paris. Language is the main source of his work and acts as a material in itself. The texts and poems that he collects on the Internet are manipulated, transformed and thus become a vital flow/fluid that fuels his sculptures. In this way, it redefines a new social space, hybrid, in the midst of change. His work is regularly shown in personal and group exhibitions by international galleries and institutions. David DOUARD was a resident of the French Academy in Rome (Villa Médicis) in 2017 and received the Fondazione Ettore Fico prize. He is also a teacher at the École nationale supérieure d'arts de Paris Cergy.

UN'FOLD
DAVID DOUARD

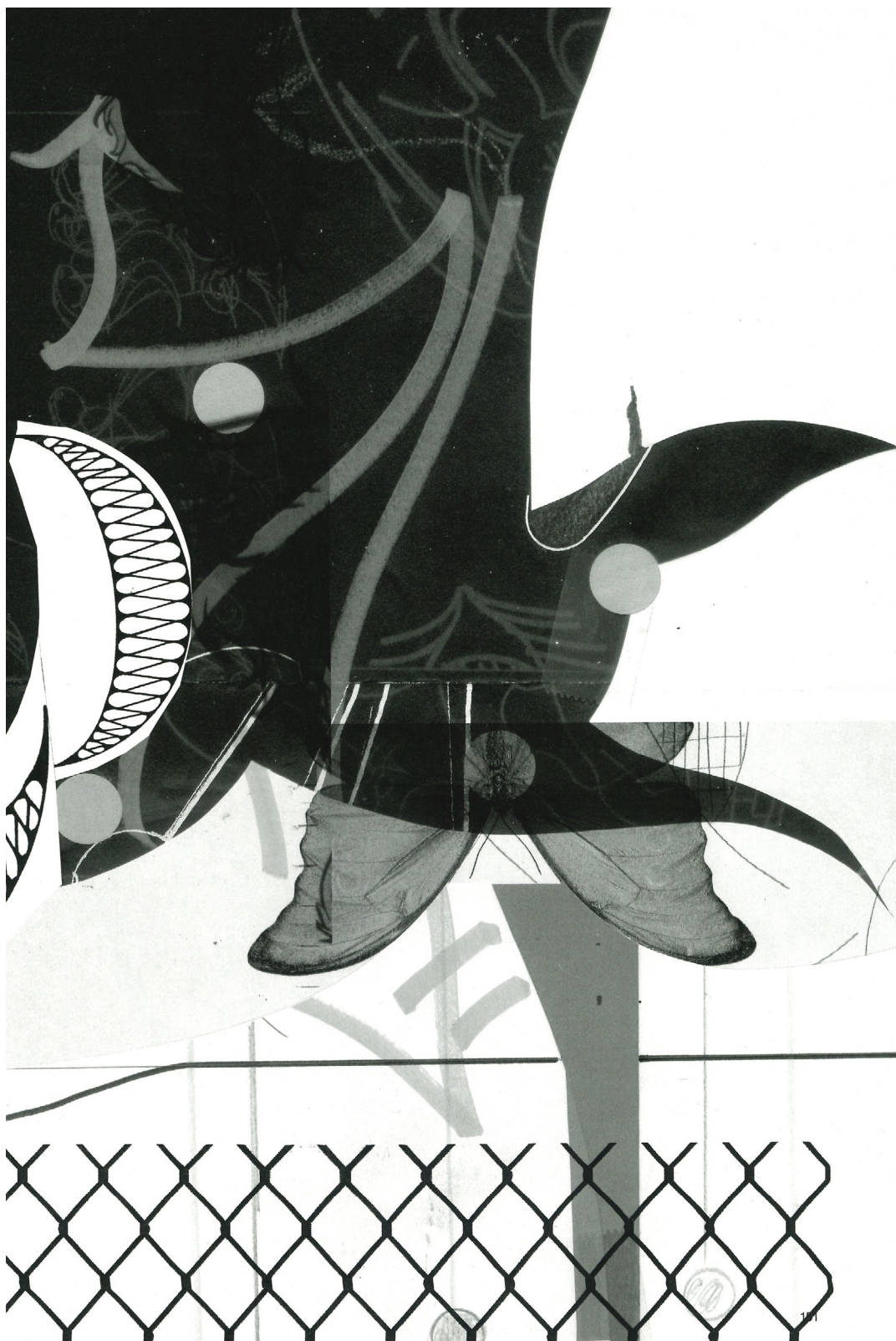


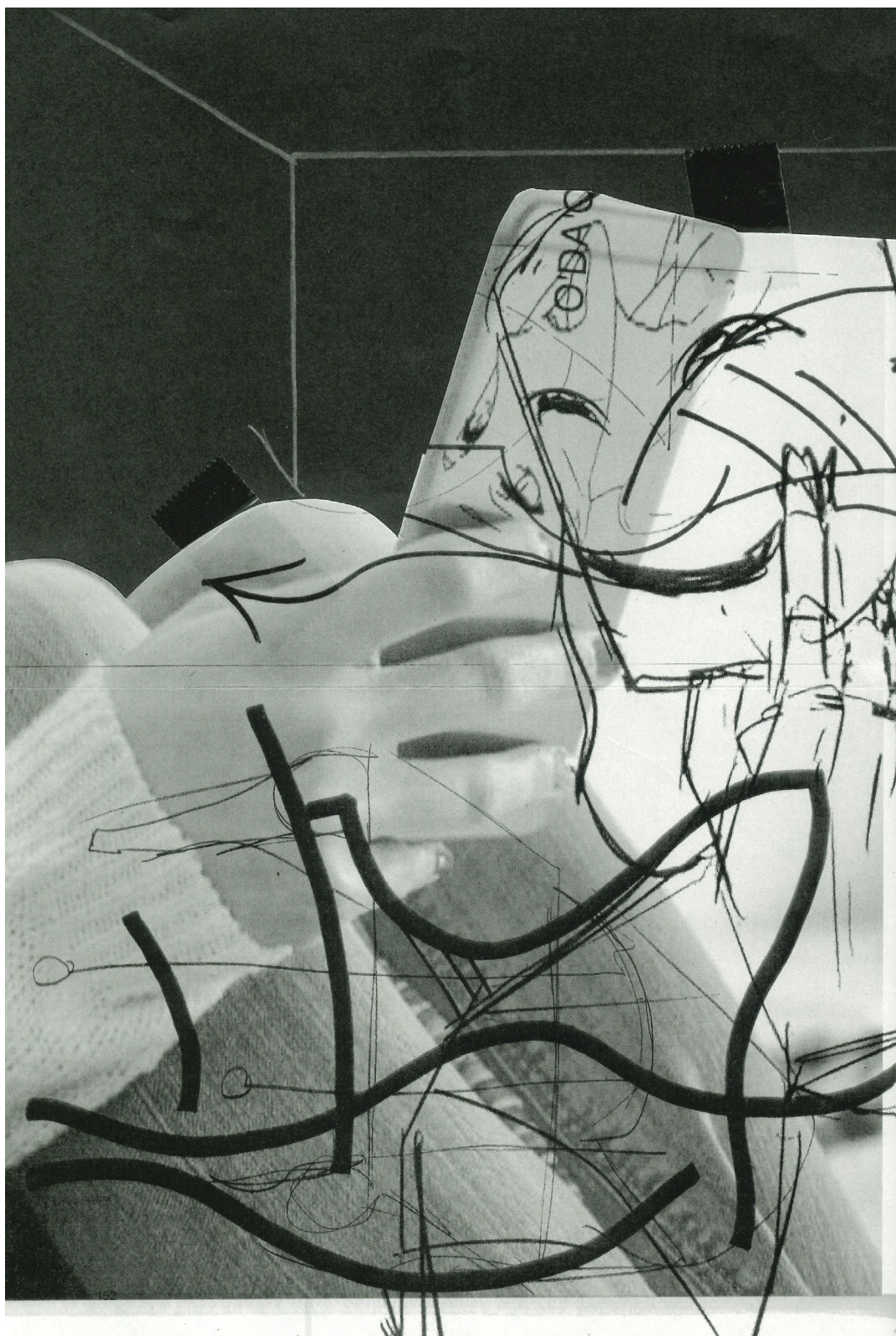
UN'Fold

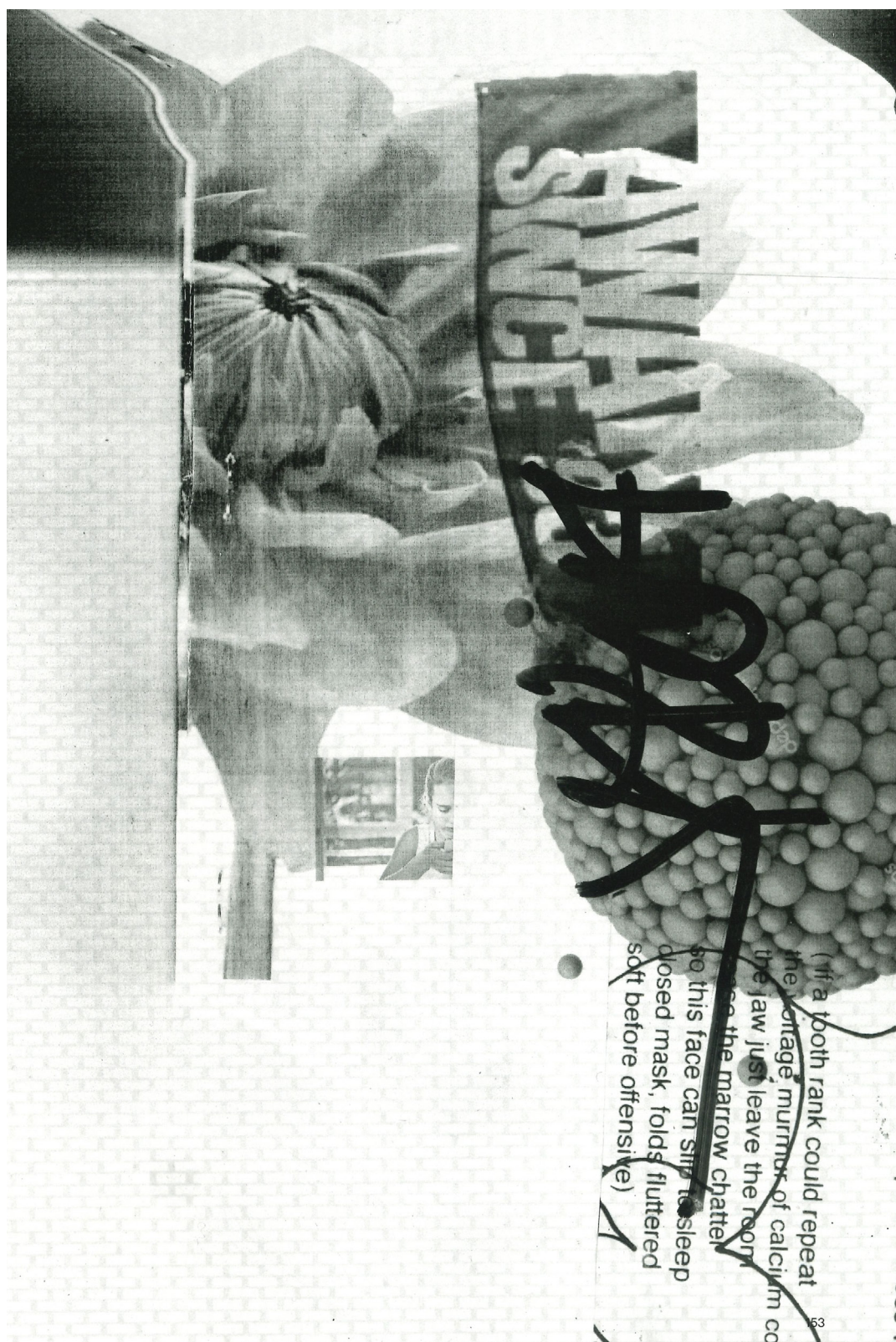
DAVID DOUARD

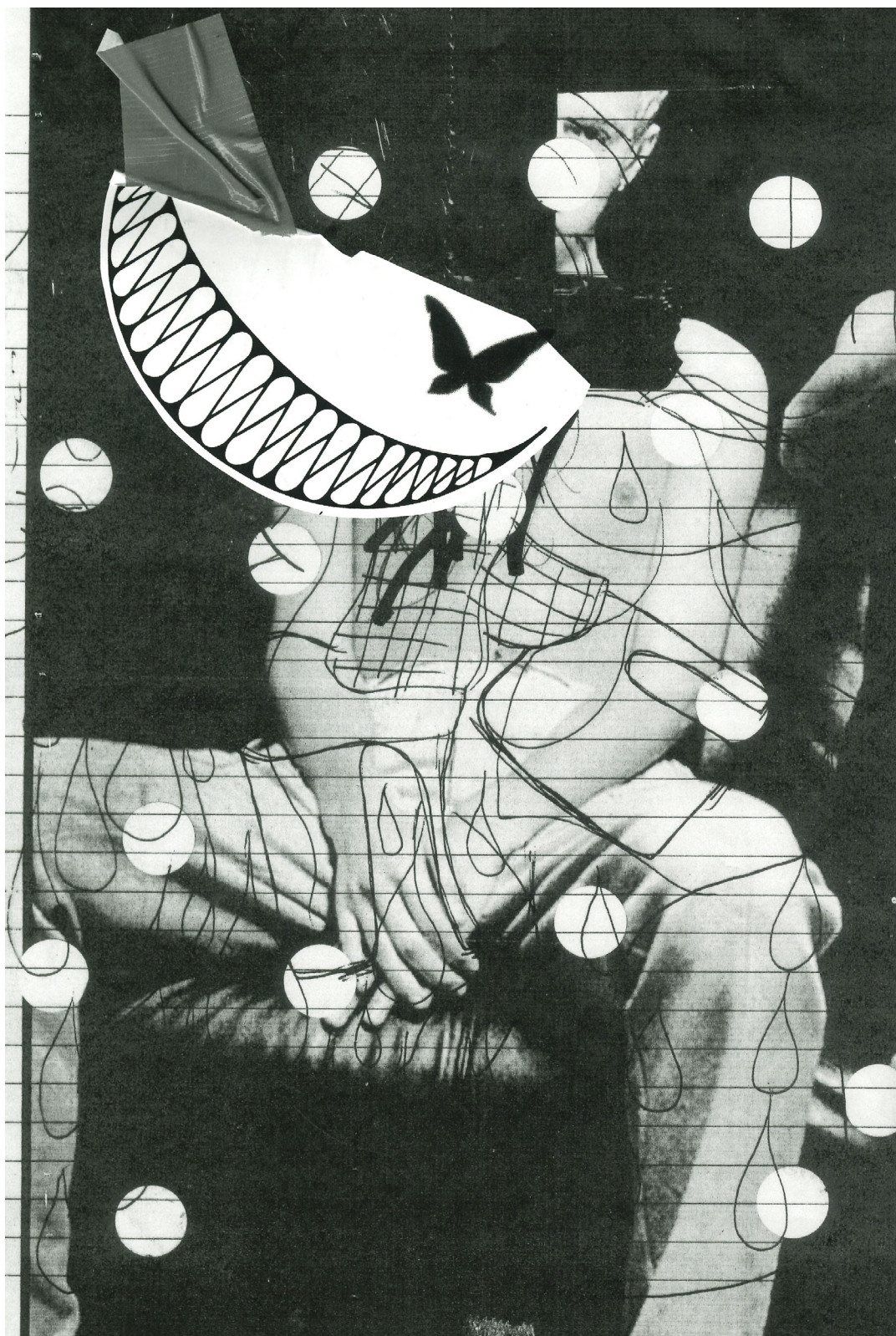
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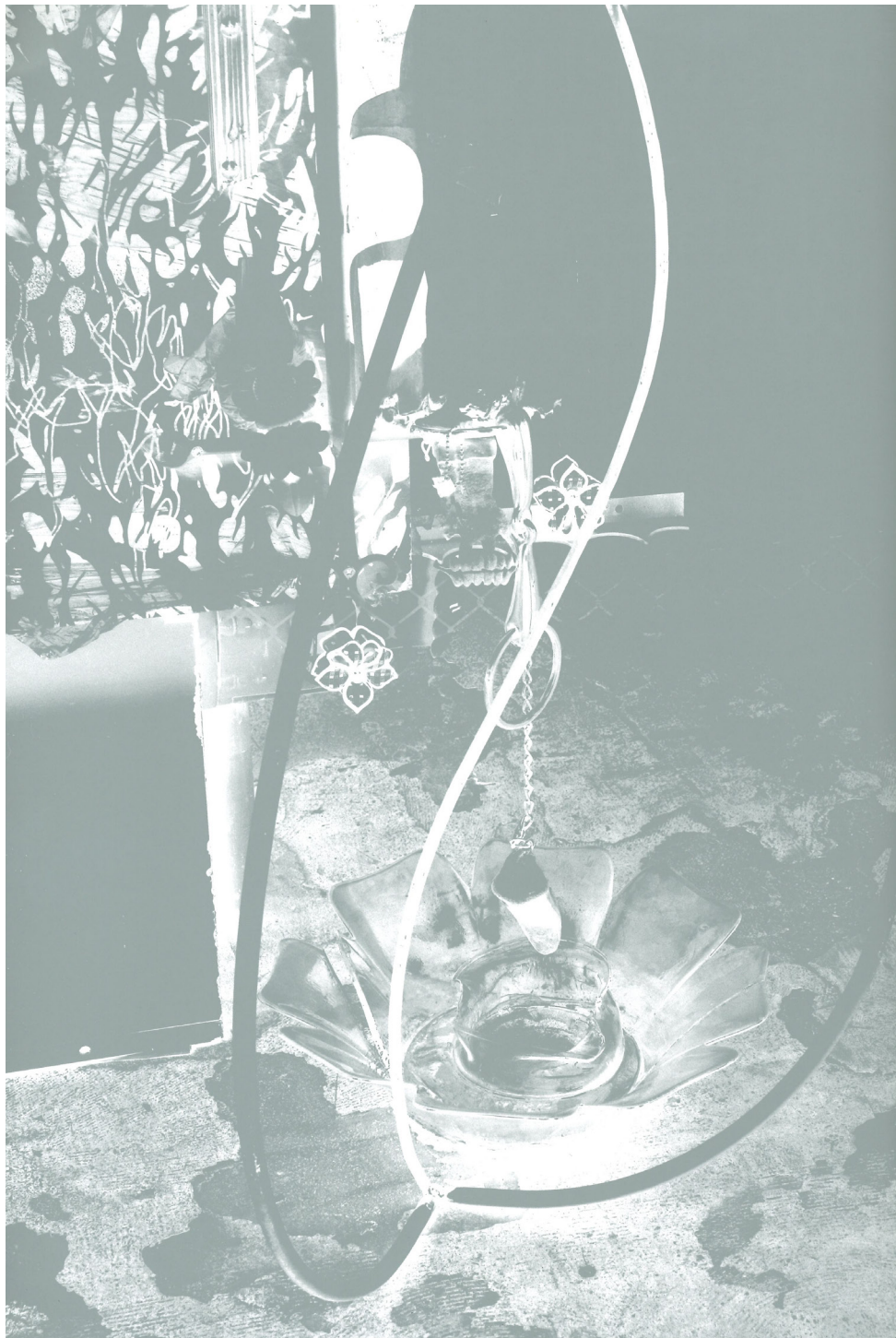






