

FOREWORD

In 2007 the Frac gave carte blanche to the École nationale supérieure de la photographie and the École normale supérieure of Lyon in the framework of *Duels*. Why did it seem important to you to undertake a collaboration with these two schools?

Since I arrived as head of the Frac in 2006, it seemed obvious to me that it was necessary to bring two exceptional schools of art devoted to training and experimentation into contact in order to envision projects mixing topics tied to mediation, training, production and questions around the notion of exhibitions. It was important for a Frac to present this exhibition assembling for the first time work produced by students from the two schools and work stemming from a public collection of contemporary art together. It wasn't a matter of showing a photography exhibit in the classical sense of the term, but rather, on the contrary to attempt the experience of a dialog, foreseeing the exhibit as a scenario for encounters and exchange.

How did this unique collaboration continue to weave itself into the artistic and cultural project of the Frac?

After over thirty years of existence and more than a thousand works in our collection, it is vital to be able to renew our approach to the collection, affirming our exploratory dimension to breathe new life into ways to exhibit and continually move closer to art in the making. While we cling to the notion today that Fracs aren't museums, it's mainly by falling within the scope at the core of their artistic and cultural projects that this capacity to revisit our collections, inventing new narratives inspired by work when all diverse scales are considered, can testify to our society's evolution. A Fonds Régional d'Art Contemporain should be able to uphold the capacity to come into the making and affirm itself as a true laboratory open to mixedness and all cultures.

The title *Histoires parallèles* seems to evoke distinct narratives. How then do these stories meet up?

The adventure of contemporary art shouldn't limit itself to one unique dogmatic and exclusive story. Quite the contrary, the title of this show invites us to span the past decade by tackling a diversity of artistic activity in so many potential writings and «parallel stories» that bow to a seismography showing depth and form we cannot fathom. Thereby, this project is as much as an exhibition than a sensual experience.

STAGE 1

What are the primary difficulties of a collective commission? Moreover spanning a ten-year period of Frac acquisitions? What was the starting premise of the initial exchanges? Did a certain problematic immediately surface?

This exhibit is the result of a community's choice, a specific entity with one voice. All four of us have separate career paths and have had the opportunity to come into contact before this occasion, something that definitely led to immediate affinity. Affirming each one's career path and specificity would have perhaps created a heterogeneous result. We four participated in the collaboration Ens/Ensp several years ago and since then we've made our own paths, and are happy to find ourselves reunited for this invitation. The main challenge will have been to work quickly and from afar, for we all live long distances from one another. Nothing was defined beforehand, neither theme nor medium; each of us looked at the catalog separately, then coordinated a common selection. Finally it's not so much a matter of problematic as a united viewpoint about the world, both poetic and artistic.

From the beginning, we understood our selection wasn't thematic but rather dealt with pieces amongst themselves, or what was at stake in the heart of each one. Shock of times for Richer's piece, prehistoric and four-colored printing process. Farrell's elegant spiral with its spontaneous, defensive gesture, a kind of makeshift poetry. Abstraction of defiant gesture inside Chevalier's work, and festive overload seen by Colomer. A sign in the night, a bitter-sweetness, joyful blues.

At first look, we are confronted with very diverse work from a formal standpoint. How did you design the hanging?

In a kind of movement, at once centrifugal and centripetal around Seamus Farrell's sculpture and especially, by taking into consideration special demands required by the space. We thought about things in terms of rhythm, and playing up differences in format. Due to their like formats, two works were first to assert themselves in the staging of space, that of Jordi Colomer and Seamus Farrell. They are massive, monumental and the margin for maneuver in terms of presenting them was slight. They are the backbone of this exhibit, a political and poetic statement, both sober and bright. Indeed, diversity is manifest throughout the exhibition because derived from a decade of acquisitions. Even though we had first believed there was a predominance of video pieces, something that complicated an exhibition in perspective's staging even more.[...] Thus it was necessary to consider this constraint and privilege painting as well as installation and photography in a subtle balancing act.

In your selection, a particular interest for material, the medium and surface seems to come to light. Was this a deciding axis?

