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EXHIBITION

BERDAGUER & PÉJUS

INSULA

16 MARCH - 13 MAY 2012

INSTITUT
D'ART CONTEMPORAIN
Villeurbanne/Rhône-Alpes

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The Institut d'art contemporain has invited Berdaguer & Péjus for their first large monographic exhibition.

Born in 1968 and 1969 respectively, Christophe Berdaguer and Marie Péjus live in Marseille and Paris.

They have had several personal exhibitions (Villa Arson, Nice, 1997 ; FRAC PACA, Marseille, 2001 ; Lieu Unique, Nantes, 2006 ; FRAC Basse-Normandie, Caen, 2007 ; Circuit, Lausanne, 2010).

They have also participated in numerous group exhibitions (*Subréel*, [mac], Marseille, 2002 ; *Communauté 1 et 2*, Institut d'art contemporain, Villeurbanne, 2004 ; *Dreamtime*, Musée des Abattoirs, Toulouse, 2009).

Christophe Berdaguer and Marie Péjus explore the interactions between brain, body, environment and constructed space, materialised by varied forms (volumes, projections, hybrid constructions, etc.).

Their phenomenological reflection on space and the psyche, on a biological relation with the world, draws on various fields (psychoanalysis, neurology, architecture, parapsychology, etc.) treated by the artists in a both deep and distanced manner. Drawing inspiration from the counter-utopias of radical Italian architects and designers, Berdaguer & Péjus perform mental transpositions of architecture.

The latter can also blend an interiority and an external building.

The mental landscapes created in this way incorporate behavioural changes resulting from psychological disturbances, the taking of chemicals or the effect of stimuli on our senses—appropriating the clinical discourse.

Thus, using the links generated between the surrounding space and states of awareness, the artists perform projects referring to a body—whether this is individual or social, human, plant, animal or mineral—subjected to various transformation processes.

The Berdaguer & Péjus exhibition at the Institut d'art contemporain reactivates existing works and includes a large number of new ones. The artists have chosen to use the entire exhibition space, considering it as a research area showing the various fields that they address and highlighting the analogy between the artistic creation process and the functioning of the cerebral structure.

Insula, the title that the artists have given to their exhibition, can be understood in a polysemous manner. The term meant an apartment building in ancient Rome and also refers to a zone in the brain linked to emotion. For the artists, the exhibition consists of a network of projects that occupy space like small brains making up a 'synaptic community'.

The works of Berdaguer & Péjus have the potential for triggering mental space. The work *Salle de consultation*, produced by the Institute for the exhibition, is a space for projection in all the senses of the word. It is a metaphor for crossing the mirror, creating a symbolic pathway through the exhibition, especially from *Kilda 2* to *Kilda* that face each other in the spaces.

Berdaguer & Péjus work on giving material substance to projects. With them, drawing becomes volume and an initially mental form becomes works like, for example, *Paroles martiennes* made for this exhibition. These translations/materialisations generally lead to the creation of artificial landscapes that can give form and figure to neuroses (*Arbres*) or express utopian projections (*Kilda 2*). The materiality given to their projects leads paradoxically to a feeling of unreality—of a floating presence.

