des attentions

Fouad Bouchoucha, Laurence Cathala,Raymond Hains, Susan Hiller,
Nicolás Lamas, Daria Martin, Antoni Muntadas, Daniel Steegman Mangrané,
Batia Suter, Suzanne Treister

from 18 january to 31 March 2019

Curators   Brice Domingues, Catherine Guiral, Hélène Meisel

Batia Suter   Bülach, Switzerland, 1967
lives and works in Amsterdam, Netherlands

1   *Nightshift*, **2019**
     Installation, variable dimensions
     Newspaper, wool blankets
     Production: Le Crédac, with the support of
     Mondriaan Fund

Batia Suter's installations of collected images are often the result of an astute intuition about their possible context. She is as sensitive to the *genius loci* as to the *zeitgeist*.

The industrial past of the Manufacture des Œillets (a former metal eyelet factory) that is now home to the Crédac reminded Suter of her grandfather who worked the night shift in a factory. The title of her installation *Nightshift* references the organization of uninterrupted labor by crews who take over from each other at the same jobs every eight hours around the clock. This productivist logic is based on an economy of attention dictated by an ideology of performance in which the worker's concentration, stupefied by the assembly line rhythm, is reduced to paying attention.

Suter produced a newspaper for the occasion and arrayed its pages in rows on the floor. They carry black and white reproductions of color pictures taken from magazines dating from the heyday of the illustrated press such as *Life*, *Paris Match* and *Panorama*. This iconophile artist knows how to identify what still grabs us in the stream of images surrounding us. Noting the recurrence of images of water, she put together a heterogeneous compilation ranging from joyous ablutions to tragic shipwrecks, carefree canoeing to fleets of warships, seasonal floods to monstrous rogue waves. This profusion is full of clichés—nautical, touristic and exotic—revealing the geopolitics of rivers and seas and the invisible borders dividing up transit zones and shipping lanes, making migration a perilous venture.

The square-folded used wool blankets set on the checkerboard of newspaper pages materialize this vulnerability. Items used by rescue teams, they come from a world of the déclassé and displaced. Their red color suggests urgency and first aid, and also recalls Ivry-sur-Seine's political heritage under many decades of French Communist Party city governments. *Nightshift* evokes our need for comfort, no matter how minimal.

Finally, in reactivating this print format, her piece refers to a medium that was once people's main source of information (and means of paying attention to the world) and has steadily disappeared in the digital age. The newspaper *Le Monde* was printed in Ivry starting in 1989. But in 2015, the publication's management announced its decision to "prepare to shut down the in-house print shop in order to concentrate [their] investments on editorial innovation and digital development."

Fouad Bouchoucha   Marseille, 1981
lives and works in Marseille, France

2 a   *Deux-points*, **2018**
2 b   *Parenthèse*, **2018**
2 c   *Point-virgule*, **2015-2018**
       Rotring, black ink, 110 × 75 cm
       Courtesy galleries Yoko Uhoda, Liège,
       Belgique/Éric Dupont, Paris

Fouad Bouchoucha likes to test out paradoxes that subvert cutting edge technologies, sometimes sabotaged by their own need for speed, power and performance. For example, by immobilizing a racing car: for *Goodbye horses* (2011), he had an aerodynamic—but totally translucent—shell made for the windshield of a Bugatti Veyron so that it could hit 400 kilometers an hour, a speed at which its tires would soon burst. That's how Bouchoucha pushes fanatical logics to the point of absurdity so as to test their breaking point or the limits at which they collapse or implode.

Bouchoucha learned technical drawing at a school for industrial product conception and design before veering off to study art. What he retains from these early studies is a fascination with a system of graphic standardization considered a kind of industrial Esperanto. Technical drawing constitutes a codified, exact and transparent language meant to eliminate any ambiguity in what the designer communicates to the manufacturer. "When the world agrees" is the slogan and goal of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) whose conventions cover outlines, schematics and measurement drawings. In equal parts fascinated by the utopian idea of a universal visual code and skeptical about the possibility of eliminating divergent interpretations, this artist commissioned both an old-fashioned craft workshop in Morocco and a French industrial design company to produce a Moroccan decorative cut-out earthenware tile from the same design (*La maîtresse et son esclave* [The Mistress and Her Slave], 2013). Bouchoucha is out to find the persistence of particularities amid a growing uniformization.