Yes, in a certain way but not so much materiality of the pieces as the ambience they create together. Is Seamus Farrell's *Spiral of Fez* suggesting material is able to attain a second, unexpected life the very material of the work? There was also Jordi Colomer's video work inciting us to reposition or to dig into the unusual even the banal, turning what is on display inside out, replaying it. In many of the pieces chosen, there is a common spirit: forms playing with material, mediums inspired by the very subject they were "extracted" from, to the letter. Obviously then, attention is focused on material, definitely, in our selection of works, but in the same time, there's a will to push this materiality towards something else, to force it to its potential disappearance: Anne-Valérie Gasc and Emmanuel Régent represent ruins, or habitations slated for destruction and it's already as if their very work, barely finished, presented itself as a "ruin to be". The character of Denis Castellás, that we for a time named the "herald" of this exhibition adventure —both a character who appears and who's becoming extinct, evanescent and resistant, holding up despite it all— seemed to us a good introduction and an emblem for our show.

How would you describe the relationship between *Spiral of Fez* the piece by Seamus Farrell which takes up a central place and the works hanging on the wall?

Spiral of Fez is like a shield, an almost open form of defense, a laying out of fortune, a haven of precarious peace. Its first role would be that of a pivot designed to direct the flow of spectators around the pieces hanging on the wall for the most part. This principle of occupying space and directing circulation is quite important when the scenography is left open, so all the work may be visible in the sweep of an eye. The second role we can attribute to *Spiral of Fez* is one of a spatial occupation by familiar elements, on the human scale, a central form, both an unrolling, a primitive labyrinth, a swirl of metal. This work acts as a stabilizer and a distributor of the gravitational force that is the exhibition, or like a sun around which a system organizes itself; and yet, this piece doesn't have greater value than the others in our eyes: it simply sheds fresh light on the works around it.

Which word would best describe the tonality of this hanging?

Perhaps it wouldn't be a word but an image, that of Jordi Colomer's neon in a deserted landscape. His twisted watchword (what was the desperate cry emanating from punks becomes a mocking, impulsive manifesto) might well summarize what we aim for as well: "No? Future!".

Do you see this selection as representative of an era? A certain worldview?

Of an era no, but a relationship with the world, quite necessarily. It's not a matter of "generational" works since the artists presented in this show belong to different generations, it is more like tensioning a similar worldview through potential infinities and in the same time lapse, contemporary. When we collectively propose Cristof Yvoré and Evariste Richer, we're also attempting to speak about tradition, still life, classicism, re-appropriation. Just as many "worlds" as there are pieces of art on display. In a back and forth sway, it therefore implies understanding these works as being forms of research, prospecting, having certain aspects in common, specific to what is contemporary. Notably regarding this return to brute material, ruins, via rapture and drifting, a latent spirituality. We might be convoking here Victor Segalen's militant warning: "Diversity declines. That is the greatest terrestrial danger, therefore we must join the struggle, fight against this decay — perhaps dying with beauty".

MULTIMEDIA STAGE

Several works tackle the question of time. In what way does Enrique Ramirez's video work Ocean 33°02' 47"S/ 51°04'00"N presented on the Multimedia Stage feed this reflection?

Enrique Ramirez's work is built so much on a specific temporality it seemed important to us to provide him with a special place. This slow, hypnotic crossing by boat allows us to confront a time we're unfamiliar with, even time that's foreign to us. In the same way that the exhibition on Stage 1 unfolds and develops around a spiral, here time is something completely different, it's work time. This odyssey in real time shows the flow path of consumer goods by way of the ocean and we grasp a temporality that's so distant from immediacy which is seemingly the norm in our contemporary lives. This time is also one of construction of a generation it's impossible to define in real time.

You have chosen to show Neal Begg's work in the documentation center. Is it in order to question the status of archive?

Perhaps it's less an inquiry into the archive than that of a work in progress, the unachieved, incompleteness in itself, the question of living creation, more than that of the archive: "the artist's workshop".

STAGE 2

On stage 2 we find work spawned by a collaboration of different two-person student teams from two Schools. These teams were formed by chance affinities... How does one manage to meet up?

The idea of a trip to London was instilled in this "Why" edition, creating conditions for an encounter outside the sphere of the two schools. During the long train ride or in different episodes of travel the first exchanges took place, the first reflections.