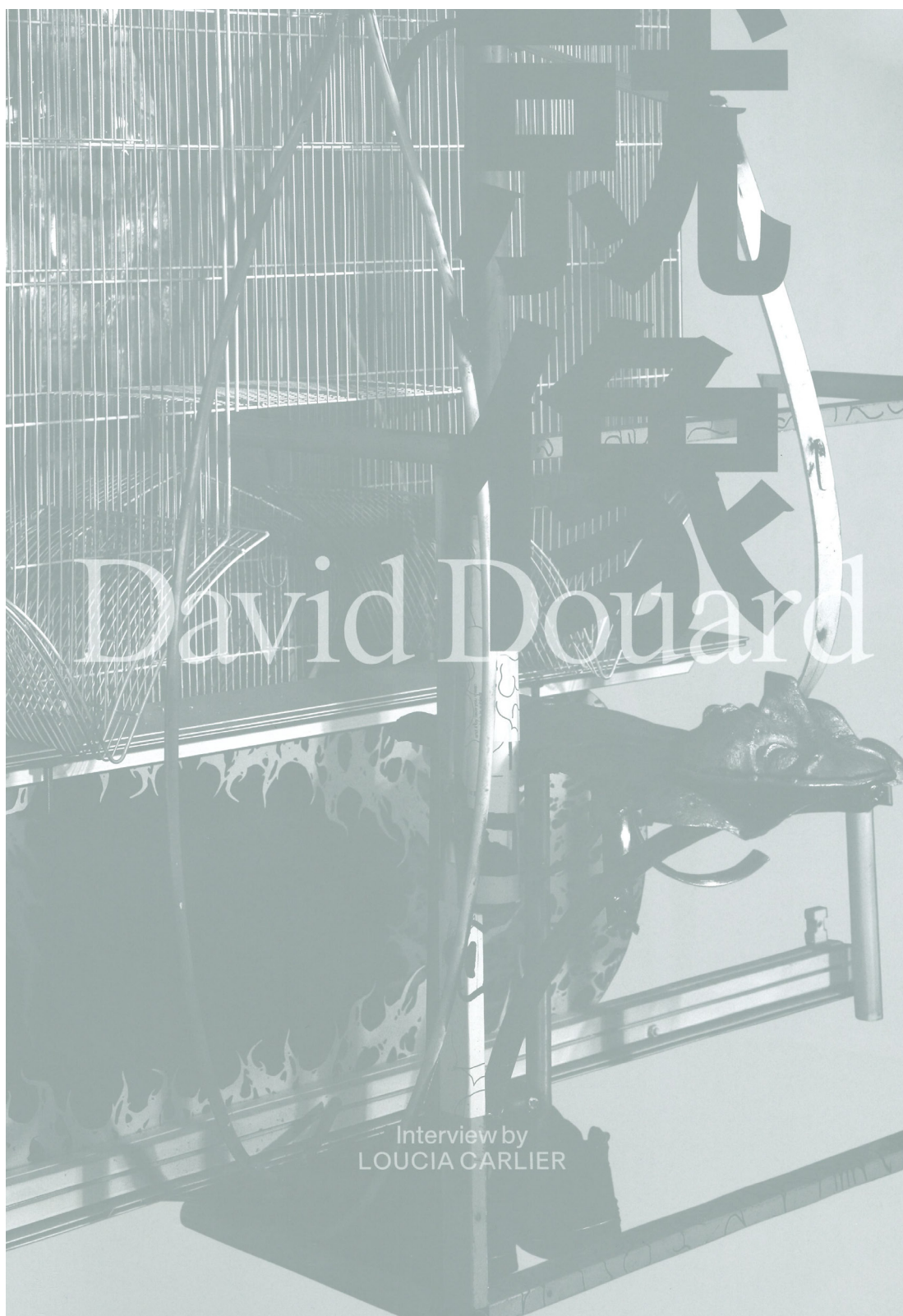
GALERIE
CHANTAL CROUSEL

STUDIO



Loucia Carlier
David Douard
STUDIO, N°6, 2023.

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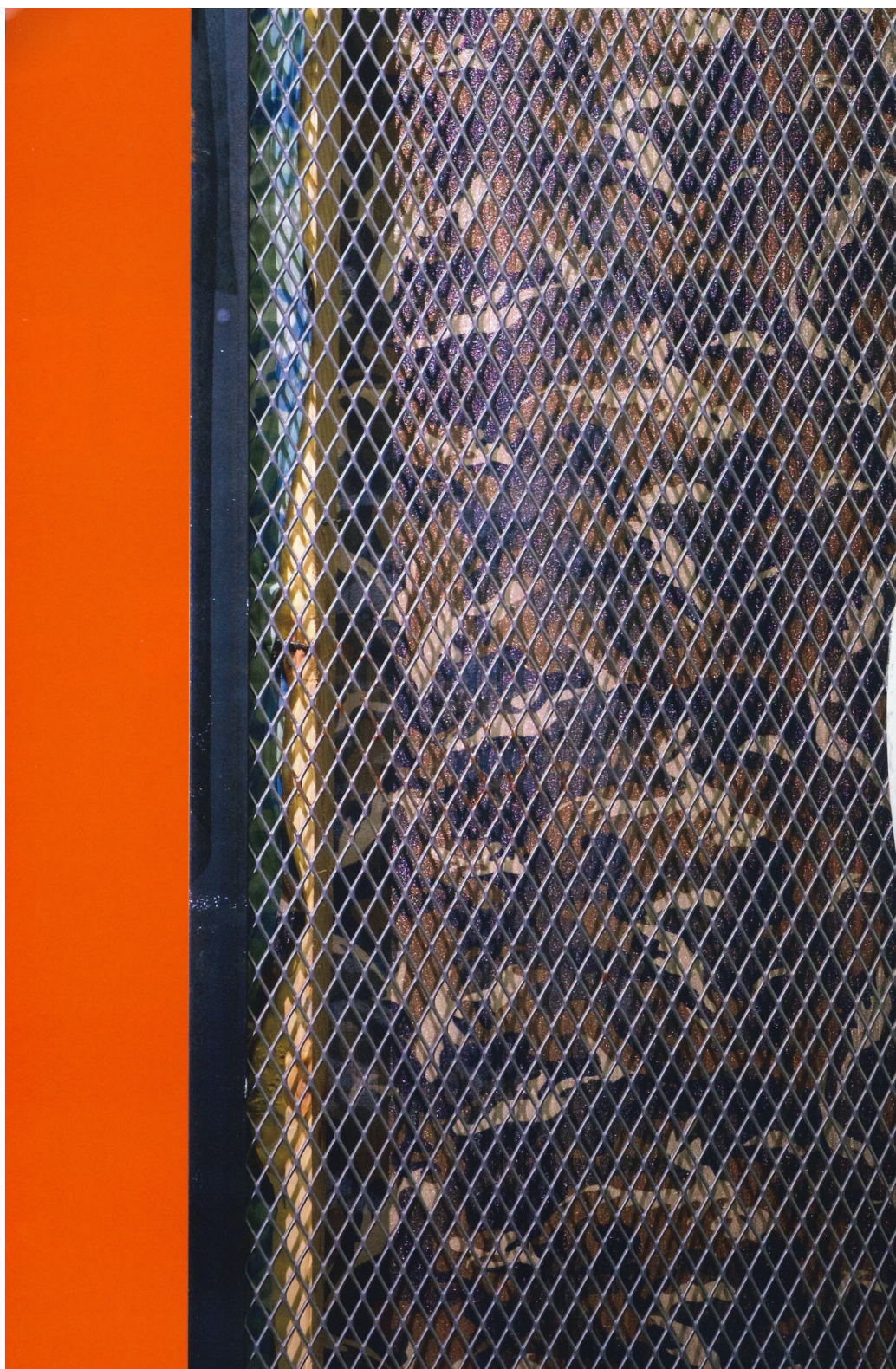


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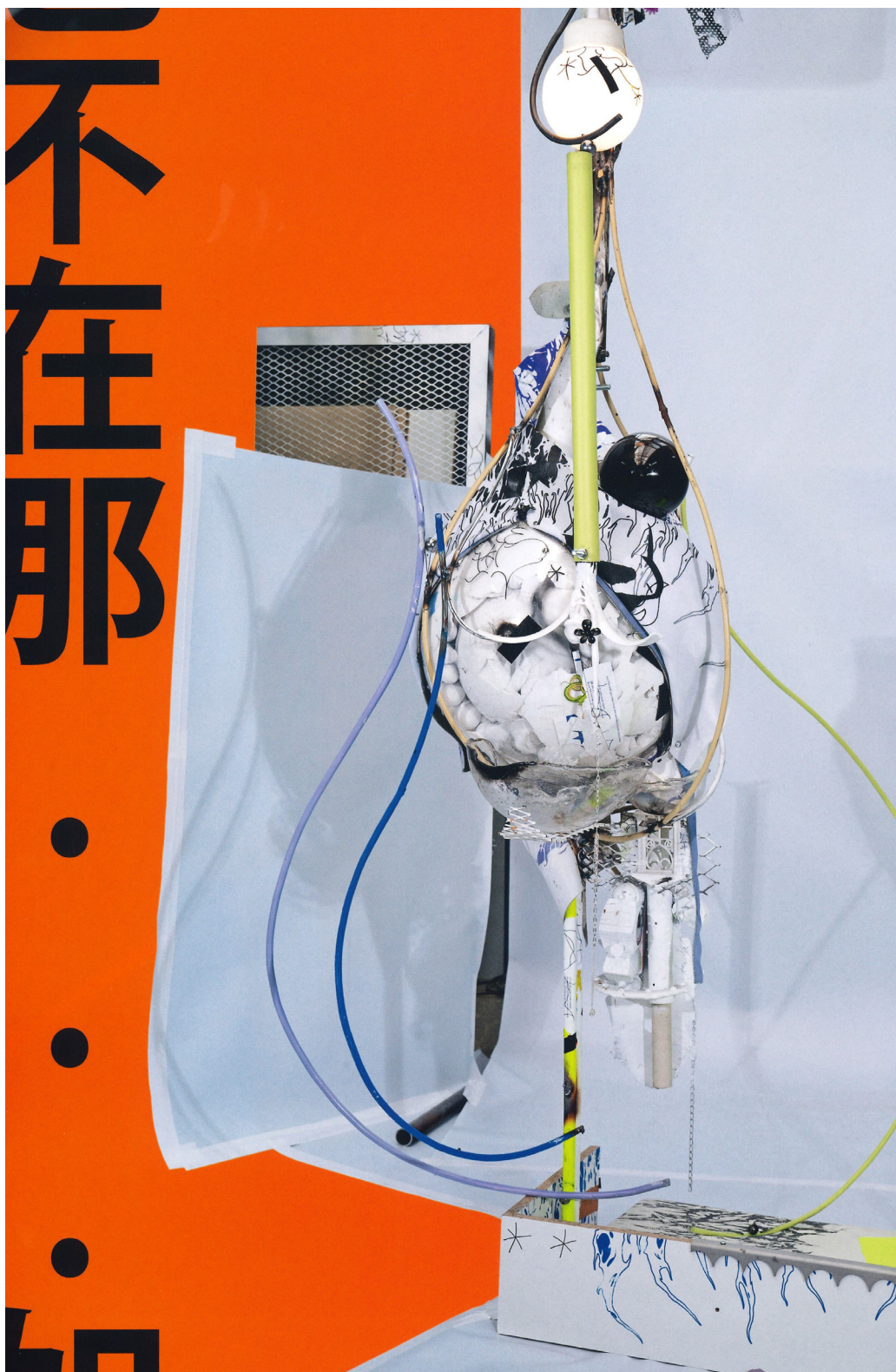


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A virtual and vital fluid runs through David Douard's work and animates each of his pieces, which proudly resist categorization. He uses found materials, texts, videos, and sounds he collects from the internet and real life, which he manipulates and connects to create a contaminated environment that reflects our contemporary world. For STUDIO Magazine, he offers digital collages of images from his work. Amongst the many activities that keep him busy, he invited me to his studio to answer some questions about his latest exhibition and his work in general.

ALL IMAGES COURTESY OF THE ARTIST, GALERIE CHANTAL CROUSEL AND RODEO GALLERY

LOUCIA CARLIER

At UCCA Dune (a satellite of the Beijing-based Ullens Centre for Contemporary Art) in Beidaihe, China, you are currently presenting an exhibition, *Optimized Heart*, that puts your work in dialogue with that of artist Liu Shiyuan and invites the public to think about how digital governance and the dissemination of information are reshaping our social life. Can you tell us how you conceived this show and, more broadly, how you prepare and imagine your exhibitions?

DAVID DOUARD

The project in China builds on a previous exhibition at the Serralves Museum in Porto, as well as another one in France at Le Plateau (Frac Île-de-France). In addition to showing certain pieces again, it shares a similar first impulse and a particular way of articulating the works together. It feels natural to me to continue making the same family of pieces as if they were from the same garden, using a language of organic or pictorial forms that are not limited but expand over the course of my exhibitions. This repetition is significant to me. In the case of this new proposal for UCCA Dune, the juxtaposition of objects takes on meaning and coalesces into an installation, which in turn plays with the space of the institution. Since these objects have already been shown, they are somewhat distant and have gained new autonomy. I am now allowing the context of this new exhibition and of life itself to fill them. What binds them together is the material representation of an original source I would call digital, evident in the images used, in the materials, and in the process of making the pieces. The exhibition was conceived around the piece *O't'kappa*, which was produced specifically for this exhibition and stemmed from an existing family of pieces, the *Yokai*. They are composed of plaster spheres and basins filled with water, which contain many of my elements of language, images, texts, and shapes that I collect on my computer and in my studio.

LOUCIA CARLIER

The question of sequence and the scenography you create for this exhibition, or the ones before, are designed to avert the gaze so that your pieces cannot be consumed. At the same time, you reenact marketing strategies of navigation by diverting or forcing the public in a certain direction, sometimes preventing them from approaching specific pieces, and thus creating a form of desire around them.

GALERIE CHANTAL CROUSEL

DAVID DOUARD

That's what I've been trying to achieve for a long time. One can never say, "This is what I am looking at," if I distract one's attention away from the objects. For example, I often put armchairs facing the wall to disrupt the audience's expectations. I'm aware that some of my gestures are authoritarian, but I don't care because, in reality, they underline an authority inherent to the institution in which they are placed. I scale them according to the space they are in. That's why I sometimes do things that aren't very reasonable. I set up gates, walls, and fences that I counterbalance with something very poetic and fragile to fight this authority and build up tension. It is this interaction that interests me. For example, with my bus shelter sculptures, I attempt to resist objects or public spaces, transforming their function into something more emotional and personal, like a cocoon.

LOUCIA CARLIER

You mentioned the *O't'kappa* piece, which has been present in several of your exhibitions and now forms the starting point of your show at UCCA Dune. It is a spherical plaster piece that reminds me of an eye or a belly in which you enclose information. This bubonic motif appears frequently in your work, taking on the form of mutant protuberances like the mushrooms in the TV show *The Last of Us*. We often get the impression that something is growing and stirring under the surface of your pieces. This is not the only form that recurs in your work. You seem to have a repertoire of motifs that you revisit and reactivate with each new proposal and in contact with your new finds. It's like a fragmented and mutant library from which you draw. Can you tell us more about this creative process?

DAVID DOUARD

Everything is possible. I like to connect things that shouldn't connect. I make elements meet, and I trust in the possible relationship between them, whether it's through thought or through a projection. *O't'kappa*, to me, is a sphere similar to acne pimples on the faces of teenagers. The sphere has a force and energy that draws me in. Fragments of texts, languages, flowers, and many other things are embedded into it, turning it into a corrupted organic matter; these are very dense pieces. The pieces are loaded, and they expand and grow with an energy that draws a bit from manga, such as *Akira*. This type of protuberance and invasion produces a dull violence that is superimposed on parts of urban furniture, pipes, grids, and on things that are supposed to restrict bodies in space. This encounter and the subsequent relationship are what interest me. I believe that *O't'kappa* signals the presence of an inner world, but its subject is invisible, which makes it more mysterious and free. It also allows for a projection and a relationship with the object. The object shows us its visible shell, but it's the disturbance under the surface that matters, what crawls under the husk, what is beneath the surface.