While first traced by a computer, *Point-virgule* (Semicolon), *Deux-points* (Colon) and *Parenthèse* (Parentheses) were finally redrawn freehand. These punctuation marks that Bouchoucha transformed into architectural drawings represent linguistic conventions in transition. Usually they regulate the syntax and prosody of a sentence by indicating logical articulations, breathing points and silences that convey style and meaning, nuance and modulation. Some, like the semicolon, which functions as something between a period and a comma, seem to have fallen into disuse. Yet these three punctuation marks have found a new life here as part of an effective, accelerated and shorthand communications stream. Assembled in a certain order, they seem to be smiley (or frowning) faces, visually encapsulating the meaning they bring together in texts.

Antoni Muntadas   Barcelona, Spain, 1942
lives and works in New York, USA

3   *Slogans*, 1987
       Digital U-Matic NTSC videotape, 4/3,
       color, sound; 9 min 30 s
       Acquisition in 1990 ; Inv. : AM 1990-256
       Centre Pompidou, Paris ; Musée national d'art
       moderne / Centre de création industrielle

"If you observe something for a long time, you can start to become critical." (Antoni Muntadas)

Residing in New York since 1971, Antoni Muntadas is an experienced traveler and perceptive observer of the media, from the most mainstream advertising to the most experimental projects he himself initiated in various localities (*Cadaqués-Canal Local*, 1974). With his *Slogans* series he invites us to read between the lines in advertisements whose subliminal commands can be formidably effective. But whereas advertising puts our "available brain time" at the service of consumer society, this artist gives it his analytic attention, deconstructing its mechanisms to the point of absurdity.

 The version of *Slogans* presented here (there are also French and Spanish-language versions) makes use of advertising inserts from mid-1980s North American newspapers and magazines. Muntadas digitized excerpts to make a video slide show. He reframed these fragments and transposed them from print to monitor. Thus decontextualized we see them differently, and the bright screen images take on a new meaning. Shot by shot the video zooms in on a key word in each slogan. Gradually the text collapses, becoming incomprehensible as words meant to arouse our desires start to stutter: pleasure, dream, magic, adventure, intrigue, success... One of the slogans reveals its own poverty (*Talk is cheap*), while another tells us to *Choose your weapon*. Perhaps this is a reference to the media as a weapon, going back to the etymological origin of the word "slogan" (once meaning a Scottish Highland war cry) to refer to the offensive strategies of advertisers vying for audience share. Then the camera zooms further in to reveal the image's structure, revealing a geometric abstraction mosaic as the pixilation erodes all definition.

 Slogans parodies the happy-talk TV vocabulary used for commercials that advertize nothing but themselves. The Ray Conniff soundtrack is just Muzak, the light background music used in public places to drown out unwelcome noises, or to soothe calling customers put on hold, tunes composed for people who are distracted, with snappy melodies appropriate for drifting attention. The last shot in this video, featuring the word *Dream*, alludes to the hypnagogic state that fascinated Raymond Hains, the transitional moment between wakefulness and sleep where our slipping attention allows our mind to wander and make new connections.

Daniel Steegman Mangrané Barcelona, Spain, 1977
lives and works in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

4 a   *Holograma*, 2013
4 b   *Holograma 2 (estrutura)*, 2013
4 c   *Holograma 6 (estrutura com bicho)*, 2013
4 d   *Holograma 4 (galho com bicho)*, 2013
       Holograms ; ca. 26 × 20 cm
       Courtesy of the artist

"If subjects and objects no longer exist, then neither do viewers of art and artworks; all that's left are relational processes and mutual transformations. Combinations of mutually-influencing agents." (Daniel Steegmann Mangrané)

Daniel Steegmann Mangrané's childhood ambition was to become a biologist, entomologist or botanist. In 2004 he moved to Rio de Janeiro, not far from the Brazilin tropical forest he was to film repeatedly. His *16mm* is comprised of a long tracking shot filmed with a camera suspended on a cable. It begins by plunging straight into the teeming jungle. Another film, a herky-jerky montage with a jump cut every time a *Teque-teque* bird sings, offers a staccato view of this environment. In *Spiral Forest*, a fixed but incessantly rotating camera scans the thick vegetation in all directions. These off-kilter perceptions reveal decentered perspectives, non-human points of view that could be that of an animal, animist or pantheist. Inspired by the anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro's theory of indigenous perspectivism, Mangrané subverts the properties usually attributed to different categories of beings.