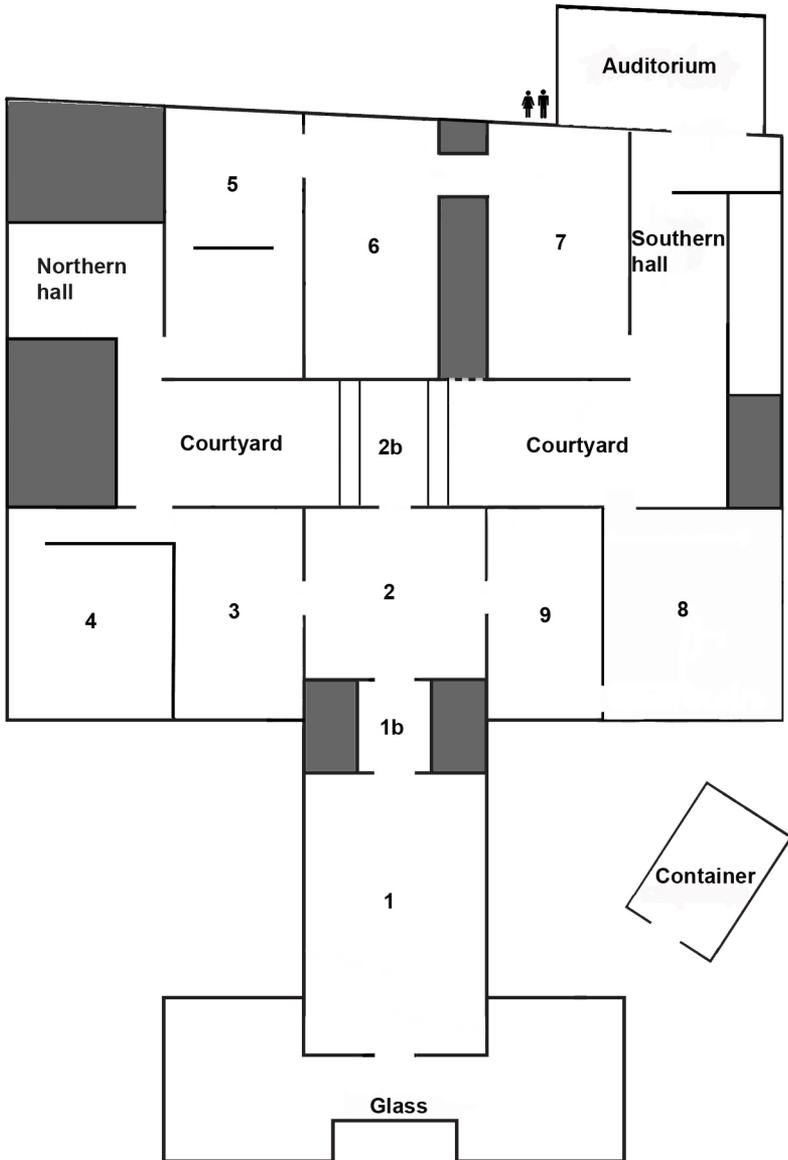
Using a combination of mental projections and the play of perception, they further develop here their exploration of language, time and memory. Berdaguer & Péjus transpose and give form to experiments that sometimes cannot be seen with the naked eye or whose occurrence we are unaware of. They question a manner of being in the world that is sometimes addictive and sometimes supernatural, floating between pathological fiction and curative reality.

The whole gives the visitor an active dimension by encouraging him or her to have doubts about what is seen and works on giving form to hypotheses of escape. Representing what is not visible, translating latent phenomena and multiplying keys for understanding come down to the production of both biopolitical and aesthetic deconditioning situations.

The research conducted by Berdaguer & Péjus plays on modified states of awareness and is aimed at materialising biological and physical continuity between cerebral activity and the outside world. In this respect, it can be linked in part to the activities of the IAC's 'Laboratory Space Brain'. This concerns in particular the work *Traumathèque* presented in the container.

www.i-ac.eu/laboratoireespacecerveau

Exhibition Rooms



Cartels différentiels, 2012

The metal title plaques along the visitor's route were made by Berdaguer & Péjus after the 'structural differential' created by the Polish scientists Alfred Korzybski (1879-1950).

Korzybski was the founder of 'general semantics', an approach to thought based on quantum physics and Einstein's work to study the functioning of man in his environment. This consisted of considering the way in which our nervous system perceives, interprets and interferes with what it finds around it in order to develop a method that would enable people to understand each other better. The method should also enable humans to gain an approach corresponding to the level of scientific progress of their time.

He is known for his aphorism 'the map is not the territory', which means that our perception of reality is only the mapping of this, a series of representations. The progress of nerve inflow to our brains leads to a chain of levels of abstraction that he showed as a diagram called 'the structural differential' and that is made up of several maps. Alfred Korzybski used this tool to clarify the mechanisms that result in poor processing of data.

The artists state that 'the plaques as a whole and hence the rooms as a whole are connected by cables providing an infinite play of connections between the works ; Korzybski's maps play the role of semantic cluster. A map that haunts the territory'.

ROOM 1

Kilda 2, 2012

Wood, flocking
Constructive system : Patrick Vindimian
With the support of Mécènes du Sud,
Marseille
Institut d'art contemporain, Villeurbanne/
Rhône-Alpes production

ROOMS 1b & 2

Paroles martiennes, 2012

Stereolithography, sound
Speech & Language Laboratory (CNRS
& AMU), Scientist in charge : Thierry
Legou
Voice : Anne Houdy
Institut d'art contemporain, Villeurbanne/
Rhône-Alpes production

ROOM 2 bis

Salle de consultation, 2012

Print on a two-way mirror
Courtesy Freud Museum, London
Institut d'art contemporain, Villeurbanne/
Rhône-Alpes production

Soleil noir, 2006/2012

Windows, anti-UV radiations filters,
germicidals UV neon light
Institut d'art contemporain, Villeurbanne/
Rhône-Alpes production

ROOM 3

Disparaître ici, 2012

Foamboard, wood, mattress, neon light,
metal mesh high and low frequencies
Institut d'art contemporain, Villeurbanne/
Rhône-Alpes production

Double aveugle, 2006/2012

Aquariums, blind fishes
Institut d'art contemporain, Villeurbanne/
Rhône-Alpes production

ROOM 4

Forêt épileptique, 1998

Videos, DVD, sound, color, 120'

