

Mount Fuji does not exist

7 June – 29 July 2012



The Play, IE, 1972, ©The Play

**James Lee Byars, Lenka Clayton & Michael Crowe, Hamish Fulton,
Julien Gasc & Bruno Persat, Mark Geffriaud, Chitti Kasemkitvatana, Yuki Kimura,
Benoît Maire, Pratchaya Phinthong, The Play, Chloé Quenum, Shimabuku**

Curated by Elodie Royer & Yoann Gourmel

Exhibition journal – free

Le Plateau

Espace d'exposition
Place Hannah Arendt
F — 75019 Paris

L'Antenne

Espace pédagogique
22 cours du 7^e art
F — 75019 Paris

Le Frac Île-de-France est une initiative du Conseil régional d'Île-de-France.
Dans le cadre de son action au Plateau, le Frac Île-de-France est soutenu par:
Le Ministère de la culture et de la communication —
Direction régionale des affaires culturelles d'Île-de-France et la Mairie de Paris.

“Good work”, he said, and
went out the door. What
work? We never saw him
before. There was no door.”

Richard Brautigan, *Loading Mercury with a Pitchfork*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1976.

June 2011

Legend has it that Mount Fuji can be seen from anywhere in Japan. On several occasions we tried to check this hypothesis. People had told us you could glimpse it from the train window going to Tokyo. That in clear weather it revealed itself from the upper floors of certain buildings in the city. That in the Five Lakes region, you could not miss it. That if you took such and such a train, boat or cable car you were sure to discover it in all its serene and conical majesty. Yet we saw nothing of Mount Fuji. The experience of contemplating it vanished every time behind thick layers of mist. Replaced by the even thicker layers of its representation, drawn, photographed, sculpted. Reproduced on prints, posters and post cards, in Zen gardens, on restaurant menus and bank notes. By standing in for the experience of it, its permanent and symbolic presence underpins the legend: Mount Fuji can be seen from anywhere in Japan. Everywhere and nowhere, at once. Tantamount to saying it does not exist.

~995 - 1005

Things which just pass
A boat with its sail hoisted.
The age of people.
Spring, summer, autumn, winter.

Sei Shônagon, *The Pillow Book*, circa 1000.

June-July 2012

Mount Fuji Does Not Exist. What we tell, we take it from experience, our own or that reported by others. Together they marry some of the contours of this exhibition, bringing together artists with a preference for a relation to the work as process, experience lived and shared, making way for a host of appropriations and interpretations. The artistic gestures that it encompasses are situated as much in their formalization as in the stages, which take part in their execution, and in the situation, which they may give rise to. This relation to art in constant motion, beyond fashions and the need to produce an object that is “art”, lies at the heart of this exhibition. A discreet art, sidestepping all ostentation and spectacularization, in favour of actions undertaken in the daily round over and above their representation. With no end purpose, the work of art here is thus at once everywhere and nowhere, in its object, its experience, and its memory.

The works on view therefore waver between a collective dynamic based on gestures dodging all need for productivity, a descent into the everyday probing the nature of existence and the substance of things, a mysterious handwritten letter that is addressed to you, a longing for perfection, everlasting and furtive, a reflection in a window pane, a walk embarked upon 43 years ago, a quest for the void, a few grams of gold mined from tons of electronic waste, a ground in bits whose fragments are so many draughts. Appearing in different modes and time-frames, they try to describe this permanent displacement between here and there: from the evocation of a one day exhibition in 1967 to a collection of books, from a small ad published in a daily newspaper to a set of photographic documents recording ephemeral actions, from a musical composition in the making to a drift on the Seine.

Sometimes, a work of art has that astonishing character which time has no hold over, imposing itself all the more lastingly on the memory, by the way it leaves its recipient, the concern for shedding light on it, creating more depth for it in the light of its own experience. So everyone has the potential to become the trustee of a precipitate of experience, which we can thus take away, conserve, and bring forth when we feel the need.

