

Rendez-vous

Thursday 17 October 2013
from noon to 2 PM

Crédacollation

Guided tour with Michel Aubry and the exhibition's curator, Claire Le Restif. A convivial moment for sharing thoughts and reactions with others, the visit will be followed by lunch at the art center.

Participation: 6 € / Members: 3 €

Booking required before October 15:

+33(0)1 49 60 25 06 / contact@credac.fr

October - December

Films program at cinéma Le Luxy

This fall, the cinema Le Luxy in Ivry, in complicity with Michel Aubry, offers a program of films in resonance with the exhibition.

See www.luxy.ivry94.fr & www.credac.fr

Wednesday 23 October
& Sunday 15 December 2013
from 3:30 to 5 PM

Studio-Snacks

During these "workshop-afternoon treats," children from 6 to 12 years old become docents at the art center and lead their families on a tour through the show. Young and old are then invited to enjoy a workshop inspired by the work of Michel Aubry, then followed by an afternoon snack.

Free admission. Booking required:

+33(0)1 49 60 25 06 / contact@credac.fr

Thursday 24 October at 3:30 PM
Art-Tea

A guided visit of Michel Aubry's exhibition with Crédac's docents followed by teatime. In collaboration with the Retirees Service of the city of Ivry-sur-Seine.

Participation: 3 €. Booking required:

+33(0)1 49 60 25 06 / contact@credac.fr

Saturday 30 November 2013 at 4 PM
Meet the artist

Michel Aubry / Hélène Meisel

Built up on many references to avant-garde, the work of Michel Aubry might seem completely devoted to a literal, scholarly and serious historical reenactment. The artist presents in reality the history in a range of circus acts, costumes, sceneries and recurring musical accompaniments. Michel Aubry and Hélène Meisel will discuss all these stagings, sometimes close to cabaret and circus, addressing in particular the

subversive clown figure, present in the exhibition through the reconstitution of the Dressing room of the Fratellini brothers.

Free admission. Booking required:

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MARD!

Mard! is an annual cycle of 5 talks about contemporary art. For this 7th season, Crédac and the library of Ivry invite Elvan Zabunyan, Art historian specialist of American art since the 1960's and whose work focuses in particular on the relationship between art history and postcolonial theories.

Season 2013-14 :

An Other History

Thinking contemporary art through the memory of slavery

Especially conceived by Elvan Zabunyan, this cycle initiates a survey of the unrecognized links between the history of contemporary art, the colonial context and the legacy of slavery in the United States and in the Caribbean. Through five case studies, from 1848 to the present, she will attempt to expand the approach of both art and history through the cultural and political issues that these figures refer to.

Mard! 1/5

Tuesday 8 October 2013 at 7 PM

Frederick Douglass,

Representation of a key figure

Frederick Douglass (v.1818-1895) is one of the most prominent American personalities of the nineteenth century. In 1845, after he escaped from slavery in 1839, is published the first volume of his autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*. This is the first time a former slave publishes such a book. Writer, politician, US Minister and general consul in Haiti (1889-1891), Douglass, aware of the role played by photography, fully managed his own image. His famous portraits are appropriated by contemporary artists as milestones of the dignity of Black art.

Mard! 2/5

Tuesday 10 December 2013 at 7 PM

David Hammons,

On the trail of a urban partition

David Hammons (born in 1943 in Springfield, Illinois) is today the most internationally acclaimed African American artist. Through a unique

practice that combines the art of assemblage, popular culture, jazz music, memory of slavery and black identity, he has built an artistic status that allows him to remain elusive while having an invaluable rating on the art market. Indeed, his works are essential to the history of contemporary art and major influences for several generations of artists since the 1970's.

»-» The **Mard!** talks are held at the **Multimedia Center of Ivry** - The Antonin Artaud Auditorium 152, avenue Danielle Casanova - Ivry-sur-Seine Metro: the 7 line, Mairie d'Ivry (50 m from the station)

Talks run 90 min. Free admission.

For the Mard! evening events, exhibitions at Crédac remain open until 6:45 PM.



