



999 Governing Bodies

Alan Schmalz

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“Doctor, am I delirious, or is it simply that the world is falling apart?”

It was always a question of building a world, and what is a world, if not a delusion? As delusional as imagining a machine made by humans to measure the electrical activity of their own brains. A machine made up of an infinite number of tiny sensors (all manufactured by another machine), linked together, allowing information to flow from the human brain to the computer. Information flows from one floor to another, from one organ to another. And to ensure the proper functioning of all this, an organizational system is required.

Like a body that needs a nervous, digestive and immune system, this world was originally thought to be made up of organs (in the guise of offices) with specific responsibilities. There was the organ of the fissure, of the fold, of anonymity, of possible experience, the office of dust (not disguised as an organ), the office of bonds, of gambling... and inevitably, to ensure their proper functioning, a workforce. Summoned to better define their own roles, those in charge of the organs (offices) have become accomplices in the construction of the very infrastructure of this world: after all, devising an environment to be inhabited necessarily involves the people who will be at the service of its development. And, without inhabitants, a world is no longer truly a world.

The organizers were asked to provide material – images and text – intended to compose an ensemble of moving parts, reminiscent of a model, or a board game. The technique (the protocol) was to cut and assemble. The tool of measurement, made up of comings and goings (between images and texts, micro and macro, body and environment), turned out to be the very cause of the destruction of this dreamed-of world, destroying it before it ever came to be. Because, if we look closely, then from a distance, from the side, such an organization, based on the one

we know (already dysfunctional), proves to be, if not a failure, at least a world that has escaped from itself.

And if the individual – reduced to nothing more than a body, pieces of flesh – is recurrently in conflict, in friction, with its environment, and the complex mechanisms of power that construct it, what would happen if they merged? A group hallucination has thus unfolded through a heterogeneous body.

It was necessary to subject the system to its own destructive mechanisms, to perform an autopsy on a living subject. The result: a desacralized, broken, disarticulated, dispersed body. A single form (a bed, a grave), suggestive of the body in its absence, was extracted as the support for this collective hallucination. Added to the dissected organs were other fragments, images cut, scanned, enlarged or shrunken, making the miniscule overpowering, and vice versa. We thus bear witness to a delirious world that continually produces its own unregulated delirium. And the path to this delirium is delineated by its remnants. Cut-up, these scraps now find themselves in a new formation. As much a timeline as it is a skyline, this silhouette of a world/time plunges us into palpitations that recall the frenetic rhythms of a humanity caught in its own trappings. A trap composed of concrete, desks, clocks, numbers, scraps of paper... in short, the activity and demands of a dilapidated skyscraper.

If the images testify to a desire, a need, to delve into the interior of things, then perhaps the descent into the basement is a necessary journey, so as to better re-emerge. A video by François Marcelly-Fernandez confronts us not with a body (or bodies) without organs, but rather with organs without bodies. Unsettling, the editing and voices take us further into this universe, still inhospitable, revealing the hidden face of what is no longer a utopia. The game has always been a place where strategy is exercised.

What was conceived as a simple utopia has become, in a way, an all the more accurate image of the world we live in: an inhospitable environment. By breaking down the material provided by his collaborators, Alan Schmalz has consolidated the multiplicity of delusions. The 999 in the title is thus to be understood not in its precision, but rather in its proliferation: the counters of this world simply don't have the capacity to exceed its own proliferation.

Katia Porro

- ¹ David Lapoujade, *L'altération des mondes. Versions de Philip K. Dick*, Les Éditions de Minuit, 2021, p. 14
- ³ Ethan Assouline, Rémi Brandon, Timothée Calame, Costanza Candeloro, Stefania Carlotti, Guillaume Dénervaud, Lou Ferrand, Laure Fletcher, Pierre Girardin, Sylvie Hayes-Wallace, Marie Jacotey, François Marcelly-Fernandez, Katia Porro, Louis Post, Marco Rigoni, Nathaniel Wooding.

- 1 *Who? What? Where? When?*
Wood, paper, 2024
Contributions : Ethan Assouline, Rémi Brandon, Timothée Calame, Guillaume Dénervaud, Laure Fletcher, Pierre Girardin, Sylvie Hayes-Wallace, Marie Jacotey, Louis Post, Nathaniel Wooding
- 2 *Grand Clown & Petit Clown*
Mirror, wood, paper, springs, bolas, 2024
- 3 *Who? What? Where? When? (prototype)*
Wood, paper, 2023
- 4 *A, B, C, G (pour genèse), etc...*
Wood, paper, 2024
Contribution : Marco Rigoni
- 5 *If You Find this World Bad, You Should See Some of the Others*
Paper, dibon, 2024
Contributions : Timothée Calame, Costanza Candeloro, Stefania Carlotti, Lou Ferrand, Laure Fletcher, Pierre Girardin, Sylvie Hayes-Wallace, Marie Jacotey, Louis Post
- 6 François Marcelly-Fernandez
Si cette notion est maintenue
HD Video, 10 min 20 sec, 2024
Contribution : Alan Schmalz