Elodie Royer and Yoann Gourmel

Misty rain
Today is a happy day
Although Mount Fuji is unseen
Bashō, 1685

Entrance

Richard Brautigan

Good work, he said, and

1976

Poem taken from the collection *Loading Mercury with a Pitchfork*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1976

Book page

Richard Brautigan is the ghost who appears in the background of all successful group photos. It is with him that the exhibition gets under way and it is perhaps thanks to him that it will end, like one of his novels, at the speed of 186,000 ends a second. In San Francisco, in the late 1950s, he hung out with the writers of the Beat Generation and handed his poems out in the street. With the publication of *Trout Fishing in America* in 1967, he became one of the major writers and poets of the American counter-culture. He then gave lectures, took part in conferences, and published collections of poems, short stories and novels, he which he dismantled literary conventions and genres: western gothic, parodic thrillers, metaphysical journals, books to be planted printed on seed packets, and so on. As a self-taught writer, he borrowed from Japanese haiku and from Surrealism, from the mechanisms of popular literature and from the ground-breaking American myths, in order to distil in fragments the daily litany of small catastrophes and big blonde beauties. In his writings we encounter Charles Baudelaire serving 'flowerburgers' in San Francisco, the smallest snow storm ever recorded (two flakes), the refund hair of a Japanese lady preventing the Third World War, a method of growing flowers by candlelight in hotel rooms, and many other recipes for fighting against despair. After several visits to Europe and Japan, he gradually fell into anonymity and withdrew to Montana, complete with the alcohol and paranoia, which he shared with rainbow trouts. In 1984, he committed suicide in Bolinas, in northern California.

Born in 1935 in Tacoma (United States), died in 1984 in Bolinas (United States)

Mark Geffriaud

Shelter

2012

Glass, silver nitrate

Part of a house under construction

Courtesy of the artist and gb agency, Paris

With the *Shelter* project, embarked upon in October 2011 at the galerie gb agency in Paris, and carried on in particular in *Le sentiment des choses*/*The Feeling of Things* at Le Plateau, Mark Geffriaud started to build a house, bit by bit, for each new show. From this heterogeneity of spaces, means and time-frames, from this genesis of different economies, there must emerge a symphonic dwelling, where harmonic and architectural breaks become the reflection of a conception and a realization based on conversations with artists, curators, and anyone else involved in the exhibition. This gathering of diverse skills is meant to culminate in the construction of an architectural element with no pre-established plan. The architectural explosion of the house tallies with the explosion of the artist's territory, the multiplication of "at homes". In this project we find the themes of off-centering and the multiplication of viewpoints dear to Mark Geffriaud. This territorial explosion should not be understood as dispersal but on the contrary in the continuity of his earlier works, operating through displacements and deterritorialization, not without a certain wit.

Here he has chosen to pursue this project by this time developing an interest in a window at Le Plateau, a remote echo of an action by the group The Play, "Mado", also on view in the exhibition. One of the windows in the reception area of the exhibition venue has been duplicated to apply to it some silver nitrate, formerly used to make mirrors. This reflecting surface on both sides of the glass thus conjures up a doubling of the space, creating an opening towards the outside at the same time as a return to its own image. Around this mirror window, a new piece of this house under construction, Mark Geffriaud has taken a stereoscopic group photo with some of the artists and people present during the preparation of the exhibition. As

testimony of this shared experience, this offers a relief vision of this fleeting collective shown in front of another window in the exhibition venue's third room.

Born in 1977 in Vitry sur Seine, France; lives and works in Amsterdam (Netherlands).



Mark Geffriaud
Shelter
2012
Preparatory document

Pratchaya Phinthong
Untitled (gold), 2012
Installation
Courtesy gb agency, Paris

Pratchaya Phinthong sets up situations aimed at confronting different geographical points and economic systems in a line of thinking about the construction and evaluation of economic, human and artistic values. Whether he goes to take two identical photos of the same full moon in two diametrically opposite places on the planet, whether he establishes an exchange network for buying Zimbabwean bank notes with no value so as to make a minimal sculpture with them, or whether he joins a community of Thai farm-workers in Sweden instead of a residency in Paris, his projects are usually constructed on the basis of a dialogue between the artist and others, shifting the artistic gesture towards the everyday, in a social and political dimension, and conversely by translating and transforming an experience undergone in the field of art. The work *Untitled (gold)* devised for the show is the discreet reflection of a marginal economic process, which has recently come to light in Thailand. Pratchaya Phinthong got interested in a practice of recycling electronic circuits contained in appliances (computers, cell-phones...) that have been abandoned or become unusable because of recent floods and the bankruptcy of different manufacturers caused thereby. Imagined by some of his fellow citizens, the purpose of this waste processing is to retrieve the gold contained in small amounts in their components so as to re-sell it, often illegally. The gold rush—gold being a universal value on which the world economy is still indexed—is here no longer synonymous with the conquest of a new territory but with a recycling of the products of advanced capitalism. In the form of a small, barely visible nugget, a few grams of this gold purchased by the artist have been buried in one of the columns of the exhibition venue.