COURTYARD

Arbres, 2012

Resin
Institut d'art contemporain, Villeurbanne/
Rhône-Alpes production

Double insu, 2010

Glass, methyl celeritas, calcium lactate
pronarcolep
Les Ateliers de Rennes' production, in
Biotrial Research industry

NORTHERN HALL

La constante lumineuse restera désormais là, dans votre cervelle, 2012

Bulb, motor
Institut d'art contemporain, Villeurbanne/
Rhône-Alpes production

Utopia bianca, 2009/2012

Forex, foamboard, plastic sheet

ROOM 5

Timezone, 2010

Video, DVD, sound, color, 49'

ROOM 6

Kilda, 2008/2012

Chains, video
Constructive system : Patrick Vindimian
Institut d'art contemporain, Villeurbanne/
Rhône-Alpes production

ROOM 7

Psychoarchitectures, 2006/2010

Stereolithography
Musée Régional d'Art Contemporain
Languedoc-Roussillon collection,
Sérignan
FRAC Pays de la Loire, Carquefou
Daniel Bosser collection, Paris
Private collection, Grenoble
Private collection, Paris
Bonneau-Samames gallery, Marseille
from CFDR collection, Paris

Arbres, 2008

Stereolithography, resin
Centre national des arts plastiques

Trou noir, 2011

Plastiline®, keys, chain

SOUTHERN HALL***Communauté invisible, 2012***

Wood, painting, metal

With Sarah, 1899/2012

Glass, lead
Institut d'art contemporain, Villeurbanne/
Rhône-Alpes production

Chants épileptiques, 1998/2012

Sound installation, 3', loop

ROOM 8***Jardin psychologique, 2006/2012***

Plexiglas®, wire netting, neon light, sand
Rivate collection, Grenoble

ROOM 9***Mies, 2005/2012***

Wood, DVD, video, color, 8' 55''
Institut d'art contemporain, Villeurbanne/
Rhône-Alpes production

CONTAINER***Traumathèque, 2002***

Video, DVD, loop
FRAC Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur,
Marseille

room 1

Kilda 2, 2012

Kilda 2 is a gossamer-like structure covered with flocking. As shown by the title, Berdaguer & Péjus designed the work as a continuation of *Kilda* (room 6) made in 2008.

St Kilda is an archipelago off the west coast of Scotland. People lived there for several thousand years in practically total self-sufficiency, covering their food requirements with seabirds. The place interests Berdaguer & Péjus as it is the incarnation of both a utopia and a dystopia—a community ideal, a kind of ‘primitive communism’ that had to be abandoned in 1930 because of the difficult living conditions and the resulting precariousness.

Kilda 2 is the maquette resulting from a mental architecture project whose process means that it cannot be rooted either in the ground or in the sky. It is a floating structure ‘oscillating between site and non-site, between projection and accomplishment [...] like a monument for men and architecture for animals’. The latter is seen twice in the exhibition by means of play of overturning and inversion.

Kilda 2 seems to form the process of sedimentation and break-up in progress in the archipelago of St Kilda

The site, the real, unlimited place where nature expresses itself is shifted mentally in the exhibition space to form a non-site, an ‘architectural’ ordering of this fantasised reality. The term ‘Non-Site’, invented by the artist Robert Smithson, matches the central preoccupations of several other works in the exhibition, such as *Timezone* (room 5) and *Jardin psychologique* (room 8).

rooms 1b & 2

Paroles martiennes, 2012

Paroles martiennes consists of several modules in white resin distributed around the room in six sets and accompanied by a sonorous litany delivered in a foreign language by a female voice.

Berdaguer & Péjus found their inspiration for this work in an imaginary language, that of the somnambulist transcriptions of the utterances of Héléne Smith made by the psychologist Théodore Flournoy (1854-1920). The Martian discourses that Smith claimed to make were transcribed and studied in the book *Des Indes jusqu'à la planète Mars* (1900) and complemented by analyses by Ferdinand de Saussure, the famous linguistics specialist.

Interested in the mechanical study of the movements of speech, Berdaguer & Péjus worked with the Speech & Language Laboratory (LPL) at Aix-en-Provence (CNRS, Universités de Provence et de la Méditerranée) using an electromagnetic articulograph, an apparatus for the accurate measurement of the positions, movements and accelerations of lips, tongue and jaw, the ‘buccal choreography’ of an actress reading Héléne Smith transcriptions. Six sensors in her mouth recorded these sounds first shown as a 3D diagram and then materialised using the stereolithography process to produce ‘solid speech’.

The artists did not use this plastic transcription work to decipher the utterances but in contrast to make the abstractions visible, preserving their organic dimension.