Centre d'art contemporain d'Ivry - le Crédac

La Manufacture des Cèllets

25-29 rue Raspail

94200 Ivry-sur-Seine, FR

Infos / bookings:

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www.credac.fr

Open every day (except Mondays)

from 2 to 6 PM, weekends from 2 to 7 PM

— free admission

Metro: 7 line, Mairie d'Ivry
(20 mn from Châtelet)

Member of Tran and DCA networks, Crédac enjoys the generous support of the City of Ivry-sur-Seine, the Regional Direction of Cultural Affairs of Île-de-France (the Ministry of Culture and Communications), the General Council of Val-de-Marne and the Regional Council of Île-de-France.

Our Partner to the opening event:

Guru

Media partners:

LeJournal des Arts

cura.

Michel Aubry — The Searchers From 20 September to 15 December 2013

Michel Aubry (born in 1959, lives and works in Paris) has carried out a programmatic body of work for some twenty years now. It has him often interpreting objects or earlier artworks that are emblematic of modernity but using a formal idiom that springs from different handicrafts (including instrument and cabinet making, costume design and upholstery). The process of crafting the object is central to his art and is governed by a production protocol that subverts the relationship between the original and the copy.

For his show at Crédac, Aubry has made reinterpretations of temporary architectures and a number of furniture prototypes that were presented by the Soviet Union at the 1925 International Exposition of Modern Industrial and Decorative Arts in Paris. The pieces include Alexander Rodchenko's Workers' Club, Konstantin Melnikov's kiosk and the USSR Pavilion. The Pavilion is in fact the subject of a brand new piece by the artist.

Paris, 1925. Alexander Rodchenko was staying in the French capital to oversee the installation of the USSR's show at the Grand Palais along with his Workers' Club and several kiosks for which he had designed the color. With its simple, economical and functional forms and materials, Melnikov's style of building design was then the architectural materialization of the Revolution's new aesthetic, the ideological tool of a renewed relationship to objects and knowledge.

In the Foreign Galleries, Rodtchenko showed his Workers' Club, an ensemble of furniture for reading, playing games and socializing that was meant to be reproduced throughout the country, the reflection of a utopian idea of integrating all the arts in daily life and contributing to human progress. Melnikov's kiosks, which featured popular artisanal products, were exhibited in one of the exposition's gardens.

Now lost, these Russian Constructivist masterpieces are still rather obscure in terms of documentation even today. Besides the rare photographs and layouts that have come down to us, Rodchenko's letters to his wife, Varvara Stepanova, form a major source of information for Aubry with respect to the creative context of these pieces. The collection of their correspondence also makes up the plot of a fictional film biography (*Rodtchenko à Paris, 2003-2013*). The scenes of this biography have been progressively filmed one Aubry show at a time.

Aubry has been tirelessly documenting the production conditions of these avant-garde projects in order to put them into practice in a different context. Thus, starting in the late 1980s, the artist set up a system of equivalences between the Western musical scale and spatial measures, drawing his inspiration from a family of Sardinian wind instruments known as launeddas. These traditional instruments are constructed from reeds, with each stem length determining the note of course, the longest ones producing the deepest notes while the shortest ones emit the highest.

Once the artist had worked out a *Table de conversion (Conversion Chart, 1992)* between the musical pitches (low and high) and metric lengths, it was then possible to find for each sound composition "a geometrical equivalent in space, and vice versa." This system, which governs nearly the whole of his sculptural output, is a "contamination" protocol, both arbitrary and ironic, of the form and functions of the objects he takes for his models.

Aubry uses reeds as both measuring instruments and art materials, whether immediately visible or incorporated in the very structure of his sculptures. Transformed into potential musical instruments (and fitted out with the true reeds of standard reed instruments - the artist's reeds can indeed vibrate then though this is never done), the original objects change status yet remain "truer than nature."

With his *Mise en Musique du Club Ouvrier de Rodtchenko (Putting Rodtchenko's Workers' Club to Music, 1925-2003)*, for example, the club's eight reading chairs, originally all the same, have been resized to fit the growing lengths of the reeds making up a mounting scale, as if subjected to a "forced musicalization" that "contaminates the historical truth of the reconstruction." Conversely, for *Mise en Musique du Kiosque de Melnikov (Putting*

Melnikov's Kiosk to Music, 1925-2009), the artist decided to abide by the object's original dimensions at the expense of the musical reference.