Born in 1974 in Ubouratchathani, lives and works in Bangkok (Thailand).



Pratchaya Phinthong
Untitled (gold)
2012
© Pratchaya Phinthong

Messy Sky

Self-produced six-monthly magazine, number 1, June 2012
Content downloadable free on the Internet: www.messysky.com
Binding on sale at Le Plateau reception desk.

In 2011, the artists Chitti Kasemkitvatana and Pratchaya Phinthong founded the magazine *Messy Sky*, whose content is completely downloadable free on the Internet, in a desire for accessibility and transmission. The pilot issue was distributed in the exhibition *Le sentiment des choses/The Feeling of Things*. The first issue is shown here and includes in its pages the publication of the exhibition, bringing together contributions from the guest artists, interviews and texts related to *Mount Fuji Does Not Exist*, with layout by the graphic designers Coline Sunier and Charles Mazé. The magazine's title *Messy Sky* corresponds to the English translation of the name of the wood known as "Rok-Fah", used for hand binding. Anyone so wishing may acquire a binding on sale at the Le Plateau reception desk. *Messy Sky* is more than a magazine, and today it has in tandem become *Messy*, an exhibition venue, and a place for meetings and discussions inaugurated in Bangkok in May 2012.



Messy Sky
A.E.Y Space, Songkla
Thailand
© Thakol Khaosa-ad

Room 1

Hamish Fulton

Broken wood Mountain skyline, Mercantour

2011

21 pieces of painted wood

Mountain skylines, Mercantour

2011

Pencil drawing on used envelope

Mountain Skylines

1993

Gouache and ink on paper

Mountain Skyline, Dolpo, Nepal

2011

Mural work, dimensions variable

Point Zéro, Paris

2010

Black and white photograph and text

Three small mountains

2008

Painted wood, nails and pencil

Lhasa tea ring

2007

Pencil and ink on paper

Courtesy Galerie Torri, Paris

Selection of publications

Collection Nathalie and Christophe Daviet-Théry, Paris

Hamish Fulton is a walking artist. Ever since 1969 he has been travelling the world on foot, bringing nothing back from his journeys, neither stones nor anything else, which he might use as traces or sculptures. His work is closely bound up with this ephemeral activity to the point where it cannot be dissociated from it. As he himself has said on numerous occasions, the basis of his approach might be summed up in the equation: "No walk = no work". So his work is situated in the fleeting experience of the walk and the special relationship between man and nature, which it provides. Unlike *Land Art*, however, with which he is generally associated, he excludes all technology and never intervenes in the landscape. The experience of his individual walks is therefore conjured up through different media which are combined without any hierarchy: photographs accompanied by short texts indicating the place the photo was taken from, the path taken, the climatic and natural data, sculptures, drawings, wall paintings, and texts, coming from his notebooks, to which he attaches great typographical importance. So many points of departure and vanishing points based on which the spectator can imagine and re-create the artist's itinerary and the physical and mental space described, over and above its representation. For Hamish Fulton, in fact, "an object cannot compete with an experience". One could describe his work as a "mental sculpture", in the sense that it makes reference to notions of space, time and matter. The exhibition includes a set of works and books presenting the range of his praxis like a visual narrative, from his note-taking to their layout, in a quest for equivalence between word, image and space.

Born in 1946 in London; lives and works in Canterbury (Great-Britain)



Hamish Fulton

Page taken from the book *Hamish Fulton, Thirty One Horizons*
Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus München, 1995