‘These ectoplasmic forms—solid utterances—are the fruit of cutting-edge technology that makes it possible to understand the mechanisms of the generation of speech. They take us to an amplification of the enigma of language, materialising the speech of the alien within us, who lives in our buccal cave’.

room 2b

Soleil noir, 2006/2012

***Salle de consultation*, 2012**

Salle de consultation is a print of part of a photograph of Freud's office on a two-way mirror. Held by the Freud Museum in London and illustrated by a detail of the window, the photograph was taken in 1938 by Edmund Engelman¹ just a few days before Freud left for England.

It shows Freud's desk, his bookcase, his impressive collection of antique objects and a broad window looking out into an inner courtyard. A strange decorative mirror hangs from the handle of the window.

The artists chose to show *Salle de consultation* in 'quiet' part of the route through the exhibition, where entering means interrupting progress and movement. Like the psychoanalytic cure, a therapeutic technique that Freud developed in 1898, the subject enters an area of retreat intended to free his speech and the exploration of his unconscious. The isolated, protected space is also enhanced by the presence of the two windows of the work *Soleil noir*.

Printed on the back of the mirror, *Salle de consultation* has no materiality and becomes a spectral image. The mirror refers to a space that is not visible and the visitor is both inside and outside. The work thus plays on different levels of reflection and generates hidden spaces, inducing a self-consultation principle.

Soleil noir consists of two windows containing ultraviolet light that can destroy any germ.

UV radiation is used mainly for its germicidal effects in biology laboratories, for the sterilisation of workspaces and medical apparatus and equipment. Matter breaks down twice as quickly in contact with UV and the genetic material of microorganisms is no longer operational. The view from one space to the other is crossed by another time unit—time that is accelerated, held back and protected.

Removing any possibility for an organism to reproduce, the enclosed space of *Soleil noir* thus symbolises the space occupied by death, as if extreme hygienism and the desire to eliminate disease and contamination finally lead to the radical prevention of life. Berdaguer & Péjus grasp one of the paradoxes of society today, in which the combination of advanced technology and biology in cutting-edge research can create a cold world.

The title *Soleil noir* can have different meanings. Whereas a black light (also called 'Wood's lamp' after its inventor) refers to a physical, germicidal reality that is harmful without protection, the oxymoron 'Soleil noir' (black sun) carries various references ranging from occult symbol to the expression for a total eclipse of the sun by way of the poetry of melancholy (*El Desdichado* by Gérard de Nerval).

1. This photograph was reproduced in the book by the photographer Edmund Engelman, *Sigmund Freud. Bergasse 19, Vienna*, published in 1998 (Christian Brandstätter, Vienna).

room 3

Disparaître ici, 2012

Disparaître ici is an architecture-landscape maquette consisting of folds and nooks and crannies that create a space in which it would be possible to hide or rest.

The sculpture more than covers a table in an organic manner, as if it could continue to develop to infinity. The lower part of the base is covered with mesh that blocks high and low electromagnetic frequencies, forming a protective Faraday cage².

The work is a continuation of the project called *Dreamland* (2007) based on a similar form, a full counterpoint of Dreamland on Coney Island, the first amusement park near New York, inaugurated in 1904, and in reference to the name also given to zone 51 in the Nevada desert. Absent from official maps, it is a military base for the manufacture of furtive aircraft whose opacity and the clear shape of their contours are used in the design of the two sculptures. They thus tend to become undetectable and 'disappear here', 'in contrast with a world in which architecture is an art saturated with visibility and whose first ambition is to stand up, to show itself and to stand up to'.

This materialisation of an invisible space that seeks to hide in the landscape and to keep away from reality is a reminder of the principle of the primitive cave. For the artists, it is related to 'integration and insertion in the landscape, in which the object is to become undetectable, in which the «least» is set out like an ideal of poverty and abnegation, the decor of the invisible'.

Furthermore, the use of metal mesh adds the idea of protection to that of disappearance. In spite of its synthetic nature (materials, design in 3D), this artificial landscape seems to be the final possibility for our protection from the

electromagnetic waves and chemicals that contaminate and run through us.

Berdaguer & Péjus see it as a proposal for a 'shell [...] in which a dreamer can fall asleep with the memory of a virginal landscape'.

Double aveugle, 2006/2012

Two half-spheres reflect the space of the exhibition room and the visitor's presence. Against its respective wall, each forms a volume containing water and a fish.

Anoptichthys jordanii³ or the blind cave fish is an aquatic vertebrate found in caves in Mexico. Although blind, the fish is very agile thanks to the lateral sensorial strip along its sides that detects vibration in the water and enables it to find its way.

The two aquariums forming reflective black eyes are entitled '*Double aveugle*' (double blind) with reference to the feature of the fish and also to the synonymic expression '*double incense*' (double unknown). It is a riddle to be solved by the visitor—blinded in turn by the reflections from the spheres. No visual evidence proves the stated existence of the animals and these thus become a ghostly copy of the presence of the viewer.

