



# FABRIQUE DE L'ART N°2 FABRICATE (FABRIC OF) ART

ত্রিমুখী PLATFORM

ANNÉE | YEAR | 2016



# FABRIQUE DE L'ART N°2 FABRICATE (FABRIC OF) ART

The yearly publication **FABRICATE (FABRIC OF) ART** in some respects resembles our world. It reflects its beauty across its planetary stretch, from west to east, from the Americas to Asia. We can feel its vibration of multiplicity and difference. Of course, it makes no claim to offer a portrait of the globe. But it is a unique enterprise, through the plurality it summons, and also as a singularised, and not eclectic, plurality, given that a very strong viewpoint underpins and supports it.

DENIS GUÉNOUN  
for the launch of the journal in Paris on June 20 2016

La revue **FABRIQUE DE L'ART** ressemble par certains côtés à notre monde. Elle en a la beauté, dans son étirement planétaire, d'ouest en est, d'Amérique en Asie. On y sent vibrionner des multiplicités et des différences. Bien sûr, elle ne prétend pas donner un tableau du globe mais c'est une entreprise unique, par la pluralité qu'elle invoque, et aussi comme pluralité singularisée, pas éclectique, car un point de vue très ferme la parcourt et la soutient.

DENIS GUÉNOUN  
lors du lancement de la revue à Paris le 20 juin 2016

**ÉDITEUR** | PUBLISHER TRIMUKHI PLATFORM ART AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

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**ISSN** | 2395 - 7131 FABRICATE (FABRIC OF) ART - FABRIQUE DE L'ART

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printed by CDC PRINTERS Pvt. Ltd. | Kolkata

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# from senses to sense: the arts of presenting

I kept my eyes fixed on some image that compelled my attention: a cloud, a triangle, a bell, a flower, a pebble, sensing that there was perhaps something completely different that I should try to discover, a system of thought [...]. It was necessary to try and interpret sensations as signs of different laws and ideas, by attempting to think, in other words, to extract from obscurity what I had felt, to convert this into a spiritual equivalent.

Marcel Proust, *Finding Time Again*, 1927

There is a chapter at the start of *Moby Dick* in which the narrator, having just entered the “pitiful” Spouter-Inn, spends a long time wondering what is represented by “a very large oil-painting so thoroughly besmoked, and every face defaced”<sup>1</sup> hung across one wall.<sup>2</sup> Only after he thinks that he’s made it out (it’s a whale) does he wonder what the artist intended by representing a marine mammal in



this way. Often, when we look at an artwork, we place ourselves on the side of meaning. We assume that the artist has intended to say whatever it is that we hear or see. We forget that it is our senses that are first of all touched, and that this sensitive awakening gives rise to our desire to find a sense in our perception. As we forget this, we lend to the artist the intention of seeking to express exactly what we ourselves have understood.<sup>3</sup>

But today – and unlike the situation in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century when Melville published his novel – the artist's task is no longer to tell us something. Claude Simon insisted, in his acceptance speech for his Nobel Prize in Literature, that when writing a novel, he has nothing to say. He added:

Even if some important truth of a social, historical of sacred nature had been revealed to me, it would have seemed to me a burlesque proceeding, at the very least, to have invented fictions to express it, rather than by a reasoned philosophical, sociological, or theological thesis.<sup>4</sup>

Choreographer Merce Cunningham also made this point during interviews with Jacqueline Lesschaeve: "*I've never believed in anything said about the 'meaning' of music, or the 'meaning' of dance.*"<sup>5</sup> More prosaically, director Rubén Ortiz once explained, paraphrasing Bob Wilson: "*If I had something to say to spectators, I'd send them an email!*"<sup>6</sup>

The artist's task is about something else. It consists in inspiring us with a desire to know more – not about the work, not about the artist, nor his or her intentions – but about whatever suddenly takes hold of us and moves us. If, in the film *Prénom Carmen* (1983), the passing of an above-ground metro is accompanied by the cries of seagulls – although Paris had no such birds at that time – the aim is not to suggest a reconstruction of the French capital by the seaside.<sup>7</sup> When at the start of the performance of *Inferno*, the director Romeo Castellucci, also guest-artist in chief of the Festival d'Avignon 2008 enters, stops in front of the forestage, and announces his name before being attacked by German shepherds, he's not trying to make us think about the dangers to which humans are exposed when they cohabit with animals. The artistic artefact is not the communicator of a signified, as

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, Chapter III: <<http://www.bartleby.com/91/3.html>>. Agnès Derail insists on the fact that the narrator first tests out several views and questions his entourage. This painting, she specifies, can be considered as being fairly similar in style to a work by Turner. In *La Compagnie des auteurs*, France Culture, February 9 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Another more detailed version of this text was previously published in Spanish: "Fenomenología del presentar" in *Literatura: teoría, historia, crítica* n°13, Bogotá, National University of Colombia, 2011, p. 49-83; then in *Tablas* n°7, Havana, Tablas-Alarcos, 2014, p. 84-101.

<sup>3</sup> "The term 'hermeneutic doggedness' is not an exaggerated description of the recurrence, insistence and systematisation of this process of searching for meaning, associated with an imputation of the latter to the interpreted object rather than to the artist's effort. 'What these works seek to represent' (or 'to express') is one of the commonest expressions in contemporary art discourse, implying an intentionality on the part of the work itself in the search of a meaning to communicate between the mind of the artist and that of the spectator." Nathalie Heinich, "Contemporary Art: From a Quarrel to a Paradigm", *Fabricate (Fabric of) Art* n°2, Kolkata, Trimukhi Platform, 2016, p. 51-52.

<sup>4</sup> Claude Simon, *Nobel Lecture of December 9 1985*: <[http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/literature/laureates/1985/simon-lecture.html](http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1985/simon-lecture.html)>. Cf. *Nobel Lectures, Literature 1981-1990*, ed. T. Frängsmyr and S. Allén, Singapore, World Scientific Publishing Co., 1993.

<sup>5</sup> Merce Cunningham, *Le Danseur et la danse. Entretiens avec Jacqueline Lesschaeve*, Paris, Belfond, 1980, p. 172.

<sup>6</sup> Rubén Ortiz in 2007 during a meeting with students at the National University of Mexico.

<sup>7</sup> This may well have been the case. Some twenty years ago, the weekly magazine *Télérama* published an issue on April 1 (April Fool's Day), explaining why it was important to move the Centre Georges Pompidou to the seaside. One of the reasons put forward was that seagull waste – compared to that of pigeons – was thought to have a positive influence on the building's solidity... Ever since, global warming being what it is, seagulls have moved to Paris.

semiologists would say, nor the contaminator of a feeling, as Artaud argued. The spectator does not receive a message ("*Stop living with animals!*") any more than he or she identifies with and emulates a feeling from the stage (the serenity of Romeo Castellucci while the dogs attack him). By bringing together, side by side, two distant and distinct singularities, Jean-Luc Godard and Romeo Castellucci seek, first of all, to produce in us what Nathalie Sarraute calls "pure sensations"<sup>8</sup>.

