



## "Brain Damage", Pierre Ardouvin.

From 8th September to 20th October 2012

Preview on Saturday 8th September 2012

The work of Pierre Ardouvin develops like an elliptical scenario of our disillusionment. His poetry, often linked to popular culture, comes from a "disturbed" relationship with language and the world.

"There's someone in my head but it's not me," sings Pink Floyd in Brain Damage, an indictment of violence in the news and media. Borrowing this title for his exhibition at Galerie chez Valentin, Pierre Ardouvin establishes between his works relationships that, obstinately thwarting a metaphorical dimension which they pretend to solicit, clearly fall within the realm of contamination, each trying to infiltrate the other by means of a formal, material or semantic kinship.

Upon entering, one is led through Jours de France, an installation that takes its title from a gossip magazine, a pioneer of the free periodical market, available in doctors' waiting rooms. The work is a reconstruction of a small waiting room, a sober space, its skewed position in the gallery displaying not only its architectural autonomy, but also a certain unease. Its incongruous presence recalls that of the small, crimson theatre Pierre Ardouvin presented at Art Basel (Au théâtre ce soir, Art Statement, 2006). Both act as stages where viewers, as they cross each other's paths, spontaneously attribute unlikely, lonely roles to one another. But Jours de France also functions as a passage chamber, which can be viewed as the beginning of the spectacle that follows.

The works involved are strange amalgams of materials: of balance and imbalance, order and disorder, quiet and disquiet. First of all there are lice, which Pierre Ardouvin presents in the form of blown glass sculptures. Each of them is stuck in an iron magazine rack mounted on a plinth that is covered in fake white fur. Their brilliant blackness evokes the late-nineteenth-century refinement of Huysmans, or even the threatening prophecies of Lautréamont's Songs of Malador. Are they traps? Are they the Kafkaesque metamorphosis of an abandoned issue of Jours de France? Scattered about the space, the lice represent a conscience directed at its own inner abyss, a closed circuit that could be said to evoke the operation of the media society.

At the centre of the space, placed on a square plinth, a triangular tent ("J'entends, j'entends" / "I hear, I hear") is presented as a sculpture. This transitory place, with its interior completely covered in mirrors, is not the reassuring cocoon that adventurers set up between themselves and nature. Viewers cannot enter without their own image—a mise en abyme—giving them a feeling of being outside themselves, overcome by vertigo, in a situation of inner dispersal comparable to the lice in its degeneration. Although the space gives a presentiment of the devastation the lice are wreaking, this is already visible in the "paintings". They offer a projection space, on the walls where they fulfil their usual function as windows, with elements of sculpture. They display images of landscapes and architectural spaces besieged by parasitic elements, evoking the agonising visions of a madman more than an organised world or idyllic nature. These "paintings" are impressions on canvas that Pierre Ardouvin created using collected postcards, which he partly painted and then scanned, enlarged, mounted on a stretcher and coated in a transparent resin mixed with glitter. The lice appear to have bedded down in some of them, since dark elements disrupt their organisation, interfering with the surface and threatening to attack their depths. Within these images, small, proliferating creatures assume the role of media, in the literal sense of the word, like an interface between reality and imagination. The complexity of their implementation is quite evocative of modern society and its propensity to manipulate reality by retouching, transferring and customising.

"I think it's marvellous! Hahaha!" cried Pink Floyd almost forty years ago, to condemn the effects of social violence. A disillusioned comment that even better sums up this essentially pointless virtuoso performance, which is today developing on the metastases of a violence that has grown silent, allowing one to glimpse, behind the perfection of the reflections, a mechanics of vacuums, repetition and indifference. The obverse of despair.

**Gauthier Huber** (*Gauthier Huber founded the art space "La Plage" and organized several exhibitions at the CNA in Neuchâtel, France. Since 2001, he regularly collaborates with magazines Das Kunst-Bulletin and ArtPress and www.cominmag.ch. He also contributed to several monographic publications as well as reference books.*)

## **News / Pierre Ardouvin**

Porte d'Aubervilliers, Pierre Ardouvin will inaugurate in September 2012, as part of artistic commissions for the extension of the tram, a "burst merry-go-round" titled : "Tu me fais tourner la tête". This work is made of fairground carousel elements – horse, elephant, airplane – projected height at the end of large steel masts. From september 5th to the 30th, on the occasion of the Biennale of Sao Paulo, the SAM Art Projects presents at the Museu Brasileiro da Escultura (MuBE) "Destination Sud", an exhibition which highlights a selection of artists supported by the sponsorship project initiated by Sandra and Amaury Mulliez. Pierre Ardouvin will present at this time "Le petit bal perdu", an installation which the dispositif is an invitation to viewer to dance in a storm of artificial snow, and bright rooms, "Les éclairs".

**Conference / Exchange**, Pierre Ardouvin / Nicolas Bourriaud at the SAM Art, at the end of September 2012. Schedules and information at SAM Project.

## **Biographical notes**

Pierre Ardouvin participated in the latest edition of the "Nuit Blanche" in Paris, surrounding the Hôtel d'Albret in the Marais, with the installation "Purple Rain". He also had a personal exhibitions at the Art Center of Fribourg, at the CCC of Tours, at the Palais de Tokyo. He presented the installation "On dirait le sud" on the facade of the "Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris" for the reopening of the museum in 2005. He was nominated for the Marcel Duchamp Prize in 2007.

His work was also presented abroad the Mori Art Museum in Tokyo (2011), the National Museum of Korea (2011). These works are included in many public and private collections such as the "Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris", the MAC/VAL, the Jumex collection in Mexico, the Fondation Louis Vuitton collection and the Galeries Lafayette collection.

A reference monograph was published in January 2012 by the "Presses du Réel".

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