The doubts and unforeseen incidents that arise during production interest Aubry in that, like a glove turned inside out, they reveal something about the technical skill and craftsmanship involved in the making of the piece. Unlike the profession of the transcriber or counterfeiter, who strive to reproduce as closely as possible the final form of something, for Aubry it's a matter of putting situations into practice in an approach that is akin to experimental science. He next sought to "put to music" Vladimir Tatlin's *Monument to the Third International*, including the tinkering and makeshift solutions that went into it, and thus display its character as a project, rather than the flawless aestheticizing object that is reproduced in museums at times.

Similarly, the Soviet Pavilion, originally designed by Melnikov as a metal structure, eventually had to be built in wood, an invisible though ideologically capital difference, and a sign that the avant-garde was indeed confronted with the economic reality of the time. At Crédac, Aubry is showing his 1:10 scale replica, transformed into a piece of sculpture made of reed and wood. The reconstruction is both an active memory and an experience.

Finally, *The Fratellini's Dressing Room (La Loge des Fratellini, 2005)*, which Rodchenko visited while he was in Paris, has been recreated at Crédac. The lair of the three famous brothers and clowns was a fascinating place, a kind of cabinet of curiosities for the theater world; turned into a traveling exhibition space in Aubry's work, it is also a tool accompanying the artist's films, in anticipation of the day when those films will be shot.

While it is indeed a question of "experiencing [the production process] anew," Aubry's art is also about rethinking the legacy of these works through the act of remaking them. Indeed, while they were once imagined as operating in social reality and have since been "smoothed over" by art history to become icons, out of synch with their social and economic context, the question remains: what status do these historical works of art enjoy at present?

By upending the problem of the "loss of the model," a fundamental question in

sculpture, Aubry's strategies of re-production imply an ontological shift of the works vis-à-vis their originals. Moving from the field of decorative arts to that of the plastic arts, Aubry's pieces are made independent; becoming nonreproducible and nonfunctional, they acquire a social, political and aesthetic reach that is reactivated in terms of a renewed context. Foreign to all ideological models and all generic forms, Aubry's approach involves the notions of uniqueness, reversibility and the constant shifting of form. Like Rodchenko and Melnikov, Aubry strikes us as a searcher, pursuing an ever-elusive object, just like the heroes of *The Searchers*, the title of John Ford's famous 1956 film which has been borrowed here for the name of the present show.

By drawing on the knowledge and skills of the historian, musicologist and craftsman, Michel Aubry continues to develop an original system of representing the history of forms, reflecting a contemporary outlook that is enriched by the various layers of its past.

Notes :

¹ See in French: *Alexandre Rodtchenko: l'œuvre complet*, Paris, Philippe Sers, 1986

² Yves Aupetitallot, « Interpréter », in *Michel Aubry*, catalogue d'exposition, Le Quartier, Centre d'art contemporain, Quimper / Centre d'art contemporain de Vassivière en Limousin, 2001, pp.48-62

³ Ibid.

List of exhibits

“All of the objects and furniture are painted in four colors, gray, red, black and white. The color scheme has an organizational significance—it differentiates and emphasizes the use, parts and nature of the objects. At the end of the exhibition in Paris, the Workers' Club was offered in its entirety to the French Communist Party.”

Varvara Stepanova, *The Workers' Club*, 1926.