No distinction can be made between the perceptible and the intelligible: the art work is a producer of sensations and, as a result of this activity of the senses, possibilities of sense emerge. While the work primarily seeks, by the linking of different elements (a man who speaks *and* dogs that bite; a metro passing *and* seagulls crying), to produce sensations in the spectators, it is in order for these spectators to, in turn, produce sense. Far from Descartes' "*I think, therefore I am*", and on condition, obviously, that the setup is aesthetically adequate, the spectators undergo a type of "*I feel, therefore I think*" – as if each person said to him or herself: "*Something's happening in me and I want to think about it.*"

Strictly speaking, a work never makes us think, but it works to make us want to think. The sensations experienced – when they "make sense", as we say – operate as prompts for reflection, detonators of thought. Deleuze wrote: "We can no longer say '*I see, I hear*' but I FEEL, '*an entirely physiological sensation*'. And the set of harmonics acting on the cortex gives birth to thought."<sup>9</sup>

The case of music is the most obvious. Whether we're talking about an old Pink Floyd album or a *santoor* concert by Shiv Kumar Sharma, listening to a composition combining different sound textures, speeds and melody variations, places the listener in a state of opening up his or her mind and drifting in multiple directions. But I still insist: this drifting only takes place because the listener has, first of all, felt something, and secondly, is conscious that feeling this way makes sense.

This is what happens to the heroine of Yukio Mishima's *After the Banquet*. An arrangement of water lilies produces meaning and thought: while contemplating

the flowers' reflection in the water, Ozu thinks about her lover's political future.<sup>10</sup>

However, the combination does not always generate meaning.<sup>11</sup> Or if it does, it does so in an eminently open manner: both mysterious and stimulating.<sup>12</sup>

In any case, already there appear, albeit in a slightly disordered manner, at least five distinct movements whose succession participates in the one poetic-aesthetic process: 1.) Linking singularities; 2.) Awakening the senses; 3.) Feeling the awakened senses; 4.) Giving meaning; 5.) Producing thought. Perhaps today, the theoretical, academic or critical study of an art work, whether music, theatre, painting, installation, architecture, film, etc., should limit itself to listing and describing each of the stages that separate the moment of its composition by an artist from the moment when a spectator, presented with the finished work, produces thought – which also implies understanding of the open and dynamic connections between these different stages. This is the question of *how*: *how* to analyse what happens between the day (or night) when an artist thinks about producing a work and the day (or night) when a spectator, watching, reading or listening to the work, sets about thinking. What process occurs, and according to what chronology, to take us from the thought of one to the thought of the other?



Robert Ryman explained: "My painting is exactly what you see in it: paint on embossed paper, the colour of the paper, the way that it's made, and the sensation that it produces – that's what is in it."<sup>13</sup> Nathalie Sarraute is even more specific: "It's a matter of establishing a contact from which new sensations arise."<sup>14</sup> In order for us to talk about art, a hitherto unknown sensation should emerge, a strictly aesthetic sensation, which we believe that we have never felt before. If a commonplace sensation is reproduced, then we are dealing, continues Sarraute, with entertainment. We can also say, regarding this notion of "establishing a contact", that art offers the possibility of experimenting with sensations – new or not – in another manner. Perhaps it is precisely this aesthetic otherness that makes experience of

<sup>8</sup> Nathalie Sarraute, "Le langage dans l'art du roman" in *Œuvres complètes*, Paris, Gallimard (Pléiade), 1996, p. 1693.

<sup>9</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Cinéma 2 – L'image-temps*, Paris, Minuit, 1985, p. 206. My emphasis.

<sup>10</sup> Translated from Yukio Mishima, *Après la banquet*, tr. G. Renondeau, Paris, Gallimard (Folio), 1965, p. 201, 202.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Yukio Mishima, *Après la banquet*, op. cit., p. 23.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 273-274.

<sup>13</sup> Robert Ryman *Catalogue*, Paris, Centre Georges-Pompidou, 1981, p. 17. My emphasis.

<sup>14</sup> Nathalie Sarraute, "Forme et contenu du roman" in *Œuvres complètes*, op. cit., p. 1675. My emphasis.

art a special adventure, one that is “new”, at once intimate, profound and singular.

To describe what this other manner of art consists of, we must first understand how a work manages to produce sensations. What type of “contact” are we talking about?

Let’s pick up the analysis we started earlier: first of all, we see an above-ground metro cross the screen and at the same time, we hear the cries of seagulls. Or else: first of all, we see Romeo Castellucci on the forestage saying “*My name is Romeo Castellucci*” before he retreats to the back of the stage, clads himself with protective gear, and imperturbably submits to the biting of dogs.<sup>15</sup> Secondly, we see clearly that according to common sense, the first element or the first action has nothing to do with the second one. However, we feel something. In other words: although we see things which we feel have nothing to do with one another, we feel something when we look at them together. And this something that we feel is on the par of a sensation, possibly new, in any case deep – a feeling that we (spectators or readers) bring into play in our depths.

Hence my question: is there a connection between the fact that *we see things that we feel have nothing to do with one another* and the fact that *we feel something deep by looking at them together*? Hence also my initial hypothesis: in *Inferno* as in *Prénom Carmen*, the work of the director consists in selecting and relating elements. Romeo Castellucci in one case, and Jean-Luc Godard in the other, choose elements (an image and a sound, human presences and animal presences) whose contact with one another produces sensations.

It’s not only in theatre or film that aesthetic effectiveness depends on the relationship between differences. Literature also presents combinations of elements that, *a priori*, are unrelated to one another, but that, placed in contact, awake sensations in us. This is what arises between the word “heart” and the word “time”, the word “time” and the words “air”, “fire”, “sand”, as they appear when we read the first two lines of a poem by Samuel Beckett:

<sup>15</sup> | On *Prénom Carmen*, cf. Jean-Frédéric Chevallier, “How to pass from one image to another? What for? 8 points on Godard’s montage strategy”, *Fabricate (Fabric of) Art* n°1, Calcutta, Trimukhi Platform, 2015, p. 148. On *Inferno*, cf. Joseph Danan, “Castellucci parmi les Papes”, *Fabricate (Fabric of) Art* n°1, *op. cit.*, p. 76-79.

But this is no exquisite cadaver game.<sup>17</sup> Finding the right link between differences requires choosing each one of them with extreme meticulousness. If, as Lyotard notes, “the material only has value as a relationship, only the relationship exists”<sup>18</sup>, adequate materials still need to be found for these relationships to take place.

In this context, the artist’s work merely consists in feeling the possibility of feeling. Chittrovanu Mazumdar senses that the linking of the elements that he chooses for his visual compositions (for example, in the *One Square Kilometre* series, the intrusion of animal flesh within the blackness of a metallic surface<sup>19</sup>) tends to produce sensations, without any certainty about either the degree or the nature of these sensations. All the more as, like Jean Dubuffet once said, “it may well be that [the artist] remains the only one to feel the effect”<sup>20</sup>. Ingmar Bergman recognises the sometimes frustrating dimension of such a task and the humility that it requires:

I observe, I record, I note, I check. I suggest, I interrupt, I encourage or I refuse. Nothing spontaneous from me, nothing impulsive. If I said what I really felt, my comrades would turn against me. But I never conceal anything. My intuition speaks quickly and clearly. I am wholly present.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>16</sup> | Samuel Beckett, *Poèmes*, Paris, Minuit, 1999, p. 12.

<sup>17</sup> | I remember, when I was teaching theatre at National University of Mexico, young apprentice directors who, upon discovering these new “montage” possibilities, set about mixing anything with anything – without, as one might imagine, producing anything interesting; instead results were rather dismal.

