

A Louvre Alliance study for the Forum d'Avignon

---

# CULTURE

REASONS TO HOPE

---

creation and creators

We all express our sincerest gratitude to all the people we have met and who have kindly shared their time with us.

Yann Algan, Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris; Hortense Archambault, Festival d'Avignon; Jacques Attali, PlaNet Finance; Elie Barnavi; Laurent Bayle, Cité de la Musique; Rodolphe Belmer, Canal+; Françoise Benhamou, Université Paris-XIII; Marc Brétilot; François Brouat, Ville de Paris; Nadim Callabe, Fondation Louis Vuitton; Caroline Champion; Hervé Chandés, Fondation Cartier; Francis Charhon, Fondation de France; Jean-Paul Clavier, LVMH; Gilles Clément, Collège de France; Jérôme Clément, Arte; Julien Clément, Musée du Quai Branly; Jean-Paul Cluzel, Grand Palais; Steve Crossan, Google; Xavier Darcos, Institut Français; Jean de Loisy, Palais de Tokyo; Paul de Sinety, Institut Français; Jérôme Deschamps, Opéra Comique; Didier Deschamps, Théâtre National de Chaillot; David Edwards, Harvard; Emmanuel Ethis, Université d'Avignon; Frédéric Filloux, Groupe Les Echos; Marta Gili, Musée du Jeu de Paume; Christophe Girard, Ville de Paris; Antoine Grumbach; Arthur Guéret; Claudie Haigueré, Universcience; Fabrice Hergott, Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris; François Hers, Fondation de France; Guillaume Houzé, Groupe Galeries Lafayette; Bruno Julliard, Ville de Paris; Chérif Khaznadar, Maison des Cultures

du Monde; Nathanael La Combe, Les Partenaires; Gilles Lipovetsky, Conseil d'Analyse de la Société; Pierre Lungheretti, Ministère de la Culture; Michel Maffesoli, CNRS; Murielle Mayette, Comédie-Française; Hector Obalk; Stéphane Plassier; Jean-Michel Ribes, Théâtre du Rond-Point; Georges Sanerot, Bayard; Sylviane Tarsot-Gillery, Institut Français; Serge Tisseron, Université Paris X Nanterre; Jean-Didier Vincent, CNRS; Dominique Wolton, CNRS; Patrick Zelnik, Naïve.

We also thank all the participants of the working groups who have helped us to enrich this study: Aurore Thomas, Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations and Claudia Ambruosi, Vivendi.

Finally, our sincere thanks to those who ordered and made this study possible: the Board of Directors and the Advisory Board of the Forum d'Avignon and the Forum team: Laure Kaltenbach, managing director of the Forum Avignon, Olivier Le Guay, editorial manager at the Forum d'Avignon, Rebecca Amsellem, project manager.

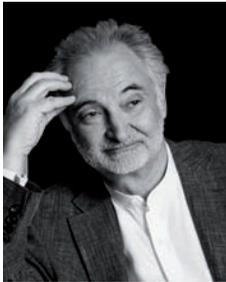
The authors: Christine Silbermann, Marine Ulrich, Charles-Henri Arnould, Jean-Michel Mathieu, Bertrand Moineau

©2012 Louvre Alliance.  
All rights reserved.  
Graphic Design:  
les designers anonymes

# Creation of the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be global, in other words, *oceanic*.

by Jacques Attali,

*Chairman of the Supervisory Board at Louvre alliance*



Cultural creation of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, whether it is artistic, scientific or philosophical is a vast ocean of tides and currents, waves and foam. This maritime metaphor suggests how the fate of creation exists in a mobile and living environment, both vertical with the heat exchanges between various strata, and also horizontal with its surface currents. Cultural territories are thus formed by a sea of creation as a shoreline

is shaped by current and tide. If this seaborne trade of sediments, living beings and *containers* is the leaven of civilization, cultural trade is therefore one of creation. It is all a matter of encounters, paths, contact fronts, mixes and circulation.

Having started with an incredible technological revolution, the 21<sup>st</sup> century provides a chance for the maritime fate of creation: that of an increased *deterritorialization*. Here, creation discovers a constant opportunity for combinations and intersections which constitute its primary source of inspiration. It calls for the building of bridges and the dismantling of borders.