 An unexpected encounter with a leaf-bug in 2008 proved to be decisive. Long and thin as a stick, as stationary as a plant, this mimetic species is able to blend into its surroundings so well that it seems to disappear. These kings of camouflage also known as phasmids (from the Greek word for phantom) haunt many of Mangrané's videos. A living paradox, they embody the contradictions he seeks to resolve, such as animate versus inanimate, non-human and human, organic and geometric, chaos and order, and, more generally, nature and culture.

 Highly attentive to the way images are constructed, Steegmann Mangrané navigates from analog to digital so as to better plumb the modalities of inscription in the real. In addition to capturing the forest on film, he also scanned it digitally and loaded the data into a virtual reality helmet, simulating an immersion in this environment on the brink of collapse (*Phantom*, 2015). Holography, a word meaning "whole writing," pursues the utopian ambition of a "definitive photography" able to record a scene in three dimensions thanks to the interference of two laser beams. He has made a series of holograms that require the viewer to be simultaneously patient and mobile (interactive) so as to be able to make out the phasmids covering the branches, to embrace their strategy of clandestinity and discretion, not sacrificing the ground for the figure, nor the background for the foreground. In short, to become attentive to the context and the milieu, the environment and not just the signal.

Laurence Cathala   Châtenay-Malabry, 1981
lives and works in Lyon, France

5   *La Troisième Version*, 2019
Text printed on paper and wallpasted,
260 × 200 cm; wall intervention (annotations,
drawings, collages), variable dimensions.
Courtesy of the artist. Production: Le Crédac

Laurence Cathala re-scales book pages to wall size,
giving the narrative the proportions of a fresco.

La Troisième Version assembles a number of texts whose
graphic diversity—handwritten notes and typeset
pages—signals their varied character and suggests
multiple authors from different epochs. In the middle is
a double-page spread from an apparently a dystopian
novel. Amid a raging environmental storm an anonymous
narrator describes the end of writing and the disap-
pearance of books and their replacement by an orality
brought to a halt by periods of muteness. This storyline
recalls Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* where the des-
truction of books sparks a clandestine resistance move-
ment by "book people" each assigned to memorize a par-
ticular tome. The idea of a return to orality hastened by
technological changes also evokes Marshall McLuhan's
The Gutenberg Galaxy, a book that posited, in 1962, that
the triumph of television would annihilate printed matter.
As it so happens, even Gutenberg's invention of movable
type during the Renaissance was initially unwelcome
because of concerns about the control and validation of
ideas once this technology made them easier to reproduce
and circulate. While, as it turns out, television did not kill
books, the question is once again posed by the emergence
of digitized information and the Internet.

The central fictional text is surrounded by notes
scribbled in the margins and on Post-its, commentaries
said to have been written by a reader interpreting it
in the manner of a hermeneutics of holy scriptures and
prophecies, and whose interrogations, hypotheses and
educated guesses indicate doubts about past civilizations.
Has the disappearance of printed materials generated
amnesia, lacunae in the transmission of knowledge?
La Troisième Version is a follow-up to *La Première
Version* and *La Seconde Version*, two texts that are also
annotated and detached from their book-object form so as
to float on the surface of a wall. Stripped of punctuation,
the central text seems to have been orally dictated and
transcribed. Interspersed slashes function like bars in a
musical score, indicating a silent reader's subconscious
mental pauses. The narrative is about a desire to regain
one's voice and suggests the possibility of an organized
resistance to what could be called our programmed civili-
zation.

La Première Version, *La Seconde Version* and
La Troisième Version are also on view in rgx
côté jardin.