<sup>18</sup> | Jean-François Lyotard, *Des dispositifs pulsionnels*, Paris, Galilée, 1994, p. 103.

<sup>19</sup> | This work was reproduced in *Fabricate (Fabric of) Art* n°1, op. cit., p. 134.

<sup>20</sup> | Jean Dubuffet, Claude Simon, *Correspondances 1970-1984*, Paris, L’Échoppe, 1994, p. 53.

<sup>21</sup> | Translated from Ingmar Bergman, *Laterna magica*, tr. C.G. Bjurström, Paris, Gallimard (Folio), p. 52.

The focus (“observe”, “record”, “note”, “check”) is put on the potential relationship – and on the potential of this relationship, that is, its possible strength. But – and here lies the source of perpetual failures – action (“suggest”, “interrupt”, “encourage”, “refuse”) is exercised on each of the elements that enter this relationship. Bergman can modify the fold of an actor’s arm, or the way in which the latter speaks a text. If he does so, it will be with the aim of increasing the potentiality of the relationship between this movement and this line. But he cannot act on the relationship as such. This is how the complication arises: *the artist’s action is attached to real elements while his gaze is directed at potential relationships on which he ultimately has no, or very little, power*. This is why Bergman cannot say what he feels to actors, for it represents only one possibility.

Let’s imagine a precipice and a bridge to be

constructed in order to straddle the gulf. The artist's task consists in strengthening the two sides, the zones of support: a bloodied animal on one side, a dark, ridged, reflecting surface on the other side. But the artist intervenes in neither the design nor the construction of the bridge. If the artist did so, he or she would reduce the potential relationship to a single form of relationship, he or she would reduce the possibility of a bridge to a single type of bridge – the type that he or she decided in advance to build.<sup>22</sup>

Claude Simon once told an anecdote, as amusing as it is clarifying for our argument:

Invited to Moscow by the Union of Writers of the USSR (it was before Gorbachev), I underwent a strange type of interrogation at their headquarters, during which, among other questions, I was asked what were the main problems that I faced [as a writer]. I then replied that I could count three such problems: the first: starting a sentence; the second, continuing it; the third, ending it. Which, as one might guess, cast a chill around me.<sup>23</sup>

By working on the start, the middle and the end of a sentence, the writer works at constructing the pillars of the bridge. Without overdoing it either, without assuming something that cannot be. An “extra addition,” Claude Simon specifies, “would only lead to a weakening of the intensity and the subtleness of the relationships”<sup>24</sup>. We go back to the core question: that of the relationship, that of the passage. A question to be dealt with, but with a squint – in a diverted manner. *The gaze is cast towards one thing while the hands take hold of something else*. The artist looks at the passage from one visual element to another, from one sequence to another, from one group of words to another. But the way in which he or she works at it is to consider this visual element or this other one, this start or this middle of a sentence.

We can speak about a bridge. We can also speak of an “and”: between an image *and* a sound, a movement *and* a phrase, a word *and* another word, etc. What is important is these “ands”. The artist's intuition (the intuition that Bergman describes as speaking “quickly and clearly”, this intuition that needs to be “practised”, as Kooning explains<sup>25</sup>) relates to these “ands”. But the zones at which the artist intervenes are not the “ands”, but the edges of the “ands”, situated on either side of the

conjunction: this image on one side, this sound on the other, or the movement of the arm on one side, the speed of elocution on the other. Georges Braque explained: “It is precisely the relationship between these objects and the relationship of the object with the ‘in-between’ that makes up the subject. How can I say what the painting ‘represents’ when the relationships are always different things.”<sup>26</sup> The artist works by looking at relationships that constantly change as they are not yet formed – relationships that are only there potentially. The artist works to potentialise them, to increase their conjunctive potential.

To understand this, we can conduct a simple experiment, gastronomic in nature.<sup>27</sup> What you need to have in front of you is: either an Epoisses (a cheese from Burgundy, famous for its odour and its consistency) and a bottle of Nuits-Saint-Georges (a great red wine from the same region), or else a Vieux Chambolle (another cheese) and a bottle of Morey-Saint-Denis (also both products of Burgundy), or else some boiled lobster tails and a bottle of Pessac-Léognan (white, served chilled), or even a portion of red-fruits Vacherin cheese-cake and a glass of Martini Gold. Care must be taken to ensure the quality, in other words, the singularity of the food element as well as the beverage: for example, it is important that the Epoisses or the Vieux Chambolle is sufficiently ripe, that the Nuits-Saint-Georges, the Morey-Saint-Denis or the Pessac-Léognan comes from a good year – in the case of the Morey-Saint-Denis, a *Les Ruchots premier cru* is advisable. We then taste a small mouthful of the Epoisses (or rather, a spoonful, given its runniness) or the Vieux Chambolle (served on a bit of bread), then we drink a mouthful of the Nuits-Saint-Georges or the Morey-Saint-Denis (the bottle, if the experiment takes place at night, should be opened in the morning, and if it takes place at lunchtime, the wine should be placed in a carafe). Three things then occur: we appreciate the taste of the cheese, then, the aroma of the wine, and it is then that we discover a third surprising flavour: the product of the encounter between the taste of the cheese and the aroma of the wine. It is not the result of the combination of this taste and of this flavour, in the way, for example, that green results from a blend of blue and yellow. Nor is the third flavour

<sup>22</sup> Such a dynamic implies, on the artist's part, placing in brackets all habitual links such as the logical link (cause, consequence), the chronological link (before, after), the psychomotor link (action, reaction), the metaphorical link (since metaphors are related to their original reference, for which they act as a comparison), thematic declinations (from the spoon to the ladle via cooking) and idea associations (from the oblong baby's bottle to the phallus). There is no predefined rule for building relationships.

<sup>23</sup> Claude Simon, “Littérature et mémoire” in *Quatre conférences*, Paris, Minuit, 2012, p. 123.

<sup>24</sup> Claude Simon, “L'Absente de tous bouquets” in *Quatre conférences*, op. cit., p. 56.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Willem de Kooning, “What abstract art means to me”, New York, *Museum of Modern Art*, vol. XVIII, n°3, 1951.

<sup>26</sup> In Georges Charbonnier, *Le Monologue du peintre*, Paris, Editions de la Villette, 2002, p. 27.

<sup>27</sup> Here, I pick up, while introducing a few variations and additions, an example that I already presented in “How to pass from one image to another?”, op. cit., p. 149. I refer to it again as the example remains the most evocative one I have.



the result of framing, the enhancement of a taste by an aroma – for example, when we combine a semi-cooked foie gras served hot, with a mouthful of Cadillac served chilled, it is the taste of the foie gras that is highlighted.

The third flavour at once cohabits with the first two perfumes, superimposes them, and is the exact product of their intermingling. It has nothing to do with the sour bitterness of the cheese or the prolonged warmth of the wine. It is something else entirely. In the case of the Epoisses and the Nuits-Saint-Georges: a mild hazelnut taste. And in the case of an Epoisses combined with a Clos-Saint-Denis (*grand cru*), the third taste takes on almond tones.

It is as if it were possible to write  $1 + 1 = 3$ , considering the sign “+” as one of the three figures making up the left-hand side of the mathematical formula: the taste of the cheese (“1”), the hazelnut or almond taste (“+”), the taste of the wine (“1”) produce three flavours (“= 3”). Even if we introduce only two of them – “1” and “1” –, there are ultimately three elements. Between the first two, another emerges: the “+”.

