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EXHIBITION

VARIABLE DIMENSIONS

4 JULY - 19 AUGUST 2012

INSTITUT
D'ART CONTEMPORAIN
Villeurbanne/Rhône-Alpes

C

FRANCIS ALÿS, LEONOR ANTUNES, JASON DODGE,
CEVDET EREK, CEAL FLOYER, MICHEL FRANÇOIS,
ALEXANDER GUTKE, PRATCHAYA PHINTHONG, EVARISTE
RICHER, BOJAN SARCEVIC, HANS SCHABUS, CLÉMENCE
TORRES, JOËLLE TUERLINCKX, MONA VATAMANU &
FLORIN TUDOR, JORDAN WOLFSON

The common feature of the works assembled in the exhibition *Variables Dimension* is their expression of a way of setting a position in the world using measuring instruments and a mathematical and topographic relation to the universe. As surveyors of sensitivity, the artists shown seek to render visible the impalpable and the imperceptible and what we cannot construct as a representation.

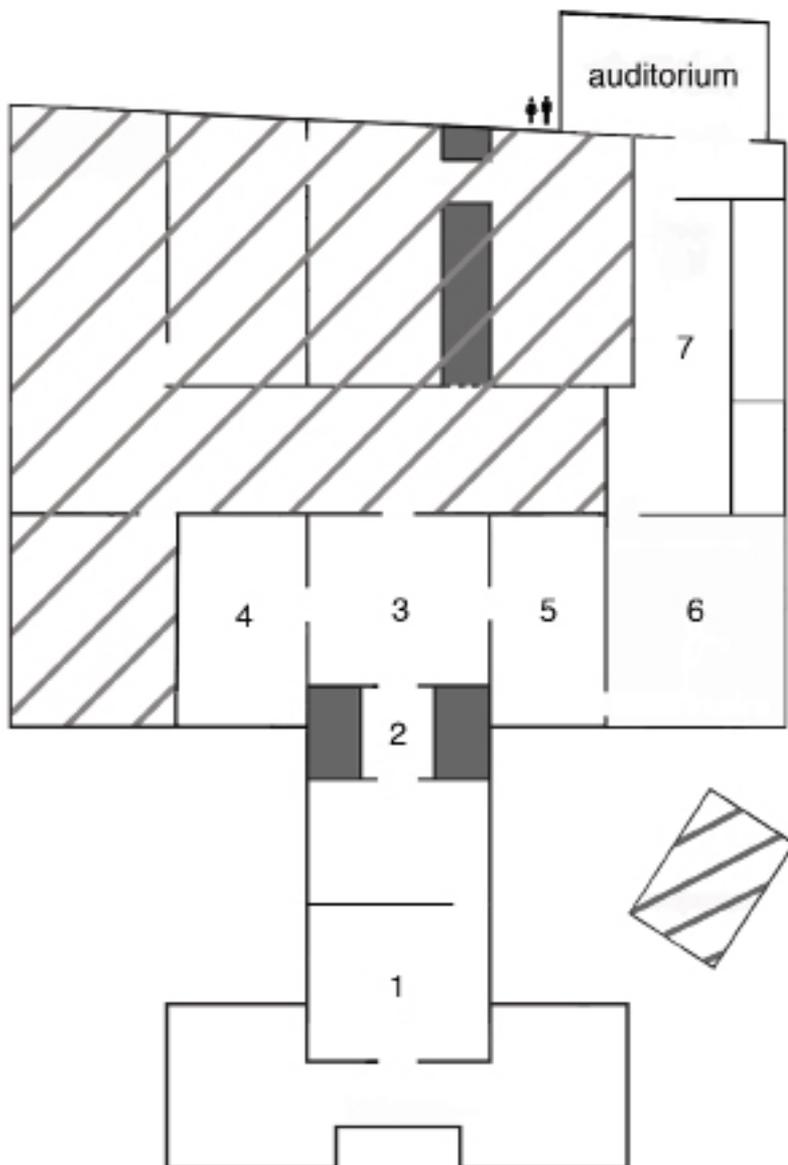
Considered using both a mental and physical approach, the measurement of space can take the form of volumes of something invisible (air, an inaccessible mountain peak), of traces of actions that record micro-variations in an individual route or of objects or devices for measuring distances. The artists observe dimensions that are generally generated by movement—walking, strolling, land-measuring, roaming, etc.—whose records often involve a risk of erasure or dematerialisation.