LOUCIA CARLIER

When you speak of corrupted organic matter, it evokes a specific way of summoning nature. It is reminiscent of weeds, of a nature that grows between the cracks of concrete, but also of a nature that resists by adapting. Text in your work seems to behave in the same way, it finds its way through the material, words get distorted and make the language abstract, a language that turns into a stutter. Could it be, to you, the most appropriate way to communicate?

DAVID DOUARD

The nature I am referring to is not pristine, but a nature that is constantly changing, mutating, and polluted. Texts, language, and images are collected from the constant and increasing flow of the internet, which I then incorporate into the plaster of my sculptures. I "preserve" them by adorning them with flowers or by covering them with metal mesh. The shapes are born within what constrains them. I want to give the texts I retrieve from the internet the same strength and power that graffiti has. Baudrillard's *Kool Killer ou L'Insurrection par les Signes* is an important text for me, as it speaks of the appearance of graffiti in New York in the late 1960s. What matters is not what is written, but the fact that it is written there, on the walls, how it circulates, and how it endures because it will be erased and then come back.

Poems that interest me the most are those that don't make sense or make sense by just being there. I see my pieces in this light, and I know that I am creating presences that resist while concealing their interiority. The most important thing is that what is said is not read; it is broken up, and while it is broken up, it is free and continues to flow. The works exude a strange presence but stand proud. This attitude is what interests me.

LOUCIA CARLIER

You are interested in behaviors that are inadequate, in what doesn't work in the world. As a response, you create a kind of dissonance, a form of disorder in your work. You often say that you enjoy it when people cannot fully grasp your work and understand what they are looking at. Why do you think this game of hide and seek is important to you?

DAVID DOUARD

The more difficult it becomes to define my work to others, the clearer it becomes to me. I believe it's important to resist definitions. As soon as someone tries to categorize my work, it annoys me, as do strategies for objectifying the world in general. I did a thesis on animism when I was still an art student and it is a concept that I still use in my work today. In the past, everything that was strange, magical, of the order of ritual or witchcraft was classified as animistic and until now, this is what gravitates around my work, and I don't like it. The strangeness of a work becomes a category of its own. The stranger and the strangeness are both considered dangerous, and art is an aggravation of that, we fear what we don't know. As a result, I am always reflecting on these terms that confine my work. I'm not interested in limiting the viewer by telling them what they're looking at. My pieces speak of flow, of intangible, impenetrable things. It is this flow that I try to capture in my sculptures. If a person gravitates toward the object, they will understand that initial impulse that drove me to make the work, and they will in turn be interested in it for that impulse, but not for the object that makes it a relic. I like the idea of flow because it shows how things resist the order of the world in which we live. The political commitment in my life is a strong starting point for my work.

I also use different elements of pop culture, such as the mask – more specifically the Joker's mask – online writing, and the selfie. All of which raise deeper political and sociological questions than one might think at first. Those are elements that will be objectified at some point, and that's what I like about them. Art already knows, by default, that things are going to be recuperated. Art is not naïve. It is a space where one can re-think things and introduce an ideal of society by directly inserting it into the objects so that it becomes effective.

LOUCIA CARLIER

Mirror material has often appeared in your work. For example, I'm thinking of the piece *Us/They*, a mirrored architectural structure around which different elements are articulated, including a Joker mask. It brings up the question of reflection, of the selfie, something to do with introspection, that of the public, and yours own ... It is a powerful gesture to put a mask in front of a mirror, especially the Joker's mask, which has an eminently political impact. What is at play in this for you?

DAVID DOUARD

The Joker's mask appears as a taunting presence that proudly emphasizes anonymity. This mask is already a mirror that reflects and reactivates political commitments. It's a bit like a troll that reactivates itself each time through its stainless bronze wall, permanently corrosive. Mirror as a material interests me less and less because it's a cold material. I'm looking for a softer way to reflect. I like to see reflections in the water, in varnish, on screens ... The reflection of a mirror is also found in a selfie.

I made the piece *Us/They* after the release of the *Joker* movie by Todd Phillips. At that time, I had already started to collect selfies of teenagers on social media who dressed themselves up as jokers in response to the movie and who then went on to protest in Hong Kong, Lebanon, and Chile, in the vein of the V for Vendetta mask. I had also archived images of Claude Cahun's, whose identity was disseminated through her costumes and makeup.

Putting on the Joker's makeup in front of the mirror is already an act of resistance and protest; it's a political act. In the piece, the mirror reflects a face that hides billions of other faces. It emphasizes political anonymity and creates a form of contradiction that lure in. It is a bid to be invisible, and there is also something a little narcissistic about being anonymous in this context, something that is canceled out by it.

LOUCIA CARLIER

I was curious to hear how you choose colors for your pieces and installations, and how you combine them together. They are often very bright, fluorescent, almost incisive. They sometimes remind us of authoritarian strategies of orientation used to constrain people in urban spaces. You reuse this way of navigating to make us fork and slalom around your pieces. Is this also a way of thumbing your nose at certain institutions that invite you?

DAVID DOUARD

For my last exhibition in China, I chose orange. I think I like the pride that emanates from this

color, and it is part of the exhibition while not really serving the pieces; it's almost detrimental to them. The color is never chosen on its own, but rather it is always decided by the shape that it will end up covering. The scenographic choice for the presentation of the pieces was a somewhat cavernous, rounded space with arches, and I wanted to perforate that space with an orange line. I was looking for a form of autonomy within the architecture of the museum, like a bloc that is laid on the ground. Using the color allows me to create my own backdrop, a plinth, where each object can exist and become autonomous. It is a sort of aggression, a refusal to play the game of the institution and a way to play my own, which is what I end up doing all the time. I refuse to allow a space to override my objects.

I don't need to make my objects shine too much and put them in the spotlight like art spaces do. I don't care, I like them to be put in danger. I often think of exhibitions as spaces where it's important to integrate bad decisions, things that are too close, gaudy colors ... Orange is mainstream, and it fascinates me because I relate to this popular culture, and I myself struggle to use a language that is too intellectual. I have mainstream references in which I can get things across; I think of the Simpsons, for example. I find that there is meaning in these things, and it's not to exoticize them.

LOUCIA CARLIER

The question of horizontality in your work interests me, and by extension, that of rest and its supporting objects. It can be found through seating, recycled mattresses, bits of broken sofas (*U/they* (2, UCCA Dune). Passivity seems to become an act of resistance. What happens when we close our eyes and allow ourselves to dream?

DAVID DOUARD

Yes it is. Having our eyes closed or dreaming are forms of political resistance for me, a bit like in Buñuel's cinema, our eyeball is cut and only then can we really start looking. Sleeping is an introspective activity. It's a state of inactivity where you become active by thinking, and where you can start building and testing resilient parallel worlds. I like this horizontality, and I find a political commitment in this dislocation and this letting go. This reminds me of a verse by Lil Ugly Mane: Time's lost every night I sleep. Eyes crossed trying not to blink and just to breathe. There's ivy twisting through the bricks outside. Is it taking over or just clinging on for life?

brenda ray - dreamin'
in

Entretien

sert

son aspirateur pour endormir bebe - bruit blanc ASMR pour
la sieste et calmer
(the shangri las - out in the streets)
elizabeth price - the woodworths choir of 1979
palestine/coulter/matou - schlongo!!!daLUVdrone revisited#3
slowdive - cello
boa - deglover
holger czukay & jah wobble & jaki liebezeit - mystery r.p.s.

Thomas Boutoux

julien donkey boy
(and peebles - can't stand the rain)
mirachu and the shipes - oh baby
farai - lion warrior
julien donkey boy
letha rodman melchior - suess-a
julianna barwick - labyrinthine
duval timothy - tdagb
dead hand - psalm
elizabeth price - the woodworths choir of 1979
yakub - power
gummo
henry flint - s&m delirium
chris korda - i'll just die if i don't get this recipe
nivhek - weightless
g.b. beckers - dritter monat

léonie risjeterre - tisseterre
competition - grow(n)
moor moter & yatta - more
julien donkey boy
the night of the hunter - leaning on the everlastin' arms
cindy lee - power & possession
knivtid - svag
(matthew sullivan - untitled 1)
blue chemise - odette

ursula k. leguin - 1975 aussiecon
generator room - fuse drives the flower
vestals - forever falling
moor moter & yatta - more
nivhek - crying jar
shakira alleyne - snowflakes
chris korda - i'll just die if i don't get this recipe



A David Douard,
cassette audio
réalisée avec
Justine Dorion
dans le cadre
de l'exposition
O'T'Lulaby au Frac
Île-de-France
en 2020.

B Vues de l'exposition

↓ David Douard

F O'T'Lulabyes,
Contemporary
Gallery Serralves,
Museum of
Contemporary Art,
Porto, 2022.

Depuis que j'ai emménagé en 2019 dans un petit village de l'Eure, nos conversations, avec David Douard, se font le plus souvent par téléphone. Ces échanges, qui passent par la transmission de nos voix et des sons qui nous environnent, nous ramènent souvent à la place que la radio occupe dans nos vies, dont elle les rythme, les modifie. La transmission radiophonique est depuis longtemps au cœur du travail de David, et c'est à lui, en premier, que je parle du projet que je cherche à mettre en place en Normandie, celui d'une résidence créative construite autour d'un studio de radio ouvert sur la réserve naturelle du Marais Vernier où il sera installé. David me fait découvrir une émission diffusée au petit matin, les lundis et mardis sur la radio en ligne NTS, le *Early Bird Show* de la musicienne irlandaise Maria Somerville qu'elle enregistre depuis sa maison située au Connemara, sur la côte ouest de l'Irlande, en bord de mer. Son émission, qui est principalement musicale, accompagne le lever du soleil et le cadre naturel dans lequel elle l'enregistre, se superpose aux paysages sonores éthérés des morceaux qu'elle joue.

B



in

Entretien

sert

Avec David, à Porto, où il vient d'ouvrir une nouvelle exposition monographique à la Fondation Serralves, intitulée *O'Ti'Lulabies*, nous tentons d'établir des liens entre son travail artistique et le *Early Bird Show* de Maria Somerville, convaincus que quelque chose d'important, de plus important qu'il n'y paraît de prime abord, s'y joue.

David Douard L'idée du flux, de la transmission des flux, est très présente dans mon travail, dans les expositions en particulier. Je pense depuis longtemps aux expositions comme à des flux que l'on attraperait en cours de route, à un moment donné. On ne peut identifier le début et on ne peut pas en prévoir la fin, on les habite pour un temps donné, comme quand on allume la radio. C'est figuré dans les expositions assez clairement : dans l'exposition *O'DA'OLDBORIN'GOLD* (2019) à la galerie Chantal Crousel, on pouvait entendre un flux de paroles qui était transmis depuis un endroit qui n'était pas explicité. J'avais d'ailleurs essayé de créer pour ce projet ma propre radio, techniquement je veux dire. J'ai travaillé longtemps sur la fabrication d'un ordinateur qui serait un véritable émetteur, mais c'est tellement compliqué que nous ne sommes pas arrivés au bout de cette idée. J'aime donner

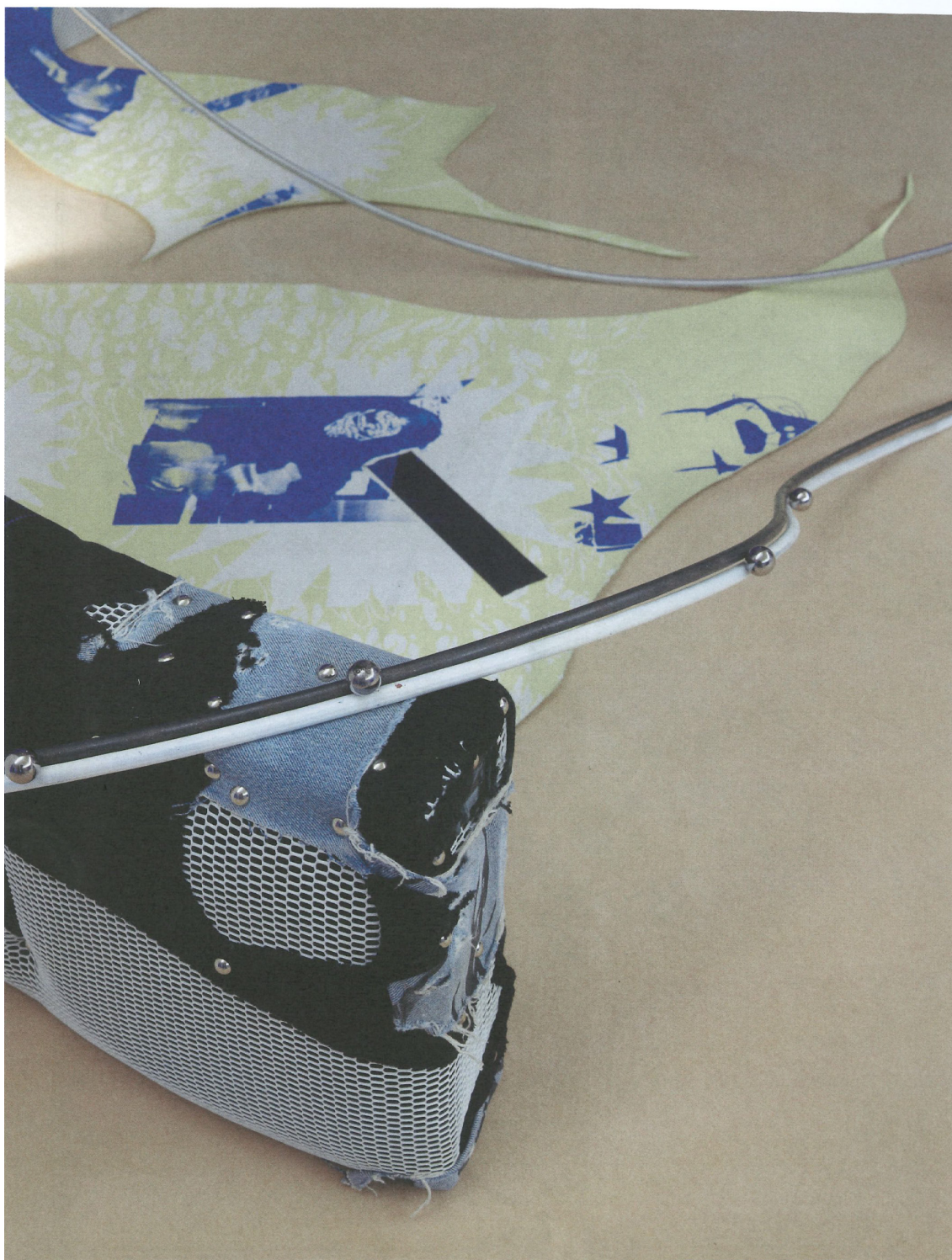
ce sentiment que quelque chose se passe, dont on ne peut jamais saisir la totalité, mais que l'on peut seulement intercepter, en s'appropriant l'énergie qui est transmise. Du coup, les spectateur-rices sont actives, iels s'emparent d'un bout et sentent bien qu'il y a une totalité à laquelle iels n'ont pas accès, ni besoin d'avoir accès. C'est une forme de liberté. Dans ma précédente exposition, *O'Ti'Lulaby* (2020), au Plateau Frac Île-de-France, avec Justine (Dorion), on a poursuivi cette idée de boucles infinies, toujours différentes, en reprogrammant le site Internet du Plateau. On a enregistré trois épisodes radiophoniques, trois blocs, et on a créé un programme pour qu'ils s'entremêlent de manière aléatoire et ainsi, quel que soit le moment où on se connecte sur le site, on tombe toujours sur une boucle différente.

c



Thomas Boutoux

46-47



Thomas Boutoux
Soon it is going to rain
Insert, N°1, September, 2022, p.43-51

in 4-34

Entretien

sert



Thomas Boutoux
Soon it is going to rain
Insert, N°1, September, 2022, p.43-51

Thomas Boutoux

48-49

C'est aussi une caractéristique du programme de Maria Somerville sur NTS qui me plaît beaucoup, cette quasi-répétition du même épisode à chaque fois. Parce qu'elle décrit chaque matin le jour qui se lève autour de sa maison-studio, et parce que les sons naturels, mais aussi les morceaux qu'elle passe, se répètent souvent, se ressemblent, parce que ce sont aussi toujours plus ou moins les mêmes groupes ou musiciens qu'elle joue. Ce n'est qu'une affaire de nuances. Et c'est de ça dont il s'agit vraiment: d'accompagner le lever du soleil dans un cadre naturel, où chaque jour ça recommence. C'est chaque fois un peu différent, mais c'est essentiellement la même chose.

David Douard Oui, c'est ce qu'il y a de très beau dans son émission, cette façon dont elle transmet cette ambiance d'un jour qui se répète, qu'elle magnifie en la rendant rassurante. Ça n'a l'air de rien, mais c'est très fort, ou ça fait beaucoup de sens. Il y a une autre chose que j'aime beaucoup, c'est le chat qu'elle lit pendant l'émission, les messages des auditeur-ices qui lui écrivent au cours de l'émission. Je trouve ça très romantique et très actuel aussi: les gens se réveillent, se branchent sur sa transmission et lui écrivent leurs souvenirs de leur soirée de la veille, lui décrivent leurs états un peu gazeux. Ils viennent annoter l'émission depuis d'autres géographies, signalent d'autres températures, d'autres ambiances, et c'est toute une communauté de gens qui ne se connaissent pas qui échangent leurs affects. Et elle, elle incorpore ce langage parlé à la musique et au lever du soleil. C'est très cinématographique aussi. Dans le cinéma aujourd'hui, ça se fait beaucoup de superposer les textos à l'image et quand elle lit ces différents messages qui lui sont envoyés, ça produit cet effet également, ça délocalise aussi complètement son émission, ça la démultiplie. On perd ses repères. D'ailleurs, c'est ce qu'elle fait beaucoup: par exemple on ne sait jamais vraiment non plus si les sons des oiseaux qu'on

entend viennent de l'extérieur du studio ou de la musique qu'elle joue. C'est très situé et on est complètement perdu à la fois. Et ça, c'est quelque chose sur lequel que je travaille aussi beaucoup dans les installations, les expositions: cette perte de repères. Essayer par exemple de faire croire qu'un grillage urbain délimite l'espace d'un lit dans une chambre en l'associant à une lampe. L'art permet ça, la transmission de ce genre de possibilités, d'impossibilités. Il permet d'ouvrir le champ des possibles en dérégulant les sens. Et il y a vraiment de ça chez Maria Somerville: elle est si près de nous et en même temps elle est invisible. On ne la connaît pas. Le paysage dans lequel elle est et qui est si important, on ne le voit pas. C'est cette poésie-là que je trouve très belle et qui n'existe que grâce à la transmission radiophonique. Ça rend très libre. Et ça recoupe beaucoup de choses qui se jouent dans mon travail: je n'arrive pas à exprimer quelque chose sans superposer le chaud, le froid, le tiède, le bleu, le rouge. Je passe par pleins d'émotions pour pouvoir en transmettre une, il faut une accumulation.