We must nonetheless refrain from reducing or stabilising the emerging third element. While we speak of a first, second and third element, this third element is not the same in nature as the first and the second. Cheese and wine are foods while the mild hazelnut taste is an aroma, the sensation of a flavour. The first two elements are movements, the third is a force whose sensation is the sign, a combination of forces, an “association of forces”<sup>28</sup> – in other words, a becoming, the becoming here being linked to an “increase or decrease in power (virtual quantity)”<sup>29</sup>.

Claude Simon once confided to Jean Dubuffet: “My books are also about blends and combinations. [...] My work makes me think of this title given to the first class in advanced maths, *Arrangements, Permutations, Combinations*.” One month later, the painter would reply to the writer: “*Arrangements, Permutations, Combinations*. That’s exactly what we deal with.” And the writer added the next week: “In literature, Joyce and Proust were the first not to hide that it was a matter of assembling”<sup>30</sup>. The art of the artist – his or her *tekhne* – consists in

selecting elements to place on either side of the conjunction (on the understanding that this conjunction may have more than two sides) and modifying them in such a way that they overflow – or tend, potentially, to overflow. Jean-François Lyotard expressed it admirably in the following way: “the artist tries out combinations that permit the event”<sup>31</sup>, combinations that help to make something happen, starting with sensations.

To increase the probability that the interstice overflows and produces a third element, it is necessary to work on the singularity of the side elements. If the Epoisses is not ripe enough (or if it is made from pasteurised milk), if the Nuits-Saint-Georges is still too young (or if the year is not a satisfactory one), the “and” (the “+”) will not become a real third element. If the sought-after gap, the necessary difference between the taste of the wine and that of the cheese is not attained, the palate will only sense a mundane mingling of wine and cheese. If the wine (or cheese) is not strong enough compared to the cheese (or wine), the taste of the second will invade the mouth, leaving no place for the first – the result being no other than the domination of the stronger taste. This case would also be detrimental for the encounter: the wine (or cheese) would have been better appreciated alone.

Conversely, the Epoisses and the Nuits-Saint-Georges acquire importance and value in the diner’s eyes when a third flavour is born from their encounter. “The sensation colours”<sup>32</sup> wrote Deleuze and Guattari. I have tender memories of those images from Eisenstein’s *Battleship Potemkin* and Siodmak’s *People on Sunday* ever since seeing what Godard did to them in *Une Catastrophe*: he connected the first to a tennis match and the second to German poetry, stirring me deeply. It is because the conjunction overflows that we reconsider the poles composing them. The operation of differentiation is a process that leads us to retrospectively savour each of the elements taking part in this operation, with deepened appreciation of their singularity, their difference.

<sup>28</sup> | Gilles Deleuze, *Critique et clinique*, Paris, Minuit, 1993, p. 165.

<sup>29</sup> | Gilles Deleuze, “L’immanence: une vie...” in *Deux régimes de fous. Textes et entretiens 1975-1995*, Paris, Minuit, 2003, p. 359.

<sup>30</sup> | Jean Dubuffet, Claude Simon, *Correspondances 1970-1984*, Paris, L’Échoppe, 1994, p. 33-37. Deleuze and Guattari explained: “What makes a material increasingly rich is what holds together heterogeneous elements without them ceasing to be heterogeneous” [Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, *Mille plateaux*, Paris, Minuit, 1980, p. 406]. They also noted in *L’Anti-Œdipe*: “Contiguities are distances and distances, statements” [Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, *L’Anti-Œdipe*, Paris, Minuit, 1973, p. 51]. It is important to find, Deleuze continues, “a Reunion that separates” [Gilles Deleuze, Francis Bacon, *Logique de la sensation*, Paris, Seuil, 2002, p. 81].

<sup>31</sup> | Jean-François Lyotard, “Le sublime et l’avant-garde” in *L’Inhumain*, Paris, Galilée, 1988, p. 112.

<sup>32</sup> | Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, *Qu’est-ce que la philosophie?*, Paris, Minuit, 1991, p. 157.

A little more needs to be said on chronology. For in reality, *what the spectator first feels is not the third element but the concrete possibility that brings about the emergence of this third element*. An interstice can produce a third element: it is this possibility that the spectator senses initially. Although the diner immediately appreciates the mild hazelnut aroma, in reality, he or she first perceives something that precedes this flavour. He or she starts off by taking the time to perceive and enjoy what he or she is discovering: the fact that  $1 + 1 = 3$ . In other words, the diner discovers that, *here and now, there is more than what there is*.

Just as in cooking where we taste our concoction before serving to make sure that it is a success, the spectator tastes the dish's flavour a little but goes no further in the tasting. His or her attention is slanted, focusing on the discovery itself: that there truly exists an interstice, which produces a third element. The importance of this realisation is such that it captivates all attention. The flavour of the third element emerges, but its first role is to open us up – to raise our awareness of its reality, to open us up to the opening. Henri Michaux describes this radical experience in detail:

As if there were an opening, an opening that is a gathering, a world, a possibility of something happening, of many things happening, a crowd, a swarming of possibility, with all possibilities abuzz: that person I vaguely hear walking nearby might ring the doorbell, come in, start a fire, climb on the roof, jump off screaming onto the courtyard floor. Everything could happen, anything, without any choice being made, and without any one of these actions being favoured over the other. [...] It is this "could" that counts, this prodigious push of possibilities that swells up, and that is further multiplied.<sup>33</sup>

We could say that Henri Michaux is a bit high here, in an exalted state. True. Apart from the fact that he may be under the effects of mescaline, his exaltation is literal. "Exalted" comes from the Latin verb *exaltare*, and the latter from the adjective *altus*, "high". But this is exactly the case here: the excitement is born from the impression of being on a height. Of course, the interstice opens to an horizontal movement when someone is "walking nearby", or someone "comes

in". But the movement is also vertical: we can also "climb on the roof" or "jump off onto the courtyard floor". There is not just horizontality (one word next to another, a second image following a first one); there is also verticality – a verticality of our world: it is the mild taste of hazelnut that rises in our mouth, from the tongue up to the palate.

Deleuze and Guattari remarked: "Between things does not designate a localizable relation going from one thing to the other and back again, but a perpendicular direction, a transversal movement that sweeps one and the other away, a stream without beginning or end that undermines its banks and picks up speed in the middle"<sup>34</sup>. This is the second reason for the giddiness and excitement – the exaltation – that we feel. This sudden conviction that possibilities are multiplied – they are streams, they are rivers – bears a spatial aspect. The "and", when it turns productive, discovers new options for movement as it opens up the space; it brings out height. We no longer just say: "*there is more than what there is*"; we also say: "*there are other spaces to traverse*" – incidentally, the traversing creates the spaces, and not the opposite. We can traverse in the way that someone can "ring the doorbell" or "start a fire". These actions are not induced or even suggested. The interstice turned producer of a third element simply creates the feeling that there are more possibilities to traverse, in other words, etymologically, to experience. If the vertical dimension is added to the horizontal dimension, it is only to make us feel that there is always more than one dimension and that there is "increase in the dimensions of a multiplicity that necessarily changes in nature as it expands its connections"<sup>35</sup>.