Nicolás Lamas   Lima, Peru, 1980
lives and works in Brussels, Belgium

6   *Partial view*, 2016
Stone, glass, plastic ; dimensions variable
Courtesy Meessen De Clercq, Bruxelles
7   *Philippe (Blind gestures)*, 2014
Inkjet printing on glossy paper ; 150 × 113 cm
Collection Marie-Aline Prat, Paris
8   *Contact*, 2015
Ammonite and iPad
Collection Laurent Fiévet, Paris

A voodoo fetish lying on a flat screen; turquoise anti-
freeze poured into the hollow of a turtle shell; a Venus
bust sitting on a photocopy machine. Nicolás Lamas aligns
dissonant objects, producing improbable and unsettling
assemblages. What connects these fetishes, skeletons,
artifacts, chemical products and digital technologies?
Continents, reigns, cultures and sometimes millennia
separate them. The ammonite and the touchscreen tablet
brought together for *Contact* seem utterly unrelated. The
former, a fossilized mollusk from the Mesozoic era, is tes-
tament to deep time whose immensity is full of evolutions
and extinctions. The latter, the kind of digital interface
that became popular over the last decade, is fated to be
quickly superseded due to the logic of overproduction
and accelerated programmed obsolescence.

Nevertheless the animal and the device are both
fossils to some extent, in the sense of the word's Latin
root, *fossilis*, meaning, "that which is taken from the
earth." There may not seem to be anything natural about
digital objects, but the raw materials they are made of
come from under the ground, at the cost of toxic pro-
cesses: gold, silver, aluminum, copper, tin, palladium,
lithium, silicon, carbon, rare metals and earths, etc.
Concerned about this often ignored materiality, in the
1990s Lamas began to develop a theoretical approach
to probe the history of past technologies and their raw
materials, an archeology of medias.

When a touchscreen is not turned on to become
a window on the world, it's a black box, an impenetrable
reflective surface. The ambivalence of the term "digital"
is helpful in understanding how Lamas sees the digital
world, as one of physical gestures. Derived from the
Latin *digitalis*, the word at first designated that which is
related to the finger or about that size. The ancient term
digit came to mean numbers up to nine, those than can be
counted on your fingers, a basic act of numeration that
prefigured the infinite possibilities of the digital world.
The photos in the *Blind Gestures* series show the tra-
jectories of our fingerprints smeared onto the surface of
darkened touchscreens, testament to our fleeting interests
lured by links and the interactivity of navigation. Almost
Abstract Expressionist in their gesturality, these images
traces our searches without recording their objectives, a
kind of blackout that questions our access to knowledge
and information, and our ability to integrate and memo-
rize content always available online.

Raymond Hains Saint-Brieuc, 1926 - Paris, 2005

9 a *L'amant vert, tag,* **1999**
9 b *Les épîtres de l'amant vert,* **1999**
9 c *L'Amant vert, Magritte d'Autriche et Marguerite d'Autruche,* **1999**
Macintoshage, silver print based on digital photo ; 120 × 150 cm
Private collection / Courtesy Galerie de France, Paris

On the occasion of a retrospective Catherine David curated at the Centre Pompidou in 1992, she described the artist and photographer like this: "Raymond Hains is above all a gaze, a way of looking through his favorite instrument, a camera. His favorite museum is the streets of Paris, where he is undoubtedly one of the last perambulators still worthy of Walter Benjamin and the Surrealists." In the late 1940s, Hains and Jacques Villeglé began to take down and collect political posters that had been torn and scratched by anonymous passers-by. Used as is, they express a collective subconscious as well as a political moment (*La France déchirée* [France Torn Apart], 1949-1961). This kind of sampling was to remain integral to the work of this artist based on selected excerpts from the urban environment (posters and fences) and his reading (official forms and truisms).

His first *Macintoshages* made in the late 1990s transposed these fragments into digital form, gathering them into primitive screen captures juxtaposed and superimposed with the successive opening of screen windows. With the help of younger colleagues better versed in the technology, most notably George Dupin, Hains constructed and consulted his own photographic database. The fortuitous encounters produced by these consultations, at first made with the intention of producing a slide show, enthralled him immensely, as did the interfaces of those early Macs and their loading errors. He decided to freeze and enlarge these mosaics.