Shimabuku

Going to see the sand mountain in Berlin forest

2012

Performance / Slide show

Comrade

1998

Text and screw

Gift: Exhibition for the Monkey

1992

Photograph and text

Sunrise at Mt. Artsonje

2007

Performance / Super 8mm film transferred to DVD, colour, silent, 3'30

Courtesy of the artist and Air de Paris, Paris

When he was younger, Shimabuku wanted to become a poet or tourist guide. Today he is an artist, producer and smuggler of stories, customs and myths which he observes and collects on his journeys, or which he works out when he encounters people. Persuaded that art must not only make it possible to create works, but also give rise to situations of exchange, the artist nowadays combines his two callings. So his art is made of the little things of life, which he invites us to observe from a different angle in order to see their beauty, their strangeness, their poetry and/or their absurdity. Whether he organizes a guided tour of Tokyo's largest fish market for an octopus he has caught before returning it to the sea, or whether he invites visitors to an exhibition to put their bodies in an elastic band, the medium matters little in the finished object, the goal being to give rise to encounters and connect human beings. With him, the artist is not only the person who produces forms, but also the person who brings life to legends, infusing and diffusing them. The pieces on view in the show reflect this on-going attention paid to the other. In 1992, at Iwatayama, the Monkey Park in Kyoto also known as Monkey Mountain, after learning that monkeys sometimes pick up a piece of glass and look at it, he decided to put on an exhibition for them titled *Gift*. In 1998, in memory of the discreet presence of a small pebble lodged in the sole of his shoe, which had gone along with him on one of his journeys, he put a small screw in the soles of a pair of sneakers for a work titled *Comrade*. In 2007, he produced the project *Sunrise at Mt. Artsonje*, for a show at the Artsonje Centre in Seoul, for which he invited the museum staff to climb onto the roof of the building housing the art centre, as if it were the peak of a mountain, to watch the sunrise together. A peak on which he also tried to communicate with unknown (beings), with the help of a hairtail fish reflecting the sun. For the exhibition, Shimabuku last of all gets us to

discover another mountain, *his* Mount Fuji, hidden in a Berlin forest.

Born in 1969 in Kobe (Japan); lives and works in Berlin (Germany)



Shimabuku

Gift: Exhibition for the Monkeys

1992

Iwatayama, Kyoto

© Shimabuku

Small room

James Lee Byars

Exhibition of Works by James Lee Byars from the collection of Lindley W. Hubbell

Gallery 16, Kyoto, January 14, 1967, 11:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Interpretation based on the original list of works regarded as a score.

Born in Detroit in 1932, James Lee Byars studied art, psychology and philosophy. After a journey to Kyoto in the late 1950s, he spent the next ten years between Japan and the United States. During those decisive years for his artistic development, he started to appropriate certain symbolic, sensory and abstract elements belonging to nô theatre and Shinto rituals—in particular folded white paper and un-carved stones—and incorporate them in the western scientific, artistic and philosophical tradition. The key to Byars's oeuvre is to be found in the articulation between the eternal and the ephemeral, looking for a total artwork, which is expressed especially in the artist's performances. For example the one titled *The Perfect Smile*, for which, clad in gold lame, Byars puts on, turn by turn, a black hat, black gloves, and black shoes, and wraps a black silk scarf around his head. The perfect smile consists in a tiny movement of the lips. For Byars, the notion of perfection does not actually lie so much in its fanciful material formalization as in the path that leads to it, and he would spend his life pursuing this quest for the "perfect", transforming each moment into a concentrate of the absolute. Ritual thus became a constant factor of his life and his oeuvre, which became inseparable.

On 14 January 1967, at the 16 Gallery in Kyoto, he put on a show for a day. The works presented, which have now vanished, belonged to his friend, patron and collector Lindley W. Hubbell. Today, all that remains of that show are a few not very good images, a hanging plan redrawn after the event, and the list of works, regarded here like a score.

For *Mount Fuji Does Not Exist*, the visitor is in fact invited to walk through a room that is empty save for a few numbers referring to the arrangement and placement of the works on view in Kyoto, whose description is provided by the list of works. The impossible experience of this exhibition is thus transmitted by its projection on missing works, and so only exists in the imagination of what it was. In 1978, when he was beginning to use lasting materials like stone, gold and marble, James Lee Byars incidentally declared: "I cancel all my works at death. Never show them again."

Born in 1932 in Detroit (USA), died in 1997 in Cairo (Egypt)

Byars performing untitled action atop the roof of the Musée d'art moderne, Paris.
Photo: G. Brownstone.



James Lee Byars

Page extracted from catalog « The Perfect Thought – An Exhibition of Works by James Lee Byars », 1990, University Art Museum, University of California, Berkeley

James Elliott ed.

Courtesy Arion Press, San Francisco

Room 2

Lenka Clayton & Michael Crowe

Lenka Clayton & Michael Crowe

Mysterious Letters

2009 – in progress

Letters sent, small advertisement published in the newspaper Le Monde, dated 6 June 2012. The letters may be consulted on-line: <http://mysteriousletters.tumblr.com>

Lenka Clayton

Slow Magic Tricks

2002 – in progress

Lenka Clayton is an artist, and a documentary maker. Her work investigates the poetry of labour extended toward an epic, utopian, often impossible task. In recent projects, she searched for and photographed the 613 people mentioned in a German newspaper, hand-numbered 7,000 stones, filmed one person of each age from 1 - 100 and re-organized the 4,100 words of President Bush's Axis of Evil speech into alphabetical order. Michael Crowe is a writer and an artist. His writing, mostly short fiction, combines deadpan wit with absurd sentimentality. In recent stories he noticed your bank statement slowly appearing as the sunrise, combined all Chinatowns to make a second actual China and suggested that Jupiter rotates in the opposite direction every time you say *nah*.