Robert Musil, in *The Man Without Qualities*, alludes to this other dimension that ends up with giddy discovery:

The state in which we live offers fissures through which another state appears, a state that in a way is impossible. [...] Laziness, or mere habit, causes us to avoid looking at this hole. Well! The rest simply follows: it is through this hole that we must emerge. And I can do it! There are days when I manage to slip outside of myself!<sup>36</sup>

On the one hand, the giddy discovery is formulated in general terms, without a

<sup>33</sup> | Henri Michaux, *Misérable miracle. La mescaline*, Paris, Gallimard (Poésie), 1972, p. 20.

<sup>34</sup> | Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, *Mille plateaux*, op. cit., p. 37.

<sup>35</sup> | *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>36</sup> | Translated from Robert Musil, *L'Homme sans qualités* t. 1, tr. P. Jacottet, Paris, Seuil (Point), 1995, p. 828.

defined subject. We can link singularities, we can eat cheese and drink wine, feel the potential of the interstice, just as someone can cross a room, jump into the courtyard, see height and thus depth. It is at a second stage that the discovery is expressed in a singular, personal, engaged manner – that is, through a stronger “I”: “*I can do it! I manage to slip outside of myself!*” We pass from a possibility in itself to a possibility for oneself: for me, for each of us. And the fact that a possibility for oneself finally arises retrospectively makes it possible to envisage the conjugation of a formulation in the first person singular. Stating that “*I manage to slip outside of myself*” leads us to recognise that “*I can do it*”, and from there, we are in a position to say: “*I can enter, I can ring the doorbell, I can start a fire, climb on the roof*”, etc. What we subsequently discover leads us to see as personal what we first discovered. Here lies the crux of the issue: the moment when the process makes a real swing is when the spectator comes to say to him or herself: “*I too can link things, create relationships, look between different elements to find the distances apt for the production of third elements.*”

This double discovery can be summed up in one concise formula: there are productive interstices through which a spectator can pass – the passage also being a type of weaving, and the weaving explaining this push outside oneself. Here are the two aspects of the discovery initially made by the spectators. And because they make the discovery – with its two aspects – they can feel their senses awakening. The double discovery is a necessary condition for this awakening as it is, for spectators, the concrete proof that they have this possibility. This proof is given to the senses – it is not the object of a speech or an announcement made to the public before the start of the performance... Because it is not discursively but concretely experienced, this proof is gratifying. Once again, it is Henri Michaux who describes this, in a type of gleeful cry:

I'd like to. I'd like to go away. I'd like to be rid of all this. I'd like to start from scratch. I'd like to get out of this. Not get out through an exit. I'd like a multiple exit, like a fan. An exit that does not cease, an ideal exit that is such that once out, I immediately start to get out again.<sup>37</sup>

This “I'd like”, repeated six times, is a

reaffirmation of a personal desire. This is what allows the spectator to feel: the spectator feels because he or she wants to feel, because he or she has the desire to feel. The entire seeming detour that we have just made leads us to this point: desire. Jacques Rancière emphasises that “bodies are engaged in active relationships based on romantic desire instead of being pent up in the passive relationship of the spectacle”<sup>38</sup>. The spectators are active because, at this very moment, they do what they wish to do, with love.



In front of a work by Heinz Mack Lichtroren that can be described as “abstract” to say the least, *Sonne des Meeres* (1967), shown at the Musée National d'Art Moderne in Paris, a five-year-old girl said to her mother: “*I'd like to have the same at home!*”<sup>39</sup> This lovely exclamation calls for two remarks. First: one need not be “educated” in art to “appreciate” it. What we need is a platform on which we feel welcome to feel freely. The four members of the family stopped in front of the work together; the mother read the title out loud. Second: the little girl didn't say “*it's beautiful*” or “*I like that*”. She formulated a comment that, in my mind, is the most appropriate way for entering into a relationship with a contemporary artwork: regarding this work that I'm looking at, would I like to keep looking at it, to have it “at home”, to make it mine, to feel as a result of daily contact with it?

A few minutes later, this time in front of a sculpture made up of moving metallic pipes and rounds, a boy aged ten asked: “*Dað, what's this for?*” His father, tense and tired, no doubt on edge, or simply miffed, replied sharply: “*It's not for anything!*” Which is certainly true, but uttered this way, the young spectator was deprived of the possibility of making up a platform on which to “work on himself, with and against himself, in order to stay accessible to eventualities”<sup>40</sup>.

This is the challenge faced by the art work, not by its public. It is up to the art device to deal with the spectator's attention. It is up to artists to work so that spectators would want, so that they trust enough to want, so that they cry out, like Michaux, with the same striking depth: “I'd like to!” – and so

<sup>37</sup> | Henri Michaux, *Misérable miracle. La mescaline*, op. cit., p. 31.

<sup>38</sup> | Jacques Rancière, *Le Spectateur émancipé*, Paris, La Fabrique, 2008, p. 97.

<sup>39</sup> | It was a Sunday afternoon, on June 1 2013: admission to the permanent collection of the Centre Pompidou was free of charge that day. As a result and sociologically speaking, the public was varied.

<sup>40</sup> | Jean-François Lyotard, *Moralités postmodernes*, Paris, Galilée, 2005, p. 186.



that they then adhere to this wanting. Art has the task of wakening or reawakening the desire. If I have taken as much time to go into detail about this stage of the artistic process, leading to a desire formulated in the first person singular (and not by the artist), it is in order to show that resolution of the problem (that of trust in sensitive experimentation<sup>41</sup>) is physical, concrete, and that it takes place. The ambition of the artist who selects elements, emphasises their singularity, and arranges them so that possible interstices producing third elements emerge between them, is to awaken the sensitive and sensual wanting of each spectator. What the artist wants is for the spectator to want, to want to want, to desire to desire.<sup>42</sup>

It is instructive to devote oneself to a study of the beginnings of works as these, very often, commence by preparing spectators (or readers, listeners) – a type of warm-up as carried out by dancers or acrobats.<sup>43</sup> This is exemplified by the start of *Nous avons les machines* (2012) by the collective Les Chiens de Navarre. Having barely settled in their seats, spectators received from unbridled actors – lingering by a door at the back of the stage, half naked and wearing unlikely masks – an avalanche of instructions (on how to behave during the performance), comments (on French subsidised theatre and its many flaws), announcements (we were told that blood used for the performance was patiently collected from the menstruation of the actresses in the past six months) and insults (regarding the aspirations to trendiness of those in attendance who only came after reading a review in *Les Inrockuptibles*) so that most of them (three-quarters of the audience the evening I saw the performance) were literally bent with laughter for ten minutes or so.

Ragas also comprise very long introductions. During the first twenty minutes of *Raag Multani* (2011), singer Manjusha Patil went over the same phrase that she gradually enriched by introducing variations, stretching them out, building up in volume after a quarter of an hour, sometimes only for a brief moment, then gradually more and more. Finally, in the last third of this composition lasting thirty-four minutes, the phrase exploded: we witnessed an almighty improvisation made up of strangely

<sup>41</sup> | It is also a matter of “renewing our capacity to live through experiences”. Marianne Massin, *Expérience esthétique et art contemporain*, Rennes, PUR, 2013, p. 151. For trusting also means no longer fearing, ceasing doubt, “divining the relevance of our present aesthetic experience”, *ibid.*, p. 94.