The current state of anxiety regarding human relations and the end of the economic models of culture through a refusal of borders is misguided. The sea cares nothing for custom officers as creation cares nothing for censors; the sea needs ports and straits which provide life, as creation depends on exchange centers and schools to maintain its renewal.

The sea, like creation, is always moving and changing. It is a force that only discovers its truth through the storm and its *raison d'être* through the cargoes that carry the fragile skiffs of our civilizations.



**James Turrell**, *Space that sees*, 1992

What makes colors and lights as fascinating as ever is the fact that James Turrell's creations, as authentic *perceptual environments*, manipulate photons (from either natural or artificial resources) in the same way they manipulate the senses and blur one's perception in a whirlwind of synesthesia.

Si les couleurs et la lumière fascinent toujours autant, c'est parce que les créations de James Turrell, véritables *environnements perceptuels*, manipulent les photons (qu'ils soient de sources naturelles ou artificielles) comme elles manipulent les sens et troublent la perception, dans un tourbillon synesthésique.

# Methodology

Broaching the *reasons to hope of creation* in just a few pages is an ambitious and perhaps unrealistic task. The staggering amount of written materials, ideas and testimonies from around the world may leave one feeling overwhelmed by the prospect of exploring all areas of this subject. Therefore such an aim has been restricted to neither an exhaustive nor a conclusive study of the ways of *coping with an ambient feeling of pessimism while highlighting the vitality of creation*.

Our intention has never been to express an encyclopedic knowledge of the entire subject, nor a philosophical attempt to formulate a definitive argument. Our objective is to inspire hope through examples and conviction that can be used as manifestoes against pessimism. Methods to complete such a study do not come through the definitive value of a full stop or a conclusion reached by brilliant reasoning, but through a process of *touches*. Some of these will always find a detractor while others will be considered worthy because they carry some weight. We have therefore decided to add a few iconographic suggestions from contemporary artistic initiatives to the texts and ideas, in the hopes of countering any pessimism.

We chose to focus our study on the highpoint of culture: creation. At the root of all culture lies a creator. In a network which branches up to the cultural diffusion and transmission, creation is the seed from which everything grows. Providing culture with some reasons to hope *for* creation is assuring that the source will not dry up. It is the certainty of its renewal and vivacity.

If a creator and his creation are enough to trigger the rise of a new civilization, there remains the need for a reader, a spectator and a buyer if there is to be any hope for their culture. Such is the logical consequence of a chain which will not be discussed in this study. The *reasons to hope* proposed below will be limited to creation, without addressing either diffusion or access, nor regulatory policies or the assessment of worth. Even though creator and creation are *necessary* factors, they are not merely *sufficient* to such rise. Let us entertain the thought in this study that this artistic gesture is *fundamental* and carries in itself a large part of cultural hope.

This *demonstrative* research involving a hope-inducing study of philosophical, historical, sociological and epistemological data, coupled with *illustrative* research from concrete experiments and initiatives by contemporary artists, have led us to the decision that disregarding the basis of any scientific approach to this topic was necessary. By choosing *not to define the purpose of our study* (creation), we have deliberately moved away from rationality. But attempting to define creation or even Art itself, setting limits to this field of study, exploring the nuances between *creation* and *creativity* or explaining the differences between *artistic* and *scientific creation* would have added so much complexity to our objective that we would have gone well beyond the scope of this essay. Therefore, by choosing not to define the purpose of our study, we reached a decision to abandon a scientific approach. We are aware that this defies any method. We hope that the reader can forgive us.

Through our abandonment of the aforementioned scientific approach, we have managed to narrow the concept of creation down to that of *artistic creation*. Again, we are not defining it, instead we are basing our standard on Gilles Deleuze's nomenclature, which makes the distinction between the various creations of the mind: *philosophical creation*, *scientific creation* and *artistic creation*. Only the latter will be discussed here even though the other two also have an important role to play in this mechanism.

Artistic creation is then released from definition and further nomenclature, excused from hierarchy or any judgment involving its shapes or forms.

We shall deliberately avoid the relevance of one type of art against another when the subject is inherently rhizomatic. Does Art include *design*, advertising, video games or fashion? We can offer no answers to such an inexhaustible line of questioning. We shall pass no critical judgment on the value of fringes, mixes and iridescence we may mention, other than the authors' own claim to taste.

The idea of an *individual's own taste* inspires our forming of *philosophical opinions*. We felt this necessary to avoid commonplace thinking and to meet the high standards excepted by the Forum d'Avignon.