After the presentation in the exhibition *The Feeling of Things of their Same Age Sculptures* asserting the primacy of the creative process, and of experience itself over result, thus wittily introducing a certain defiance towards the act of turning artworks into things sacred, the two artists were invited to produce another project undertaken in collaboration and titled *Mysterious Letters*. Embarked upon in 2009 in the village of Cushendall in Northern Ireland, the *Mysterious Letters* project consists in sending a different handwritten letter to all the planet's inhabitants. After Cushendall, Polish Hill in the United States, Saint-Gall in Switzerland, and Köln in Germany, more than 400 letters were sent to the inhabitants of two streets close to Le Plateau. Only a small advertisement in a daily paper dated the same day as the show's opening describes the dispatch of these letters, because, for the artist, the nub of the work is situated solely in the possible discussions which receipt of these letters causes among their recipients.

The work *Slow Magic Tricks* by Lenka Clayton is also being exhibited from 7 June to 1 July in the window of L'Antenne.

Lenka Clayton was born in Great Britain in 1977, and lives and works in Pittsburgh (USA)

Michael Crowe was born in Great Britain in 1977, and lives and works in London (Great Britain)



Lenka Clayton & Michael Crowe

Mysterious Letters

2009

© Lenka Clayton & Michael Crowe

Yuki Kimura

Untitled (Room)

2012

Inkjet print on adhesive paper

Eleven

2012

Two identical children's chairs

Courtesy of the artist

Yuki Kimura uses existing images like objects, stressing their physicality, their surface and medium, and their material nature with regard to their content. Mixing photographs found in family albums and in flea markets, which she then manipulates and takes other photos of, with ready-made objects and sculptures, she produces installations combining different media in an analysis focusing on time and image.

The photograph of a household interior hung on the wall can thus be partly hidden by a green plant, or a photo of a snowy landscape presented on a table covered with stones. The photographic image as recording of a past event is thus always connected with the experience of its materiality in the present. For the artist, "What I mean is that the past evoked by a photo is a thought, while the photo itself is in the here and now. Photographs are physical matter, images on paper, but my aim is to create a place that counterbalances those images and their physical medium."

In the exhibition, Yuki Kimura proposes a found image representing an interior enlarged on a scale of 1:1, presented in the form of adhesive paper that has seemingly slipped from the wall, thus underscoring the illusion of reality of the photographic representation through the artificiality of its surface. The work *Eleven* is a readymade consisting of two identical children's chairs. For the artist, these two chairs refer to the image of a time, which no longer exists, that of childhood, but also to the motif of the double, a classic theme of literature and photography. Between these two works, between objects and images, a continuity appears. What is involved, moreover, is no longer so much objects or images, but places and spaces.

Born in 1971 in Kyoto (Japan); lives and works in Berlin (Germany).

Benoît Maire

i.e.1

2012

HD video, colour, sound, 15'40

Produced with the help of the Fondation nationale des arts graphiques et plastiques

Courtesy of the artist and Cortex Athletico, Bordeaux

In claiming theory as his main medium and aesthetics as his field of action, Benoît Maire questions the possibility of visually formalizing theoretical propositions and, thereby, imbuing theory with affect. In particular, his works chart his preoccupations with present, time, narrative, performativity and the end of history, by way of performances, discussions, objects, paintings, drawings and videos. His work requires spending time to inhabit—in the physical and mental sense of the term—the disjointed aesthetic system, which he develops. But rather than trying to understand his philosophical references, Benoît Maire's praxis bestirs in the viewer a personal response to the poetics of space, be it the page of a book, the time taken to read a book or see a film, an exhibition, or a presentation of ordinary objects. His work is based in the end on an affective process of creation, chaotically fuelled by knowledge and cultural references.