Dans l'exposition que tu viens d'ouvrir à la Fondation Serralves à Porto, le paysage dans lequel on se retrouve plongé et dans lequel on évolue est cependant plutôt celui d'un environnement urbain qu'un milieu naturel.

David Douard Plus ça va, plus je repense au graffiti, qui a longtemps été important pour moi. Mais je crois que je ne le comprends que maintenant. Le graffiti, c'est une relation avec la ville, les murs, l'autorité. S'il n'y a pas toute cette organisation et cette autorité, il n'y a pas la forme d'expression qui est celle du graffiti. Je trouve ça assez fou: le graffiti est totalement abstrait dans son langage. La plupart du temps, on ne comprend pas ce qui est écrit et on s'en fout. À part les graffitis qui sont politisés et qui sont ceux qui disparaissent le plus vite, le vrai graffiti c'est un langage irrationnel, contre-productif, qui n'a pas de sens, mais c'est une forme de langage qui n'existe

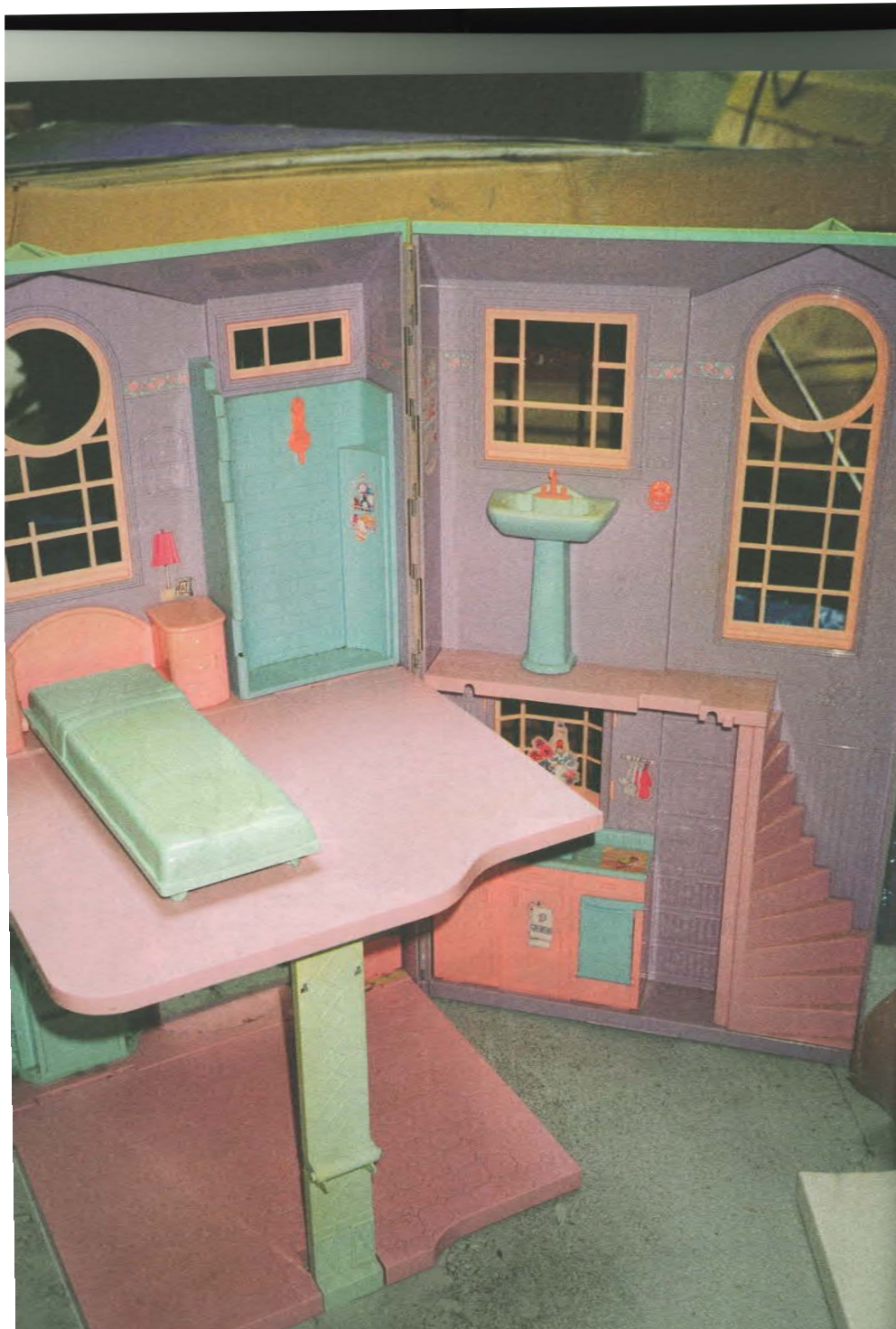
que parce qu'il s'inscrit dans des endroits très particuliers. Mes expositions, je les construis de la même manière, je vais vers un langage irrationnel qui me fait créer des formes et le graffiti c'est ça, des zig-zags, des *skills* pour écrire un truc qui ne dit rien, genre «yo» ou «bob». (Rires.) Plus c'est irrationnel, plus ça me plaît en général, parce que moins on comprend, plus ça résiste. Et donc les formes de mes sculptures viennent exister contre les parois dans un rapport à la fois conflictuel et absolument nécessaire pour exister.

*Et le son que l'on entend dans
l'exposition, et est à nouveau très présent,
quel rôle joue-t-il ?*

David Douard C'est un morceau que j'ai fait, qui est très simple : c'est un claquement de doigts avec un beat. Dans l'exposition, il y a le texte qui est très présent dans les écrans, dans les matières, il y a un flux de texte, une transmission mais dont on n'a jamais accès à la totalité, comme je le disais tout à l'heure à propos de la radio. Le son, c'est aussi une intrusion dans le quotidien et j'ai utilisé le son le plus intrusif, qui nous mobilise, nous interpelle. C'est un claquement de doigts qui est répété, comme on demanderait une attention, mais là, ça devient un peu le pacemaker de l'exposition. Il demande de faire attention. Mais à quoi ? Vers quoi ? Pourquoi ? On ne le sait jamais vraiment. C'est comme le fluo dans l'expo. Normalement, le fluo est là pour aiguiller une attention, donner une information, mais en général, dans mes installations, là où il y a du fluo, il n'y a rien. C'est pour dire « prêtez attention, quelque chose est en train de se faire » mais, encore une fois, comme on n'a pas accès à la totalité, c'est une transmission d'énergie et seulement cela. Il se passe quelque chose. C'est politique aussi. C'est pour dire : « Hey ! On est là ! » Et soit on est agacé par le claquement de doigts, soit il nous mobilise. On se dit à notre tour : « Je suis là. » C'est comme un cri souterrain qui arrive à la surface sous une forme abstraite. Tous les objets de l'exposition sont comme ça : les masques servent également uniquement à montrer qu'il y a des gens derrière. Et là encore, on revient à la transmission radiophonique. Il y a une dimension introspective à l'écoute radiophonique, on est connecté individuellement à quelque chose mais, par la transmission, on est également connecté à une communauté.

On fait communauté au même moment et on participe chacun avec notre affect, notre subjectivité, notre sentimentalité. Cette dimension politique de la radio comme une pratique collective est encore beaucoup plus forte que dans un concert, je trouve. Bon, ça dépend de quelle radio on parle, bien sûr. Encore une fois, je parle d'une transmission radiophonique qui n'aurait pas de début ni de fin, qui ne serait pas structurée par un programme d'émissions. C'est une idée de la radio qui n'existe pas vraiment. C'est peut-être ça, le projet de ta radio en Normandie, un flux continu. C'est comme quand une radio est en grève, quand les radios publiques sont en grève, il n'y a que des morceaux qui s'enchaînent. Une radio en grève, c'est génial, la connexion au monde disparaît, il n'y a plus d'informations, uniquement de la musique en continu sur le canal qui te permettait d'être au courant du monde. C'est super intéressant, une radio en grève... On tient quelque chose là... (Rires.) C'est souterrain.

MATTO



Do you always manage to express yourself freely, and create real ruptures in an exhibition space?

It's a real challenge. We can always say to ourselves that whatever we, artists, do gets recuperated by the system, we might as well see it as something violent. True freedom, true expression - that's life; it's a child running, it's making love. That's what counts. To create exhibition spaces is to kill something, to objectify something, and bring it back to something sleek. Everything we can put forward is recuperated, so we have to look for systems where we make energies, presences, an aura, something that makes it escape. That's why I always see the exhibition space as a conflict, but positive conflict. I need this conflict.

I find that when we enter an exhibition space, a gallery, we are always caught in a sort of 'heavy' something. I would like to feel that everything belongs to us, that everywhere is our home, but what also counts is that there are spaces where we can't go physically. But we can go there mentally, we can appropriate them mentally. The voids are important. Ultimately, I think that many people see that there is a life in the space. An energy of life, that I would like to re-transcribe in the exhibitions, but which is not necessarily in the exhibition itself. We feel that the life is elsewhere, that it escaped the form of the authority of the work we are looking at.

In this exhibition at frac you have made installations with materials and objects like chains, glass, plexiglass, magnets, steel wire, railings, net curtains, screens, partitions and blinds. The materials used become a language. What I found interesting was that, amongst some immediately present materials and large objects, you have placed many small objects, seemingly insignificant, that one might even overlook completely, but that in fact add much to the overall feeling and impression.

It works as a whole. You walk around, and don't immediately grasp what it is, and all the little details count, well for me. They're not there just to be put down because something more was needed. The details must act on the experience when we walk around. I often look for something that has a relationship with the tongue, the teeth, the mouth, something that speaks of transmission, of communication, of contamination.

Some of the objects in the show were easily recognisable, some were ambiguous, like this sort of 'billboard frame' but without an image inside. They are recognisable but they are not in the same context anymore, they have been modified. There becomes a clash in the viewer's mind in what they have recognised the object for, and what is actually in front of them. The connotations have been hybridized.

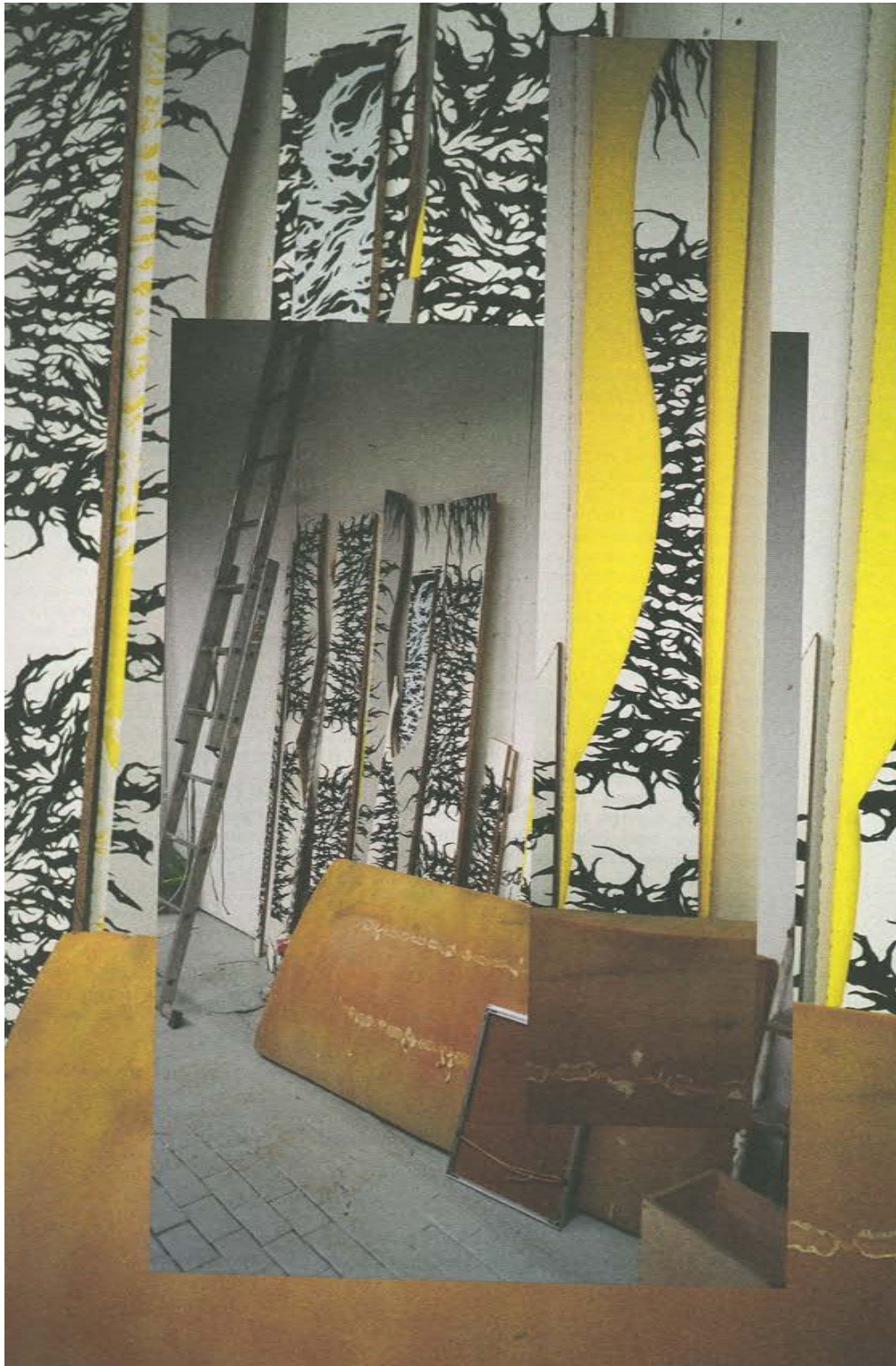
Indeed, these 'billboard frames', they are objective forms but they have been corrupted by the small details. Again, it's the same system, where one eats its form. It is like manga. Yesterday I watched manga with my son, and I said to myself it's all about aura, demons that give us energy that can make us positive. That you can be bad but also nice. This Asian universe of the sense for details, and accepting violence as a form of expression like any other. And it's true that I like to use objects that we recognise. It's important that we recognise them quickly. For example, the Joker mask, I want to express a presence of a person, who acts anonymously online. How to make this presence physical and material, that's something that interests me. Once a friend said to me that with the Joker mask, you either feel like he's laughing at you, or you're with him. With the grid, it's the same. Either you feel like you're in prison, or you feel like you're outside of it. Things are never that simple, there is this ambiguity.

Other objects I use, like a table, an armchair, a seat, I see them as forms that are the moulds of a body which is not present, it's like a ghost, holding the presence between this technological avatar and the real life. There is no more separation now; we are hybrids. We can now exist other than being here physically. We can be elsewhere. Art allows that too. That's why I think that art is the most beautiful thing that exists. It allows us to use objects that are martyrs of their functional life, and turn them into something producing sensations. Art allows something to become something else, something more spiritual.