<sup>42</sup> | Monroe Curtis Beardsley noted: “Experience has a marked aesthetic character when it has some of the following features, including the first one: attention firmly fixed on a perceptual or intentional object; a feeling of freedom from concerns about matters outside that object; a notable affect that is detached from practical ends; the sense of powers of discovery; and integration of the self and of its experiences.” Monroe Curtis Beardsley, in *Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism*, Indianapolis, Hackett Publishing Company, 1981, p. lxii.

<sup>43</sup> | In 1997, the Feu Faux Lait collective in which I was involved pushed this idea to an extreme by taking it literally: we invited people in the public, so inclined, to take part in the actors’ warm-ups before the start of performances. This was doubtless a little didactic. But it helped spectators to immerse themselves in the system being presented.

magnificent sounds. Julien Nénault noted the importance of this moment when “gentleness transforms into fever, and eyes and eardrums twist and turn, carried away by the rhythm, the virtuoso ecstasies, like a butterfly that spins and grows dizzy with light”<sup>44</sup>. The Raga’s structure incorporates a phrase whose aim is to calm listeners so that they can then listen with all required attention, which later no longer corresponds to calmness but on the contrary, to frenetic excitement: a “sound gesture that exceeds the audible. [...] The musical gesture reaches the ear, thus prepared for unpreparedness, like an event.”<sup>45</sup>

## 8

Once spectators reach this point, when the flavour of the third element shows up, triggering the succession of these preliminary stages that lead them to being able to say “*I would like*”, a feeling emerges that marks the end of the process of entering into a singular relationship to the work: the “feeling that there is a fissure”<sup>46</sup>. We feel that there is a fissure for we realise that these “holes” to traverse, from which emerge third elements are found as much in the work as in our own depths. There are holes in the work and there are holes in us. We can pass through the holes in the work, and we can also pass through the holes in us, while the surging of third elements in the work is matched by a surging within us, in such a way that we are traversed and become creators – and we no longer know by what nor of what. The fissure is ours and the fissure is other, something else. The “feeling that there is a fissure” can be experienced the moment when one reaches a second sensitive conviction: all of a sudden, we are certain that there is a sort of a platform from which we have the freedom to feel singularly – to be traversed as much as we traverse. This is similar to the firmness of a floor on which we set our feet. This is an explanation of the aesthetic otherness suggested by Nathalie Sarraute: “readers [...] feel [...] the presence of a still-unknown order of sensations”<sup>47</sup>. A “disparity with the ‘normal’”<sup>48</sup> is in question. Art only brings original sensations into play because it is a place – the one which we presently occupy, in contact with the work – from which we can feel unrestrictedly. Aesthetic experience turns into a special, intimate and revealing adventure whenever

<sup>44</sup> | Julien Nénault, *La Musique de Philippe Dubuc*, unpublished.

<sup>45</sup> | Jean-François Lyotard, *Moralités postmodernes*, op. cit. p. 186. An observation here. We often confuse aesthetic construction and representation. We assume that there is a logical and automatic connection between preparation and representation. This amounts to saying that all preliminary construction is re-representation. In this case, we deny the idea of preparation in the name of a supposed purity of the here and now. This is a big mistake. The present is constructed, and even more: it is prepared. Preparing the present means increasing the probability that the unforeseeable springs up, expanding potentialities. In this sense, artists should do everything they can, that is, prepare everything that can be prepared (including the spectator) to help the spectator bring about the unprepared. In short: it is important to prepare the work so that the unprepared surges up with the spectator, so that “unpreparedness” takes place.

<sup>46</sup> | Henri Michaux, *Misérable miracle. La mescaline*, op. cit., p. 24.

<sup>47</sup> | Nathalie Sarraute, “Forme et contenu du roman”, op. cit., p. 1672.

<sup>48</sup> | Marianne Massin, *Expérience esthétique et art contemporain*, op. cit., p. 110.

we envisage it from a platform where singularity and depth hold importance. When a type of trampoline of desires forms, a reception area in which we can want to want, and when we willingly place ourselves there (such is our will, thus is our deep desire), from this moment, we then begin to really feel.



After attending a staging of *Hamlet-Machine* that the Proyecto 3 collective performed in a nave of the National Museum of Cultures in Mexico City in 2004, a spectator began to cry. She then explained that what she had seen and heard had “spoken” to her (these were her words) about her imprisonment in the city.<sup>49</sup> She explained that here in this large urban agglomeration, she felt as if she was in prison. And surprisingly, she concluded by saying that she now had to behave differently with her children. (I can add that this was the first time that this mother from an unprivileged social background had gone to the theatre.) Our theatre performance that combined Heiner Müller’s text with acrobatic sequences, minimalistic choreographies, movements of the public from one side of the nave to the other, the throwing of foldable chairs and unmatched furniture, neither “spoke” about Mexico City nor gave educational tips to parents.<sup>50</sup> This meaning (“*I feel like I’m in prison here*”) and this thought (“*I’m going to behave differently with my children*”) were produced by this spectator who, upon seeing our work, experienced sensations that were as real as they were unique. This is what her internal stirring produced. The thought emerged because the series of experienced sensations ended up making sense.

Making sense is more than looking at or even contemplating relationships, those ones that already exist and those ones that spectators produce. Sense is produced when spectators adopt relationships, when they claim them as theirs – as if they decided for a moment to overlap this tangle of threads woven by them: the production of sense consists in joining the different perceptible threads that we experience, in operating the “differential articulation of singularities that make sense in articulating themselves, along the edge of their articulation”<sup>51</sup>.

If the art device succeeds in getting sense to emerge, if it plays a role in this process, it is however not the system that produces sense. Jacques Rancière insisted on the fact that stakes ride on “the suspension of all definable relationships between the intention of an artist, a perceptible form presented in a place of art, the spectator’s gaze, and the state of the community”<sup>52</sup>. For it is to the extent that what the spectators perceive does not need to be reframed by a predefined normative discourse that these spectators have the possibility of establishing – or re-establishing – continuity between their perception and their experience, placing the first in relationship with the second, and thus to grasp themselves in their own right and as a continuum – a living being in the process of living. This is the first inkling of sense. Jacques Rancière was clear about this: the spectator “composes his own poem with the poem elements in front of him”.<sup>53</sup> For example: Mexico City transformed into a penitentiary centre.

Another performance that we presented with the Proyecto 3 collective concluded with oranges tumbling down the impressive staircase of a majestic colonial house.<sup>54</sup> This event, which required very long rehearsals so that the fruit would roll down the steps in the right way, prompted the fugue – or drifting – of one spectator to North Africa. The latter claimed that he was no longer in Mexico, but in Algeria, in a village by the Mediterranean Sea. Other than the precision and the rhythm of the sequence itself, we had worked in our present (that of the rehearsals) to create holes between this sequence (the oranges), the previous sequence (the projection of a film extract showing middle-class women training in a gym) and the following action (the actress in turn slid down the staircase, then undressed). Meanwhile, the spectator, from his present (that of the theatre presentation) worked to compose a continuity taking him away to the Maghreb countryside.