# Introduction

## The end of Art, the end of History, the end constantly announced.

The *end of art*, or at least its decline has been predicted by many. In the past, it was prophesied by even greater numbers of people from every continent. From the debates of the scholastics to the quarrels between the Ancient and Modern schools of thought, from the *Salon des Refusés* (Salon of Rejects) to the insults that were hurled at the 1913 premiere of *The Rite of Spring* and the Degenerate painters of 1937... it is a long list that compiles the victims of the apostles of Decline. Every evening, art, said to be ill and declining, was promised an end to its suffering. Every morning, the artist would mock this, laughing wildly.

The history of ideas never stops proving the existence of this phoenix. The promise made by each generation that the next would topple is broken by each new work of art. Before we even approach a history of art, we have no choice but to acknowledge to consistency and *vitality* of artists.

It would appear that, with the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, such vitality is not questioned anymore. Not even the most cynical of us dare to use the passé phrase *the decline of art*. No longer focused on *the end of art*, pessimism has turned its attention to *culture*. It is no wonder that the wisest philosophers of our time tend to turn on *the cultural field* instead of creation. They are not wrong in saying that culture is going through a rough patch, but they have stopped arguing the death of the artist. From *Unease in Culture*<sup>1</sup> to *Unease in Museums*<sup>2</sup>, from Thomas Mann to Georges Bataille

and from Guy Debord to Jean Baudrillard, their condemnations and warnings are always sustained by reason and often accurate, for example when they find links between art and pornography<sup>3</sup> or between culture and waste<sup>4</sup>. However, they never make any mention of some end of human creation, not even when raising the alarm about the culture of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Let us insist on this: the most violent satires we have had to read for the past twenty years have focused on mass culture on the one hand, and contemporary art on the other. When Baudrillard spoke of the *duplicity of contemporary art* in 1996, he was not discussing the state of creation in 1996, but instead this specific and old-fashioned movement (contemporary art), that one Hector Obalk<sup>5</sup> and Nathalie Henrich<sup>6</sup> described as a *genre*, a particular gesture, almost a trend, that never expresses nor finishes *all* that art is nowadays. The creator who did not produce *contemporary art* could still work and laugh.

Philosophy is not so easily fooled as it has stopped thinking about the history of art in terms of *lines* or vectors, thanks to the generation of Aby Warburg, Walter Benjamin and Carl Einstein. Without progress or decline, the linear view of the history of art was shattered in a million pieces. A flowing history, one with threads and folds, in which Dürer is neither above or below Mantegna but indeed side by side with him, where Messiaen's music is no longer about progress but movement. Human ingenuity plays itself out in every dimension, it has become a *plateau* with no major axis. According to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, this means: "a multiplicity that can be connected with others through superficial underground stems in order to shape and spread a rhizome"<sup>7</sup>.



# Percieving this light seeking to join us but fails in the darkness of the present, that is what being contemporary means.



Giorgio Agamben<sup>8</sup>

But this *plateau* can neither die nor decline without human life also vanishing. The history of art, having been stirred up by modern art and two World Wars, had no choice but to abandon the temporal arrow of the *norm*, dear to Vasari. To Aby Warburg, the opening to the world outside of Europe further destroys the notion of *progress* in which the *interest for anthropology takes over that of pure aesthetics*<sup>9</sup>, and where *La Pensée Sauvage*<sup>10</sup> (The Savage Mind) brings its off-center irony on any and all attempts at a western norm.

Music, painting, poetry, sculpture and architecture were followed by cinema, video and performance art amongst others, no arrow of time comes to *vectorize* the *plateau* of creation in which only montages, movements and mutations provide a growth both in space with Warburg's beloved *migrations of symbols*, and in time, with the *survival of symbols*. Any talk of a decline in art therefore denies the concept of the *modification of art*; any talk of the end of creation is weighed down by anthropocentrism and academicism. None of those changes, modifications, movements, migrations or survivals are a slope upwards nor one spiraling down into loss. In this, the history of art is akin to Freud's psychoanalysis as it emerged around the same period of time and shared the same skepticism toward the words *progress* and *decline*, treating them as a denial of symptoms.

