

Paul Viaccoz

ESPRIT ES-TU LÀ ?

From October 1st to November 12, 2021

Opening Thursday September 30, 2021, 2 PM – 8 PM

Weekend GENEVE.ART on Saturday November 6 and Sunday November 7, 2021

11 AM – 6 PM

Esprit es-tu là (spirit are you there)? A question that expresses fear, skepticism but perhaps also the lightness of a spiritualist seance. Could Paul Viaccoz be trying out divination methods? Might his work as an artist enable him to explore unsuspected territories, set between dualizing and ultra-consciousness, and to experience the pleasure and capacity of escaping, of rising up and leaving this world?

In a back and forth between magic and the limits of science, between illusion and reality, his drawings, painted murals and assemblages of objects oscillate between observations, threats and predictions, in a vision that is both surreal and appalled by the violence and horror of the present and its deadly outbreaks of wars, diseases and pandemics.

His drawings cover a hundred or so sheets and even encroach on the walls of his studio. This mural practice is the expression of a very free extension of his readings, thoughts and meditations. Entrenchment in this little garden house that he calls the small white house, allows him to self-reflect and gain perspective, somewhere between dream and presage.

Producing large numbers of paintings or drawings and painting directly on walls also reminds us of the spiritualist artists of the early 20th century or the 1970s, closeted in small spaces and even in their own homes, whose artworks, drawings, paintings and even their walls served as a medium and offered them a complete mental and hypnotic immersion in the development of their creative work, going far beyond conventional formats.

The presentation by Paul Viaccoz comprises two series of drawings, one on braille paper, while the other incorporates several *Paysages de guerre*, as well as an installation of three radiotherapy *Masques*.

This exhibition is accompanied by a publication of the same name, which brings together details of the drawn walls in the small white house, a selection of *Paysages de guerre* and a text by the artist in which Paul, alias Damiano and ПOЛ, the central character in two previous short stories, *Le responsable de l'économat est aujourd'hui indisponible* (FMAC, Geneva, 2012) and *La censure des messages*, (Musée jurassien des Arts, Moutier, 2018), evokes the experience of isolation. This short text frames two quotations from Wolfgang Sofsky's book, *L'Ère de l'épouvante. Folie meurtrière, terreur, guerre* (Gallimard, Paris, 2002), which attests to the difficulties of representing cruelty, violence and war.

This work joins the Before publication series, published by the CEC, and is linked to the second volume of the CEC catalogue, *L'Effet papillon II, 2008* (*L'Effet papillon II, 2008*), which will cover the activity of the Centre d'édition contemporaine from 2008 onwards, following on from the first book of the same title, which covers the period from 1989 to 2007.

A small eight-page brochure is added to the press release, presenting images of two *Murs shamaniques*, created on the inner walls of the artist's house, where day after day he has assembled objects found in nature or in everyday life, as well as souvenirs, fetishes and talismans, juxtaposed

or combined with photographs, drawings, video screenshots, postcards, masks, musical instruments, skulls, sabres, dried flowers, feathers, jewelry and embroideries. This collection of objects, images and texts forms a mural jigsaw that he rearranges according to his mood and thoughts or external events. The walls of this personal *studiolo* construct a language whose subtext remains cryptic and secret, an intimate, poetic and ritualized altar, bordering on exorcism, in which the figure of the artist is interwoven with that of the shaman.

PUBLICATION

Paul Viaccoz, *ESPRIT ES-TU LÀ?*, *Before publication 5*, brochure, 36 pages – single booklets, 17.2 × 23.5 cm, offset, stapled binding – published in the *Before publication* collection, which gathers the pre-publications of authors' texts or artists' inserts, which will appear regularly and as a preview before their final publication in *L'Effet papillon II* (second volume of *L'Effet papillon*, 1989 – 2007, catalogue of the Centre d'édition contemporaine published in 2008). Text: Paul Viaccoz. Graphic design: Niels Wehrspann, Lausanne. Edition of the Centre d'édition contemporaine, Geneva, 2021.

BIOGRAPHY

Born on September 30, 1953, Paul Viaccoz lives and works in the canton of Jura. He has presented numerous personal exhibitions including, *La censure des messages* at the Musée jurassien des arts, Moutier (2018); *La censure des messages* at the Anne and Robert Bloch Foundation (FARB), Delémont (2018). He has also participated in various group exhibitions including, *Sans titre, entre autres, un regard sur la collection de dessins du FMAC*, Le Commun, Bâtiment d'art contemporain, Geneva (2019); *NO WALK, NO WORK*, Contemporary Art Center, Yverdon-Les-Bains (CACY) (2016). In 2018, his work was the subject of several publications: *La censure des messages*, éd. Jurassien Museum of Arts, Moutier; *40 Paysages aquatiques* and *PAYS PAYSAGES*, éd. Paul Viaccoz; *Fonds municipal d'art contemporain (FMAC), Geneva. Collection 2004-2016*, published by art&fiction.

Paul Viaccoz's exhibition and publication are supported by the Fondation Leenaards, Lausanne, the Fonds cantonal d'art contemporain, DCS, Geneva, and the Department of culture and digital transition of the City of Geneva.

For its 2021 program, the CEC is supported by the Department of culture and digital transition of the City of Geneva, The Loterie Romande, the Fondation Leenaards, Lausanne, and a private Geneva foundation.

THE CEC FOLLOWS THE HEALTH INSTRUCTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FEDERAL OFFICE OF PUBLIC HEALTH (OFSP): COVID CERTIFICATE + ID, SOCIAL DISTANCING, USE OF HYDROALCOHOLIC GEL AND WEARING A MASK ARE MANDATORY.

Opening hours: Tuesday – Friday, 2 PM – 6 PM