The video *i.e.1* being screened in the exhibition shows the artist in a park handling small sculptures made in his studio. As assemblages of different kinds of objects (shell, Plexiglas, camera lens, etc.), these sculptures conjure up so many measuring instruments whose purpose eludes us. For the artist, "An artistic object does not have a function: the end for which it is conceived is precisely without an end. It is therefore the document of a pursuit, which although directed cannot be finalised. It is not an object, only a document bound to an impossible object." In this film, which, in its form, is akin to a working document, he thus tests his own works in an attempt to confront them with reality.

Born in 1978 in Pessac, lives and works in Paris.



Benoît Maire
i.e.1
2012
© Benoît Maire

Room 3

Chloé Quenum

etc.

2012

Lead, dimensions variable

Chloé Quenum sees the exhibition space like a place of production in which she presents and stages objects and forms taken from a repertory, which she often uses in a recurrent way. Each spatial venture is contextual and each object takes on its autonomy in this context. Reflection about the exhibition space and the history of the forms proposed by the artist actually invite us to pay special heed to what is all about us. In the wake of her participation in the exhibition *The Feeling of Things*, where she presented parts of a metal mobile framed but not fixed in front of a mirror, she re-enacts these elements in a new installation.

The enlarged and multiplied forms of these elements have been cast in lead and make a drawing on the floor. The title of the piece, *etc.*, suggests this project's continuity and the different forms it may take. It also refers to the translation of the Latin expression based on which the abbreviation is formed, *et cetera desunt*, literally meaning: "and the other things are missing", as well as to its mistaken pronunciation, widespread in France, and akin to another expression, *ecce terra*, meaning "here is the earth".

Born in 1983 in Paris, where she lives and works (France)

Mark Geffriaud

Window

2012

Stereoscopic photograph

Courtesy of the artist and gb agency, Paris.

Chitti Kasemkitvatana

One thing after another

2012

Series of interventions

The project can be followed on-line: <http://table-a-tapisser.tumblr.com>

Chitti Kasemkitvatana is an artist, freelance exhibition curator, teacher, host of a radio show about art, and co-editor, with the artist Rirkrit Tiravanija, of the magazine *Ver*. He was much in evidence in the Bangkok art scene between 1995 and 2001, when he became a Buddhist monk and spent seven years in the forests of northern Thailand, before recently resuming his artistic work, using a conceptual and minimal approach to explore the porousness of the boundaries between art and spiritual life.

Invited to take up a residency in Paris for two months, Chitta Kasemkitvatana has chosen to partly orient his research around Yves Klein's work and archives, in particular based on the *Theatre of the Void* and the *Zones of immaterial pictorial sensibility*. He is also working around notions linked to time and space in art and culture, and more precisely on the idea of void and immaterial "spiritual space" in relation to Buddhist culture.

During the time of the show, Chitti Kasemkitvatana proposes *One Thing After Another*, a series of works made on the basis of his different research projects both inside and outside the space of Le Plateau (in the Buttes-Chaumont, on the banks of the Seine, in the catacombs, and so on).

Born in 1969 in Bangkok, where he lives and works (Thailand)

Rooms 4 and 5

Julien Gasc and Bruno Persat

Le début de la Grèce (D'Héraclite à la famille Barberis)

2012

Work in progress face-to-face giving rise to chance and to the writing of a musical score with piano

As a musician, composer, producer, artist, and founder member of the group Aquaserge, Julien Gasc navigates between different artistic fields, fuelled by many encounters and collaborations with porous boundaries. He thus tends towards a cross-cultural mix of influences and disciplines in all directions and in diverse media. Assemblage, installation, models, photography, video, performance, event and sound systems are also so many art practices, which enable Bruno Persat to emphasize the creative process. The artist is interested in the transmission of knowledge, memory and ways for sharing experiences. His works—which may take as their point of departure the drift of icebergs, the utopian and community-oriented architectural projects of the 1960s, and/or video games and theories of cognitive psychology—stem from an aesthetics of the project. Their display is seen like a collective expedition where obstacles and discoveries encountered during the itinerary have more significance than the destination.

Julien Gasc and Bruno Persat are long time friends whose paths have overlapped since the 2000s, first in Montpellier where they studied art and music, and then started to work on improvised stage projects, then here, there and everywhere, each one developing his own praxis, one becoming a composer, the other a visual artist. *Le début de la Grèce (D'Héraclite à la famille Barberis)* /The Beginning of Greece (from Heraclitus to the Barberis Family) is a new shared project devised for the exhibition, overlapping installation and experiment, and passing through different hypotheses between the writing of a colourful score, the start of an island journey, and the poetic organization of their respective experiences. Starting out from an arrangement consisting in embedding a piano, and thus turning it into an architectural feature, the place of an encounter, and the wall into its area of mediation and memory, the project is developed in the time of the exhibition, leading to the composition of its original sound track.