*First evidence*: not even in the darkest times of human history had the light of creation ever gone out. Moreover, artistic creation plays itself out on the same *plateau* as life on earth where decline has no other meaning than the end of life itself. This testifies of a human permanence, a *Kunstwollen*<sup>11</sup>, the expression of a necessity. What starts off this study may be considered a historical evidence, but it is both the best and the least sufficient of proofs. What is there to say beyond a philosophical *that's the way it is?* Sterile, *arctic*, evidence through history of art leaves one feeling confused. To work, it needs the help of examples, testimonies and verification: that is what this study is all about.

From the most intimate to the broadest, our reasons to hope will be established in this order: the processes withing the human being, shapes and their testimonies and finally the world and its favorable exteriorities.

1. Sigmund Freud, *Malaise dans la culture*, PUF, 2004
2. Jean Clair, *Malaise dans les musées*, Flammarion, 2007
3. Jean Baudrillard, *Le complot de l'art*, Sens & Tonka, 1997
4. Jean Clair, *Op. Cit.*
5. Interview with Hector Obalk, historian and art critic
6. Nathalie Henrich, *L'art contemporain exposé aux rejets*, Jacqueline Chambon, 1998
7. Gilles Deleuze et Félix Guattari, *Mille Plateaux*, Minuit, 1980 (free trans.)
8. Giorgio Agamben, *Qu'est-ce que le contemporain?*, Rivages, 2008 (free trans.)
9. Hans Belting, *L'histoire de l'art est-elle finie?*, Gallimard 2007 (free trans.)
10. Claude Lévi-Strauss
11. Alois Riegl





**James Thierrée**, *Au revoir parapluie*, 2007

Swiss actor and director James Thierrée is second to none in transporting his audience into a poetic and imaginary world. The grandson of Charlie Chaplin combines shapes and images to evoke a dream-like universe blending theater, circus, pantomime, acrobatic dancing and opera singing.

© Photographie / Photography: Richard Haughton

James Thierrée n'a pas son pareil pour transporter son public dans un imaginaire emprunt de poésie. Mêlant les formes et les images, le metteur en scène et acteur suisse, petit-fils de Charlie Chaplin, impose un univers onirique qui combine théâtre, cirque, pantomime, danse acrobatique et chant lyrique.

# THE HUMAN BEING

Roland Barthes starts his notes of lessons and lectures for *The Preparation of the Novel* at the Collège de France by admitting to a feeling of unease at the thought of realizing an artistic piece: “I want a piece of art, but I don’t know how to choose it or program it. (...) So what I am facing here, at this point in the Course, is a blank page.” *Blank* really shows how hard it is to grasp the creative process.

**R**adically different from *homo faber*, the artist is always where he is not expected: either *wherever there is joy* according to Bergson, or with Bataille’s *eroticism of evil*. Evidence has to be found and selected in this enormous gap, like in the testimony of Reigl’s *Kunstwollen*. We would like, in this first chapter, for those testimonies to be situated at the point closest to the artist’s soul and gesture, at the very beginning of this process of desire for art. We must therefore endeavor to detect, in the human being of today and tomorrow, the clues of an unquenchable thirst for creation.

## 1<sup>ST</sup> REASON TO HOPE

### The consistent will to create, Eros and Thanatos

Building order out of noise, giving birth to symbols, developing the imagination... there are so many jolts and demonstrations of the malleability of the living in life that go beyond genetic and epigenetic programs. Whether we call it *self-organization* to quote Jean-Didier Vincent, or *sublimation* in Freud’s work, there is something wild about the ability to create.

At the root of this wildness lies the full duality of the desire to create. Art is born from both the

*coexisting* and *consecutive* responses to *yes* and *no*, from an affirmation and a refusal and can be found *simultaneously* and *separately* in Dionysus and Apollo, in Eros and Thanatos. As a perfect example of the self-organization of the brain or a miracle of communication and the process of desire, such duality ensures the longevity of a creativity that will always flow whether we are denying or affirming a theory. There is therefore little chance of the source drying up if both sides are used, if they are combined and relaying each other.

From Greek mythology to Goya, Géricault to Sade and Joyce to Fluxus, violence punches through creation and upends what is culturally expected. The *thanatean forces*, whether they are musical, pictorial, literary or cinematographical can either celebrate or contest a point. They will, at any rate, continue to proclaim that “a being is only touched to the point of dying, a god at the throat or a sacrificial animal<sup>12</sup>”.