Whether the works play on ungraspable realities or have the appearance of everyday objects such as measuring instruments that have been modified, they use standard codification whose evidence is challenged. Thus what is measured or possibly quantified is generally random, unverifiable and at the limit of the absurd.

Space and time measured here become elastic. Through the works shown, a line is constantly stretched through space. It is initially real (chain, cable, cotton, magnetic tapes, elastic, etc.) and little by little becomes the metaphor for a flow, energy and a trajectory that sometimes create constraints or tension in the body.

Returned to their prime abstraction, these assessments and speculations related to nature address our need to project ourselves into the universe, to question our presence in the world—a passage that is necessary today more than ever.

Exhibition Rooms



- 1 JASON DODGE, HANS SCHABUS, EVARISTE RICHER
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room 1

JASON DODGE [rooms 1 & 4]

Born in 1969 in Newton, Pennsylvania, USA.

Lives and works in Berlin, Germany.

Jason Dodge makes installations by assembling everyday objects that are usually hand-made. His works are generally simple and modest in appearance, close to minimalist aesthetics. The titles have a poetic and narrative dimension.

Each of Jason Dodge's works has an incomplete aspect, as if it were a fragment of an endless ensemble.

Human presence is invisible in his sculptural fiction. The works bear the marks of the maker—the artist himself or those he gave the job of execution—and of the route to the exhibition venue. The visitor is invited to decode the history of these objects whose presence ceaselessly generates new questions.

***Be the Moss-dim Yellow Light if Only by Electric
Electric Current surrounding the Room, 2010***

Jason Dodge's electrical installation considers the rarely visible power distribution grids always present in our environment. Cables carrying 220 V current refer to the disorder of an unfinished electrified space that could also be a latent danger.

Accompanied by the enigmatic title of the work, the visitor is invited to make connections as well. The artist uses our cultural approach to objects (cable) and words (light): electricity is immaterial and invisible but forms part of our perception of the work.

HANS SCHABUS [rooms 1 & 3]

Born in 1970 in Watschig, Austria.

Lives and works in Vienna, Austria.

Hans Schabus designed *Demolirerpolka*, a wooden fence that covered the entire face of the IAC for the exhibition *Fabricateurs d'espaces (Spacemakers)* (2008). Invited again by the Institut d'art contemporain, the artist had his first large solo exhibition in France, *Nichts geht mehr*, in 2011.

His sculptures, actions, videos and installations generally refer to his immediate environmental and the materials that it consists of. The artist's studio in particular is seen as the matrix of his work, where his life and thinking are spatialised; it is the first place in which the relation between mental space and physical space acquires form.

Hans Schabus uses radical acts—digging, refilling, enclosing, cutting—to destructure and restructure space and change our references and movements.

IAC, 2011

A small black metal plate, *IAC* is a project related to the site in which it is displayed and was made for the exhibition *Nichts geht mehr*. The title is the acronym for the Institut d'art contemporain and the work indicates the weight of the air (calculated from the volume of the rooms) held within the walls of the exhibition space.

A formal echo of the technical plates affixed to machines, *IAC* is intended to be a translation of void converted into a physical indication. Close to conceptual aesthetics, the work has a tautological dimension, that of indicating, with mathematical precision, the presence of an imperceptible physical substance in the exhibition space.

EVARISTE RICHER [rooms 1, 2, 3 & 4]

**Born in 1969 in Montpellier, France.
Lives and works in Paris, France.**

Evariste Richer's sensitive work is aimed at attempting to understand the world. As a result, he examines the mechanisms that govern the use of knowledge and the reconstitution of the universe. Using the tools of science and culture (metrology, teleology, climatology, physics, etc.), he marks out a paradoxically rigorous and quirky field of operation which is finally addressed as an experiment.