Ensp and Ens are institutions with particular "ways of doing things", different modes of thought. Was it obvious to create the "Writing and photography" Education and Action Research between the two schools?

Above all this partnership evolved thanks to the will of two individuals, namely Patrick Talbot, former director of the École nationale supérieure de la photographie and Jean-Marie Gleize, poet and professor-researcher who was director of poetic studies at the École normale supérieure of Lyon, united by a same passion for photography and literature and a long friendship. The strongpoint of this program is partially about pondering a question common to two different institutions. One whose principal material concerns writing, while the other treats the topic of image. It's indeed because difference exists within the two institutions that the exchange is possible and there's a common ground allowing the creation of space where this shared experience can be expressed without dogmatism. Otherness (learning to work with another), experimentation and hybridization constitute the common founding base of this program, bringing together these two types of students and institutions. Making good use of the exercise here and there to create nothing but another way, that would be the *motto*.

How are reciprocal contributions manifested between creation and human sciences?

Above all it means displacement. Students in both training programs don't necessarily tackle writing and image using the same codes. Elaborating a common "object" means accounting for this departure from the rule and making something rich of it. During these exchanges, certain paths of reflection surface, references whether literary, philosophical, filmic, artistic, linguistic, typographical or ethnographical and so on. Anyway, the whole field of culture and its forms of expression are revisited and discussed, we could even say examined. Prototype in 2005, this innovating initiative was able, by way of its thematic quality, "Writing and photography", and its progressive pedagogy to evolve into a "great practice" on the landscape of research, when artist and researcher have much to learn from each other.

How would you describe the materialization of the co-presence of word and image in space?

It materializes in a very different manner depending on the projects. The text may embrace a strong artistic dimension, finding itself on the same level as photography, or break into fragments, the image might adopt the framework of a narrative or again the two may reconcile producing a graphic work. Let me remind you, Greek etymology of the word Graphie/written form (writing and painting) may crystallize the creative issue of uniting under a common "inscription" i.e. text and image. The reciprocal contribution finds itself in a plasticity of means to hybridize: the text may be diffused ("sonorous showering", theatrical dialog etc.), projected onto images, inscribed in the fixed image and in movement, etc. These hybrid objects call into question the spectator's eye, successively led to resolve an enigma, when generally (s/he must "tinker around" by reading, looking, making parallels, correlations...). The duos occupy two territories: a book and an exhibition. They must reflect upon the articulation of these two modes of simultaneous presentation: a bi-dimensional object, the book and the other tri-dimensional, the exhibit. All this play around space defines for us a new alphabetization. An alphabetization for young people which in the end empowers them, making them more vigilant and clearer about the imperative of image which has a determinate role on our era [...]. That's also why we consider the time of youth encompassed by this program as being absolutely crucial to the project itself.

The two-party axes of reflection are very different. Some treat deep subjects, others lighter ones: how to reconcile such differing work?

The *Why* exhibition isn't a thematic exhibit. It unveils a problematic —that of finding the relationship that exists between image and writing— each team has confronted in a singular way. What links them to the work, is firstly the notion of experimentation. The exhibition, via assemblages both close and far, through polyphonies and multiple forms of writing and contamination between mediums, proffers something to see, to read to hear (think) with seven particular partitions. Likewise, the idea behind this program is to provide a true place of experimentation and questioning for the students mid-degree. It must noted that we are dealing with students and the worrisome issue of demands can only be built from a place where fragility and incertitude of each individual can find voice.

Finally, how is a dialog created with work from the Frac's collection shown on Stage 1?