Although 'art tends to maintain the idea that if one does not believe in a work it does not function', Berdaguer & Péjus feel that it operates in the doubt and questioning of the person who tests it.

2. An enclosure that protects a volume from external electric fields (from danger of electrocution, lightning and also radio waves, etc.).

3. The fish is pink and known for the opaque membranes that have spread over its eye sockets during thousands of years living in the dark.

room 4

***Forêt épileptique*, 1998**

Forêt épileptique by Berdaguer & Péjus is first of all a film resulting from an ephemeral work in a forest. Several persons were asked to walk through woodland lit by stroboscopes set at frequencies ranging from 9 to 12 Hz, the level said to be able to cause fits of photosensitive epilepsy⁴.

The projection apparatus creates an immersion environment close to the initial experience. Berdaguer & Péjus focus on the upsetting of the perception of space as can be triggered by strong light intensity. This change in state is combined with highly significant ‘decor’—that of forest, found both in legends and stories and in fantasy films. This fragment of landscape is used here to generate both the imagination and neurological sensitivity.

The history of epilepsy has shown that the affection can be combined with moments of extreme lucidity. Here, the lit forest can refer to cerebral imagery. *Forêt épileptique* is the incarnation of a brain while having the capability of affecting our brains.

Chants épileptiques (1998/2012) is presented in the southern space. This is the result of a neurologist’s score of the way some people hum during a fit.

courtyard

***Arbres*, 2012**

The two *Arbres* (trees) shown in the courtyard are a manual enlargement of the stereolithographic maquettes assembled in room 7. The trees are at human scale here. Set in an entirely white environment, they form an artificial landscape determined first and foremost in relation to the human body.

This recreated, reconstructed version of nature can be found in several works by Berdaguer & Péjus, including *Kilda* (rooms 1 and 6), *Disparaitre ici* (room 3) and *Forêt épileptique* (room 4). By shifting from two to three dimensions the artists create volume that is intangible, a mental image. The anthropomorphic forms that result are like ectoplasm as they emerge from an unreal space.

***Double insu*, 2010**

Double insu consists of two interlaced phials doubled symmetrically on each side of the courtyard. Each contains an active substance, one generating perception of slowed time and, in contrast, the other generating perception of accelerated time. Thus the simultaneous taking of both substances theoretically cancels out their active ingredients, with a new perception of time. Using a contradictory chemical set-up, the artists’ hypothesis is that of ‘requisitioning real time’ and making it artificial, producing an ‘active placebo’.

‘*En double insu*’ (double unbeknownst) can also be phrased ‘*en double aveugle*’ (double blind). As in *Double aveugle* (room 3), we see the question of the double that is recurrent in the artists’ work. It often generates a dialectic (between inside and outside, space and psyche, belief and doubt...).

4. ‘Photosensitive’ epilepsy occurs when electrical discharges from neurones are caused by exposure to strong flashing lights.

The notion of *insu* (unbeknownst) also refers to a 'placebo', the idea not being that of administering real substances but of creating situations that trigger a psychological mechanism and make it possible to probe our relationship with reality.

northern hall

***La constante lumineuse restera
désormais là, dans votre cerveau,
2012***

A bulb hanging from the ceiling rotates slightly. The title refers to a mnemonic way of remembering the speed of light. Replacing each word of the phrase '*La constante lumineuse restera désormais là, dans votre cerveau*' by the number of letters that make it up gives the speed of light in metres per second.

Various research was carried out throughout the nineteenth century to measure the speed of light, in particular using devices with spinning mirrors. Further experimental work in the twentieth century using radar and then laser made the result more accurate. Accepted by the scientific community in 1983, the definition of the speed of light in a vacuum was designated as a universal constant subsequently used as the basis for all measurements of space and time.

The mnemonic phrase draws on artificial memory by training the brain and associations of ideas. Its peremptory nature places it between adage and poetic declaration. Berdaguer & Péjus give a simple form to a generic proposition, whose postulate they cancel.

'White Utopia' consists of tables and shelves on which are set out models of furniture covered with plastic sheets.

Berdaguer & Péjus reactivated the project called *Autoprogettazione* (auto-conception) designed in 1973 by Enzo Mari, the Italian artist, theoretician and designer. The founder of the Nuova Tendenza movement and a leading figure in 'anti-design' from the 1960s onwards, he worked on making the art of making furniture accessible to as wide a public as possible.

Thus, *Autoprogettazione* consisted of publishing drawings and plans of furniture for construction on a do-it-yourself basis to complete an interior cheaply in two days. 'I think that if people were encouraged to make a table they would be able to understand the thinking concealed behind it'.

The artists combine this approach with the '*phalanstère*' principle of Charles Fourier (1772-1837), the French philosopher, in 1832. He defined the precepts of an ideal community society centred on the use of a farm and including housing for the equivalent of 400 families.

