

UOL. XVI

Haris Epaminonda

24.09 – 06.12.15

Opening Wednesday 23 September, from 6 to 9 pm

Curator: Xavier Franceschi



Haris Epaminonda, Photographie trouvée, archives de l'artiste

Contact :

Isabelle Fabre, Communications Manager > +33 1 76 21 13 26 > ifabre@fraciledefrance.com

Magda Kachouche, Press Officer > +33 6 84 45 47 63 > mkachouche@fraciledefrance.com



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Press release

Frac île-de-france is presenting the first solo exhibition in France by Haris Epaminonda at le plateau.

The work of the Cyprus-born artist, who currently lives and works in Berlin, comprises mainly films, sculptures and installations that incorporate images and objects borrowed from various origins and epochs, to stage multiple encounters, while cultivating an explicit relationship with the past.

Epaminonda's approach is characterised by a careful choice of objects and meticulous presentations. The fact that her exhibits are taken from contexts that can be inferred by the observer, but are never explicitly revealed, contributes to their intrinsic strangeness. Pages of old books, vases or statuettes are put into relation through visual associations and form a fictional space. Shown as they are – as readymades, essentially – they appear like elements of an interrupted narrative that spectators are encouraged to reconnect. Their mode of presentation, or exposition, is key, and although they are often displayed in conventional museum settings – plinths, display cases, etc. – the scenography is invariably revisited and altered, as the plinths become sculptures, the display cases turn into aquariums, or frames overlap with more frames to focus on a detail of an image.

Epaminonda's films, as in her series *Chronicles* (2010 – on-going) evidence a similar relationship to the world: scenes of still-lives of objects and images variably composed and recomposed in front of coloured backdrops resulting in takes reminiscent of archaeological documentation –, landscapes vibrating to the rhythm of the elements moving through them; a palm tree moving with the wind, clouds passing over a mountain top, the sun setting at the horizon of the sea - reaffirm the poetic vision that underpins the artist's work.

The exhibition at le plateau marks an important and new step in Epaminonda's practice, which, as the title suggests, shall be seen as one large work building up over time through different volumes and chapters. For this occasion the artist has devised an extensive environment that occupies the cleared spaces of le plateau with a series of cubicles, platforms and screens conceived both as sculptures and presentation devices. Including other elements, films and sound - the soundscapes of the installation will be composed by the music duo 'Part Wild Horses Mane On Both Sides', with whom the artist often collaborated in the past - , the whole set exceeds the exhibition space itself with parallel and temporary appearances connecting the inside and outside of le plateau. Like an emphatic homage to the Japanese filmmaker Yasujiro Ozu, these performed interventions shape a kind of inhabited archipelago in constant evolution.

By condensing the different angles of her approach, in which the idea of travelling and movement – in time and space – plays a fundamental role, the exhibition as a whole will offer a unique opportunity for a simultaneously sculptural, spatial and filmic experience.





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Biography

Born in 1980 in Cyprus (Nicosia), Haris Epaminonda lives and works in Berlin. Her work was exhibited in solo exhibitions in numerous international art venues : Museum of Modern Art, New York (2011) ; Schirn Kunsthalle, Franckfort (2011) ; Tate Modern, Londres (2010) ; Malmö Konsthall (2009). Co-representing Cyprus at the Venice Art Biennale in 2007, she took part to dOCUMENTA (13), Kassel (2012), to the 2nd Athens Biennale (2009) and to the 5th Berlin Biennale (2008).





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Interview between Haris Epaminonda and Xavier Franceschi

Xavier Franceschi, director of the frac île-de-france, curates the exhibition *UOL. XVI*.

XAVIER FRANCESCHI : One of the main characteristics of your work is that it integrates existing images and objects. Could you explain how this practice developed? And do you remember the first time you presented an object or an image in this particular way?



