

GALERIE CRÈVECOEUR

4 RUE JOUYE-ROUVE

75020 PARIS

*Laure et Jane Dumond*

Florian & Michael Quistrebert

15/09 - 27/10/12

Laure and Jane Dumond / Florian and Michaël Quistrebert. It's the fraternal story of a double act. For this end of summer exhibition, the Quistrebert brothers have decided to up the ante on the singularity of their choice to paint as a pair that is related to each other. The title, in a nod to Duchamp, plays on linguistic slippage (the mispronunciation of which suggests the title of a famous painting by Courbet). This fourhanded oeuvre likes to multiply the figure of the double with its share of visual metaphors and symmetries, in a play of echoes and responses between the centre and the periphery. With this unstable title, the Quistrebert brothers announce a twofold programme, just another stage of their research into abstract painting's formal solutions in the present day. For instance, how an inherently primordial form is produced? And how this original form is thought of in a comprehensive, mobile and generative manner?

It begs the question of exactly which "origin of the world" the Quistreberts are chafing against in their paintings and videos. On the face of it, it is not a question of capturing the morphogenesis of the first moment (the original nucleus, in the manner of the *Genetic Moment* in Barnett Newman), but rather to consider various situations of the subject faced with the mechanics sensitive to the emergence of forms, and how this metaphorical relation to the work answers to archetypes of the Universe's workings, currently confirmed by the latest developments in astrophysics. A far from stable place is constantly renegotiated in a game of perceptual disturbances and proprioceptive disruption, the prerogative of optical art in the sixties - a generation which the Quistreberts converse with here in counterpoint, in far more than a mere revival. The retinal flirting of optical art was fixed on a re-appropriation of the work by the viewer / actor, according to a physiological bias of perception, which replaced the observer at the heart of art displacing the authority of the creator (Duchamp and his proto-kinetic *Rotoreliefs* recalled that "the viewer completes the work of art"). Here, it is rather about providing the keys to a poetic repositioning of the eye in the cosmic order of things.

The abstract forms that the Quistreberts are proposing surf on a physical order, which is not only based in the vibrating surface of things (the opticaliste itch), but part of the multifaceted tiering of forms and phenomena (microcosm/ macrocosm). Hence, the recourse to visual devices conducive to vertiginous rapture, keeping in their sights a dive into the heart of the mechanisms of the cosmos. Upon entering the Crèvecoeur gallery, two medium sized formats are positioned face-to-face, two diptychs in which the iterative geometry establishes an ad infinitum duplication (the kaleidoscope, a fun optical instrument that emerged in the mid-nineteenth century, historically linked to the mechanisation of the sense of infinity). The viral multiplication of primary geometric forms (diamonds / squares / ellipses) takes the form of constellations and trajectories, the rotating rhythm of which is rendered more explicit (the principle of revolution), on an increasingly monumental scale, with the two twin pictures of the back room: two screens (283 x 195cm) of phosphorescent nuances reflecting each other in optical games derived from the simplest *Gestalt*, propelling the eye into the vortex of a cinematic space with multiple entries (and exits).

Between these two involutorial devices, wherein the form spirals in upon itself in mirrored Moebius effect, in itself a form of doublure, a video is screened in total darkness, a black box conducive to the hypnotic fascination of the gaze. One is reminded here of the archaic technique of fixing a point of light, the basis of the first developments of medical hypnosis that did indeed offer a rereading of the subject's doublures (conscious / unconscious), notably through the split personality in "altered states of consciousness". In this cinematographic niche, the Quistreberts present us with their latest video entitled *Dots*. It is produced from captured video images; extreme high angles of a traditional dervish's dance, the *samà*. The dervish whirls faster and faster in a frenetic race that drives the consciousness into trance, with the body a means of attaining

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an ecstatic grace, through the individual's heady dissolution within a divine and transcendent entity. The dervish, converted here to a luminous galactic point, is a point of attachment for the gaze, tallying with recent discoveries in astrophysics on the gravitational movement of the body around a moving centre. Thus, *Dots* mischievously combines astrophysics and ancient ecstasy inducing techniques, Sufism and abstract opticalism in a combination of shapes and references, which defeats the established order of cultural registers (East / West; pure abstraction / decorative arts; Islamic arabesque / musicaliste line; experimental science / esotericism; religion / entertainment etc.).

This work is an undisguised tribute to the history of the attempts at audio visualisation, a Visual Music of which the animated vocabulary of abstraction has, as we know, always had to do with the Pythagorean background of a "music of the spheres" (from the Whitney Brothers mandalas to Norman McLaren's experimental films). But contrary to John Whitney, who early adopted computer digital technologies to deploy this psychedelic sense of the infinite, the Quistrebert brothers resort to the use of analogue equipment (the swirling dervishes) to digitally draw the geometric pattern and stimulate the intoxication of the gaze. The term analogy is important because it refers precisely to this relation of scale between underworld and cosmos. As recently shown by the historian Barbara Stafford, the analogy is strikingly relevant in contemporary thought, especially in simulation technologies and the latest cognitive approaches to identity. For the analogy posits a likeness of relations between two objects, not based on formal and specific properties of these objects, but on the reciprocal relations between these properties. It is in this a singular form of resemblance in direct contact with the thorny issue of abstraction. Instead of a simple "relation of likeness" (the one encountered in the illusionist project of figurative painting), it initiates a "likeness ratio" (the more abstract principle and a mathematical proportion of digital kinship). The analogy imposes a relational similitude, emphasising the barely concealed desire of a *coincidencia* between individuals and the world, the old dream of "the analogy between all beings". The analogy is a matter of abstract mediation between orders, realms, senses and beings, whose ultimate goal is to better reveal a tightly woven fabric of relations between visible and invisible, identifiable and unknown, Body and Cosmos. It is only through multiple quantitative differences (brightness, opacity, density, colour, hue, timbre, texture, etc.) more weighted than neutralised that the "likeness ratio" provides some form of geometric equality referring to a possible permanence of things, a mathematical secret of quality in which the spectator will project, beyond the apparent chaos, a desire for unity. This is a zone of the buried desire that the Quistrebert brothers attempt to approach, in a very empirical and experimental way, sometimes amused and uncontrolled, in their little pataphysical investigation into the World's origin.

Pascal Rousseau

Translated by Audrey Concannon

\*The word *doublure* has several meanings. It is a lining for clothing, an understudy for a play and a body double or stand-in in cinema.

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