Room 1

Putting Alexander Rodchenko's Workers' Club to Music, 1925-2003

Collection Fonds Régional d'Art Contemporain des Pays de la Loire

① *Putting the Reading Room of the Workers' Club to Music*, 1925-2000

Painted wood, 8 wind instrument reeds, 106 x 360 cm

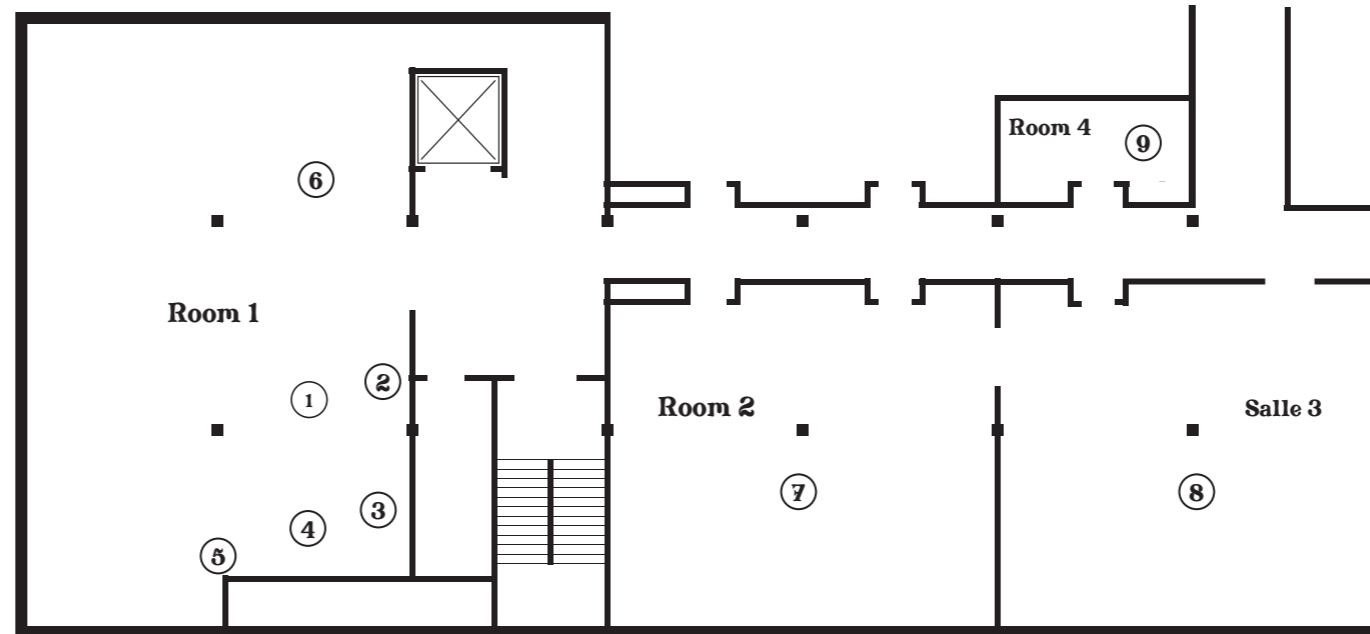
This ensemble, meant for reading and consulting reviews, is made up of two desks and eight chairs of varying sizes, put to music.

A canal measuring 1 cm in diameter has been drilled into each chair back for its entire length. A reed has been fitted to the upper end of the canal, enabling one, by blowing into it, to play the note corresponding to the height of the chair back. The reeds that make it possible to play notes in some of the pieces of furniture in the Workers' Club are of reed harvested in the south of Sardinia. The thin strip cut into the reed tube vibrates when one blows into the reed. The drilled piece of furniture emits a unique bass note like the drone of a bagpipes. The pitch of the note depends directly on the length of the drilled hole.

② *Putting the Bookcase of the Workers' Club to Music*, 1925-2002

Painted wood, 5 reeds, 211 x 225 x 37 cm.

The bookcase holds five shelves of differing widths. At the center of each shelf a small stand painted red determines both the angle at which the shelf will slope and its width. The lower part of the bookcase is meant for storage. The five stands have been drilled through to form a canal that is equipped with a reed. The width of each shelf is equal to the length of the sound that has been engraved in the stand.



③ *Putting the Photograph Display of the Workers' Club to Music*, 1925-2002

Painted wood, photographs by Eric Poitevin, 214,5 x 160 x 31 cm

④ *Putting the Chessboard of the Workers' Club to Music*, 1925-2001

Painted wood, 2 reeds, 115 x 189 x 77 cm

The Chessboard is made up of a trapezoid board, which can be raised and lowered, and two chairs of differing heights. Two sound canals measuring 72 cm and 55 cm have been drilled into the board in the fields facing the two players, which enables one to play the notes la and re.