HARIS EPAMINONDA : For many years I have been collecting artefacts, old ceramics and pottery, fabrics, statuettes and books – basically all sorts of things that I am drawn to. I surround myself with them and sometimes realise that one or the other has become part of one of my works.

XF : How do you select these images and objects? Would you say that there are larger ensembles in your work – images of landscapes, classical sculptures, vases and Asian urns, African or Oceanic statuettes, etc. – which are expanding in the course of your research?

HE : I like certain colours, shapes, sceneries. I like pictures with surfaces that suggest a certain depth and density, and I like imperfect things done with the greatest care and attention to detail. Selecting these images and objects has always been an intuitive process.

XF : In parallel – or rather, simultaneously – to these objects, you are showing a series of minimal sculptures. These slender metal shapes – reminiscent of lines drawn into the space, or pedestals, which, beyond their functionality, exist as parallelepiped volumes – are in stark contrast to the objects you choose. How do you deal with these oppositions – formal or other?

HE : I believe it's through oppositions like these that objects can be brought to life. I'm interested in the tension that manifests itself through the materials. The metal structures and plinths sit somewhere between the architecture of the exhibition space itself and the objects they support. For me, the work exists in the ambiguity of the moment – everything is seemingly fixed in the space and yet things remain open, and together they tell a story.

XF : Another striking characteristic of your work is that it plays with elements of museum scenography, which are often diverted from their original function. Does this allow you to indicate clearly that you are working on the idea of presentation as such? In other words, that what really matters is the way in which things are presented, or framed?

HE : Images generate ideas and vice versa. Questions of presentation come much later in the process, and although they certainly play a role in the overall set-up, I'm interested primarily in how objects tend to oscillate between past and present and in their potential to generate multiple plots. In this process, all decisions on how to treat these objects and images depend on their very objecthood and potentiality: their specific materiality dictates all my actions.

XF : Putting several elements next to each other, connecting them as you do, implies that you allow for a narrative. But is there every time a precise and final meaning to establish for each of the associations you are suggesting?



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HE : I don't really think of my work in terms of definitive ideas or meanings. In my mind, my installations are like images that suggest space, a memory, a place. I would like to think of my work as a growing collection of images that resonate with spectators and thus stimulate their imagination.

XF : Would you say that you follow the same approach in your films? Or rather, should your installations be seen as edits – of images and objects, that is – similar to those that structure the films in the field of cinema?

HE : To a certain extent, yes. There are of course obvious differences: in many instances, the films are not found but filmed by me, and the installations are straightforward, that is, without objects or other elements interrupting the filmic experience. Still, you are right, the sense of suggestive narrative is quite similar in both types of work.

XF : At le plateau you are presenting a specially conceived environment composed of cubicles or cells that function as both exhibition displays and sculptures in their own right. Is it true to say that you changed the scale but that the underlying logic – of combining objects in space – remains the same?

HE : I suppose yes, though I don't think there is a change in scale. I have always been playing with architectural interventions and alterations or additions, perhaps even at times much too subtle to notice.

XF : The environment at le plateau incorporates plants, animals, etc. The exhibition space is literally inhabited; even more so as it is regularly attended by a person who uses it for various activities: drinking tea, polishing a stone, etc. How should these other forms of presence be considered?

HE : Their presences and actions bring to life some of the elements inside and outside the exhibition space. There is the old man (a marginal character) inside le plateau, who at various times on certain days throughout the show, will be performing different tasks interrupted by frequent pauses. Meanwhile, two young women will be walking through the nearby Parc des Buttes-Chaumont, as if to absorb their own image, diffusing into the image of the other. Perhaps to become a mirror image, a reflection in the water that dissolves with the first rainfall.

XF : How would you connect these two appearances?

HE : The various elements inside and outside the exhibition space combine to form an image – in this case of three fictional characters meeting on a mountaintop. Although the characters seem unconnected (they never come into direct contact with each other), they meet in multiple time dimensions as they ascend or descend the mountain. Over the course of the exhibition, they appear at specific moments, according to a schedule illustrated by an imaginary graph that follows the shape of the mountain.