His art consists first of all of methodology involving meticulous work—from exhaustive inventories of information of all kinds to the regeneration of natural phenomena or the reactivation of old techniques—to form the foundations of work that resolutely leans towards a certain form of scientificity.

Waiting for a Walk with Stanley, 2010

The work is in the form of an odometer, an instrument using the turns of a wheel to measure distances.

The title refers to the artist Stanley Brouwn, a historical figure in conceptual art whose work is centred on measurement and walking. Brouwn measures all his journeys on foot in order to generate a way of being in the world—from his own body to the universe.

Also interested in the relations between the cosmic scale and personal experience of space, Evariste Richer shows a 'halted' object here, crystallising his waiting to share a few steps with Stanley Brouwn one day.

Le mètre vierge, 2004

The ribbon of this 'Stanley' brand tape measure is shown blank. Set on a base, the tool thus cannot be carried and as it is not graduated it can no longer be used to measure spaces and the world.

Evariste Richer has diverted the object from its initial purpose in order to call into question our measuring systems and spatial conventions. Without a traditional standard measuring device, we would have to reconsider our relationship to the environment and give up our scientific certainties.

The work also invites visitors to be aware of the non-measurable character of the universe and of the vanity of the tools made by man to address what is around him and that remains ungraspable.

room 2

EVARISTE RICHER

Le mètre, 1994

The photograph of a ruler consists of the enlargement of a measure spanning 0 to 100 centimetres to the artist's height (1 metre 90 centimetres).

This is a determinant piece in Evariste Richer's work. It forms the starting point for his approach to the notion of measurement. He proposes a new standard here and compares it to conventional standards, suggesting another relationship with the world.

The work reminds the visitor of his presence in a society organisation and an order in the universe while stressing that perceptive experience of space is also personal and subjective.

room 3

EVARISTE RICHER

L'œil du perroquet, 2008

An artificial horizon (the graduation indicating the degree of horizontal inclination of the aircraft has been erased) with the platform spinning and turning bizarrely seems to take the whole venue with it. An instrument for measuring reality, this artificial horizon has run wild, showing our dependence on instruments for rationalising the world.

L'œil du perroquet thus illustrates the growing distance of our understanding of the environment—a loss of landmarks referring to the disappearance of a sensitive relationship with reality.

HANS SCHABUS

Meterriss [Level line], 2011

Made for the exhibition *Nichts geht mehr* in 2011, *Meterriss* consisted of a chain some 75 metres long set a metre above the floor and that compressed the exhibition space to the extent of causing walls to crumble and break. The gradual increase in the tension of the chain furrowed a route in constructions generally used to show works, causing walls to fold, thus revealing the hitherto invisible structure of the building.

A sort of condensed version of the constructed space at the IAC, here the chain is placed in a jumble on the floor with the tensioning tools. It is at the precise place where the two extremities were joined during the exhibition¹. Creating a new form of addressing the venue for the visitor, Hans Schabus sets up transgressive situations for the physical and mental examination of space.

1. The work can be presented like this or be reactivated and tense in a space.

CEVDET EREK

Born in 1974 in Istanbul, Turkey, where he lives and works.

In multiform work combining objects, video, sound and performance art, Cevdet EreK links the notions of time and space, with echoes of both personal and collective histories set in a given societal context.

He represents the passing of time, for example in a series of plastic rulers entitled *Rulers and Rhythm Studies* (2007-2011). The rulers are similar to those used in schools but do not bear measurement units. *Ruler o-Now* is a double decimetre marked only with the figure 0 and the word 'Now' at its extremities, like the representation of a perpetual present from an undefined point of departure. Other rulers are graduated, with one centimetre corresponding to a year. They set out the dates of an individual history, like *Ruler I* that goes from the artist's year of birth (1974) to the year in which the work was made (2007).

Ruler Near, 2011

Ruler Near is graduated to cover a period of two decades at the beginning of the twenty-first century, from the nearby past to the nearby future. The fact that this time scale covers our actual present and the two end years (2002 and 2022) are hardly visible as they are shown truncated, highlights the ephemeral, derisory character of our present time.

