

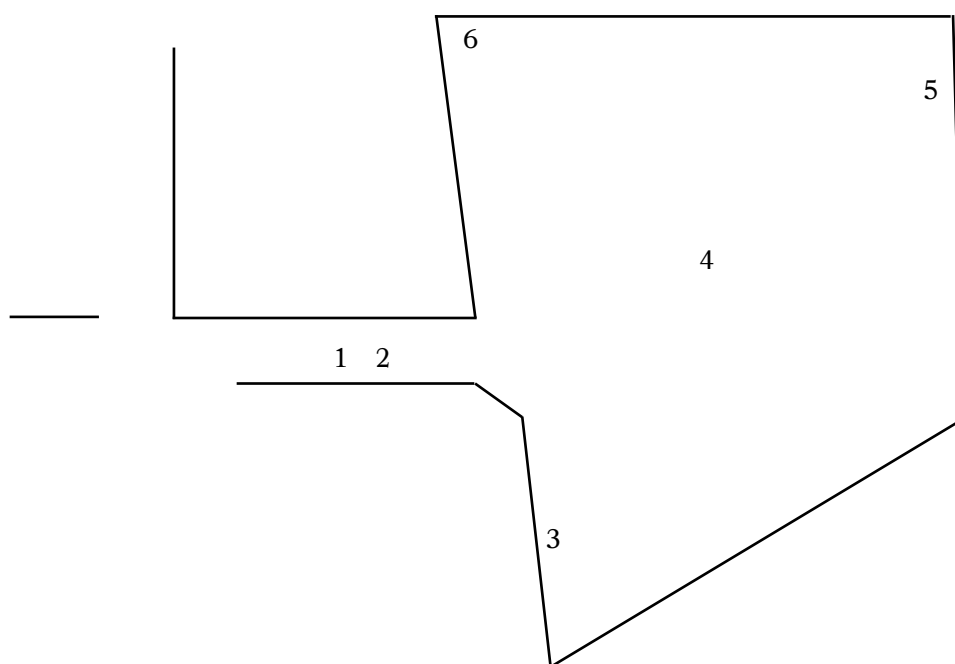
*Gigantic, impassive, surrounded by rubble, Oldenburg pours plaster  
into a mould he has fashioned from corrugated cardboard.  
He is making an oversized peanut.<sup>1</sup>  
Otto Hahn*

One does not immediately grasp what one is seeing. Perhaps the object has been placed upside down, or stored away improperly; perhaps it is (deliberately) “ill-made”; perhaps it has been fabricated from an unusual material or belongs to a distant past. It resembles a piece of furniture, a box of medication, a battery, a geometry manual, a bicycle wheel, a house... Yet in the moment, observed from this particular angle or under this specific lighting, one hesitates. Form and colour alone remain. And for a brief instant, one believes, one perceives the primordial face of things, before they become—or become again—useful, familiar and, it must be said, somewhat unremarkable. When everything reassembles into a recognisable entity, we find ourselves both relieved and slightly disappointed. Louis Gary, it seems to me, seeks precisely to defer that moment of recognition and thereby prolong this felicitous state of uncertainty.

Nicolas Giraud

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<sup>1</sup> It is with these words that the critic Otto Hahn begins a text written in 1964 for Claes Oldenburg’s exhibition at Ileana Sonnabend’s gallery in Paris. I must confess a degree of envy for this virtuoso opening—two visually impeccable sentences that constitute both a portrait of the artist and a brief glimpse into his studio; two concise sentences that evoke the seriousness of the work as well as the humour that permeates it. One might wish that every critical text began with such a miniature mise-en-scène of the oeuvre it addresses. If these two sentences—written by another author, in another era, and concerning another artist—are chosen here as an epigraph, it is because they seem to impose themselves as a means of articulating, by ricochet, something essential about Louis Gary’s work. To such an extent that one could almost appropriate Hahn’s remarks on Oldenburg verbatim, aside from the physical differences between the two artists (to my knowledge, no monumental peanut appears in Louis Gary’s oeuvre, though there is, undeniably, a comparable play on materials and scale). It is less a matter of asserting an affinity between the two bodies of work than of signalling a displacement, akin to the voice of a ventriloquist momentarily inhabiting another body. Indeed, the remainder of the text—along with Oldenburg’s own voice, quoted extensively—seems to emanate directly from Gary’s work: “—I like people to laugh when they look at my objects,” he says. Or further on: “—My ice cream is an illusion of ice cream. I do not seek to imitate, but to create a lyrical situation. My work is the objectification of my relationship to the world.” Even the anecdote that follows seems to echo La Salle de Fruit, one of Gary’s first exhibitions in 2011 at the Maison Rouge, for which pieces of furniture were designed and built to display various fruits. Oldenburg recounts: “Each person interprets art in their own way. When I was making furniture in Venice, California, I lived in a huge abandoned bank. The scale of my works seemed normal. When they were brought back to New York, they would not fit into the elevator. It took eight men to carry them up the fire escape. People immediately assumed I was condemning the encroachment of furniture on daily life. I had no such intention, but meaning shifts according to context.” We are seated around an oversized table; the conversation continues; in the centre, a circular opening accommodates a pineapple.



#### 1.2.6. *Vert Puisaye*, 2021-2025

Pigment and gelatin-silver  
photographic prints, frames in  
assorted materials

#### 3 et 5. *Untitled (Cenotaph)*, 2023

Mixed media

#### 4. *Cinema*, 2025

*Twenty-four cylindrical elements*  
*Cardboard, wood, paint, paper,*  
*various materials, electronics*

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Louis Gary is a French artist born in 1982. He received his artistic training in several French art schools. He lives and works in Saints-en-Puisaye (Yonne) and is represented by The Pill gallery (Paris / Istanbul). Since 2007, he has developed a body of work exploring the relationship between sculpture and furniture; in recent years, a renewed engagement with drawing has led him toward a liberated, deliberately ambiguous and sensuous approach to sculpture. In parallel, his photographic practice does not rest upon a defined conceptual framework, while nonetheless attempting to reconcile the subgenres, impasses and belief systems associated with the photographic medium.