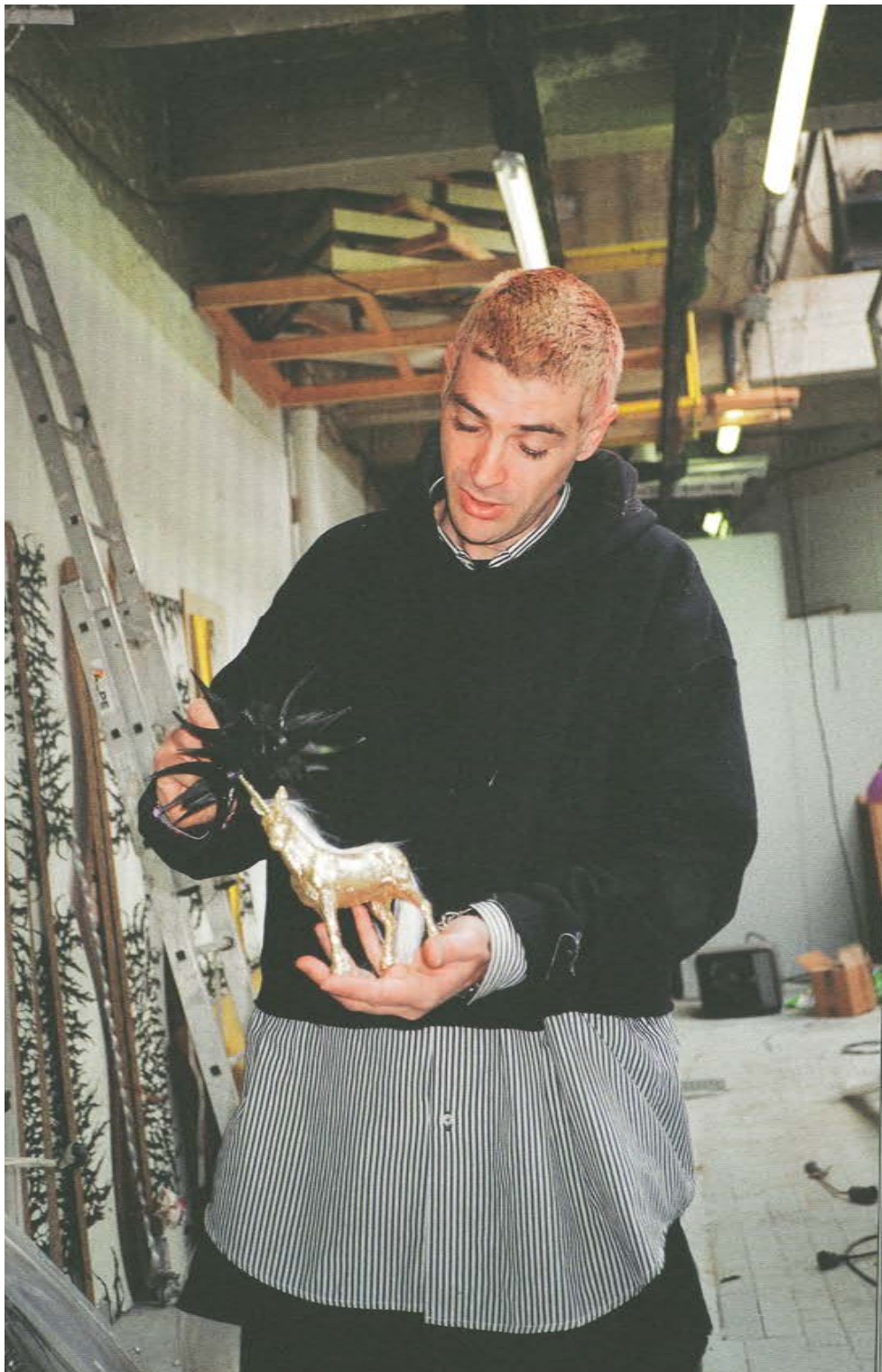
Do you work mostly on commission, or do you not need them to continue your research, making works, expressing yourself?

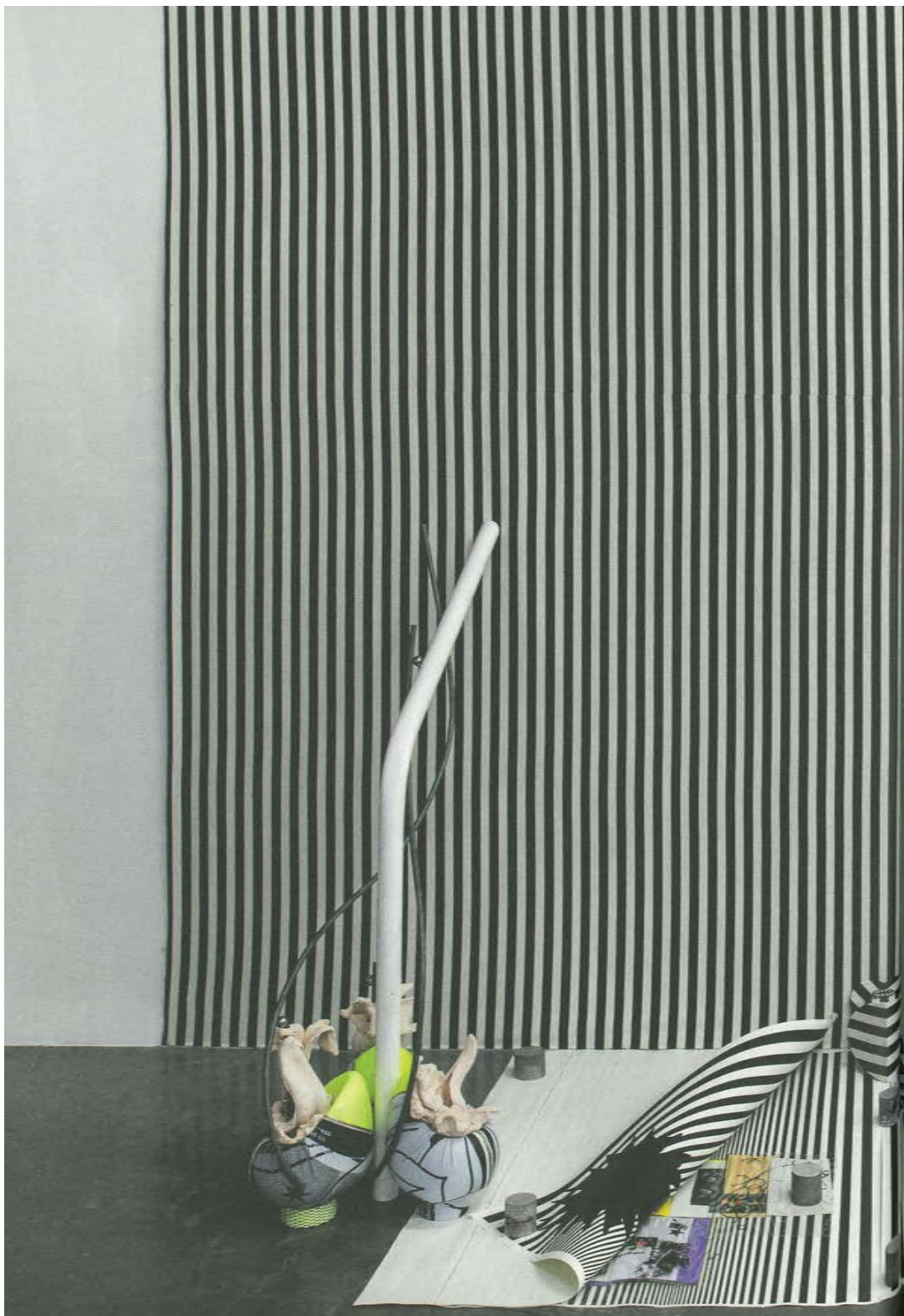
This is a very interesting question. Because it's true that we, artists, can be caught up in what we do, we don't need to have orders, but at the same time when we are asked to make something, when there is a deadline, when there is a gallery requesting to produce for a reason, it helps - it's important. I don't know if I was here at the studio, making all this work, if I did not have the gallery asking me to produce.

GALERIE
CHANTAL CROUSEL

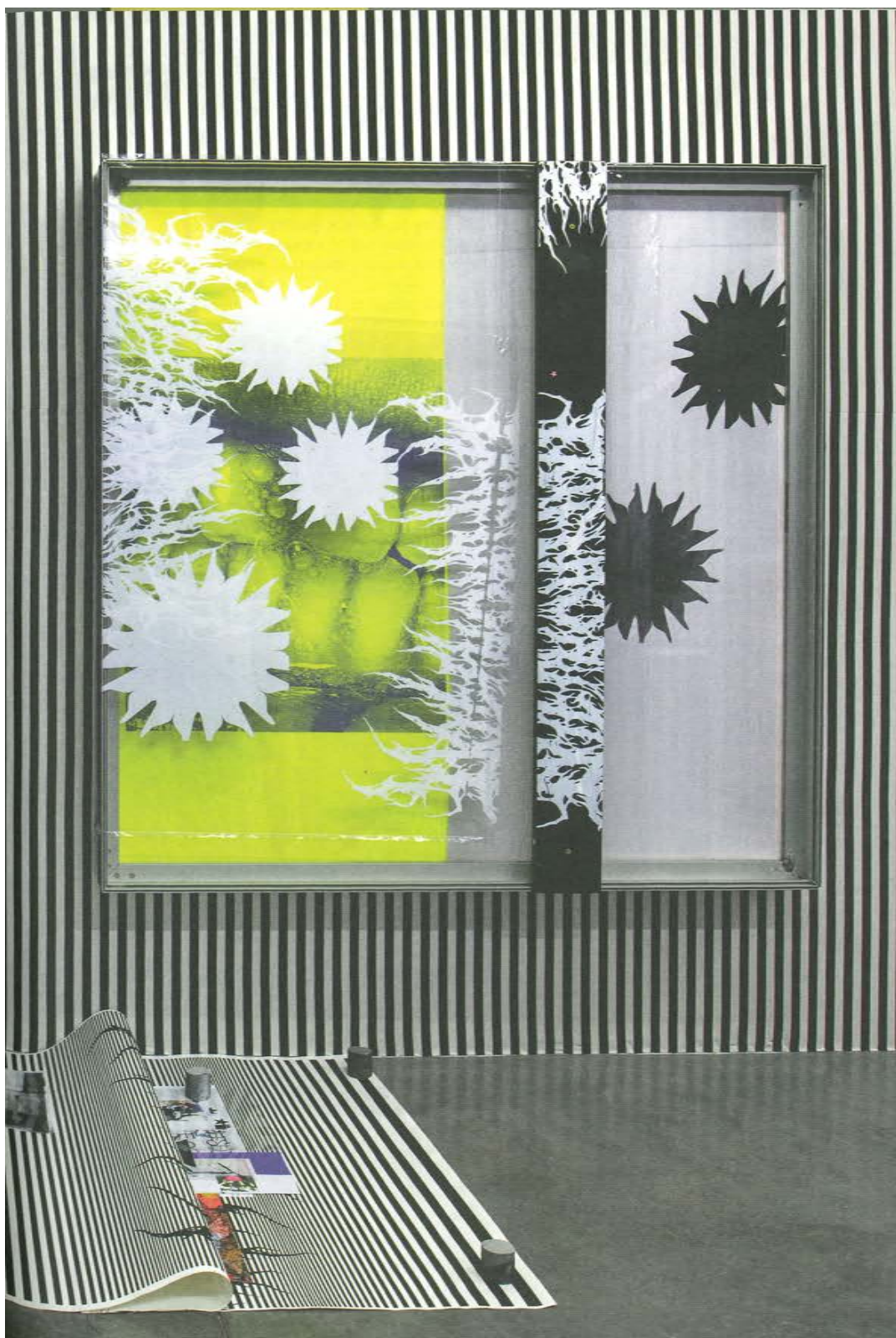


I believe in the stuttering — David Douard
MATTO, Issue 5, 2021





GALERIE
CHANTAL CROUSEL



I believe in the stuttering — David Douard
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GALERIE
CHANTAL CROUSEL



I believe in the stuttering — David Douard
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How does it work if someone is interested to buy a piece of your work? Because it seems to me your shows are not about isolated pieces but it's an ecosystem.

The ecosystem. There is again the idea of contamination, of transmission, that gets broken when you take one out. Any isolated object is an artefact of a situation. What counts is the situation.

There's a certain fluidity in your work, and it's not easy to describe.

I communicate a lot with objects. I distrust words a lot. But the words of others don't bother me too much. I accept them, it's part of the work. Like the shell, it takes all the rumors.

How do you collect the object you use in your work? Do you pick them up on the street, or you go to look for them specifically?

The street is important, yes, it's clear. But since the beginning, I have a studio practice, I bring here into the studio objects of different hierarchies. I trust their language. I try to put them together to create, I like to say, a kind of 'stuttering.' Sort of collages of things that are not supposed to meet, and therefore do not create fluidity, and yet there is a fluidity that will be created, a new language. From the beginning there was a relationship with the language, it's a vital source, a flow. I started with graffiti, by creating letters, to express myself on the walls. I saw graffiti like the rumour of language. Then I was asking myself how can I put the energy of graffiti in the material of the sculpture, so I started to collect words and sentences, and created, for example, the poems using aluminium I told you about. When there was 'Occupy Wall Street', I participated in it, but then at one moment, I decided to stop and be in the studio, so there was a door that cut me off from the street. And that's when I started to work with technology, with the internet. Something started to happen, I was sensitive to that. I liked the cyberpunk atmosphere, making technology physical.

How do you explain your work to your children? Do they become involved in your work in some way? You said they are here at the studio often.

Yes, of course! I think that childhood and adolescence are motifs that I've liked in my work since the art school. It's a moment in life where one 'becomes'. I also like children and teenagers because they are against the world but without a point of view. They just don't want something, they want to have fun - and they are right. We, adults, often accept, we have resigned. I adore Mike Kelly, the Californian artist, in terms of the spirit of childhood and adolescence. He succeeded in speaking seriously about what we have in our memories, and what we have put aside because we have decided at one moment to be more pragmatic, in spite of the fact that it becomes more complicated. I am rather on the side of the eternal adolescent.

How long has it been since you left the Beaux-Arts de Paris?

Eight years now. I had my son when I got out.

Do your children also spend a lot of time on the internet?

Yes, and that gave a room in the exhibition. There was a pink sculpture with a little poem. It's a sculpture I made with my son. We play a lot of video games, TikTok.

Have you ever been tempted to work fully with these digital mediums? In a way with 'a material' that is not physical?

I find it hard, even if it's tempting. At there is a video image. This image had haunted me in my nights. I had removed it from its status of image, I had it inside me.

Where did this video image come from?

When I was in Rome at the Ville Medici, I was looking for information about a bombing in Afghanistan. I came across an article in the online version of newspapers where images showed the places that are going to be bombed. What I found crazy is that I could walk around those places on the Google maps, and of course, I saw people, children, and I experienced a kind of trauma. You're in the place that's going to be bombed. I was allowed to enter a building, I observed the place. I opened the exhibition with this image, which when you see it, you don't really understand what it is. We imagine that someone is wandering in a digital space, you see a ceiling, and that's all. I wanted us to enter the image, so that we do not consume the image as a show.



Do you see each exhibition as a space that you create for specific moment, or is there a certain continuity and linearity with your other exhibitions?

Yes, we can't lie too much. We make the exhibitions as we live, there is always a link. I believe in the 'stuttering', and the fact that I don't always make an ending to my shows, which makes me need to continue to look again, to go back to them.

Are you working on a new exhibition?

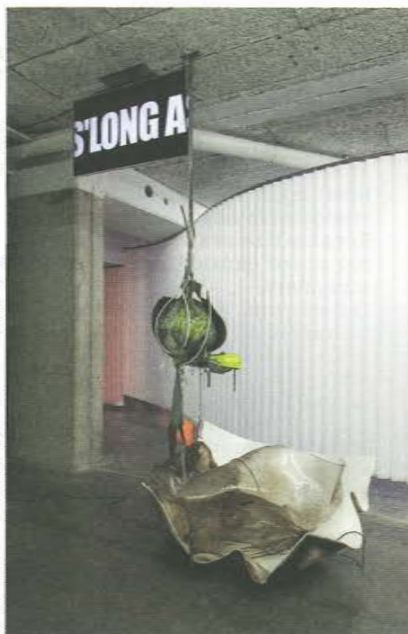
Yes, there will be one at the Galerie Chantal Crousel, at the same time when they will exhibit Wolfgang Tillmans. I'm going to do a new piece, these colourful blown glass balls with lamps inside. It links to this idea of language, and transmission, and breath, but it's enclosed.

I also feel that in your work, all the objects have a sculptural potential. When you are here at the studio, and you look around, all the objects are almost free of their context, of their usage, they all have this potential to be sculptural. Suddenly you notice their sculptural aspect, or the pure shape of them, that you usually would not notice.

An object is a martyr of its function. My iPhone, for example, it is locked in its function. The language also locks us in a function of communication. But as soon as we twist it, we change it, we crumple it, we modify it, it becomes something else. It's a way of 'hacking' a little, of corruption. The piece of aluminium, that was 'ingested' and 'spit out'. Everything is linked in this sense. All the objects that I collect, from the moment that they enter the workshop they are an element of a whole. They will have a different destination.

How does the present inspire you?

I think the current generation of geek is interesting. Mark Zuckerberg was a geek and he defined our world. I loved Bjork when I was a teenager. She was real to me. She said things I understood. I also love reading Ursula Le Guin's science fiction. In fact, today, when you read science fiction, you understand that the world we live in has already accelerated. Everything that could happen as fiction is almost true now. Reality has surpassed all the stories. We have to imagine



more, to push even more. I think that the time in which we live now is extraordinary. I know that there are many problems, it's a hassle, but still, the imagination and creation is at the top.

We can imagine that the mutation is possible. Besides, mutation has always been seen as pejorative, associated with strangeness, corruption, pollution, impurity, but in fact, I think it's good. That we accept that the world, that living on the Earth, is changing all the time, and we are not going to stop. All is just going to change, good, or not good. It's not science fiction anymore, we live the fiction now, and we accept that it's happening. I adore Tetsumi Kudo, this artist who started Japanese Fluxus. He was creating these swamps of polluted nature, technology, he called them *Cultivations*. Body parts, plants, electronic components, they were all in these metal birdcages. It was a polluted ground but at the same time a place of creation. He made one piece with a head portrait of Eugène Ionesco coming from the soil. This always made me think of how some things that are impure, can become good. And if something is there, it means that it must be there. It is like hallucinogenic mushrooms. If they are there in the world, it means that there is a reason.



David Douard, *O'Flyluby*, exhibition view, Frac Île-de-France, Le Plateau (2020-2021). Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris. Photo: Martin Anyrhopio.



GALERIE
CHANTAL CROUSEL

CRASH

DAVID DOUARD

INTERVIEW : ARMELLE LETURCQ. PHOTOGRAPHE : BERTRAND JEANNOT



Armelle Leturcq
"David Douard"
Crash Magazine - Mars 2019

Issu d'une génération qui a vu Internet et ses nouveaux réseaux de communication s'immiscer dans la société pour finalement l'engloutir totalement, l'artiste plasticien David Douard travaille autour du langage et du corps à travers des objets découpés, rapiécés, aux formes presque humaines. Telles des fantômes qui hantent les espaces qu'ils investissent, les œuvres du sculpteur semblent raconter des bribes de vie contemporaine. Son exposition *O'Da'Oldborin'Gold* présentée à la Galerie Chantal Crousel semble confronter les objets tangibles du quotidien à l'irrationalité du monde virtuel. Textes sérigraphiés trouvés sur Internet, vieux meubles et matériaux abrasifs se rencontrent dans un espace imaginaire où l'organique se frotte à l'immatériel.