These highly enigmatic puzzles were constructed by associating ideas and homonyms, a kind of surfing that was to become typical of Internet searches. The series *l'Épître de l'amant vert* (The Epistle of the Green Lover) is based on a sixteenth-century poem of that name by Jean Lemaire de Belges (Hains is a voracious reader) that imagines verses composed by a (green) parrot to console his recently widowed mistress, Princess Marguerite of Austria. In a play on the poet's Belgian origins, Marguerite becomes the painter Magritte, while the bird, trained to repeat, does so repeatedly. This allows Hains to generate multilayered mythologies in his annotated captions and weave his own "personal Web."

Suzanne Treister London, Royaume-Uni, 1958
lives and works in London

10 a *HFT The Gardener/Video,* **2014-2015**
HD video ; 11 min 55 sec
10 b *HFT The Gardener/Diagram, The holographic dimensions of consciousness,* **2014-2015**
Wall drawing based on the original drawing
10 c *HFT The Gardener/Botanical Prints,* **2014-2015**
12 digital prints;
42 × 29,7 cm
Collection 49 NORD 6 EST - Frac Lorraine
All works: Courtesy de l'artiste, Annely Juda Fine Art, London and P.P.O.W., New York

During the 1980s Suzanne Treister made strange paintings simulating video game interfaces. In 1991 she bought an Amiga console and raster drawing software. She used her computer to sketch labyrinthine surrealist worlds, then photographed her screen to document them, creating an archive throwing doubt on the real existence of such games. Thus she was playing with the ambiguity between reality and fiction, and as if to make it even more confusing, on her fake backdrops questions were posed to players, like, for instance, "Are you dreaming?" In 1995, she designed her first Web site named *Would you recognise a virtual paradise?*, offering an absurd tour of the Neuschwanstein castle that serves as the Disney logo. Treister's work unfolds a multitude of parallel worlds where fictional and real figures meet, outlining strange systems of thought—conspiracy theories, and millenarian and Kabalistic casts of mind—to decrypt the real.

Treister creates alter egos. One such persona is named Rosalind Brodsky, a virtual reality and time travel fan. Another is Hillel Fischer Traumberg, the protagonist of an intricate story. His initials, HFT, also signify High Frequency Trading, exactly what he does for a living in London's City, where he executes algorithm-assisted financial transactions. Treister imagines her character's hilarious slide into madness. Hallucinating as figures flash by his screen, he interprets the world on the basis of their supposed correspondence with esoterically obtained numbers. Traumberg first envisages injecting the chemical composition of the drugs he is consuming into his algorithmic codes, and then derives the numerical equivalents of psychotropic plants obtained by the Kabalistic method of gematria. The mad trader tries to figure out how the numerical positions of exchange-listed companies correspond to numbers calculated from the names of the psychoactive plants he grows. He draws up botanical illustration plates like an Ernst Haeckel on acid. His system of thought requires modes of representation, and so Traumberg makes diagrams and watercolors of his visions. After first taking up gardening, he becomes a drugged-out artist inspired by Adolf Wölfli. The film summarizes this psychedelic fable where the digital world acts like a hallucinogenic.

Susan Hiller Tallahassee, USA, 1940 – 2019, London

11 *Dream Screens*, **1996**
Interactive audiovisual work for the Internet, commissioned by the Dia Foundation, New York. Courtesy of the artist and Lisson Gallery / Collection Espace multimédia Gantner, Département du Territoire de Belfort

"The social state, like the hypnotic state, is simply a kind of a dream, a dream of control and a dream in action. Having no ideas other than those suggested to you and believing that they arose spontaneously—that is the kind of illusion that characterizes sleepwalkers and society members." (Gabriel Tarde, *Les lois de l'imitation* [1890], second edition, 1895, Paris, Kimé, 1993, p. 100.)

Starting in the early 1970s Susan Hiller explored the esoteric hopes that many technologies have inspired. Like a paranormal archeologist of the media, her work revisits the psychic powers with which certain devices are supposedly endowed—the ability of the camera to capture ghosts and auras, the tape recorder to register voices from beyond and television to capture images of ghosts. Without wanting to pass judgment on the dubious veracity of these phenomena, Hiller sought to grasp these beliefs and the desires they express.