This piling up of 'own designs' would therefore enable *Utopia Bianca* to meet the requirements of the numerous families of Fourier's *phalanstère*. Somewhat like a storage establishment for furniture, this accumulation of models under sheets brings to mind potential waiting to be realised, a parenthesis in time and space. For Berdaguer & Péjus, this is not 'a work of mourning [...] rather the ghostly design for a utopia that remains to be built'.

room 5

Timezone, 2010

Timezone shows a man walking in grey sand. Filmed from above, the spiral of material is divided as the path traces two semicircles: a black one and a white one.

Here, Berdaguer & Péjus illustrate the metaphor used by the American artist Robert Smithson (1938-1973) to explain the notion of 'entropy'.

In 1967⁵, this theoretician of earth art explained the irreversible nature of time using the example of a child running in a box filled with black sand on one side and white sand on the other, causing the materials to mix and become grey. Even if the child then tried to change the direction of his movement, the grains of sand would be irremediably mixed. The artist then mentioned the use of video, which could go back in time artificially, although this would not prevent the film from crumbling or becoming lost.

The work by Berdaguer & Péjus puts into practice and reverses the procedure mentioned by Robert Smithson. They thus test the split between the project and reality and change the initial direction of the movement. *Timezone* shows a restorative walk towards the original order by showing a backward movement. The person turning like the hand in the circle of sand becomes a human clock.

Using technology, the two artists try to turn time back by means of negentropy⁶ that finally cancels itself out.

5. Robert Smithson: 'Monuments of Passaic', *ArtForum*, 1967

6. Negentropy or negative entropy describes the evolution of a system whose degree of organisation is increasing. Used in thermodynamics, the notion can be applied not only to physical systems but also to social and human ones. It was defined by the physicist Léon Brillouin in 1959 in his book *La science et la théorie de l'information*.

The gradual separation of black and white causes the disappearance of a whole part of the video image. The film devours itself.

room 6

Kilda, 2008/2012

Kilda consists of interwoven metal chains and a video showing stills of the eye sockets of animals reflecting a structure whose form seems to be an inverted transposition of the grid. This work preceded *Kilda 2*, the imposing structure shown in the first room of the exhibition.

The chain composition is upside-down architecture, designed first of all for birds.

It is inspired by the design technique used by the architect Antoni Gaudí (1852-1926) who used strings in the making of models of his designs⁷. A mirror set beneath the model of the building was used to invert forms and to see the final appearance and dynamism of the structure—the translation of the effects imposed by construction.

This architectural ‘mirage’ also evokes the history of the archipelago of St Kilda (see room 1), ‘paradise for birds and hell for man’. Birds are henceforth the only observers of this floating structure, as shown by the video that accompanies the chains.

According to Berdaguer & Péjus, ‘*Kilda* takes form in a between-time, oscillating [...] between the right side and the reverse side [...]. Architecture made of birds, time, concretions, wind, chains, droppings and upside-down sky’.

7. Gaudí made gigantic models of hanging strings weighted with small bags of lead to check the distribution of loads.

room 7

Psychoarchitectures, 2006/2010

Psychoarchitectures were made with same process as that used for *Arbres*. Drawn from the digital modelling of children’s drawings made for psychological tests, the series of models forms a three-dimensional transcription using stereolithography⁸. This manufacturing process is used to make solid objects from a digital model with any manual intervention. It is particularly well-suited to the artists’ aim of materialising mental representations.

The classification of disorders using the study of drawings developed throughout the twentieth century and became systemised from 1959 onwards with the creation of the psychopathology of expression. Among the various categories of drawing tests, the draw a house test and the draw a tree test are in the category of set subject tests in which the drawing is subjected to formal analysis based on specific criteria (characteristics of the line, use of the surface, position of the representation, etc.) to detect the features of patient’s personality and pathology. Using the analogy between a house and mental space—in a dream a house can form an image of the psyche—the drawings resulting from psychological tests form a tool for interpretation and an instrument for therapy, while standardising the clinical approach.

Psychoarchitectures also contain the do-it-yourself principle that is central to the preoccupations of Berdaguer & Péjus. Here, this constructive Utopia is incarnated by objects that escape all standardisation.

8. A ‘rapid prototyping’ technique in which laser sintering can be used. A laser beam acts on photosensitive resin and forms the part to be made by successive deposits of thin layers of material.

Arbres, 2008

Arbres, made using the same procedures as for *Psychoarchitectures*, are from drawings made for psychological tests.

Materialisation in 'plant' form of psychological suffering, these trees reveal the neuroses of the people who drew them. The artists consider that their size is similar to that of the brain.

Trou noir, 2011

Trou noir (black hole) is a ball of black plastiline in which keys of various sizes and shapes are embedded. The whole is presented like a mobile and hangs from a thin chain hanging from a bracket fixed to the wall.