The dialog in motion between the three stages is perhaps best perceived as a dynamic rather than a resonance between works. Temporality —10 years— is an important point of articulation in the sense that each floor shows a state of recent activity and thus singularizes a particular and constitutive time in the works' existence. The expression "parallel stories" can be grasped in terms of a shift. This movement can also be found on the side of the actors in the project, through the shift of each person's role, which might be located at any level... from artist to curator, student to young artist, artist to teacher, researcher to curator and institution to laboratory as well, since the Frac opens its doors to transversal and experimental proposals. Making one's way through the exhibition, the visitor can create dialogs between the floors because certain pieces in the Frac's collection delve into the questions of representation via use of diverse techniques, from felt (Emmanuel Régent) to oil on canvas (Cristof Yvoré), serigraphy in concrete dust (Anne-Valerie Gasc) or graphite (Scolti Acosta) there are so many different mediums the artists use, like in *Why*. Furthermore, certain techniques evoke writing, either directly, for instance the inscription engraved in the car door in Seamus Farrell's installation, or implicitly, in the burnt wood used in Davide Balula's work (the tree is paper's raw material, writing's thousand-year medium)... Photography is evoked also, either explicitly —by slides projected on the Iranian revolution from Bahman Jalali or implicitly in Evariste Richer's stones evoking cyan, magenta, yellow and black (CMYK) in printing (contrary to the digital which treats colors in RGB (red, green, blue) etc. So it's the visitor's job to interpret, seize upon and imagine such and such possible resonance between floors in the form of a common problematic: the relationship between writing and photography, temporality, removal, the written as source of memory and personal images.

DOCUMENTATION CENTER

Is this the first time that archives from these years of research and common collaboration have been shown? How do they embellish the presentation on the other stages?

Yes, for the first time Ensp and Ens have decided to present a ten-year partnership especially for this exhibition in the documentation Center choosing extracts from "partitions" produced from the six itineraries in addition to untreated sheets of offset printing in books, highlighting the diversity of propositions on a same shelf, all of which is accompanied by many other documents. This ten-year feedback allows us to understand the evolution of the path traveled and its ever-innovating, creative nature. Ten years for this type of device is undeniably a "turning point". Paralleling the 2013-2015 itinerary *Why* with a selection of work spanning ten years of the Frac's acquisitions, including a selection of archives, facilitates an outline of current creation and provides a good idea about artist and researcher training for the years to come, inevitably linked to contemporary times and its evolutions.

You have chosen to show Neal Beggs work in the Documentation Center. In order to outline the question of the archive's status?

Unquestionably, Neal Beggs' work questions the archive, which has evolved into something for exploring creative issues. It is used to document (like an exhibition's catalog is an archive, for example, giving information about scenography, the choice of works etc.) but it's also a potential source of creativity for today's artists. A certain number of partitions from the six itineraries explores this ambivalence of archive. You only have to realize that photos of Richard Long's work, produced to make record of his involvement in nature (Land Art), have become works in themselves. Art ceaselessly nudges borders along. And the Research Training Program attempts to add its own grain of salt. The ephemeral library covering *Histoires parallèles* invites us to follow through with this reflection on the archive, the book and hybridization, proposing reference material treating these questions.

Extracts from an interview between those in charge of public awareness programs at the Frac and Pascal Neveux, director of the Frac; Ariane Carmignac, Gilles Pourtier, Marie Quéau, Vincent Zonca on Stage 1 and Multimedia; Muriel Toulemonde, Paul Pouvreau, David Gauthier and Éric Dayre, teachers and artists at Ensp and instructors and researchers at Ens, Lyon for Stage 2 and the Documentation Center.

Translated by Holly Dye.

HISTOIRES PARALLÈLES

Exhibition
21st November 2015
to 7th February 2016

Histoires parallèles (Parallel Stories)

This exhibit, shown across four floors, is the fruit of a collegial committee regrouping four former students from the the école nationale supérieure de la photographie, Arles and the école normale supérieure of Lyon – Ariane Carmignac, Gilles Pourtier, Marie Quéau, Vincent Zonca – in addition to Muriel Toulemonde, Marie Frétygn-Rydzek, Paul Pouvreau, Juliette Vignon, David Gauthier, Éric Dayre, Fabienne Clérin and Pascal Neveux. Designed as a work in progress, via work sessions and numerous exchanges and reflection shared throughout the year 2015, the show is plural in nature. This collective committee has thus built up a series of works from the Frac's acquisitions during the period spanning 2005–2015 (Stage 1 and Multimedia Stage), deciding to present work created by eight two-person student teams from two schools depicting the years 2013–2015 under the title *Why* (Stage 2). In the continuity of the *Duels* exhibition presented at the Frac in 2007, *Histoires Parallèles* hence features ten years of partnership, without nostalgia or melancholy, but rather with an ideal to sketch out the portrait of a ten-year collective adventure that allowed students from Ensp and Ens Lyon to maintain a healthy dialog based on the relationship between text/image. Archives shown in the Documentation Center likewise give witness to the richness of such exchanges and the diversity of fine art and textual approaches.

