

David Douard

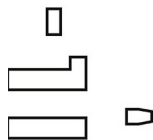
O'Ti'Lulaby

27.09–13.12.2020

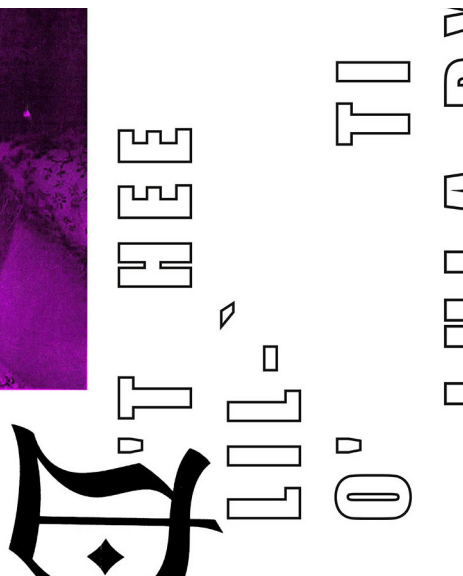
Curator: Xavier Franceschi



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Presse release

From September 27 to December 13, le Plateau presents *O'Ti'Lulaby*, David Douard's solo show including mainly new works, installations, sculptural and sound works and architectural elements.

Combining several language registers, everyday objects and materials, from low-tech, popular and mainstream culture, David Douard's works create shifts in meaning that generate poetry and fiction.

Bits of poetry from the Internet coupled with whimsical, damaged, cut-out and patched up forms result in hybrid sculptural pieces. Indifferently garnering junk, his installations – composed of materials whose organic and anarchical characteristics reflect those of social movements – yield changing bodies.

For his solo exhibition at Le Plateau called *O'Ti'Lulaby*, David Douard transforms the exhibition space by integrating architectural elements -railings, net curtains, screens, partitions and blinds – rather reminiscent of the surfaces of screens in a quasi-virtual relationship with space and playgrounds fenced with certain urban interstices.

These multiple spaces play on superimposition and transparency, rich in frameworks and layers that accentuate the undulating and moving effect of the images, objects and bodies. The site is therefore covered with a patchwork of sensitive and architectural epidermises, like a body with vital areas that are alternatively dormant or awake and activated by a myriad of flows.

Representation of the self and an emerging identity outline the glossy reflections of overexposed introspection. Breathing, language and his stutter are also insinuated in various forms – cut-up voices and words, fragments of writings – and this little refrain seems to mirror a collective voice that defies any categorisation.

In this universe, the structure equally partitions and reveals, hides and yet is assertive, and the anthropomorphic objects that intervene desert the partitions in favour of a fragmented centrality. The hindering and constraint of bodies are central to this individual and collective immersion where information, objects and figures echo both control and the subversive power of images and language.

David Douard, born in 1983 in Perpignan (FR), lives and works in Paris.

He had several solo and group shows in international institutions such as: Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA), Dublin, Ireland (2019); KURA. c/o Fonderia Artistica Battaglia, Milano, Italy (2018); Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France (2018 et 2014); Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris, France (2017 et 2015); Kunstverein Braunschweig, Germany (2016); Fridericianum, Kassel, Germany (2015); Sculpture Center, New York, United States (2014); Astrup Fearnley Museet, Oslo, Norway (2014); Fondation d'entreprise Ricard, Paris, France (2012). He took part in the following Biennales: Asia Culture Center – Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju, South Korea (2018); Taipei Biennale, Taiwan (2014); 12th Biennale de Lyon, France (2013). He also had a fellowship at the Académie de France in Rome – Villa Médicis (2017-2018).





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Interview between David Douard and Xavier Franceschi (extract)

XF : Can you tell us how the idea behind this exhibition originated? The origin of these new pieces that you created for Le Plateau?

DD : The exhibition is called *O'Ti' Lulaby*. I was thinking about a group song, a lullaby, a murmur, breathing placed in the corner of the bed for insomniac children. It may be a medieval song or the sound and air from a fan in a data center. Either way, in the case of a medieval lullaby, it evokes resistance, essence and soul. As for the breathing or whoosh from a data center, it is caused by excessive interaction between restless teenagers inventing a new galaxy via social networks. A place for discussion, activism and self-representation.