Cevdet EreK's rulers form chronological friezes that are an invitation for the personal, intimate reappropriation of time. In addition to a tool for representing time, Cevdet EreK proposes a '(hi)story maker' allowing everybody to plot his own.

BOJAN SARCEVIC

Born in 1974 in Belgrade, former Yugoslavia.

Lives and works in Berlin, Germany, and in Paris, France.

Bojan Sarcevic creates work in which space is addressed with regard to its poetic and perceptive dimensions and also its cultural, social and political components. The repertoire of forms deployed seems like an archive of past and ongoing histories and especially those of architectural modernism and early twentieth century avant-garde aesthetic experiments.

Forming references and paradoxes and open to different interpretative potentials, Bojan Sarcevic's work is unclassifiable and reveals an art of displacement and crossing. The works lie between solid and vacuum, between monumental and fragile and between ascetic and ornamental. Creating his own language, from contortion to ellipse, the artist's work is hybrid, at the intersection of numerous cultures.

Miniatures, 2003

Bojan Sarcevic draws on the misted windscreen of a car, while driving. The drawing is similar to Kufi calligraphy (dating back to the ninth century in Kufa, Iraq) that has an angular, horizontal appearance. Little by little, the windscreen becomes covered with an entangled pattern reminiscent of a maze which, in parallel, mingles with the landscapes visible from the car.

The real journey seems to be twinned with an imaginary route that lies between the geometrical and the ornamental. The floating, ephemeral appearance of the drawing and its repetitive form give it the dimension of a palimpsest, like ghost writing, related to the dream aspect of travelling.

room 4

JASON DODGE

Above the Weather.
In Turkey, a Weaver has woven a Tapestry from String equaling the Distance from the Earth to above the Weather, she was asked to choose String the Color of Night, 2011

The work consists of folded blankets with the single thread used in their design corresponding to the height of the troposphere (the part of the atmosphere at an altitude running between 8 and 15 kilometres, that is to say 'above the weather').

The artist ordered them from weavers and their appearance shows the subjectiveness of the latter as regards the method of weaving and the colour. As a guide for colour, the artist asked each weaver to chose the colour most resembling a night sky.

An everyday object is used to create a poetic dialogue between earth and sky, between individual and collective.

ALEXANDER GUTKE

**Born in 1971 in Gothenburg, Sweden.
Lives and works in Malmö, Sweden.**

Alexander Gutke's work addresses the relation between reality and the process of rendering an image of it. This is why he often uses image generating equipment such as film cameras and cinema projectors as these enable him to explore space, light, shadow, darkness and void.

Thus, using a recurrent principle, his films often tell the story of their own making. The artist examines the technical functioning of the apparatus and isolates and highlights the component parts by literally dissecting them to make them both the purpose and subject of the work. Creating loops in all senses of the word, the medium becomes both the tool and the process, the means and the end.

Alexander Gutke reactivates and renders visible real mechanisms while creating visual illusionism.

Singularity, 2010

A 16 mm projector placed on the ground projects a silent film on the wall: the image of a dressmaker's tape measure unrolling. Instead of winding on to a spool, the film unwinds in space along the edges of the room, following the angles.

The image projected and the physical extension of the film as a loop across the room give the impression that space is being measured by the film. In fact, the relation between the dressmaker's tape measure, the movement of the film and the dimensions of the room is totally arbitrary. The apparently scientific character of the operation gives way to disturbed perception, with the illusion of a different space-time.

EVARISTE RICHER

L'Everest, 2006

L'Everest, consisting of a single reel of copper wire, uses economy of means to address the vastness of the subject. The reel holds 8,848 metres of wire, that is to say the altitude of the highest summit in the world, all rolled up and giving a certain form of majesty to an undistinguished object 20 centimetres high. Packed, shelved and rationalised through measurement, Mount Everest is seen as contained and mastered energy. In a relation between one scale and another, the work can be seen as a way of capturing the world using limited resources. It is thus to be understood as an allegory of our failure to embrace the excessiveness of reality.

room 5

JOËLLE TUERLINCKX

**Born in 1958 in Brussels, Belgium,
where she lives and works.**

Joëlle Tuerlinckx's works are as much preparatory sketches and documentary notes and archives as installations, videos or projections. The whole of her work forms a spatialisation of her artistic thinking that can be in the form of a solo exhibition or a catalogue that mark the stages in the core this reflection. The artist has a conceptual approach and shows works that suggest lines for reflection and also doubts and questions for the visitor.