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AL: Pour ta deuxième exposition à la galerie Chantal Crousel, as-tu voulu créer l'idée d'un parcours ? Tu sembles avoir voulu restructurer l'espace ?

DD: Un parcours, non. Mais oui, j'ai restructuré l'espace. L'espace demande souvent à être investi, surtout celui de cette galerie. C'est ma deuxième exposition ici mais avec celle-ci il y a plus d'objets différents. D'une manière assez formelle,

j'ai voulu créer des séparations pour donner à chacun un espace autonome. Donc j'ai dessiné trois ou quatre espaces différents qui sont pour moi des espaces de projection mentale. La grille, le mur jaune... sont tels des socles de pensée où les objets viennent se poser dans les coins. J'espère que les objets dépassent la scénographie. Même si je n'aime pas ce mot.

AL: Oui scénographie se rapporte davantage au théâtre. Cette expo pourrait presque être un décor de théâtre sans comédiens.

DD: Oui, c'est toujours présent quand j'essaye de créer ces espaces. Je fais de la sculpture, je travaille des objets morts. C'est un peu le dilemme : mettre de la vie dans la mort, de la fluidité dans quelque chose d'inerte, du mouvement dans du statique, j'essaye de dealer avec tout ça. Si je fais un étalage de ces objets, ils restent morts. Après, l'environnement autour aura toujours ce rapport au non-spectacle. Il y aura forcément une notion d'échec. Les éléments scénographiques vont produire des marquages domestiques, privés, publics... qui donneront forcément un côté théâtre mais ça je ne le veux pas, je tente de trouver l'équilibre.

AL: Une scénographie sans spectacle en fait.

DD: En tout cas, j'aimerais vraiment qu'il n'y ait pas le spectacle. J'aimerais ramener l'objet à ce qu'il a de fossile, poreux... qu'il ne soit pas consommable. L'action des corps dans l'espace d'exposi-

tion est mentale. Je réfléchis à des formes de corps qui ne sont pas présents, que j'essaye d'incarner par une présence. C'est comme cela que je vois la sculpture. En même temps j'incite le spectateur à impliquer son corps dans ces possibles fantômes. Je créé juste des petits soulignements : un petit couloir, une petite ouverture.

AL: Comment conçois-tu cette exposition ? Comme quelque chose de global ou des pièces séparées ? Le collectionneur, par exemple doit-il tout acheter ou des blocs séparés ?

DD: Je ne me pose pas ce genre de question. L'autonomie des pièces et l'installation générale sont liées, c'est sûr. Il y a une diagonale dans l'espace, une pensée qui coupe l'espace. Les éléments jouent sur différentes couleurs. Ils sont séparables. Quand je dis que je mets mes pensées en diagonale de l'exposition, je pense réellement corruption, viralité, contamination, porosité, inertie, mouvement. Pour moi, il y a un contenant dans chaque chose présente et ça mute avec cette idée

de viralité. Les sources de mon travail sont impossibles à montrer. Dans ce sens-là, je bégaye dans l'espace avec différentes formes, choses et tout est lié puisque ça part du même constat. Dans la séparation, il y a une forme d'autonomie et de résistance que j'aime bien travailler. Quand une pièce s'extraît d'un tout, elle acquiert une forme de résistance. C'est un peu une bombe à retardement qui n'a plus aucun lien avec ce qui la tenait dans une forme de silence collectif. Là, elle est seule, plus forte, comme un petit bout de chose.

**COMMENT UN ADOLESCENT FAIT-IL
DE LA POLITIQUE AUJOURD'HUI
AVEC SON ORDINATEUR, SA CHAÎNE
YOUTUBE OU SON COMPTE
FACEBOOK ? C'EST QUELQUE CHOSE
QUI M'INTÉRESSE
ET QUI FIGURE DANS LES OBJETS.**

AL: La grille est considérée comme une œuvre à part ?

DD: Non, ce sont des choses qui aident à souligner une pièce. Je pense à solliciter le corps du spectateur à un moment donné. Ici c'est un cadre, une zone confortable de consommation culturelle...

AL: Confortable ? C'est quand-même du grillage de cour d'école, enfin cela me fait penser à ça... c'est carcéral...

DD: Il y a des peaux sociales, des espaces définis dans la société, qui sont là. C'est un rapport au corps, au lieu, à notre identité... l'ADN de la rue et de la maison qui nous façonnent. Pour moi, il y a beaucoup de choses autour de l'espace de la galerie qui sont aseptisées, assez "white cube". J'aime donner des tonalités de peau comme la rue, la grille, l'école, le carcéral, l'autorité, la baie vitrée, la maison, la moquette, le canapé... toutes ces choses font partie du cadre de corps. Ce qui m'intéresse ce sont ces corps qui aujourd'hui se définissent par une sorte de non-productivité, une matière molle. Les gens qui ont grandi avec Internet,

qui se représentent politiquement et agissent d'une manière complètement nouvelle, constituent un ensemble qui est difficile à cadrer. J'aime bien donner des petits squelettes de peaux sociales qui peuvent donner des cadres de vie. Mais cette vie-là, on ne l'aura jamais ici, ce sont des artefacts.

AL: Ça pourrait éventuellement être une habitation.

DD: Pour moi, ça habite des présences qui sont...

AL: Virtuelles ? Désincarnées ?

DD: Non. Je parle beaucoup du virtuel dans mon travail mais je considère qu'il y a de vraies personnes derrière tout ça. La technologie est juste un outil qui permet de transmettre des choses, autant que le reste. Mais oui, je suis imprégné par ma génération qui a vécu avec l'arrivée des réseaux, d'ouvertures, d'identités qu'on peut se créer, d'échanges. Mon travail a changé depuis que je suis adolescent. La virtualité est quelque chose que je considère dans l'objet mais les mouvements de gens qui m'intéressent aujourd'hui sont bien réels. Je conçois l'objet et les présences dans l'espace comme des choses qui pourraient être des artefacts,

qui pourraient être virtuelles, comme des avatars.

AL: On peut se demander aujourd'hui à quoi ça sert de monter des expos, de produire des œuvres tangibles, avec Internet.

DD: Au contraire, on a plus que jamais envie de repenser l'objet et l'exposition. Ce qui reste d'une présence humaine, c'est un objet qui a été produit ou créé par elle. Il reste un boîtier avec un ordinateur, ce qui reste un objet. Un contenant, comme un vase. Ça m'intéresse de penser l'objet comme ça. Je suis inspiré par des sortes de formes animistes, des représentations de l'esprit et du corps qui prennent forme dans une matière et qui restent dans le temps. Surtout au regard de cette période virtuelle et toutes ces questions sur la technologie. C'est pour cela que les parois d'un espace ne sont que des cadres pour autre chose. C'est hanté par ce qui n'est pas là. C'est le petit *a* de la sculpture quand on réalise un objet, au sens archéologique.

AL: L'expérience du spectateur est importante pour toi ? Quand tu construis ce genre d'environnement tu te mets à la place de la personne qui va le visiter ?

DD: C'est difficile de penser à ça. Il y a souvent un malentendu sur le travail. Je n'essaye pas d'être accessible ou complaisant, j'essaie d'avancer masqué d'une certaine façon.

AL: Mais penses-tu quand même à l'expérience du spectateur ?

DD: Oui, mais sans le préserver, c'est une expérience plutôt dure. Soit il rentre dedans, soit il s'en va. J'ai remarqué ça. Plus j'avance moins je préserve les gens. Ce qui me marque avec des expositions comme celle-là c'est que c'est proche d'un art conceptuel, d'un art qui véhicule des idées, mais en même temps il y a une générosité de la matière qui fait que je pense au spectateur, qui va rentrer dans une espèce de séduction formelle avec l'objet et petit à petit, il va être déçu. Et cette forme de déception m'intéresse, je la travaille beaucoup. Il faut que je perde les gens à un moment, pour les ramener vers l'idée, vers le contenu.

AL: Tu ne veux donc pas que le spectateur soit séduit ?

DD: Si, mais c'est sournois. Je veux créer des présences de flux qui sont impossibles à capturer. A partir du moment où je les capture, je les objective et je les tue. C'est très politique dans ce sens. Il y a comme une transe, une danse qui existe entre les objets, un flux mais si je le capture, je le tue. J'essaye de trouver des formes qui puissent amener vers ce mouvement qui m'intéresse mais sans le figer. Forcément je joue sur une forme d'esthétique qui est assez formelle en sculpture – le mouvement contenu dans un objet inerte – ce qui crée des formes de séduction. Ça ne s'arrête pas là. Ce qui m'intéresse c'est de parler du corps, du corps politisé, du corps social, des nouveaux outils que nous avons... comment on les ingurgite, comme on les recrache. Il ne s'agit pas que de mouvement et de fixation de ce mouvement. En tout cas, la sculpture c'est forcément séduisant.

AL: Tu considères ces objets quand-même comme des sculptures ?

DD: Oui, je considère ça comme des objets qui ont échoué. Pour faire passer des idées actuelles, le matériel reste intéressant et je résiste avec ça. Pour ma génération en tout cas, qui va vers une dématérialisation.

AL: Tu n'es pas tenté de réaliser des choses en réalité virtuelle ?

DD: Non, pas du tout. La question de la matière m'intéresse. Les artistes qui m'ont toujours intéressé sont conceptuels et ils pensent d'abord au concept avant la matière. Je crois être assez proche de ça.

AL: Sauf que tu as quand-même un côté assez organique dans ton travail. C'est un mélange de ready-made avec des choses organiques que tu crées toi-même.

DD: C'est un mélange des deux, ce qui peut aussi caractériser ma génération. On prend un peu tout et on essaye de combiner. Il faut qu'il y ait une sorte de schizophrénie, de dualité permanente

chez moi. J'aime l'objet sculptural mais il faut qu'il serve une idée. J'aime la petite licorne coupée en deux et j'aime faire des structures monumentales très autoritaires. J'ai trente-cinq ans, ce n'est pas très jeune, mais je viens vraiment de cette période-là. D'un moment où les artistes ont fait une sorte de pot commun qui, malgré tout, n'est pas déconnecté de la réalité. Ça reste politiquement corrosif, cette idée de mixer les choses. On peut laisser la place à la pensée, tout en créant des objets expressifs.

AL: C'est une façon de perturber ?

DD: Une façon de dealer avec la mort. On crée des cycles et j'aime me réapproprier des choses mortes comme la sculpture. D'ailleurs, c'est assez viral, certains artistes de ma génération reviennent à la matière, je crois en un certain animisme. A cette époque d'entertainment généralisé, il y a une vraie question dans cette expo sur la consommation culturelle. La sculpture est quelque chose d'assez tradi, réactionnaire et il faut se la coltiner

pour dire des choses avec, c'est déjà pas mal. Plutôt que d'aller dans la zone de confort d'un film ou d'une expérience virtuelle, qui serait juste un spectacle.

AL: Tu rejettes le spectacle ?

DD: Oui, complètement.

AL: Tu aimes les situationnistes, la dérive ?

DD: Ah oui beaucoup !

AL: Tu te méfies de l'entertainment ?

DD: Oui, et d'ailleurs, quand je parle corps/mouvement, je parle de flux. La chose à ne pas faire serait de spéculer sur eux, sur ces corps en mouvement qui m'intéressent. Comment un adolescent fait-il de la politique aujourd'hui avec son ordinateur, sa chaîne



YouTube ou son compte Facebook ? C'est quelque chose qui m'intéresse et qui figure dans les objets. Tout ce qui peut être le matériel aluminium ou matériel technologique, comme les langues, les transmissions, le mouvement Anonymous avec le masque... tout est présent ici. J'ai des corps en mouvement aussi qui sont sérigraphiés partout. Ils sont dans des transes, dans des raves, dans des squats. Avec mon petit appareil je fais des photos, mais je ne les montre jamais. Elles sont enfouies dans la matière. C'est une forme de résistance pour moi. Je disais que l'esthétique amène à une forme de déception. Cette déception est très situationniste, voire proche du mouvement Fluxus. Le spectateur se retrouve devant un objet qui est plutôt généreux et expressif mais c'est un leurre. Ce qui compte c'est ce qu'il y a dehors, ce qui se passe à l'extérieur. Si ce que j'essaie de faire produit cela, c'est top. J'aimerais qu'il y ait une forme de générosité avec un coup de bâton derrière qui dit « agis ! ».

AL: Toutes ces nouvelles technologies tu les perçois surtout du côté politique, engagé, plutôt que comme une aliénation ?

DD: C'est les deux. La politique comme plateau de réflexion c'est une forme d'aliénation. La technologie est devenue si proche de nous et de notre corps qu'il devient intéressant de le penser comme une chose qui fait partie intégrante de notre esprit, de notre zone d'action.

AL: Nous faisons partie d'une génération qui expérimente. Nous sommes un peu les cobayes de ces nouvelles technologies. La nouvelle génération a déjà intégré la chose et se protège.

DD: On est peut-être dans une période "cobaye" et il y a eu une faille quelque part. Steve Jobs et tous ces grands penseurs qui ont mis en place le système, voulaient que les choses soient simples, qu'il n'y ait pas d'accrocs. On a compris que ce n'était pas le cas, que les choses n'étaient pas si simples. C'est flagrant aujourd'hui, nous vivons de nouvelles formes de pathologie avec de nouvelles angoisses. Les nouvelles générations se préservent de ça mais il y a une chose qu'elles n'oublient pas. Elles

savent bien qu'elles ont accès à une plateforme à utiliser plutôt que d'être utilisées par elle. Youtube et Facebook sont des plateformes, au même titre que la rue. C'est comme le graffiti et toutes les contre-cultures. Ça fait grandir cette chose qui dépasse la technologie et qui m'intéresse. Comment impose-t-on notre corps, notre expression dans la société ? Comment crée-t-on un "nous" qui correspond à ce que l'on veut sans subir les choses ? Aujourd'hui Internet est beaucoup plus utilisé par les gens pour des formes d'expression alternatives que l'inverse ou du moins à cinquante/cinquante.

AL: D'un côté ça donne plus de liberté mais de l'autre plus d'aliénation. J'ai vu une étude qui disait que de plus en plus de jeunes font de la chirurgie esthétique à cause des réseaux sociaux. Ils veulent diffuser une image d'eux-mêmes qui corresponde aux critères des réseaux. Dans ce cas là, c'est plus d'aliénation, plus de contraintes pour le corps. J'ai quand-même l'impression qu'avec les réseaux



sociaux et Internet, il y a une importance accordée à l'apparence qui est plus grande qu'avant. Même s'il y a une libération de la parole et donc du corps avec des mouvements comme #metoo qui n'auraient pas été possibles sans Internet et les réseaux sociaux.

DD: C'est intéressant de se demander quelles sont les limites de notre espace. Comment on est représenté aussi. Le narcissisme, par exemple, est une forme de représentation politique assez étrange. Je me représente par moi-même et je n'ai pas l'intention d'être représenté par un autre. Même si ça crée des névroses et des pathologies, j'ai tendance à voir les choses de manière très positive. Même si on crée un autre que soi sur Internet qui agit, on crée un organe nouveau, anonyme, un avatar. Il y a les haters qui détruisent toute forme de positivisme mais il y a autre chose et j'y crois. C'est à cela que je me raccroche régulièrement pour imaginer des formes. Je ne peux pas parler d'autre chose que de politique puisqu'on a affaire à une organisation de gens qui décident de leur façon d'être. C'est toujours une belle déclaration.

AL: Pour revenir à l'exposition, que veut dire ce titre *O'Da'Oldborin'Gold* ? Le communiqué ne dévoile rien sur l'exposition, c'est voulu ? Je trouve ça bien de ne pas donner de grille. On n'est pas à l'école, on n'est pas là pour expliquer.

DD: Qu'il n'y ait pas de communiqué matche bien avec l'exposition. Le titre est assez énigmatique c'est vrai. Ça fait un moment que je fais des titres comme ça. J'aime le rapport au langage qui est encore lié au corps. (rires) Ça rappelle toute une écriture que j'aime bien collecter et qui m'intéresse vraiment. "Boring Gold" en même temps c'est assez clair. C'est pour dire qu'il y en a marre de certaines vieilles choses...

AL: Dans l'art ou ailleurs ?

DD: Je ne sais pas. C'est très romantique comme déclaration. Je ne veux pas être didactique.

AL: Il y a quelque chose d'un peu californien dans ton travail, à la Mike Kelley, ou Cady Noland aussi. Même dans ton esthétique, il y a quelque chose de Cady Noland. Surtout ce côté métallisé, ces grilles, ces chaînes qui pendent. Le morceau de lit en rotin qui semble peint en argent. Le rotin c'est vraiment symbolique des années 1970. Il y a une

espèce de court-circuit entre les époques avec ce côté métallique.

DD: Oui, bien sûr. Cady Noland n'a jamais pu faire quoi que ce soit sans penser à la mort. Elle étudiait aussi beaucoup le corps social, le corps guillotiné. J'aimerais vraiment que ça devienne ça, c'est sûr. Je suis obsédé par la fiction, la réalité, l'étalon de droite selon Deleuze, qu'est ce que la gauche aujourd'hui... je pense à tout ça. (rires) Du coup, oui, Cady Noland est importante pour ça dans ses questions de déplacement. J'ai toujours eu ce côté américain, depuis le début. On me l'a toujours dit. Je trouve ça plutôt positif. Je crois que j'ai une culture assez pop. Je viens du sud de la France mais j'ai des inspirations plutôt anglo-saxonnes. J'ai creusé une empreinte dans le sable avec le lit, puis j'ai splashé de l'aluminium. C'est le fantôme du lit. J'aime que ce soit des gestes de sculpture assez forts. Rendre verticales des choses qui sont normalement à l'horizontale m'intéresse. L'inaction du corps qui dort, qui est dans une action plutôt mentale. On parlait des galaxies, qu'est ce qu'une pensée produit avec ses rêves et ses cau-

chemars ? J'ai tendance à plutôt me contenter des meubles que je trouve dans la rue. Le matériau aussi est important pour moi. J'ai fait pas mal de graffiti et j'ai un ami qui m'a raconté qu'on pouvait fondre de l'aluminium dans un terrain vague et faire des splashes. J'ai commencé à faire ça avec lui comme une forme d'expressivité. Cet aluminium m'a rappelé les outils technologiques qui souvent nous manipulent. Il y a une idée de production dans ce matériau froid. Le fondre est un peu comme le corrompre. Je corromps la matière en quelque chose de plus expressif et personnel. Le splash c'est comme un crachat ingurgité et recraché. Là je recrache dans le monde du rêve, de l'inconscient. En même temps l'inactivité supposée du corps endormi est active puisqu'elle est verticale...