It is somewhat based on our transmission, communication and representation mechanisms. It is not a fixed, but constantly evolving form, something that is swarming, a mass, a solid, united nameless and colourless material. In an exhibition I want to recreate a flow. I am interested in data centers, in the fans cooling the computers that store our information.

I was also inspired by the impact of this activity, that is often hidden from view, on nature, how these days a poem can be written on a telephone, be stored, create heat that will impact a flower or other forms of changing nature.

XF : There is a dimension which I believe to be vital in your work, that lies in your way of marrying a work that is eminently sculptural, with something intangible namely language, speech, sound and music. Are you proposing a new experiment in this register to Le Plateau?

DD : An object or image is the opposite. It's fixed by definition, meanwhile sculpture, as we know, uses this movement to capture life. I'm looking for forms that can contain a certain energy, flow and life, to reflect on life and existence, the various pieces must be able to mutually influence one another and influence the space. The further it is from what we know, the closer it is to us in my opinion, it is just a face where the gaze should slide or cut like Buñuel's eye, quite cutting-edge so that we think differently, see differently and can deconstruct our relationship with things. That is why the forms cannot be recognised and assimilated. I have looked into many animist rituals. They inspire me. A certain belief of life in death, I like to think that an object has a soul.

Looking for the strange or/and irrational, a language that we don't understand, does not mean removing oneself from reality, on the contrary it means extending the scope of possibilities based on reality.

I also belong to a generation of artists who began to work with objects at a time when there were no more, or at least at a time when technology was entering our lives and calling into question materiality, physicality, as well as our social relationships and our way of consuming. It is true that the world is full of objects/prisons, everything is coarse, cutting, in short nothing has ever been smooth like Steve Jobs tried to tell us, we bought that for a while and then we woke up. So no, we decided to open the machine and see for ourselves, and like «baby Mad Max», we





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turned the totally sterile landscape of new technologies into our fertile field, a source of permanent chaos and glitches (in particular with regard to software). Bringing the physicality of digital to the fore, not being blinded, speaking about people who think, act, interact and reinvent themselves in mutant forms, it's political.

XF : We can also talk about recurring forms. For example, masks and this strange smile derived directly from the Occupy Wall Street movement, once again present in the exhibition...

DD : I'm really interested in disidentification techniques. The desire of any citizen to no longer be controlled hides behind the masked face.

The mask questions identity and relationships with police surveillance, or any form of control over communities. This is what lies behind wearing a mask, balaclava and hood. The trend to assert, therefore, radical individual and collective anonymity.

It is also to thwart standardised and individualistic forms of representation found in all its forms in society.

XF : Can you tell us about this piece that you are creating that refers to a specific game and that will have a decidedly architectural dimension?

DD : There is a game called Minecraft where the world isn't round, but horizontal. It is conducive to wandering, the scope for creating worlds and characters is also infinite. Many things interest me in this game, it is like a quite beautiful self-sufficient utopian life in which the user actively partakes.

I have watched my son play and together we created a model of the game but in the studio, the idea was to cut pixels out of building materials and to create an architecture that rebuilds itself each time, a sort of constantly evolving form. A fluid architecture but inspired by algorithms.

It is a coming and going, between a digital space and a physical space as a framework, and that is consistent with something that has interested me for a long time with the alternative practices generated by the Internet. I know that Minecraft is currently used by Reporters sans frontières to circumvent press censorship.

The NGO inserted articles and books in the online video game that have been censored in several countries such as Egypt, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia and Vietnam. This small model shows a 9-year old child and me wandering, looking for a free library hidden in Minecraft.

XF : All the space at Le Plateau has been completely redesigned to in particular to offer a specific route, a way through the exhibition comprising a set of constraints that are imposed on visitors. What does this idea of constraint refer to for you?

DD : There is a sort of appropriation of the space. I chose the most radical pendant, these are prison grilles, because I know that space, including exhibition space, is equally authoritarian. And I emphasise it, I add a sort of extension. I don't try to make it more pleasant, on the contrary. I do the opposite. I operate in a negative mode. It's also my way of withdrawing into my objects to test them and also see how far I can go in a form of resistance in comparison with these authoritarian forms. This is what I'm looking for - a relationship between opposites. It is as if the space were schizophrenic. It's both an interior and an exterior, both domesticated and personal as well as urban and





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collective. All this works for me like walls sharing the experience of the bodies living there and who are restrained most of the time, it is the bedrock of our experiences.