Dreams were a central subject for her. To them she devoted numerous publications, lectures and a group show, as well as some of her own works. In 1974 she invited a few people to sleep outdoors for several nights in an English meadow known for its "fairy circles." Afterward, she had them diagram their dreams. When these drawings were compared, they revealed coincidences that suggested a collective enchantment (*Dream Mapping*). In 1996, she asked an enlarged community to dream together on another site, the Internet. *Dream Screens* is a Web page conceived as a blank projection screen. The user chooses one of six languages in which a female voice will recount snatches of dreams taken from movies, novels and essays whose titles contain the word "dream." Three signals accompany these fragments: a repeated Morse code message (*I'm dreaming, I'm dreaming*), the radio wave emission of a pulsar and the beating of a human heart. At the same time, the user can click anywhere on the screen to a blindly activate one of many colors distributed according to an invisible structure in the (symbolic) shape of a spider web.

A hypnosis session making use of the magnetism of the screen, this navigation produces a state similar to daydreams, meditation or the flickering attention propitious for the emergence of visions. Like the stroboscopic effect of Brion Gysin's legendary *Dreamachine* (1958), *Dream Screens* works on both the body and consciousness, enchanting and soothing. Our numbed mind becomes more porous and easy to influence. If was clear to Hiller that movie and television images have definitively contaminated our dreams, then what about the digital world? Will it be possible, one day, to electronically record dreams, and maybe even program them?

Daria Martin San Francisco, USA, 1973
lives and works in London, UK

12 *Soft Materials*, **2004**
16mm film, color, sound ; 10 min 30 s
Courtesy of the artist and gallery
Maureen Paley, Londres
Collection KADIST

A film shot in a Zurich artificial intelligence research lab, *Soft Materials* is a suite of sequences recording the dance-like interactions between two live performers (a male dancer and a female actor) and two robots. All are unclothed—the people and the machines have been stripped of their protective coverings as they improvise and imitate each other's movements, a spontaneous choreography infused with curiosity and sensuality. Who is leading whom? Moving by turns, the partners seem to guide and mimic each other as they engage in a playful learning process. The robots are lo-tech and deliberately look as if they were put together in someone's garage. In fact, they are the fruit of research into embodied artificial intelligence, a bio-inspired approach aimed at developing robots capable of learned behavior through interaction with their physical environment, and thus advancing and evolving rather than being programmed in a purely rational and premeditated manner.

Instead of the sometimes-scary imagery usually associated with progress in the field of artificial intelligence, Martin upends our expectations regarding the relationship between human and robotic intelligence. Her automatons are feeling, clumsy beings, and when we see them in action, it's sometimes hard not to project zoomorphic or anthropomorphic behavioral traits onto them, or recall the enchantment of little children who test, touch and bang into things. Martin's receptive and vulnerable work exalts the human dimension driving mechanical engineering.

As in most of her films, the performers are silent. They interact solely in the realm of mutually imitated body language. The soundtrack to which the protagonists move (composed with the aid of Biosonics software developed by the Zurich lab) serves to isolate them in their own fantasy world, distanced from the viewer. Her films are shot and projected in 16mm, imparting an anachronistic materiality to the cutting-edge technology, endowing the human and robotic bodies with a living skin, breath and presence.

13   rg^x *côté jardin*

rgx is the tenth *royal garden*, a series of exhibitions that came before and will survive *des attentions* (some attentions) show of which it is a kind of independent matrix—pensive and talkative. Doing exercises *côté jardin* (garden side—which also means stage right in French) means experimenting with different reading exercises, inspired both by Renaissance bookwheels and machine analysis of digitized content: to read all the meanings, in every direction). to take a walk *côté jardin* means going to meet possible ghosts and reincarnations of works presented in the exhibition *des attentions*, here transposed into step by step evocations. available for consultation at any time, day or night, rgx disenchants and reveals hidden associations stirred up by an editorial team disguised as the tenth gradiva rose: laurence cathala (artist), brice domingues & catherine guiral (officeabc, graphic designers and curators), vincent maillard (developer) and hélène meisel (curator).

rgx is an exhibition conceived at the invitation of the centre d'art contemporain d'ivry—le crédac. this venture is in turn part of the royal garden project launched by claire le restif and mathias schweizer. rgx is set in ibm plex, a family of typefaces designed in 2016-17 by mike abbink in collaboration with the bold monday foundry. *royal garden* website has been optimized for the Chrome and Firefox platforms.