XF : The other link between the characters is the fact that they are both Japanese... And inside the exhibition space, most of the elements are linked to Japanese culture. What about this connection with Japan? And why do you use this particular way - very much classic and traditional - to evoke it?

HE : The exhibition is a fiction. Many elements of the show have an actual historical and physical origin - and many elements come from Japan. This ranges from fabrics from Kyoto to Japanese performers and so on. But these elements come together with other elements from other places - from Italy, Cyprus, Greece, China etc, book pages sourced in various second-hand stores, geometric iron structures, fish etc... Still, there is something in the Japanese culture, a way of seeing, a strive for simplicity, an emptying out, that I feel very close to. I have never been to Japan. I would love to go there one day. For the exhibition, the appearance of Japanese elements is as relevant as the place of the exhibition, Le plateau in Paris, the park, the water in the fishtanks, the time tables etc.





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Available pictures

All pictures are available upon request .

Contact : Magda Kachouche (mkachouche@fraciledefrance.com)



Haris Epaminonda, Founds photographs, from the artist collection



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Rendez-vous*

The Rendez-vous invite you to come back to le plateau within the framework of the exhibition.

Uisit with Haris Epaminonda

Sunday 25.10.15

5:30 pm

Uisit with Xavier Franceschi

Sunday 15.11.15

5:30 pm

Plateau-Apéro

Wednesday 07.10.15

Wednesday 04.11.15

Wednesday 02.12.15

Late opening, until 9pm, every first Wednesday of the month.

Exceptional late opening on Thursday 22.10.15 with le Grand Belleville.

Guided tour

Every Sunday

4pm

Conversation de plateau

Thursday 26.11.15

7:30pm

Special guests unveil their vision of the exhibition.

* The Rendez-vous are free of charge.





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L'Homme aux cent yeux (revue)

Frac île-de-france is launching a new review: *L'Homme aux cent yeux*.

This new review – in a nod to its glorious ancestors of the 30s and to the spirit of the Music Hall – proposes an annual programme of live interventions, open to all kinds of artistic creation (acoustic, filmic, choreographic, etc.), by artists invited to occupy the exhibition spaces in two phases. The first will consist in evening events during the ongoing exhibitions, with a performative play specially created by an artist for each occasion. The second will take place once during the year, in between exhibitions, when the spaces are empty and awaiting the next installation. For this event – the acme of the review – all the invited artists will gather and propose a follow-up to their first intervention. These two forms of intervention will enable the invited artists to experiment with new pieces in different contexts and in direct relationship with the public.

* *L'Homme aux cent yeux*(revue) is a reference to Argus, the all-seeing giant in Greek mythology with a tragic - and beautiful – destiny.

Lola González
Thursday 29.10.15

Félicia Atkinson
Thursday 19.11.15





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Plan your visit

> **frac île-de-france, le plateau, paris**

22 rue des Alouettes
F-75019 Paris
Metro : Jourdain, Pyrénées ou Buttes-Chaumont
Bus : line n° 26
Wednesday to Sunday, 2–7pm
Free Admission

> **L'antenne culturelle**

22 cours du 7ème art (50 meters away from le plateau)
F-75019 Paris
Tél : +33 (1) 76 21 13 45
Open during the week, upon appointment for research purpose.

> **frac île-de-france, Administration**

33, rue des Alouettes
F-75019 Paris
Tél : + 33 (1) 76 21 13 20
Mel : info@fracidf-leplateau.com
www.fraciledefrance.com

> **Partners**

Frac île-de-france receives the support of Conseil régional d'Île-de-France, Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication – Direction Régionale des Affaires Culturelles d'Île-de-France and Mairie de Paris.

Member of Tram, Platform (association of all the Fracs) and Grand Belleville.

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President of frac île-de-france: Jean-François Chougnat
Director of frac île-de-france: Xavier Franceschi

