

GALERIE CREVECOEUR

9 RUE DES CASCADES

75020 PARIS

À une heure de la civilisation

Erica Baum, Isabelle Cornaro, Moyra Davey, Ilse Garnier, Pierre Garnier,
Pierre Garnier & Seiichi Niikuni, Alain Guiraudie

In Rome, Emile Zola wrote "a man of genius sums up his era, at a time in civilisation (à une heure de la civilisation), he provides all the sap of the social soil, which later remains exhausted, sometimes for centuries". For the inaugural exhibition at our new site in Marseille, we have decided to adopt this turn of phrase as the definition of an artist's activity. Using different methods, artists create form from a certain chaos in the present, whether it be linguistic, natural, intimate, sexual, urban, or technological... They take hold of the ordinary and make it converge towards something close to a myth. They express the present, but they modify its historicity by putting it up against the past, which has necessarily become fictional, and a future, which is entirely imaginary. What the artists brought together in this exhibition have in common is a need for inventories and stock-taking, no matter how imperfect and partial they might be.

In her very first series, Desktops, going back to 1994, and presented for the first time, Erica Baum has taken scraps of vernacular poetry from students' desks. In the works of the Index series (1999, 2000, 2002/2017) she has compiled extracts from the lists of contents and raster lines obtained with a scanner – violating for the first time her principle of photographic reality. What can be seen here is an anticipation of questions of the classification of information – be it "institutional" or spontaneous, just before the arrival of the digital age.

Isabelle Cornaro's work decomposes the typologies of art history and recomposes them with a totally subjective touch. It is intimate, almost secret, where human hairs become lines highlighting the classic nature of perspective, in contrast with the lyricism of drawing. Both narrative and cinematographic, the spray, a work produced in situ, is set in a form of retinal retention.

The experiments of Ilse and Pierre Garnier, sometimes in correspondence with Seiichi Niikuni in the series of Franco-Japanese Poems, have meant being able to patent spatialism, one of the possible horizons of concrete poetry. It is at once a possible exposure of the practices provided by the typewriter, an explosion of language as matter, and a poetic revolution of the letter.

Moyra Davey, who presents two films, Notes on Blue (2015) and Hujar/Palermo (2010) and a new photographic installation, Endless Love (2017), transforms her photographic objects into postal ones. They then become genuine mappings, like historical indications, but which have tipped into a fictional dimension. Endless Love, whose source is the Rosenberg archives in the Philadelphia Library, evokes the steamy correspondence between Alice B. Toklas and Bernard Faÿ and the poet Mercedes de Acosta.

In "Du soleil pour les gueux", the 2001 film, the character embodied by Alain Guiraudie, pursued by an unprincipled head hunter on his own land, the Plateau des Causses, supported by a hairdresser, who has deserted the town, and a shepherd who has lost his flock, needs to confront the dilemma of life. "Carol Izba is a guy who wants to go to Montpellier but who's afraid of leaving his home turf." On this same land, in sparkling then declining light, he thus confronts the other.

The selected pieces, installed in an extremely open space – unveiling a simultaneous view of the street and courtyard, between Haussmann and Pouillon, and which intentionally retains traces of its previous uses, raises the question of how to "remain vertical", as in the title of Alain Guiraudie's latest film. How to examine the world from our vertical position, which distinguishes us from having the posture of an animal, how to remain upright while emerging from the formless, and what should be kept from the ceaseless unfurling of human activity?