Like a researcher or a scientist in a laboratory, she develops variations centred on the relations between images and words or between space and thinking. Using comparison, juxtaposition, accumulation or the addition of an unexpected component, she creates for the visitor a poetic experience that is physical, perceptive and intellectual.

Mur, 1999 *Sol, 1999*

The words 'MUR' (wall) and 'SOL' (floor) are written with a black felt tip pen on the glass of back projectors and projected on the two floors and the floor of the room. Written normally on the support, the words appear in mirror writing for the visitor.

Joëlle Tuerlinckx has two works in progress whose presentation is modulated continuously because of their intrinsic links with the venue. The artist specifies that both the back projector and the text should not be maintained in their original condition but that 'time should be left to

do its work' and inversions and crossings out seem to herald changes to come: deterioration, discolouration and change.

CEAL FLOYER

**Born in 1968 in Karachi, Pakistan.
Lives and works in Berlin, Germany.**

Ceal Floyer's work features minimalism and clues. She uses videos, photographs, sounds, sculptures and light and manipulates space and void to 'show the uncertainly in art' .

Her works display concision and modesty that sow doubt in the minds of visitors. The latter wonder how they should consider these objects which, beyond their banal appearance, tend to reveal their process and their representation context.

For Ceal Floyer, the eye forms the essential part of our experience of reality. She concentrates on the principles of the phenomenology of perception by encouraging the visitor to go beyond a passive posture.

4 m 37 cm, 2012

A length of black elastic is stretched over the whole width of a white wall. This discreet work is to be considered in the light of its evocative title.

In fact, it has two names. When not exhibited, the work is called 'titre variable' (variable title) in line with its nature. It can be adapted to each exhibition and is hence called 'adaptable'. When the work is shown, the title is determined by the minimum length of elastic required—or the length when not stretched—to cover the surface selected.

LEONOR ANTUNES

**Born in 1972 in Lisbon, Portugal.
Lives and works in Berlin, Germany.**

Measurement and scale are recurrent notions in Leonor Antunes' work and enable the artist to explore the relation with space and more broadly a relation with the world.

She makes installation, sculptures and objects based on study of the environments of our lives, observing details of architecture and town planning. The artist usually takes fragments of architecture, interior and exterior details, reinterprets them by copying them on a larger or smaller scale, retaining the memories of forms.

Most of her sculptures are created from measurements of modernist constructions. The reference is generally diverted from its original function in order to adapt to a new context, as in the series of 'Instructions for use' (*Modo de usar*), works designed along the lines of measurement tools and made from found objects.

A spine-wall suppressed all draughts, 2008

The work consists of two interlinked components, one in black leather and the other in black rope, on the floor and the wall. The work is part of the set of objects/ sculptures that form a relation with the fragments of *Villa E1027*.

The latter was built in the South of France from 1926 to 1929 by the Irish architect Eileen Gray (1878-1976). It is a free interpretation of modernist architecture and the international style that prevailed during the first half of the twentieth century.

Here, Leonor Antunes shows her own physical and mental perception of the villa. She affirms the particularity of a space and subjectivity related to memory and the body against the supposed rationality of a standard measurement.

room 6

MONA VATAMANU & FLORIN TUDOR

**Born in 1968 in Constanta, Romania
& born in 1974 in Geneva, Switzerland.
They have worked together in
Bucharest, Romania, since 2000.**

Mona Vatamanu & Florin Tudor grew up in Romania during Nicolae Ceausescu's totalitarian regime (1965-1989). They became interested in the massive planned demolition of villages and historical buildings scheduled from 1972 onwards in order to glorify the advent of a new society.