Julien Gasc was born in 1980 in Castres; he lives and works in Vallesvilles (France)

Bruno Persat was born in 1975 in Cagnes sur Mer; he lives and works in Paris (France)



Bruno Persat and Julien Gasc

Le début de la Grèce (D'Héraclite à la famille Barberis)

2012

Preparatory document

© Bruno Persat and Julien Gasc

The Play

Documentation of their actions

1967 – 2012

Courtesy The Play

Current of Contemporary Art

1969 - 2012

Styrofoam raft

Performance and documentation

Courtesy The Play

Keiichi Ikemizu, Tetsuo Miki, Yoshinobu Suzuki, Seiji Nii, Shinichi Kobayashi, Toyoko Ikemizu, Ako Miki, Moemi Nii

Situating “without particular reason” most of their actions in nature, admitting simply that they “like the infinite time and space of the open air”, The Play is a group with variable geometry made up of people with different personalities and skills, formed in 1967 in the Kansai region of Japan, and still active today. Over and above the criticism of the social and artistic institutions typical of the Japanese context of the 1960s, the group has since never ceased inventing its own forms of collective actions and their transmission, creating with several hands the possibility that an event can happen without one being worried about its outcome. In implicitly rejecting the idea of artwork as end purpose, the group has thus always stressed its own dynamic, based on exchange and doing things together, in the physical and spiritual dimension alike, through the construction of ephemeral situations. Without making distinctions between art and life, The Play resides in that interstice in the established systems of art, from its production to its consumption, and emphasizes, through its commitment, an attitude and a spirit where games, sincerity and wit are still essential today. Its persistence over time, which can be partly explained by the collective model of the way it functions and the extraordinary involvement of its members in each one of its projects, thus makes this a group apart in the history of (Japanese) art, neither totally integrated, nor completely on the side-lines.

An important selection of documentation (photos, videos, drawings, writings, plans...) is on view in the exhibition, retracing most of the group's actions from the late 1960s up to the present day. The group members have also been invited to continue the performance *Current of Contemporary Art*, initiated in Kyoto in 1969, and carried on last year in Osaka. This collective action consists in building a raft made of styrofoam blocks forming an arrow, so that it is possible to navigate a river by being adrift in it. Programmed for the 1971 Paris Biennale, this action never took place in the end of the day. More than forty years later, The Play proposes rebuilding this arrow-raft so as to navigate the Seine, once again underscoring a relation to art, as an aimless exploration that is part and parcel of the daily round.

Group founded in the Kansai region of Japan, active since 1967.

The Play

Current of Contemporary Art

1969

©The Play



On 20 July 1969, in the morning, we went down the Uji-river from Tonoshima, Kyoto on a white arrow-shaped raft (3.5m x 8m) made of styrofoam. We arrived at the east of Nakanoshima in Dojima-river, Osaka in the evening.



We moved a window (3.5m x 4 m) from the east wall of the museum to the center of the room. We called it MADO (window). Then the room began to breathe in fresh air and MADO was in an air stream.

The Play

Mado

2-30 March 1980

Museum of Modern Art, Kobe

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«Mr. Technology walks on the moon. What will Mr. Play et al. do ?
Mr. Student Radical causes a bloodshed again. What will Mr. Play et al. do ?
Mr. Painting fills a white space. What will Mr. Play et al. do ?

...

Mr. Expo stumbles. What will Mr. Play et al. do ?
Mr. Zero does a body ritual. What will Mr. Play et al. do ?

...

Mr. Image cans the sky. What will Mr. Play et al. do ?
Mr. Play et al. prove the being. What will Mr. Play et al. do ?
Mr. Play et al. make a voyage. What will Mr. Play et al. do ?»

Hajime Okamoto, "Cross Meeting", 1969, republished in *Play* [black cover], Osaka, published by Keiishi Ikemizu, 1981.

Séquence

> Visit with Elodie Royer and Yoann Gourmel, exhibition curators

Sunday 24 June – 6 pm

> Lecture : Chitti Kasemkitvatana

Thursday 21 June – 7.30 pm

Chitti Kasemkitvatana, who was very active in the Bangkok art scene from 1995 to 2001, became a Buddhist monk for seven years in the forests of northern Thailand, before recently resuming his artistic activities once more. In exploring, in particular, the porous nature of the boundaries between art and spiritual life, he will present the research carried out during his residency in Paris.