In astrophysics, a black hole is a body whose field of gravity retains all types of matter and radiation. It is indiscernible and can engulf anything near it.

The roughly shaped object that looks malleable although bristling with sets of keys, brings to mind a representation of captivity. From the tool without a lock by way of 'keys of interpretation', the ritual object condenses a host of 'screen memories' to which we pay no attention and that nonetheless mask a hidden memory.

From outside it looks like an impregnable fortress.

The size of a head, *Trou noir* represents amnesia, memory losses and all the places that are no longer accessible, that have been forgotten and now just form mental architectures—ghosts of spaces.

southern hall

Communauté invisible, 2012

Twelve wooden chairs painted black are connected to each other and to the floor by a metal bar. The forms are geometrical or symbolic, bringing to mind both contemporary furniture and models of phantasmagorical architecture.

The items were designed after photographic records of a free design experiment in the 1960s⁹.

These black wooden chairs fixed to the floor form somewhat austere, hieratic furniture, a result of their fixing between public and private space.

The freedom of expression and creativeness of the young dropouts—who unconsciously called on the whole universe of contemporary forms—is replaced here by control, prevention and the expression of emptiness: chairs stored, unusable and abandoned, the only remaining traces of designers and users who have disappeared, of a community (social, religious, a group of thinkers¹⁰?) that has become invisible.

9. The experiment was conducted by design students and their teacher, a member of the Anti-Design movement, who wished to design a 'neighbourhood participation' project with street children in Naples for the design of street furniture.

10. The 'Invisible College' was the name used by the chemist Robert Boyle in his correspondence from 1646 to 1647 to indicate a society of scholars and thinkers with whom he worked. Some writers consider that the Royal Society, founded in London in 1660, resulted from this.

With Sarah, 1899/2012

Entitled *With Sarah*, this window with web-shaped stained glass refers to the story of Sarah Winchester (1839-1922) and more particularly that of her mansion in Santa Jose in Santa Clara Valley in California.

Known for its extravagance, the building is now part of history. From 1884 until her death in 1922, the widow of William Winchester (the heir of the famous American rifle maker), devoted her time to the building and ceaseless refurbishment of her residence, influenced by a medium, to remove the malediction that weighed on the family. The result of Sarah Winchester's mental projections and spiritualist sessions, the architecture stands out by its scale (160 rooms served by immense corridors), its technical innovations and above all the strangeness or absurdity of certain design features: doors opening on to empty space, windows forming part of the floor, cupboards with no backs or full of coat stands...

The web pattern is rich in form and meaning: it is the archetypal trap, an image of transformation and also a symbol of the random world of the senses in Hinduism, the form of the mandala whose heart refers to the centre of the universe, and is also the expression of a mental path to recover the essence of being in Jungian psychoanalysis.

The web pattern brings to mind the network principle that drove the design of the Winchester house. Starting in the centre and then spreading like an infinite circular maze, the architecture generates architecture around a central room, the blue room in which the widow communicated with the spirits every night.

Berdaguer & Péjus are interested in this architect-less architecture—an 'endless monster' to get rid of bad spirits—and the major idea of the labyrinth. The spiritualist sessions organised by Sarah Winchester formed the source of the constantly changing plans for the house.

The window opening on to the invisible world that forms *With Sarah* has resonance with the invisible beings in the community of empty chairs that it overlooks and sets a different temporalness. Indeed, the title indicates collaboration with Sarah Winchester through time.

Chants épileptiques, 1998/2012

Berdaguer & Péjus present the voices of persons during epileptic fits as transcribed as a score by a neurologist specialising in epilepsy who is also a musician. The scores are played on piano and violin and broadcast in the exhibition space as an echo to projections of the film *Forêt épileptique* (room 4).

The shrill and basically incomprehensible words produced during periods of mental disturbance are changed into melodies similar to nursery rhymes that can generate affective resonance. Their simple, repetitive form makes these 'epileptic songs' similar to ritornellos, making original music positioned between an imaginary space and cathartic ritual.

Listening to these chants shows that each patient has his or her ritornello. So each of us has a hidden chant. Berdaguer & Péjus emphasise this idea, that also fits in with their exploration of an imaginary language in *Paroles martiennes* (room 2).

room 8

Jardin psychologique, 2006/2012

Jardin psychologique is an installation consisting of tall fencing around black sand. Coloured mobiles hang above this.

Berdaguer & Péjus designed the garden—whose form might call to mind either a children's play area or a sports field—as a place for observation of the visitor thanks to the presence of interpretation tools. In fact, the mobiles are cut-outs of the inkblot of the so-called Rorschach psychological test.