What the spectator saw (a Mediterranean landscape) was the “ands” that he himself composed, the intervals between the oranges and the stairs. What he felt was what was produced in the interstice (the sea, dry air, olive trees), so that here and now, there was more than what there was: there was another country, Algeria. And what he

<sup>49</sup> One can, first of all, stop at the crying, as Kazu does in *After the Banquet*: “Kazu rarely took the trouble to analyse what she was doing at a given moment; her nature told her that she would think about it later. For example, if she started crying as she left, she wouldn’t understand the reason for her tears in the heat of the moment.” Yukio Mishima, *Après la banquet*, op. cit., 1965, p. 43.

<sup>50</sup> A few video extracts are available at: <<http://www.proyecto3.net/maquina-hamleta922477>>

<sup>51</sup> Jean-Luc Nancy specifies: “articulation should be taken simultaneously in the mechanical sense of a joint and its play, in the sense of the spoken offering, and in the sense of the distribution into distinct ‘articles’”. Jean-Luc Nancy, *Le Sens du monde*, Paris, Galilée, 1993, p. 126.

<sup>52</sup> Jacques Rancière, *Le Spectateur émancipé*, op. cit., p. 61.

<sup>53</sup> Jacques Rancière, *Le Spectateur émancipé*, op. cit., p. 19.

<sup>54</sup> It was *Sin título*, presented at the Casa Refugio Citlaltépetl in February and March 2006: <<https://youtu.be/Jt8W9bKoNas>>

understood was that sense was being made. Or else we can put it this way: when the spectator feels that it makes sense to be present, he or she finds sense in the fact of being there. It makes sense to be present when the spectator finds sense in the illation between the inside of the artefact and its outside (which is no other than his or her own inside), when he or she feels that there is sense in placing into relationship “a plurality of simultaneous worlds, a simultaneity of presents in different worlds”<sup>55</sup>. Jacques Rancière has also said: “The spectator acts [...]. He observes, he selects, he compares, he interprets. He links what he sees to many other things that he has seen on other stages, in other types of places.”<sup>56</sup> The connection of the inside with this outside that is also another inside brings to the surface the impression of a deeper reality being deployed – from the interstice – to hitherto unsuspected dimensions. It is the depth as well as the volume, and thus the radicality of this reality, that lead to the production of sense. We could almost say that meaning is the impact left by this depth and this radicality. Or else that it appears when the spectator, in turn, turns into an artist: when he or she composes by himself or herself, when he or she becomes a combiner.

The sensitivity, sensoriality and sensuality of sense is also due to the fact that there is a will to find sense. Indeed, the field of action of the verb “to want”, previously raised by the wording of Henri Michaux, is now extended: there is a passage from “*I want*” to “*I want to link*”, then from there, to an unexpected “*I want to do*”. If the second (link) combines the inside with the outside (of the work), the third (to do) is fully turned towards the exterior (of the work): “*I want to behave differently with my son and daughter*” – this is an activity that will be carried out at home, that is, outside the theatre, outside the work. “*I want to take some time to rethink relationships with Algerian villagers*” will perhaps require a trip back to North Africa – so very far from the place where the performance was presented. In wanting to give meaning, we also simultaneously find a direction for our movements, for our praxis, for our actions.



Do we find sense or does sense offer itself? Do we produce meaning or is the latter produced for us? Rather than confusion, the issue raises a mystery. A way to describe this in simple terms consists in observing that at the same time that meaning comes – and without being able to clearly define whether it comes to us or if we make it come – something already runs ahead, making the first move, as if already located after the surge of meaning: it is what I have called the will to do. When meaning emerges, a will for action also appears – placed downstream of meaning, as its consequence – without this entirely being the case because desire does not appear after meaning but with it. Christoph Theobald pointed this out: it is a desire “to make life viable and enviable by inscribing this meaning in a play of individual and collective relationships; and this without definitive rest being reached or desire being exhausted one day”<sup>57</sup>. Giving meaning becomes a desire to inhabit the ever more radical opening of the real.

It is at this point that thought appears: once sensitive experience makes sense, the spectator can begin to think. Thinking is a stage that comes after the given sense and before the planned action. Thought comes after the sense that “Mexico = prison” and before the new child-raising plan. Between the found meaning and the envisaged action, there opens up a space where it becomes possible to rethink our environment. The surge of a meaning, alone, would not suffice to motivate the production of thought: if there were only a prison-city, why think beyond it, what would be the point? But if there exists the possibility of inventing other relationships between generations, it is worth thinking about how to go about it. Thinking is inscribed in the interval between the given meaning and the desire to act.

Martin Heidegger made this observation: “what is most worth our thought today is what we do not yet think”<sup>58</sup>. The idea is simple: the exercise of thought is exercised on what has not yet been thought. Yet what has not yet

<sup>55</sup> | Gilles Deleuze, *Cinéma 2 – L'image-temps*, op. cit., p. 135.

<sup>56</sup> | Jacques Rancière, *Le Spectateur émancipé*, op. cit., p. 19.

<sup>57</sup> | Christoph Theobald, *La Révélation*, Paris, Les Editions de l'Atelier, 2001, p. 50-51.

<sup>58</sup> | Translated from Martin Heidegger, *Qu'appelle-t-on penser?*, tr. A. Becker, G. Granel, Paris, PUF (Quadrige), 1992, p. 24.

been thought today is the relationship, it is the priority of action that consists in creating relationships, weaving ties – starting with ties with one's own children.<sup>59</sup> Thus rises a love thought, a thought that does not think about how to gather singularities and reduce their differences, nor how to blend them into one another or into a majority whole, nor even less how to fill the space between them, but simply and literally, how to want and to love this difference that is theirs – in such a way that this difference is productive of yet more desire. The experience is sensory. Senses bring or make sense. But movement does not halt or interrupt things. It runs, it stretches – from sense to thought, from desiring thought to the senses.

## 9

A question for today's world then arises: how the hell do we think about relationships and the interstice if, in the era in which we live, all relationships are necessarily commercial: this in exchange *for* that, this is worth that which is worth money. Deleuze and Guattari already pointed this out: with capitalism, "the conjunction [...] ceases to be related to pleasure and excess"<sup>60</sup> to be turned into an instance which reduces the diversity of desiring flows to the only imperative of producing to produce... money. There is an "and", but this "and" stands in for a "for". The conjunction is no longer conjunctive, it is no longer creative: work *for* capital on the one hand, and capital *for* itself (turnover, net profits, profit rate) on the other hand.<sup>61</sup> So much so that the "and" no longer designates a spacing between terms but the subordination of one term to another.

To give a concrete example: in November 2010, I spent an evening with a family who lives on a Calcutta footpath. I was invited to a celebration. We danced – till late – and then we slept. When I was preparing to leave, my hosts, as is the custom in Bengal, expressed an intention to invite me back – for the closing of their festivity: the immersion in the Ganges of the divinity they were celebrating (Kali). As my mastery of Bengali was lacking at the time, a police guard at the entrance of the metro station thought he'd help us out. But he didn't confine himself to translating what my hosts were

saying, namely: "*Come back this evening for the immersion*". Unable to imagine that someone like me (white, European, etc.) should be in a relationship with people like them (far less white, and living in the street, etc.), he sought a plausible explanation in his eyes: the relationship between me and them could only be monetary. So the policeman invented part of the translation: my hosts, he explained to me, were asking for a financial contribution to the closing of their festivity. But in fact there was no question of money being exchanged between us. The policeman-translator reduced the singularity of this relationship to a "for" value. There was no question of hosts *and* their guest, but a tourist's money *for* increasing the capital of local residents.