XF : But are these forms, this violence, a direct reference to the violence of what we experience collectively? Is it a sort of representation for you?

DD : We live under permanent control, through technologies, architecture, alienation is everywhere. If violence is present in my objects, it's because there is a defence, as something has to resist, has to exist for just reasons, without complying, forgetting yourself.

I often envisage architectural space like a patchwork where everything is equal. The bus shelter, the grille, the wall of the teenager's bedroom. It already exists in the forms that I make, around the question of identity. I do the same with space. Internal and external space, structures with bay windows, advertising boards. All of a sudden, the advertising board is in your home, in your living room, for example.

But it's also a way of saying that we are impregnated by these authoritarian forms. They are in us and we can also regurgitate them. There is definitely an idea of absorption and reiterating.

Appropriating urban space, making it my playing ground, has been a part of my life since I was a teenager. I think that a push/pull relationship is being played out. The walls/partitions were blank canvases, they needed to be harnessed, the surface appropriated to express myself.



XF : The exhibition is a global proposal, an environment to be perceived in its entirety. To what extent can the pieces be autonomous?

DD : All the pieces have some form of autonomy and they each play their roles all together. It's a shared seclusion of sorts.



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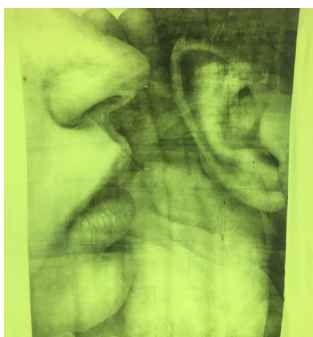
Images available



David Douard, *Awake since*, 2019. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris (2020).
Photo: Martin Argyroglo



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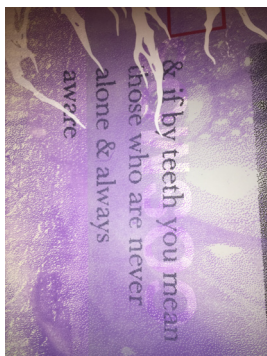
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David Douard, *blindfold*, vue d'exposition, KURA. c/o Fonderia Artistica Battaglia, Milan, 2018. Courtesy de l'artiste et Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris (2020).
Photo: Roberto Marossi



Work in progress
© David Douard



David Douard, *blindfold*, vue d'exposition, KURA. c/o Fonderia Artistica Battaglia, Milan, 2018. Courtesy de l'artiste et Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris (2020).
Photo: Roberto Marossi



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Events*

Offering you reasons to come back to the plateau during the exhibition time.

› Launch of *O'DA'OLDBORINGOLG* vinyl

On the occasion of the opening

Launch of the vinyl (produced in collaboration with Romain Hamar) and a series of posters
silkscreen prints by David Douard, edited by Galerie Chantal Crousel

Samedi 26.09.20

de 15h à 21h

› Artist tour

Sunday 22.11.20

5.30 pm

with David Douard

› Late-night openings

Late-night openings, up until 9pm, every 1st Wednesdays of the month, with a guided tour at 7.30 pm

› Guided tours

Every Sunday

4pm

Meet at the reception

*Rendez-vous gratuits





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La vitrine

Every month, the “Window Display” at l’antenne is home to a new art project linked to le Plateau’s exhibitions, collection and educational outreach ventures.

Marion Uerboom

16.09 – 1.11.20

Mathilde Denize

4.11.20 – 10.01.21

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La vitrine

L’antenne culturelle
22 cours du 7ème art
75019 Paris





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Practical informations

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Free entrance

Tube access : Jourdain or Buttes-Chaumont / Bus : line 26

Exhibition open from Wednesday to Sunday, 2pm - 7pm

Late-opening each 1st Wednesday of the month, Plateau-Apéro

L'antenne culturelle

22, cours du 7ème art (50m from the Plateau)

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Open weekdays, by appointment, for the use of the document library (books, magazines, videos)

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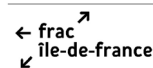
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President of the Frac Île-de-France : Florence Berthout

Director of the Frac Île-de-France : Xavier Franceschi

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