Author's note: we imagine notes that reference other notes, evocative, textual and visual notes regarding the artworks on view. we imagine whole pathways of associations, evocations that are derived and deriving. we imagine a garden where there lives a one-armed bandit who suggests possible pathways. we imagine these pathways as associated with a subverted and poetic botanical terminology in which the names of flowers also name other things. we imagine a *royal garden*, the tenth by that name, where roses would grow, and where, step by step, gradiva would walk. we imagine mapping her steps and other lovely walks, with our thanks to claire le restif, jean-denis frater, julia leclerc, sébastien martins, léna patier and mathieu pitkevicht ; fouad bouchoucha, laurence cathala, raymond hains, susan hiller, nicolás lamas, daria martin, antoni muntadas, daniel steegmann mangrané, batia suter and suzanne treister ; françois aubart, thierry chancogne, alexis chrun, george dupin and julien prévieux.

www.credac.fr/rg10

rg^x   is a big band
rg^x   is a memory palace
rg^x   is a typographic garden
rg^x   is a redaing machine
rg^x   is a cyclo
rg^x   is a player
rg^x   is a fortune teller
rg^x   is a cyclothymiac
rg^x   is a one-armed bandit
rg^x   reads, watches and listens to images, texts and sounds
rg^x   links vertically and horizontally
rg^x   knows claude simon
rg^x   reads the *whole earth catalog*
rg^x   is a flow marked by pauses, stases and echoes
rg^x   plays disco
rg^x   reads cards
rg^x   knits together and unravels contents that link affinities
rg^x   is a *css to print* flow

INTRODUCTION

Claire Le Restif

Ten years ago we invented *Royal Garden*, a curatorial project living online on the Crédac website. We considered expanding it to formats other than exhibitions so that we could explore still virgin territory. To mark our first decade we wanted to launch a project connecting the two formats, online and on the walls.

We invited Brice Domingues, Catherine Guiral and Hélène Meisel to curate this anniversary. Their response is fascinating. Through art they interrogate an extremely important economic and educational issue: attention, a disposition that is exercised, educated and contended for. Art is a privileged locus for the exercise of paying attention to the contexts, materials, forms, relations and the world proffered to the viewer.

INTENTION

Brice Domingues, Catherine Guiral, Hélène Meisel

Among the bustling crowds in some Renaissance paintings, peripheral figures point their index finger toward the scene's pulsating heart, as if to intercept and guide our wayward gaze. First drawn in the margins of manuscripts and then adopted as a typographic convention, a small hand with an outstretched index finger (a manicule or digit) came to serve as a kind of annotation to signal a text's key passages to hurried or distracted readers. Then, increasingly an instruction, this hand became pure signage: an arrow, blinking light and advertizing injunction. The little hand became legion, calling attention to a myriad of signals emitted by the press, radio, photography, movies and television.

Long before our media environment evolved into a digital cosmos, Walter Benjamin noted the generalization of "reception in distraction," indicating "major perceptual shifts." On the Web, we still have the icon of a little hand, now wearing a white glove, to highlight hovering hyperlinks that can be activated by a click, while our fingers on a touchscreen make searches that may turn out to be inspired or dead-ends. Multiple ruts, whether captive or emancipated, mark the pathways along which we move, driven by self-interest, curiosity, astonishment and associative delirium.

In the spirit of an "ecology of attention" defined by Yves Citton in 2014, the exhibition *des attentions* asks itself: "What do we let traverse us?" in our digital environment? The ten artists brought together for this show express a fluctuating, wandering attention, freed of both technological determinism and monetizable standardization. Instead of a permanent state of alert demanding instantaneous receptivity and proactivity, they sketch out a furtive, variable vigilance, simultaneously dreamy and rebellious, deaf to siren songs but attentive to context, the people around us and our environment. Far from the performance imperatives dictated by the logic of quantification, their work embraces an "emancipating distraction," a floating attention that can focus by itself.

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