Hermann Rorschach (1884-1922) was a famous Swiss psychiatrist who in 1921 developed the test that bears his name. A psychological evaluation tool, it consists of a series of plates of symmetrical inkblots that the patient is requested to interpret. The forms are reminiscent of animal or human figures and of situations and actions that may sometimes resemble monstrous or fantastic patterns. A contemporary of Kandinsky, the father of abstract art, Rorschach, an amateur painter himself, created forms based on the same principles of phenomenological experiments as works by the author of *Über das Geistige in der Kunst* (Concerning the Spiritual in Art), first published in 1911. Indeed, Wassily Kandinsky also focused on the analysis of forms and colours as tools for the expression and analysis of 'interior resonance'.

The mobiles function on the principles of evocations and memories and are both playful and disturbing. They are reflected in the black sand of *Jardin psychologique*—with reference to the sand handled by the man in the video *Timezone*. As often in projects by Berdaguer & Péjus, they are designed as 'forms/tools' that can enter the psyche.

room 9

Mies, 2005/2012

Mies is made up of several cupboards on which top pieces are placed. This is accompanied by a film with synthetic images.

The work refers to the German architect Mies Van der Rohe (1886-1969) and more particularly to his famous project, the Farnsworth house or 'glass house' completed in Illinois 1950. The first transparent building of history, this 135 sq. m house built of glass, concrete and steel is considered to be a masterpiece of modern architecture. It was the subject of much controversy in the 1950s, and in particular, the client, Edith Farnsworth, sued Van der Rohe for the lack of privacy resulting from complete transparency.

Indeed, Mies Van der Rohe did not include a single partition wall in his glass cube, with the exception of box structures for the wash room, the bathroom and wardrobe space. In April 1953, Edith Farnsworth said in an interview in *House Beautiful Magazine* that she felt like a sentinel permanently on duty, with the transparency of the house making her both afraid of being seen and giving her a feeling of being on show. Her wardrobe became her only private area. Van der Rohe had stipulated a separator wardrobe five feet high for artistic reasons but Farnsworth was six feet tall. She felt that the house was an open space and she wanted to be able to change her clothes without her head sticking up above the separator.

Berdaguer & Péjus designed a preliminary solution to these dilemmas in 2005. It consisted of a mass of straps that, as if initiated spontaneously within the building, would invade and saturate it. The video projected in the exhibition room simulates a walk in this penetrable work at the scale of the architecture of the IAC in order to generate an immersion phenomenon, operating like a window, bringing the outside inside.

Pursuing this idea, in 2012 they built a replica of Edith Farnsworth's wardrobe, to which are added 'top pieces' to reach the initial height desired by the client.

Mies is an inversion of Mies Van der Rohe's concept. The transparent box is now saturated, cut off from the landscape outside and subjected to a build it yourself principle so that the owner can reappropriate her dwelling. Developing from within, this endogenous architecture topples the architect's power by rendering the occupant a player in the place in which he lives, that he can now sculpt and occupy as he or she wishes.

container

Traumathèque, 2002

Traumathèque is a facility for recording and storing traumas using video cassettes. The visitor can experiment a self-hypnosis technique that consists of memorising the account of a traumatism permanently in order to soothe the persistent pain. A therapeutic voice thus encourages relaxation, remembering a traumatic event and recording it while a floating screen of electronic snow is projected on the wall.

The cloudy video image can have the 'memory screen' notion developed by Freud in his analysis of repression and neurosis. For a psychoanalyst, memories are late constructions by the individual or even fictitious reconstructions aimed at screening off a wound and blurring its imprint.

Berdaguer & Péjus thus appropriate and amplify a therapeutic procedure that makes it possible to remove one's traumatic memories by recording one's thoughts. They call on the introspective ability of beings (as in the work *Divan* in 2003), to approach inner liberation and deconditioning to be able to live in the present, unfettered by the past.

They chose an analog medium (VHS cassettes). The technique is important for them insofar as beyond the rational value generally awarded to it, it can generate its own fantasies and ghosts.

Berdaguer & Péjus reverse transfer phenomena, as if there were a switch of powers. Films no longer influence our psyches, but our psyches generate films.

Acting as a form/tool, *Traumathèque* stores traumatisms so that they are available at any moment. They increase with time and generate their own archives. Each reactivation of the work broadens the community of experiences. But the latter remain individual and, in a way, non transmissible.

The public is invited to reactivate the work by recording their own traumas. Thus, a form is available for visitors wishing to participate and can be obtained at the reception desk of the Institute from Saturday 24 March onwards.

PRATICAL INFORMATIONS

BERDAGUER & PÉJUS

Insula

Exhibition from 16 March to 13 May 2012

OPENING HOURS

Wednesday to Sunday from 1 pm to 7 pm

Free guided visits (in French)

on Saturdays and Sundays at 3 pm and by appointment

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Bus C9 (stop : Ferrandière)

Bus C16 (stop : Alsace)

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