They use videos, photographs, paintings, performances and installations to render visible what no longer exists and to examine the condition of post-communist countries with the currents of rejection and amnesia. They also explore stereotypes related to the notion of 'bloc' and the contemporary resurgence of these ideologies in language (commune, collective, etc.).

They also address the redeployment of the values and problems related to neoliberalism and compare them with the past. They thus work on demonstrating that it is impossible for memory to open up in a world dominated by political, religious or economic power.

Land Distribution, 2010

The installation consists of HS tapes and pointed metal bars arranged in a grid adapted to the exhibition space. The visitor is invited to walk round it or go inside it. His passage will then be mingled with that of the other participants and the prints of each passage appear on the white floor.

Here, Mona Vatamanu & Florin Tudor make use of the principle of the delimitation of cooperative land as used currently in Venezuela using strips from 'a product of our consumer society'. This reference enables them to describe as a counterpoint the history of the countries in the former Soviet bloc, which was also marked by land redistribution.

room 7

PRATCHAYA PHINTHONG

Born in 1974 in Bangkok, Thailand, where he lives and works.

Pratchaya Phinthong examines economic systems, the media and the globalisation of work in the contemporary world. He often triggers a face to face between situations drawn from reality—and that differ in terms of space, place or culture—in order to make works that move from art towards the social field.

'Speculative' principles of disappearance and accumulation are recurrent in Pratchaya Phinthong's works. He materialises or, in contrast, erases signs of economic values or sociocultural presuppositions that are by nature invisible or have no physical existence but that nevertheless have an effect as regards changes in everyday life.

2017, 2009

Made using invisible ink, this work is doomed to disappear. It is circular and the text is from a blog found on the Internet. Its author claims that experiments are carried out in Zone 51 in the United States and at the particle accelerator at the CERN in Switzerland with a view to sending part of the population to Mars just before the earth collides with a planet in 2017.

By choosing the supposed date of the apocalypse as a title, Pratchaya Phinthong is in line with the tradition of dystopias and science fiction. While theories of plot take shape in the media, the gradual disappearance of this 'prophecy' makes it both magical and insidious.

FRANCIS ALÿS

**Born in 1959 in Antwerp, Belgium.
Lives and works in Mexico City, Mexico,
New York, USA and in London, UK.**

Francis Alÿs has based his art on the concept of wandering and itinerary, through walking. Cities are his main material for his work and reflection, sites for creative walking and also to the taking of a political position.

Writing protocols and axioms such as *'Parfois faire quelque chose de poétique peut devenir politique Et Parfois faire quelque chose de politique peut devenir poétique'* (Doing something poetic can sometimes become political and doing something political can sometimes become poetic), the artist considers artistic intervention as a new way of considering society and of generating a possibility of change.

Francis Alÿs performs random, discrete actions in urban environments, which have become his laboratory. He creates light-hearted or ironic situations—that are sometimes absurd or transgressive—that reveal singular features.

The Leak (Paris), 2003

The Leak shows Francis Alÿs walking in the streets of Paris with a dribble of paint running from a pot that he holds in his hand. A sinuous line of paint is formed on the ground, forming an imperceptible mark that will disappear with the passing of time. The action finishes when the artist hangs the empty pot on the wall of the exhibition. The video is accompanied by documents.

There are no spectators of Francis Alÿs' walks. They form part of everyday life with its chance events and passersby. The recorded material subsequently gives them the status of art, of 'performances'.

The artist's work reconfigures his relations with institutions and the public, with a questioning of our relationship to art and life.

MICHEL FRANÇOIS

**Born in 1956 in Saint-Trond, Belgium.
Lives and works in Brussels, Belgium.**

Sculpture in Michel François' work covers photography, video, installations and performances to address the issues of space, matter, volumes and balance that determine representation. Using recycling and also a principle of overflowing or contamination, he is interested in the movement between two states. All his works show a slide between the density of a mass and its potential for dispersal or disappearance.

The objects, images and volumes never cease to change, to be converted, to reform or to clump, re-enacting a natural growth process (entropy) or freeze and become transitory forms.