**O'DA'OLDBORIN'GOLD À LA GALERIE CHANTAL
CROUSEL DU 12 JANVIER AU 14 FÉVRIER.**



STUDIO
VISIT



David Douard

Language as virus
and failing machines

—
by Robert Barry

A punctured airbag hangs deflated and forlorn – removed from the car that once housed it – pinned to the wall in a side room of David Douard's studio. Like most of the materials the artist uses, the airbag was found lying in the streets that surround his studio in Aubervilliers, on the outskirts of Paris. This object is not – or not yet – considered by Douard to be a work, or even part of one. 'One day,' he says, 'maybe.' Until then, the airbag simply hangs there, over his shoulder, as he gets on with other things. But, for Douard, it has come to represent an idea that is central to the exhibition, at Galerie Chantal Crousel in Paris this autumn, which I find him in the midst of preparing for. Entitled 'Bat-Breath. Battery', the show offers mute testament to a life emerging from otherwise exhausted technologies.

It may not look much like one right now but, within a few weeks, this room in Aubervilliers will become a radio studio, broadcasting to the gallery across town a lone female voice, which will sing monotone lines composed from poems sourced on the internet and cut into semantic fragments. Douard has been making use of this kind of material, posted anonymously as scrolling text videos on YouTube or in forums such as Deep Underground Poetry, since his 2012 solo show 'Innerspace' at Bétonsalon, an art and research space at Université

Paris Diderot. For each show, he finds different means of giving material form to these disembodied words, orchestrating a scenario for which Thomas Pynchon, in his 2013 novel *Bleeding Edge*, coined the phrase 'virtuality creep': the seepage of online fauna into the offline world. The words are moulded in plaster or aluminium, projected onto what the artist describes as a 'fountain of saliva', or sung over the airwaves: 'The medium changes,' Douard tells me, 'but the idea stays the same.' Influenced by William Burroughs's 'cut up' technique, showcased in his *Nova Trilogy* (1961–64), the artist seeks to 'contaminate the exhibition space' with a volatile language virus.

Douard has lived in Aubervilliers for some ten years now. As we walk the short distance from his house to the studio, he points out a small domestic workshop where a man of Chinese descent tailors suits, and a warehouse where a group of ageing communists regularly convene. Part of the graffiti scene as a teenager, Douard has long taken the local streets as a natural starting point for his work. But today, he says: 'Nobody expresses anything in the street now. Everything happens on the internet. That's the place you have to understand.'

The particular warehouse Douard currently works in was found for him a year and a half

ago by his gallery, Chantal Crousel. It's big but spartan, still looking more suited to its former purpose as an automobile repair shop than the production of fine art. The floor is currently striated by a huge metal frame, which was the reason Douard chose such a large space. Formerly a support structure for a set of street-market stalls, this frame is soon to become the foundation for a series of bulbous aluminium staffs, each wrapped in exposed electrical wires with a current passing through them. Douard will use this piece to transform the exhibition space into a battery, in a use of electromagnetic energy as artistic material that brings his work close to that of American conceptualists such as Walter De Maria (*Lightning Field*, 1977) or Robert Barry (*Electromagnetic Energy Field*, 1968). But, as Douard himself says, there's a paradox: 'I'm very influenced by conceptual art, but I'm quite expressive. I even cast my own aluminium in the garden here!' There is scant evidence of American minimalism's clean lines and airy purity in the piled-up profusion of rough-hewn elements found in a Douard object.

'I come from a generation that is used to going to a museum and seeing a machine not working,' Douard tells me, referring to the growing ubiquity of media art, kinetic art and video art in major institutional retrospectives where, due to the sheer volume of pieces,

it becomes almost inevitable that, at any given time, at least one or two works won't be operating properly. But Douard sees in such curatorial headaches a possibility 'to represent something beyond the composition itself: nothingness, obsolescence, the passing of time. I'm always thinking about that when I produce electric works or use media: they might work or they might not. It's still the same idea.'

Fidgety and intense, Douard conjures up a strange imaginative world in which inert materials are imbued with secret inner lives and made the agents of some obscure, silent resistance. By contrast, people are apt to become things, entangled in the work on display by the simple act of sitting down on one of the items of furniture that Douard frequently installs within his sculptures and which he encourages people to use – although his chairs do not offer you a better view of the work so much as entangle you in it. For the 2012 Bétonsalon show, an old brown sofa left its occupants facing a plain white wall. 'I try to use the display as if it were a street, a social place,' he explains. 'There's no distance from the work. The public have to go in and taste it for themselves.'

Robert Barry is a composer and freelance writer from Brighton, UK.

David Douard is an artist based in Aubervilliers, France. This year, his work was on show at Union Pacific, London, UK, and his solo exhibition at Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris, France, opened in September. His work is included in the group show 'Co-Workers. Le réseau comme artiste' (Co-Workers. The Net as Artist) at Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris from 9 October to 31 January 2016.

1
'Bat-Breath. Battery',
2015, exhibition view at Galerie
Chantal Crousel, Paris

2
Peaceful snow/Lounge corps,
2014, metal, Perspex,
paint, wood, fabric, chain, model
houses, dimensions variable

Courtesy
1 the artist and Galerie
Chantal Crousel, Paris;
photograph: © Aurélien Mole
• 2 the artist and
Johan Berggren Gallery,
Malmö

*Douard conjures up a strange imaginative world
in which inert materials are imbued
with secret inner lives and made the agents of some
obscure, silent resistance.*



L'OFFICIELART

DAVID DOUARD
en conversation avec
MAURIZIO CATTELAN

GÉNÉRATION NETFLIX

Enfant de l'ère numérique, David Douard (né en 1983) développe une œuvre poreuse et complexe où se mêlent sans hiérarchie machines et organismes, nouvelles technologies et poésie, salive et processus de transformation du langage. Il aborde avec Maurizio Cattelan les films de Gregg Araki, l'acné et son exposition présentée au Palais de Tokyo

Page de droite, David Douard.

GALERIE
CHANTAL CROUSEL

PHOTO VALENTIN BOURE GIACOBETTI.



Maurizio Cattelan
Génération Netflix, David Douard en conversation avec Maurizio Cattelan
L'Officiel Art, March-May 2014, p.204-207



Maurizio Cattelan :

**Bonjour David, rapide aperçu, qui es-tu ?
Quel âge as-tu ? Où vis-tu et travailles-tu ?**

David Douard :

Bonjour Maurizio, j'ai 30 ans, je vis et travaille à Aubervilliers en banlieue parisienne, dans cet espace suburbain où il se passe beaucoup de choses et qui est pour moi une source d'inspiration.

Il y a un certain nombre de références musicales ou cinématographiques des années 1990 dans ton travail, très génération Netflix. Je pense à Gregg Araki, à Belle et Sébastien ou au groupe indé-pop Unrest (So so sick). Comment toutes ces références disparates s'articulent-elles dans ta pratique ?

Ma génération a beaucoup regardé la télévision et la digère peu à peu. C'est une référence incontournable pour les artistes, comme l'était la peinture de paysages à une époque. Adolescents, je regardais beaucoup de programmes américains, cela a été une éducation parallèle qui m'a marqué. Mon but est d'arriver à énoncer autant le regardeur que le regardé en utilisant le médium qui les sépare comme outil conceptuel.

Est-ce qu'il n'y a pas aussi une sublimation du monde de l'adolescence, peut-être le tien dans les années 1990 ?

Oui, c'est un motif qui revient car il représente un moment, une attitude, une surface propices à toutes les expressions. Dans mon atelier les objets se comportent comme des peaux adolescentes en mutation, en rébellion : les choses poussent, se dressent devant moi, courbent comme des corps malades, les surfaces sont impures. Cette rébellion adolescente n'a aucune ambition politique, elle est toujours poétique et en mouvement.

Tu avais de l'acné enfant ?

Justement non, mais à partir de 13 ans j'étais en internat pendant sept ans et j'ai vu des choses que tu ne peux pas imaginer.

La peau semble être un élément récurrent dans ton travail, je pense à ton exposition à Béton Salon, Innerspace, autour du travail de Jean Commandon. Elle y est comme le passage vers une étrange intériorité. Qu'y a-t-il sous la peau que tu représentes ?

Je pense mes pièces comme des peaux, ce sont des parois derrière lesquelles glissent toutes sortes de choses. Souvent, je charge la matière de texte imprimé, comme une maladie de peau, une protubérance. Le langage incorporé dans la matière se propage et agit, il ronge, façonne, jusqu'à trouver sa forme en surface.

J'aime les mutations, la corruption, toutes ces lois qui existent dans la matière. Je n'ai de fascination, ni pour l'organique, ni pour la technologie. C'est le duel destructeur entre les deux qui m'intéresse.

Je t'ai entendu parler d'"autisme technologique" en te référant à l'individualisme extrême corollaire aux nouvelles technologies qui deviennent littéralement des extensions du corps humain. Néanmoins, en plein boom du "selfie" tu fais partie des artistes de ta génération qui continuent à favoriser les collaborations et les échanges.

"LES IMAGES COMME LES OBJETS SONT DES PAROIS À RUMEURS ; ELLES FIXENT LES LÉGENDES..."

Je ne crois pas à la singularité, au style, et je déteste la vision égocentrique du monde que l'on attribue aux artistes. Je n'éprouve pas de jalousie envers les autres artistes. Je fais partie de l'espace Castillo corrales à Paris ; nous n'avons jamais arrêté de croire en l'expérience collective. C'est une nécessité d'aujourd'hui qui permet de faire naître de nouvelles formes d'exposition et de prendre des risques.

Qui sont les artistes qui t'influencent ou t'ont influencé ?

Les mouvements Fluxus et lettristes restent les plus importants ainsi que les artistes Allan Ruppersberg, Tetsumi Kudo ou encore Jef Geys.

L'image, mentale et visuelle, est un motif-clé chez toi. Pour moi les images ont toujours été l'arme ultime pour combattre le langage. Pour toi, j'ai l'impression qu'elles ont la même structure que la peau :

une plateforme visible qui donne accès à un monde caché chargé de langage et de signes. Pourquoi ?

Les images comme les objets sont des parois à rumeurs ; elles fixent les légendes que nous créons et les transformons en fossiles. Ce sont souvent des légendes urbaines liées à notre société, qui concentrent le mal dans un ghetto, sous la figure d'un noir américain ou du capitaine Crochet, tout cela pour l'objectiver et se dire que nous sommes par défaut le "bien". J'aime assez que mes pièces soient la surface propice à l'éclosion de ces propos, c'est très proche d'une vision animiste où la matière est incarnée.

Tu es passé maître en copier-coller, parasitage, piratage à la manière d'un virus. Ce qui m'amène à la question hypocondriaque : pourquoi cette obsession du virus et de la maladie, du "sick" ?

"Sick" est le mot qui me permet de renverser le sens scientifique du terme en quelque chose de positif. C'est devenu un titre générique pour toutes mes pièces. Comme un virus, il se transmet du plâtre au métal, du bois aux fleurs. Sous la tutelle du langage et de la poésie, la salive malade se propage et fait pousser des choses.

Je suis comme Kudo, un "cultivateur". C'est aussi ma porte de sortie pour ne pas avoir à assumer un style ou une forme.

Que se passe-t-il dans ton exposition au Palais de Tokyo ?

Grâce à la commissaire Rebecca Lamarche-Vadel, j'ai pu accéder à la collection de moulages de l'hôpital Saint-Louis dont j'avais entendu parler en travaillant sur Commandon, et j'ai élaboré un projet autour de seins malades qui deviennent une source de lait dont les objets s'alimentent dans l'espace d'exposition. Le liquide contient pour moi le sujet, comme la salive il est la traduction en matière du langage. L'exposition va être une rumeur des multiples récits poétiques qui font notre société aujourd'hui. Ils prendront forme et vie dans la fusion du liquide. Pour ce projet j'ai également développé un lieu habité où un ordinateur va envoyer des signaux, des mots provenant d'Internet, une nouvelle forme de poésie, dans toute l'exposition pour activer des objets mécanique au rythme du flux du texte.

FEATURE



Empathetic Violence

David Douard *discusses his idea of sculptural resistance*

by MICHELE D'AURIZIO

FEATURE



Galerie
Chantal Crousel

Michele D'Aurizio: *Are your artworks dead or alive?*

David Douard: They are not dead or alive, but perhaps stillborn.

MDA: *So, are they supposed to disgust or instill a feeling of pity in the viewer?*

DD: Animism is a notion that I found to suit the works, insofar as their skin curtains an underground life: they are no longer vital, but are trapped in an inert, intense vegetative state. This state is a foundation for resistance — often inertia is indeed the most stubborn resistance.

I am not asking the viewer to look at my artworks as dead objects, but to understand them as fossils, imprints of his/her daily experience: the objects are not dead because the viewer is “together with” them.

MDA: *Sickness and disease are recurring topics in your art — as in a constant search for a wavering state of matter. This seems symptomatic of a rather pessimistic understanding of life on earth.*

DD: The idea of disease came to be a sort of tool that allows me to approach things, to give shape to objects

and to load them with meaning, as in a flow of contaminations. For me disease is a conceptual framework: it orders my thoughts, it grows and teems inside me. In this sense, it is not a pessimistic concept but rather more of a productive means to an end. Moreover, I like the idea that a threatening circumstance could turn out to be positive: depicting the starting point of a process of decay or a demise, to be constructed as a feeble inertia.

MDA: *What materials determine your art?*

DD: I work with materials that I feel might have a communicative potential. For example, I search for signs of contamination and materials that allow this to become visible. I often choose poor materials, such as plaster, wood, steel... I'm not interested in the finish of a product — my aim is to render a poor material into an effective object, by infecting it with meaning. In this regard I employ narrative and poetry, which I inject literally into the plaster or the living matter, as if the material is being corrupted by a subject. In the end, the surface of the work develops an impure skin or “acne,” the subject rises onto the surface as an abstract, silent, sculptural efflorescence.

Previous page:
Glory Hole, 2013 (detail)

This page:
Wee've Ne'er Gotten, 2014
Installation view,
“Mo'Swallow,” Palais de
Tokyo, Paris

FEATURE

Next page:
SICK 54LIVA, 2013

Galerie
Chantal Crousel

MDA: *So do you believe that inorganic compounds can secretly feel emotions?*

DD: Emotions are rooted within materials: they move within them, are contracted by them and give them shape. The surface of my work is a result of these movements: acne pimples, sweat drops, sores. They are all symptoms of what is happening inside and is arising on top, producing a kind of significant form of disorder. The idea that inorganic materials can start acting as affected objects seems to me a form of activism against the established order of things. Technological objects, for example, are so exciting: they invade our lives and force us to establish relationships with them that go beyond daily habits, becoming almost like voodoo objects.

Within the search for contamination, digitalization is a source: wiring the works expands them onto a flow, stimulating movement through devices. But the kind of correspondence that digital tools establish in relation to texts and materials is more akin to an idea of re-appropriation and hacking. The mass of digital tools around us is so immense that it could even be understood as a broadcast network of our impurities; corrupt cables, screens, projectors are introduced as a kind of mystical force and as re-appropriated objects.

MDA: *Indeed, in your installations, you often incorporate technical devices — such as video screens, players, sound domes — along with display elements — benches and rugs above all. I always wonder if you are looking for specific shapes, or more for specific scenarios; and if you consider yourself more a sculptor or a storyteller. In the installations, the autonomy of the sculptural work often seems affected by a muscular staging sensibility. But where does the autonomous work begin and where does the exhibition display end?*

DD: The works in the studio gradually turn into hybrid display structures; videos are often chaotic and disjointed, connected but striving towards a certain level of autonomy. The tension between display elements — as you mentioned, benches, frames, support structures (often borrowed from the aesthetics of fair display) — and sculptures that are in contrast informal, brutal, twisted — between an objective presentational strategy and deeply anarchic objects — allows me to depict both the interiority of objects and the subjects that are haunting them.

I am also interested in the domestication of my works, which might seem remote and dry, but in that communal field of the exhibition space, approaches intimacy. The installation acts eagerly to develop direct involvements: the sounds, the words, the images; and everything else in the space strives to actively provoke to the point of exhaustion. Maybe this renders a malleable viewer, a kind of wanderer.

MDA: *Who are the subjects who sleep in your works?*

DD: I used to obsessively follow several rioting movements around the globe, and it has found its way into my work in the form of fragments of words from the web, some jpeg files, anonymous things... And, step by step, I wanted to build a sort of "legion" with

them. It is something like a sub-network of emotions. It is rather appropriate to use the word "sleep," because it is indeed a quiet strength, a swarm without any outward output.

MDA: *And what about the teenager?*

DD: Being teenage is a lost joy, remaining in our minds as something that once happened and that we strive to find again. I try to embody this in my work, filing keepsakes of forgotten stories, patterns of life that pivot on the fancy about those teenage years that we had never truly experienced. It is also worth mentioning the construction of the self as affected by the repression of the other self: to live in the eyes of the other, hiding and rioting without purpose and ethos. Thinking about social movements that impact our quotidian existence, teenagers remain the princes, the first heirs of pure freedom. This is why I find it interesting to place them as storytellers: their voices force things to reveal themselves.