This translation of "and" into "for capital" is what happens (to us) most of the time. We spend our time translating, converting "and" into "for". We obliterate the very possibility of things being free – even though this possibility does not cease to appear concretely. Anthropologist Marc Hatzfeld insists on this:

Gratuitousness clashes with one of the most deeply anchored beliefs in contemporary mentalities, according to which only exchanges measured by economic interest can regulate social relationships: it is thus impossible for things to be free; even worse, this can harm healthy relationships between upstanding people. The stakes of gratuitousness hold such importance for current ideological and economic apparatus reliant on monetised exchanges that they rouse opposition that hesitates before no menace, no means, no moral limits. [...] Gratuitousness is even more deliberately transgressive in a context in which we cannot imagine that an activity might escape from its trade measure. Not only air and water have become objects of trade, but neighbourhood solidarity and local ties tend to be supplanted by formatted "local services" from which people hope to draw economic profits. Apparently nothing escapes from the determination of trade apparatus to trade whatever it touches.<sup>62</sup>

Here, art holds the value of a spoilsport. What it spoils, in the capitalist sport, is the transformation of "and" into "for", of "+" into "€". In art, we (spectators) can experience radical gratuitousness, unconditional gifts. Lyotard reminded that "the artist has become the mere producer of intensities that do not belong to him"<sup>63</sup>. In other words, the artist-turned-artisan-blender gives what he does not possess.<sup>64</sup> And it is precisely this *over-gratuitousness of the gift* that we sense when in contact with a work which leads

<sup>59</sup> | The insistence of French cultural institutions on the notion of "being together" is symptomatic. For example, the leitmotif of the 2015 edition of the Fête de la Musique was: "vivre ensemble la musique!" (experience music together!).

<sup>60</sup> | Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, *L'Anti-Œdipe*, op. cit., p. 266.

<sup>61</sup> | In an interview published in the newspaper *Libération* on July 27 2016, economist Jézabel Couppey-Soubeyran issued a reminder: "For a long time now, the systemically important banks in the Euro zone have turned away from financing the companies that need them in favour of the market's most lucrative activities which contribute in no way to financing the economy." Cf. Jézabel Couppey-Soubeyran, *Blablabanque. Le discours de l'inaction*, Paris, Michalon, 2015.

<sup>62</sup> | Marc Hatzfeld, *Les Lascars. Une jeunesse en colère*, Paris, Autrement, 2011, p. 52-52, 58.

<sup>63</sup> | Jean-François Lyotard, *Des dispositifs pulsionnels*, Paris, Galilée, 1994, p. 105.

<sup>64</sup> | In this respect, the figure of the *curator* is emblematic: it is a matter of combining works of which the latter is not the author. Cf. Laurent Jeanpierre, Séverine Sofio, *Les Commissaires d'exposition d'art contemporain en France. Parcours social*, Paris, Investigative report for the Commissaires d'Exposition Associés, 2009.



us in this way – because it makes sense.<sup>65</sup> I remember having this sharp conviction while watching an actor approach the forestage, sit down, take out a pure white handkerchief, unfold it on his knees, tenderly caress the piece of bloody meat that it contained, while behind, three boisterous actresses used heavy shovels to strike steel rails set out on the stage. This was in 1993: it was a performance of *Macbeth* by Serge Noyal at the Théâtre de Châtillon. The fact that I could receive a present of this type, in a world where everyone, in one way or another, claims to increase their market shares, causes me to think. When the experience that consists in feeling that meaning is given is real, then this experience leads us to think about what “we don’t yet think about”: sense-relation, the sense that links everything as much as it is given. What art does when it does something, is to give the “and” its creative potential. Aesthetic experience acquires the traits of a revelation (a post-experience that is nothing like the pre-experience) when it gives the experience of an “and” that is no longer a “for”.

While artistic presentation can lead to a revelation, it is not artists who decide on the revelation’s content: they only operate on the presentation. This is the most astonishing part of the answer to the question on what happens between the moment when an artist thinks about producing a work and the moment when a spectator thinks as a result of seeing it: the necessary absence of link between the first and the second thought. So the ultimate paradox arises: the aesthetic process only works on condition that all determinism is suspended, all calculation of effects relating one thought to another thought abandoned. The dynamic of relationships only works if the relationship between the first moment in the process (the artist thinking about making a work) and the last one (the spectator thinking while contemplating the work) is not established, and even, in a certain way, does not exist. In order for there to be relationships, it is necessary to remove one – the one which, covering the whole process, from its start to its conclusion, would achieve nothing except crushing all the others. For the arts to become convincing again, they should no longer seek to convince.

tangible proof before continuing further in the creation of living links, we spectators also need proof. We need concrete reasons to believe. Otherwise we stop believing – what is modern capitalism except a generalised cessation of thought? And at times, through contact with a film, a staging or a book, we have the perceptible, hence tangible proof that we have lacked. That the *in-between between two singularities* becomes the producer of a third one, that we spectators have participated in the process, that there is a meaning given to this and that we have come to think it up... all these events are real and act as proofs: they help us believe in the possibility not only of feeling and thinking, but also acting in this world that is ours, in relationship to this world, by creating relationships in this world.

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Today, what binds us together, what links us (such as a demonstration for the legalisation of paperless migrants, the welcome of refugees), what touches us most (such as a Santhal dance about which we know strictly nothing), is what singles us out, differentiates us, makes each of us unique. This is our condition as creators, as art teaches us to feel, love, inhabit, and activate it with our desire.

<sup>65</sup> In *Sculpting in Time*, Andrei Tarkovsky called the artist a servant.

For like Saint Thomas, the apostle who needed

As **Jean-Frédéric Chevallier** was born in 1973, in other words, shortly after May '68, he received an education that was stimulating to an extreme. While he has practically given up playing the guitar, drawing, culinary invention and robot construction, he continues, among other activities: directing performances that combine dance and theatre (the last to date, co-directed in India with Surujmoni Hansda, a young Santhal village girl aged 15 years: *Essay on Seasonal Variation in Santhal Society*); making film-essays (a Franco-Indian example: *Drowning Princess*, co-directed with choreographer Maïa Nicolas - DVD L'Harmattan, 2009); designing installations (for example, on the riverbanks of Québec: *Try Me Under Water*); writing books in French (the latest: *Deleuze et le théâtre. Rompre avec la représentation*, Les Solitaires Intempestifs, 2015) or in Spanish (a Mexican example: *El Teatro hoy: una tipología posible*, Paso de Gato, 2011); occasionally spending a few days in the ecumenical community of Taizé; giving, from India to America, via Europe, conferences that he hopes are as stimulating as his education was; coordinating a contemporary performing art festival in a tribal village in Bengal. But when he needs to exude gravitas, Jean-Frédéric introduces himself as a theatre director and philosopher, a holder of three master's degrees and a doctorate, briefly lecturer at the Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle in Paris and at greater length professor at the National University of Mexico, and a resident of India since 2008, where he co-directs, with his wife Sukla Bar, the non-profit organisation **Trimukhi Platform** and the bilingual magazine *Fabricate* (*Fabric of Art*).









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this issue is published with the support of the Publication Assistance Programmes of the Institut français  
ce numéro a bénéficié du soutien des Programmes d'aide à la publication de l'Institut français

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ISSN 2395 - 7131

distributed by SAMPARK Global Media

INR 998.00  
EUR 24 USD 26