Histoires parallèles is also a manifestation, the political and artistic need and desire to reaffirm a teaching method around the experimentation and merging of artists and researchers collaborating and offering a vision of their work within an institution devoted to contemporary creation. Fruit of a unique and novel collaboration between two national schools and the Frac, this exhibit resonates as the elaboration and end result of work blending writing and photography, all while questioning practices and assigned roles. Finally, it's a possibility to discover works delivering a broad contemporary, uncompromising world-view as crucial parallel stories whose meaning cannot be denied.

Pascal Neveux,
Directeur of the Frac Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur

Education and Research Action's Archives

"Writing and photography", 2005–2015

[FRAC Collection]

Neal Beggs, *Unité d'habitation* [carnets], 2014

Ephemeral library

of the exhibit

Documentation Center

Stage 2

Why?

Education and Research Action
"Writing and photography"
2013–2015

Morgane Adawi/Jeanne Évrard,
because we're animals too
Pierre-Marie Drapeau-Martin/Noémie Regnaud,
Presqu'île
Elsa Leydier/Margaux Coquelle-Roehm,
Le dos des souvenirs
Robin Lopvet/Sam Rachebœuf,
voyage voyage voyage
Emanuela Meloni/Mathilde De Maistre,
Gouine
Pablo Mendez/Guillaume Auzoux-Burgunder
Press to flesh
Margaux Meurisse/Chloé Morille,
Liquidambar
Marine Simon/Li Weiwen,
Dialing

Stage 1

[FRAC Collection]

Scoli Acosta, *Sunglasses and Nightshades on a Stalagmite*, 2006–2008; *Archaic Roller Coaster*, 2006; *Backdrop (sun and moon)*, 2011; *PCH Dawn (brick figure)*, 2011; *Tapping Ancient Forest*, 2011; *Tobacco Plant*, 2011; *Stockings like Wicks*, 2011; *Bright Canoe*, 2011; *Shines off the Crown*, 2011
Davide Balula, *Burnt painting/Imprint of the burnt painting*, 2012
Yto Barrada, *Le détroit*, 2001–2003
Denis Castellás, *Untitled*, 2003
Marc Chevalier, *Untitled*, 2007
Jordi Colomer, *No Future*, 2006
Seamus Farrell, *Spiral of Fez*, 2008
Anne-Valérie Gasc, *Bouquet final*, 2011
Bernadette Genée & Alain Le Borgne, *Couvre-chefs*, 2002–2007
Bahman Jalali, *Days of fire, Days of blood*, 1978
Florence Louise Petetin, *Psaume 17*, 2014
Emmanuel Régent, *Pendant qu'il fait encore jour, 14 septembre 2013*, 2013
Évariste Richer, *CMYK*, 2009
Cristof Yvoré, *Untitled*, 2013

Multimedia Stage

[FRAC Collection]

Enrique Ramirez,
Océan 33°02'47"S / 51°04'00"N, 2013

Concerning the exhibit

- A dossier available for those accompanying groups
- A tool for high school students and youth available at the Frac's welcome desk
- Resources about the exhibited artists at the Documentation Center
- The books about each Education and Research Action "Writing and photography" are for sale at the welcome desk

Monthly nocturnal openings free of charge

On Fridays December 11th, January 15th and February 5th 2016,
from 6pm to 10pm
For more information: www.fracpaca.org

The Frac is open Tuesday to Saturday 12pm to 7pm and Sunday 2pm to 6pm
Groups welcome upon appointment Tuesday to Friday 10am to 7pm
and Saturday 12pm to 7pm: reservation@fracpaca.org

Our next exhibition:
Lieven de Boeck, *Image not Found*,
from March 4th to June 5th 2016

Graphic design:
atelier informationCare / Ronan Le Régent, Clémence Antier

The Education and Research Action Ensp/Ens Lyon receives support from the Rhône-Alpes and Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur regions, from the Ministry of Culture and Communication, and Ministry of National Education, Higher Education and Research.

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