> Performance : Christophe Fiat

Le Cri de Godzilla

Thursday 5 July – 7.30 pm

Christophe Fiat will tell us the film saga of the Japanese monster awoken from his sleep, in 1954, by American nuclear tests in the Pacific. For the occasion, the performer will become a sonic poet. He will alternate pre-recorded voices and hypnotic electric guitar riffs in order to remind us of the memory of the thing, which may cause us to perish or save us from atomic destruction.

Latest book published: *Retour d'Iwaki* (Gallimard, 2011).

Latest play: *L'Indestructible Madame Richard Wagner* (created at the Théâtre de Gennevilliers in 2011 and revived at the 65th Festival d'Avignon)

The Sequence program is admission free, except the performance : 5 euros.

Reservations obligatory at: reservation@fracidf-leplateau.com

L'Antenne

Windows

Lenka Clayton

Slow Magic Tricks

7 June – 1st July

The installation *Slow Magic Tricks* plays with the open space of the vitrine by proposing several magic tricks in three stages. Over the days, through a subtle interplay of dissimulation and revelation, alert passers-by observe a succession of magic phenomena such as the appearance of succulent cakes and the sudden cleaning of shoes.

Virginie Barré

10 juillet – 8 août

Wavering from the familiar to the mysterious, from colour to black and white, from image-movement to freeze frame, Virginie Barré's artistic praxis is declined in strange installations of accessorized models and drawings and comic strips. Haunted by film memories, her works appear like so many enigmas for the viewer.

Informations

Le Plateau Exhibition space

Place Hannah Arendt

Intersection of rue des Alouettes et and rue Carducci F-75019 Paris

T : + 33 (1) 76 21 13 41

info@fracidf-leplateau.com

www.fracidf-leplateau.com

Free admission

Metro access : Jourdain or Buttes-Chaumont / Bus : ligne 26

Opening hours: Wednesday through Friday from 2 pm to 7 pm
Saturday and Sunday de 12 am to 8 pm

L'Antenne – Educational Center

22 cours du 7^{ème} art (50 meters away from Le Plateau) F-75019 Paris

T: +33 (1) 76 21 13 45

Open during the week upon appointment, for documentary collection consultations (books, magazines, videos).

L'Antenne is closed from 21 July to 2 September 2012 (included) and on bank holidays.

Frac Île-de-France - Administration

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Director of Frac Île-de-France : Xavier Franceschi

The exhibition journal is offered to you by Frac Île-de-France/ l'Antenne.

Redaction : Elodie Royer et Yoann Gourmel

Coordination : Isabelle Fabre with the help of Camilla Pizzichillo

Graphic design : Loran Stoskopf and Clara Sforti

Cover :

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IE, 1972

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Partners

Le Frac Île-de-France is supported by the Regional Council of the Île-de-France region, the Ministry of Culture and Communication – Regional Direction of Cultural Affairs and the Mayor of Paris.

The exhibition Mount Fuji does not exist has received valuable support from Japan Foundation, About Art Foundation (Bangkok), Atelier S.K.H and Ecusson and Grolsch.

We are grateful to the Ministry of Culture and Communication –Regional office of artistic creation, Department for the Public and Distribution– for their support in accomodating the artists.

Member of the following networks : Tram, Platform, the Frac group, d.c.a and Grand Belleville .

With the support of parisART.

Acknowledgments

Masako Kotera et Arata Okano, Villa Kujoyama — Kyoto, Galerie 16 — Kyoto, Alexandra Bordes, Richard Brautigan, Florence Bonnefous, Eric Campione, Laure-Hélène Caseau, Cyril Chaumeau et Alexis Vaillant — CAPC Bordeaux, Christophe et Nathalie Daviet-Théry, Gaëtan Didelot, Anne Dressen, Lorraine Féline et Nicolas Boulard, Christiane Germain, Azusa Hashimoto, Kyoko Kasuya, Stephan Köhler, Mrs Mathon-Kurihara, Romain Torri, Shinobu Sakagami, Philippe Sauve, Coline Sunier et Charles Mazé, Klaomard Yipintsoi as well as all the installation team and Gloria Sensi : Lucile Fay, Mehryl Levisse, Yannick Mauny, Yacine Naciri, Pauline Uguen. (Sorry guys not to have you all on the boat !)