Everything is a cycle and everything circulates, without rank and with the main guideline being energy, either latent or released.

***Walk Through a Line of Neon Lights,* 2004-2009**

A line of broken, neon lights trampled by Michel François follows a hilly path. It confronts the visitor physically in his crossing of the exhibition space.

The work reflects one of the artist's preoccupations—the mould-like representations of the human body operating, capable of 'making sculpture'. The line of broken neon lights on the ground gives form the artistic action and focuses on the relation between creation and destruction.

Broken glass is a recurrent feature in the artist's work and here shows movement in space, like a measurement of the contained energy of walking.

CLÉMENCE TORRES

**Born in 1986 in Cannes, France.
Lives and works in Paris, France.**

Clémence Torres uses her own body as a measurement standard to survey and measure the exhibition venue to create spaces for thinking and experimenting. She makes sculptures and installations in glass and metal, videos, texts and drawings that focus on the frame and outside the frame, the inside and the outside.

She uses industrial materials to make modules that create volumes and uses glass and mirrors to make specular, penetrable sculptures.

The exhibition space and its equipment (rails, bases) become a field of exploration for showing the types of relation between individuals—intimate, personal and public. The body is invited to test its limits in a 'sincere space' that is sculptural, architectural and social.

***Toise* [Height gauge], 2011**

A height gauge runs from floor to ceiling. A telescopic system means that its dimensions are variable according to the placing of the object in relation to the height of the ceiling.

The '*toise*' was used in France as a measurement unit until 1795 when the metric system was adopted. The term is now used for the measurement gauge used by doctors to measure the height of persons and that used by archaeologists to measure the depth of layers, etc.

Clémence Torres invites the visitor in the exhibition space to measure himself against the standard gauge and to face architecture and other people.

JORDAN WOLFSON

Born in 1980 in New York, United States.

Lives and works in Berlin, Germany and New York, United States.

Jordan Wolfson works with video, installations and performances. He mixes conceptual language with popular culture and poetry with irony. The principles of repetitions, loops, superpositions and juxtapositions are at the heart of his approach in order to focus on time, memory and collective imagination.

The artist continuously accumulates material (especially advertising and media items). He considers that his works can be approached as 'culture thermometers'. He thus carefully examines contemporary questionings and their recurrent imagery or uses the work of other artists for his own purposes.

On each occasion he thus works on these everyday objects, making metaphorical forms that give the ordinary something strange, a romantic aspect and a degree of derision.

Star Field (month 26), 2004

Here, Jordan Wolfson plays on principles of obsolescence that he contrasts indirectly with the contemporary world. The use of a 16 mm projector brings to mind the cinema and its increasingly spectacular technical equipment to show the conquest of space.

Moving points of light are also a different kind of reminder of man's perpetual need to conquer and explore the universe, with a stereotype vision of space.

However, although this expedition is poetic it can only be immobile: its source is none other than the *Star Field* computer screen saver that was very popular in the 1990s.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

VARIABLE DIMENSIONS

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Exhibition from 4 July to 19 August 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

The Institut d'art contemporain will be opened on Saturday 14 July and Wednesday 15 August.

ACCESS

Bus C3 (stop: Institut d'art contemporain)

Bus C9 (stop: Ferrandière)

Métro ligne A (stop: République)

Station vélo'v (bicycles) 1 minute on foot

The Institut d'art contemporain is 10 minutes from Lyon Part-Dieu railway station.

PRICES

• full price: 4€ • reduced price: 2,50€

DOCUMENTATION CENTER

by appointment

BOOKSHOP

specialised in contemporary art.
open during exhibition opening hours.

The Institut d'art contemporain receives aid from the Ministry of Culture and Communication (DRAC Rhône-Alpes), Rhône-Alpes Regional Council and the city of Villeurbanne.

INSTITUT D'ART CONTEMPORAIN

Villeurbanne/Rhône-Alpes

11 rue docteur Dolard
69100 Villeurbanne
France

tél. +33 (0)4 78 03 47 00
fax +33 (0)4 78 03 47 09
www.i-ac.eu