

BQ

Leda Bourgogne
Prefrontal Vortex

Opening: 9.12.2023, 6–9 pm
Exhibition: 12.12.2023–17.02.2024

el jumps back as she comes closer to put some lipstick on, noticing her haggard face in her car's rear-view mirror. She then puffs a cigarette, blowing out smoke rings. Smoke rings are vortices, swirling around, evaporating in the air. Vortices form in stirred fluids – or so Wikipedia says –, and their little turbulent flows, in which whole velocities are wrongly distributed, don't differ much from el's feeling of her own self. Since an emotional cyclone distorted that notion, when she looks at the rear-view mirror, she sees a face, but she doesn't know whose one.

While she caresses the air with one hand, messing around with the fading smoke, el turns the stirring wheel with the other. When in motion, the finger's skin can feel the air. When in motion, the slit of reality depicted on the rear-view mirror changes from every angle. The rectangle returns a dust devil from one spot and a mountain from the other. Was she not at this desert, in her Thunderbird, looking at the rear-view mirror, her experience would be another.

The impulse to put out the cigarette on her hand would not only alter the appearance of her skin but also trigger an amount of acute physical pain. Physical and emotional pain are part of the same broader neurological continuum, yet, while imaginary fears don't harm you, the psychological pain they generate might (or so the neuroscientists say). An irrational impulse should be suppressed by a brain area, within the boundaries of the prefrontal cortex; a neural tissue which defines personality, and perception of reality. Should this area be altered, her pain would feel different.

The ability to differentiate conflicting ideas and the fact that these can coexist thoughts lies in the prefrontal cortex too. el relates to the contradictory nature of the self, depicted in Moondog's track *I'm This, I'm That*. "*I'm lost, I'm found; I'm free, I'm bound; I'm best, I'm worst; I'm blessed, I'm cursed*" – he sings. Moondog's song reveals the coexistence of opposed natures in one same entity, yet the ability to identify contradictions could dilute if that brain area is harmed by a concussion or long-lasting stress. Any established idea of the self would be then wiped out by an invisible dust devil. Contradiction is inherent in every notion and every being, yet the increasing demand to choose absolutes and oversimplified coloured truths seems to ignore that, while depleting any ambiguity tolerance. Did we all get concussed?

In her fantasy, el leaves the desert and drives her Thunderbird through different areas of her brain, leaving her memories in the rear-view mirror, moving forward, turning towards the Broca Area, and ending up in the BA 45. Once there, she would retrieve the semantic knowledge required to inhibit her impulses and regulate her emotions. Her mirror neurons wouldn't tell her whether her trip is imaginary or real though.

In Berlin, BQ's mazy architecture may recall the one of a brain. A map of Leda Bourgogne's latest artistic scenery manifests in a collection of paintings and sculptures, which is distributed through the gallery's compartments. The walls are covered with see-through fabric, emulating a cortex, painted with abstract drawings that might recall smoke-looking patters, or washed-out versions of Ramón y Cajal's neurons, or both. In Bourgogne immersive settings, animal skeletons, spines, body limbs, mirrors or intimate encounters are depicted along with abstract motifs, all celebrating the paradoxical nature of the body-mind continuum. Other apparently opposed notions, such as tenderness-violence, pleasure-pain or bright-dark, exist in perpetual interaction in this same form and are present in the exhibition, confirming the complementarity and coexistence of opposites.

Meanwhile, somewhere else, maybe in someone else's dream, el looks down, as she doesn't recognise her own face. The sister in the rear-view mirror is me, though she doesn't know it.

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