MDA: *What do you remember about the riots in the Paris banlieues?*

DD: This is a very good question, because I feel very sympathetic to the Parisian suburban landscape, a place where I am affected by local behavioral patterns that then influence my practice. Primarily due to having lived and worked there for quite some time now, it is what I consider to be my home.

Suburbs are for me landlocked areas of modern cities, a hybrid density where hyper-organized city dormitories exist in parallel with social madness, bursting identities and primitive rebellion — I empathize with the violence that hides in the suburbs because it is a form of unspoken melancholy. Here we stare at the city from afar: we are frozen out, where we feel protected from the pressures and hectic rhythm of the city. Certain things persist in the suburbs: the young people have full territorial control; they move in masses and retain the power to break the city.

I feel that the riots could begin again tomorrow. I see the potential for this. There is a wandering and unstable subject that lingers, which nags and torments to echo the intensity of external events. I often think about a work of Martin Kippenberger, *New York Seen from the Bronx* (1985), a tiny model of Manhattan...

MDA: *In the "Youth Uprising" manifesto, Isidore Isou wrote that young people are "any individuals who do not yet fit into their function, who agitate and fight to attain the desired position." Do you feel you fit into any function?*

DD: I'm interested in this idea of transition, to crystalize it into an idea of sculpture's resistance, a kind of death threat. My practice is indeed close to an adolescent's attitude, insofar as it fights in the face of its own future, while teeming with impurities, flaws and contamination.

I'm attracted to the notion of an organization that moves towards anarchy. In art, I would say, as an organized corporation of rebellion with its own language, its

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own codes. It is that which aims to erode sedimentary structures.

Regarding my generation, there are three distinct possibilities: either we fight all the time and then we occupy the necessary moral view, or we just adhere to the rules and codes and then produce; or finally we just become insane. In terms of being insane, I try to imagine an organization of this madness, to consider it very seriously. This permits me to speak about strangeness, broken computer science, “trans-genre” relationships, obsolete rituals surrounding urban myths. All of this communicates when things are hidden and corrosive: including logos, codes and even demonstration devices... Which is once again a materialization of contamination.

In regards to Isidore Isou — and to add Robert Filio — my attitude stems from a belief in poetry, and through this I hope to show that the works are not dead.

David Douard (b. 1983) lives in Paris

Selected solo shows:

Marbriers 4, Geneva; Signal, Malmö; Les Églises, Chelles; Galerie Valentin, Paris; Rongwrong, Amsterdam; Bétonsalon, Paris; Galerie Catherine Bastide, Paris.

Selected group shows:

David Roberts Art Fondation, London; Frutta Gallery, Rome; High Art, Paris; Biennale de Lyon; T293, Rome; Gasconade, Milan; Galerie Kamm, Berlin; Fondation d'Entreprise Ricard, Paris; Shanaynay, Paris; Castillo/Corrales, Paris.

Solo shows by David Douard are currently at Palais de Tokyo, Paris, until May 12; and Sculpture Center, New York, until May 12. In 2014 Douard will exhibit at Musée d'Art Contemporain, Lyon; and High Art, Paris.

Michele D'Aurizio is Flash Art International Managing Editor.

*Previous page:
SA SA, 2013*

*This page:
Installation view, “Sick Saliva,” Valentin, Paris, 2013. Photography by Florian Kleinfenn*

*All images courtesy of the
Artist and High Art, Paris*

ARTFORUM



David Douard
PALAIS DE TOKYO
13, Avenue du Président Wilson
February 14–May 12

Galerie
Chantal Crousel

Parisian David Douard's latest exhibition, "Mo' swallow," is a contemporary fable that through meme and repeated riffs spatializes the power of language to constitute worlds. Referring to the circulating identity of hip-hop as speech, prose, and song, the exhibition speaks to the transformative effects of excess consumption and living with technologies.

Near the entrance to the show, an ambient, catchy, video game-like sound track by Gag Drake Vogt emanates through a sequence of Venetian blinds. Behind them one notices that the sounds are coming from a video loop that resembles a DVD selection menu. It is as though it is the interface for the exhibition, where space is configured as multiple rooms to explore. There is a collective enterprise behind this walk-through landscape—once again Douard is working collaboratively and also drawing in other artists' works. Two historical pieces—a 1975 birdcage by Tetsumi Kudo with disembodied portrait of Eugène Ionesco, and Jules Baretta's 1890 cast breasts—are nodes in this mise-en-scène punctuated by sculptural fragments of street-based, suburban Pop referents, aestheticizing dysfunction and mock-casually attentive to arrangements of design and brand: Stand-alone plaster-cast brick wall paintings, murky resins, brandished insignias, metal structures made defunct, mannequins, and projected word-forms coexist—offering momentary retinal relief under hydroponic lights.

Here, the biological and the digital, word and image, interchange and transact into a strangely compelling mood reminiscent of urban malaise and adolescence. Value in this system is suspended, decommissioned, made permeable again like the streaming consciousness of rap: nonsense and meaning coalesce. This is salient work that simultaneously critiques and reproduces the atmospheric states for contemporary cohabitation and relationship with desire.

CURA.



RUBA KATRIB: What role do movies and music play in your work? These references are integrated in a way that seem to have an autobiographical significance, that they have in some way influenced the way you, or perhaps a generation, think about the world. For instance, in your work you have used *Innerspace*, a '80s movie where Dennis Quaid and his space ship are shrunk and injected into the body of an unwitting Martin Short, culminating in a story of fantastic space misadventure and biology gone wrong. I myself watched this movie several times as a kid, and I know that it had an impact on how I viewed the body and science at the time. That bodies could shift scale, mutate into other's, and just the visuals of the interior of Short's body that Quaid visited said a lot about what was we look like and their potential.

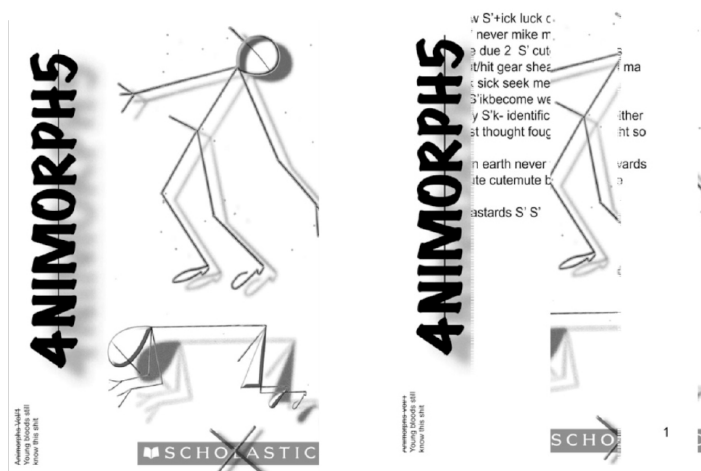
DAVID DOUARD: Films have an important role in my practice. It might be because sometime I am influenced by a film to start a project, or to work on an anecdote, or because, sometimes, more directly, I capture a part of a film to incorporate it in an installation. What I like in films or TV series is the attitude of the spectator who watches them, and how it conditions the spectator's interaction with the narration, like the emotions felt for the characters, especially fear.... This is probably why I particularly like Z-movies or horror movies: for their impact on reality, but also for the passivity with which we watch them and the influence they can have on our everyday. A science-fiction film can have repercussions on our behavior, or can stimulate our imagination, as an escape from a certain form of reality.

Also, the system of production and the exhibition of cinema, which is very object-based (or objectified), is often a starting point for my installation works. The theatrical previews, or commercial devices that serve to promote the film are motifs that I like to reemploy. They are a form of transmission of a subject or topic: a narration through very controlled media objects.

The film *Innerspace*, which gave me the title for my exhibition at Bétonsalon in Paris in 2012, was a direct reference to my collaboration with Jean Comandon, a scientific filmmaker from the '20s. My project was to translate a part of his work and I had chosen to do this through this American film about a crazy inner adventure that is anti-scientific in its treatment of science. One of my intentions is often to bring technology and science back to a more subjective space, one that is more personal than clinical. I think of the people who have viewed these films and if they had taken control of them – had appropriated them for their own narration and their own history – as a form of subjective hacking.

I also have used the film *Lord of the Flies* by Harry Hook for an installation I created at Fondation Ricard. I had reused the system of presentation and promotion of the film. I rerecorded the voices and pasted elements of the films with cut-ups, and shaped it as a theatrical preview with posters in the space and sculptures operating as decor. Through this process the installation and the film were renamed *Island of Lost Souls*, after a 1932 horror movie directed by Eric C. Keton. The two films share the plot in which characters lost on a desert island are presented as outcasts from society. My work was to recontextualize the film *Lord of the Flies*, and to see the lost teenagers, separated from civilization and led to brutality, as motifs of rebellion. In addition, I had taken some poetry I gathered from the internet during the events around *Occupy Wall Street* and added them into the new script of the film.

I am currently working with the science-fiction television series *Animorphs* based on young adult books written by K.A. Applegate and published by Scholastic. It is the starting point of an installation/platform where the medium of the TV-series is used as a tool for narration as deployed in the installation.



RK: There is a fixation on youth – perhaps your own with the references to the '80s and '90s – but there is also a general experience of childhood expressed in your work. What is the significance of youth in relation to the other subjects you are grabbing with? Also, as we've touched on, children are increasingly bombarded with different narratives and products, a phenomenon that will surely impact the formations of culture and knowledge.

DD: I see most of my motifs are acne spots, the surface of my objects like the skin of a sick child. I have always been attracted to the world of childhood. In relation to making art, this world came naturally when I was at art school, and I had to find the expressive patterns that could work as the stroke of the brush or as claws. Childhood is a moment in life where everything is being made, and nothing is controlled yet, this is a space I like. Using childhood is a way to stay free without any conviction or utopian ideals. It's not the end, it is the start, but we all know that everything collapses quickly once one passes through this period. But I don't think there is a kind of nostalgia in my approach of childhood, I would like it to be recurrent pattern, natural, like a painter uses a free gesture, or a brush stroke. For me it's a system of pure liberty that takes different formats. Often, when I create narrative works, I imagine children and teenagers as the representatives of a strange world where everything "switches"/"tumbles". I like the idea that an installation could look like a group of wandering children in a *banlieue*.

I am also very fascinated by the adaptation of new generations to new technologies, the way they digest them, how they use them everyday. The new modes of languages used and developed influence me constantly, the hacking of “DIY” machines. I have been developing for some time now a way of referencing the language used in popular culture, and that influences a lot of my decisions. I have been using the word “sick” as a slogan for all my works for two years now. More than its reference to a virus that would contaminate my pieces, it’s the meaning of the word that is interesting, its double function: negative for science, positive for popular culture. It mirrors the way we see the relation between new technologies and youth. We all know this fissure brings some kind of generalized autism, but at the same time it increases our capacity to open new horizons for language transmission, narration, and knowledge. It’s a phenomenon I would like to continue exploring in my work because it constantly evolves, particularly with the new forms of hacking that teenagers create everyday. In a way, my work gathers all these preoccupation and brings them to more poetic and hybrid forms, made to evolve in the context of art, which should not be moralizing and didactic.

RB: It seems like you are thinking about a moment of contact, of influence. Thinking about youth and the references you make in your work are specific to a formative moment in life. Like *Innerspace*, *Animorphs* or *Lord of the Flies*, films, books, television, music, etc. that shape how you (or even a generation) think about culture, society, science, space, and on. It’s shared, but also very personal. These elements play a part in how the interior space of a child is constructed, part of their imagination is impacted by these cultural manifestations.

DD: What interests me about these references is how to create some sort of answer, a digestion of media tools and to bring them to something more personal. It is a form of hacking, both dark and pop. And the fact that the actors of these films, and movies, and references are teenagers or children is very important because the person who watches them is also a teenager or a child, and in this way, these productions shape the forming mind of the child. My aim is to pervert all these sources, to copy them, to quote them, to use them as references, but to do all this in a subjective *détournement*, like a reappropriation, a digestion with no particular respect for the original source.

I have discovered “cry plays”, which are YouTube channels, created by fans of TV shows, or sitcoms produced by very big production houses. The creations made by the fans are very surprising. They often add a personal narration to the original narration. If you take the example of the story of zombies in the TV show *Walking Dead*, it holds a very important place in the development of “fan fictions.” In relation to this phenomenon, I try to imagine the fans as ghosts manipulating fictions, making it their own reality, or to translate their emotions into a fictional base. And all of these elements do exist on a platform like YouTube. By the way, I am at the moment creating my own TV program, which will be shown in an installation as a video.

RB: Can you elaborate on the “cry plays”? Viewers take over the existing narration of a television show? Personalizing it? Do they influence the actual program? This form of “hacking” seems to emphasize the attachments that are formed to the narratives and characters of popular culture. It’s also interesting in light of all the consumer technology and outlets with which to create and broadcast. But of course, this production isn’t based on totally original content.

DD: Yes, the cry plays are YouTube platforms made by fans in which they elaborate the fiction themselves, meaning that a series’ spectator becomes an author who manipulates elements of a show (title, topic, etc.) and applies and extends them into their own life and narration. This act isn’t really anodyne in relation to media impact. It highlights the desire to create our own investigation in relation to the various media we encounter. This is all happening without copyright, without the author’s credit: the spectator becomes the author. And this point is an important element for the construction of the narration. This kind of reappropriation helps my own way of working and creating stories. Using media as a medium can permit a subjective mix of response, which then disrupts the machine. Software does that, I think. In this way, I consider myself to be a sculptor. First, I worked with the “geek” of Blender, a free 3D software, to create and print 3D “virus shapes” and then incorporated them in my installation.



fue mut du-



RK: We've talked around technology a lot, but how do you see it as a concept manifesting in your work? It kind of sneaks in, it isn't overtly technological, although you are almost always incorporating some kind of media. It almost looks like you are hiding it, masking technology in a kind of romanticism... Are these elements opposed?

DD: The internet as a medium has a great strength. It is very close to the everyday experience of many people. One could say it is an impure/imperfect prolongation of a mutating body. It is very important to use it as a tool. I personally use the tool as a symptom, a virus producer that mirrors society, a generator of new language forms, new forms of communication. It is a very romantic vision.

I always try to give inert objects an affect, whether textual or electronic, to activate new forms of life. The sculptural forms are born from some impurity, from an overload of emotions, from a break, a knot. Most of the time, technology is also used as a text generator, or as a data generator, and the surrounding forms have to comply with this data. They adapt the narration flow to a form and vice-versa.

I have paid a lot of attention to the research made by Bruce Sterling on dead medias. (World power systems: dead media project: a modest proposal on dead medial World Wide Web page.) Sterling states that our relation to IT tools works like some kind of affinity. The "program obsolescence" of computers leads us to experience a relation to the life and death of an IT tool. If I try to translate what Sterling says, what we have to do is to reactivate dead IT tools. For an artist, working with these kinds of concepts is quite strange and stimulating. It is linked to some ancient animistic practices, which can be reactualized today.

In Erik Davies' *Technosis*, there is the idea of techno-animism. It functions as a kind of manifesto for the relation between new technologies and animist practices. I feel I am very close to this thinking. I would like to develop this intuition with my project working with *Animorphs*, without falling into the trap of merely representing the *anamorphosis* between technology and the body. I would like it to be more grounded in the everyday, urban, close to the behavior of the young and less affluent social classes: some kind of world inhabited with quixotic creatures with baseball caps, and sportswear. As if a young "chav" becomes a three headed eagle with a blackberry in hand. In the end, I think that to look for a life form for something that is already dead and to find a new form for language coming from the subterranean world of death, is one of the founding bases for an art object.

Today, IT tools are very aggressive, even with their luxury packaging. The youth generation has to overcome what is given to us. It has to hack what is produced by the industries, to give matter its subjectivity back. One could say that our personality has melted into the IT mass. Our avatars are traitors, and that's why I try, in my studio, to do my best to animate a deformed ghost, morphed by successive compressions, like a low quality jpeg after sending.

RK: Do you think that emotions are able to resist new technologies? Some people, like Ray Kurzweil, think that in the not too distant future, the human body will be increasingly robotic, simulated, and uploadable, including our emotions.

On the other hand, we also have emotional connections to consumer technologies; we are physically and psychologically attached to them in ways that are now considered very "normal." It just sneaks in.

DD: I am currently working on a series of sculptures, linked to a video. In the video, when there is a particular emotion in the voice of the actor, a detector sends an impulse to the engine of the sculpture, and the whole things start pivoting, very lightly, but very nervously. It's as if the membrane was activated by the machine and was also answering the emotions of the molecules inside the screen. Without going into the interactive aspect, it gives the whole thing the aspect of a garage creation.

And, in the end, what would be a negative point, the programmed obsolescence of objects, remains the starting point for a new form of life. In the same way the Fluxus artists used the information flux to make it stutter, kids from the new media generation are starting a crusade against new technologies, with subterranean languages, and emotion overloads which cause the chipset, the cables, and the screen to blow out.

The outcome of our advanced technology is the creation of new objects that are closer to us. Those objects will be affected also by the users and vice versa. We can do nothing. We want creature comforts, paper lightness, but we will stay at the same point, in the same mood, and finally the machine will come to corrupt everything.

The machine will become her own subject and we will wake up in a morning with red bloody words in mind as the Nicola Simpson's types tract(1). Poesy is still the same, words parcelling will born from sick data like a software vengeance.

The last thing I could say is that hybrid stools, tranhumanism... will help us to write our thoughts, sad thoughts, and stupid thoughts, like the machine in a way.

Nicola Simpson (ed.), *Notes from the Cosmic Typewriter: The Life and Work of Dom Sylvester Houédard*, Occasional Papers, London 2012.