⑤ *Putting the Poster Display of the Workers' Club to Music*, 1925-2002

Painted wood, drawing by Georg Ettl, 195 x 108,5 x 56 cm

The original poster display may have been designed to show the “Lenin posters.” Although no document describes what was actually shown in this piece of furniture in 1925, its dimensions make clear that it was meant to accommodate very large documents on paper or canvas.

⑥ *Putting the Rostrum of the Workers' Club to Music*, 1925-2003

Painted wood, aluminum, 300 x 400 x 154 cm

Room 2

⑦ *Putting Melnikov's USSR Pavilion to Music*, 1925-2013

Sardinian cane, wood, 250 x 295.5 x 110 cm

The Pavilion designed by Melnikov for the 1925 International Exposition of Modern Industrial and Decorative Arts in Paris was entirely built in wood by Charpentier de Paris companions. This reconstruction is a 1:10-scale model of the skeleton and wood framework of the pavilion, put to music.

Room 3

⑧ *Putting the Melnikov Kiosk to Music*, 1925-2009

Painted wood, Caucasian and Afghan rugs, Caucasian kilim, 325 x 603 x 250 cm

The kiosks designed by Melnikov for the 1925 International Exposition of Modern Industrial and Decorative Arts in Paris featured popular artisanal products of the Soviet republics and provinces.

Room 4

⑨ *The Fratellinis' Dressing Room*, 2005-2013

Costumes: Moholy-Nagy's teacher's uniform at Bauhaus; Alexander Rodchenko's artist's coveralls; Tatlin's new style clothes for the city; Alexander Rodchenko's work jacket; three hussar “attila” jackets; hussar pelisse; the dress of the psychic's assistant (Miss China Select); jacket of the revue's leader; Turkmen kaftan.

Kombi, 1923 - 1939 - 2011

Wool, cotton, leather, labels

The Fratellinis' Dressing Room Table, 2009

Putting Paul Fratellini's Chair to Music, 2009

Chair, tubes made from synthetic materials, 5 reeds

Putting François Fratellini's Chair to Music, 2010

Chair, Sardinian cane, 10 reeds

Putting Albert Fratellini's Chair to Music, 2010

Chair, Sardinian cane, 5 reeds

“23 April 1925, Paris.

... This evening, I went to a circus, there are four in all of Paris. I saw the famous Fratellinis, nothing special, but of course they are artists. It is something else that struck me: the general public's love of them and especially their dressing room, which has an open door at one end through which everyone looks in, and a window through which one can see as well; there are five rooms, and it's a whole museum of objects, photos, drawings, etc.”

Alexander Rodchenko. “A Paris. Lettres à la maison” (1925), *Ecrits complets sur l'art, l'architecture et la révolution*, Paris, Ed. Philippe Sers, 1988.

Biography

Born in 1959, Michel Aubry studied at Strasbourg's School of Decorative Arts. An artist and filmmaker, he lives and works in Paris and teaches at the Advanced School of Fine Arts of Nantes-Metropolis. His recent shows include the 2012 Biennial of Sao Paulo (Brazil); the 2012 Biennial of Rennes; *Décor & installations* in Beauvais, 2012; *Les Animaux animés* at the Museum of Fine Arts in Nantes, 2010; *La Loge fantôme* at Galerie Marion Meyer Contemporain, 2010; *John M Armleder / Michel Aubry* at Parvis in Ibos, 2008-09; *Les Constructeurs éclectiques* at CRAC Sète, 2008; *La Force de l'art* at the Grand Palais, Paris, 2006...

In parallel to the exhibition at Crédac, Michel Aubry's work is featured in the exhibition **Décorum. Tapis et tapisseries d'artistes** at the Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris (from October 11, 2013 to February 9, 2014) and is also granted a **solo show at Galerie Eva Meyer, Paris** (from 24 October to December 14, 2013).

Michel Aubry is represented by Galerie Eva Meyer, Paris.

www.michelaubry.fr