A world of violence that will not die out so long as the violence of the world lingers, or that a deathwish remains withing the human heart. The permanence of the Fluxus movement, Yazid Oulab and Mounir Fatmi’s *Traces of the Sacred*, films by Lars Von Trier and David Lynch, the excessiveness of Hermann Nitsch and Andres Serrano are among so many *projects to escape projects*, so many traces of a damned side that is radically opposite to the *magazine*



*aesthetics* our consumerist society is still paying the unproductive price for.

What this side of evil lets us see isn't the indulgence of some morbid pleasure, but rather the light at the end of the tunnel. This is what Georges Didi-Huberman notices in his study of Laura Waddington's video-montages of the Sangatte camp: "*Border* is an illegal film in which every *state of light*, in actual fact, shines through. (...) These are images that give order to our pessimism<sup>13</sup>". Fireflies always escape slaughter.

We are now making the transition from Thanatos to Eros and to the solar forces that are just as active as the thanatean ones. In reaction to the glorification of the sad passions of the nihilists, Dionysus *raises the multiple and the potential to the highest power*<sup>14</sup> and makes it the topic of an affirmation: *the only advisable word is "yes"*<sup>15</sup>. Although they are just as active, the current Dionysian forces are frequently discreet in the society of the *spectacle*. *Dancing, lightheartedness and laughter*<sup>16</sup> are more easily found in Asia and South-America than in the split western world that is so prone to resentment. Voltaire said it before: "As soon as I started to look a happy man, all my colleagues, the intellectual pride of Paris, unleashed their spite on me", and the phrase *to live happily, live discreetly* has been flipped over to *to live discreetly, live happily*<sup>17</sup>. Less cinematographical than a deathwish, and therefore more discreet, the affirmation of real liveliness never stops pulling away from nihilism. Music, which is inherently dionysian, is going, in terms of history of music, through an unprecedented boom in broadcasting. But the solar character emerges primarily from unexpected and isolated places: Jordi Savall's ethno-musicological rediscoveries, William Forsythe's extremely enjoyable deconstructed scenes, or James Turrell's play with light. Painting itself plays with the unexpected and is moving away from melancholia, following in the footsteps of Tiepolo, and taking after Fragonard, we have Carole Benzaken, François Boisrond and Najia Mehadji. As for *Lights*, nobody at the present

time can reveal them to us better than Philippe Sollers who is the essential thinker of *joyous energy* and wrote in 2010: "Permission to neglect nihilistic propaganda and its insane habit of inflicting guilt, as well as the bad mood that is triggered by someone who persists in selfishly following their own set of rules. (...) Where am I? Who am I? A simple passenger of the eternal return of Salvation. Indeed, Salvation<sup>18</sup>"

## 2<sup>ND</sup> REASON TO HOPE

### Creative practices, horizon of expectations

Whether solar or disputing, human creation is spread through a *practice* that is not necessarily that of the making of a work of art. As Bernard Stiegler points out, to improve one's culture, one must step back from themselves in their free time. Until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, self-culture went against action and production. *Otium*, an exercise in cultural practice that can be done alone or in groups dealt with the mind, and *negotium* to a world of action and production. The 20<sup>th</sup> century managed to merge *otium* and *negotium* together. It was a historical *tour de force* as the universe of the mind and its essentially unproductive practices have been absorbed by a productive universe. Hence a great misery, and the disappearance of Bataille's notion of *sovereignty*.

This critique of a certain period of history however, although fair and coherent, doesn't mean that this phenomenon is set in stone. Steigler's *otium*, this *spiritual exercise*, this unproductive sovereignty shall not stay dead forever. The counter-reform has arrived, not in terms of religion, but at that moment in the 17<sup>th</sup> century when men and women reinvented their own intellectual exercises to protest the overbearance of the Church and Court. Although hundred years lie between Loyola and the Parisian salons of 1640, the same desire for unproductive processes is at work in a renewed *otium*,



# “Isn’t the wonder of psychological life all about the succession of defenses and falls, of smiles and tears, of sunshine and melancholy?”



Julia Kristeva<sup>19</sup>

one of writing, correspondences, mathematics and botany. Nowadays, how could one miss that a similar desire is on the rise?

Amateur artists, as opposed to art-lovers, are making a come-back in reaction to the forces of production-consumption. In the image of the French nobility in 1640, the *absolute free time* (Leibniz’s *leisure*) has been re-adopted by amateurs who have to fit their desire in between economics, this century’s new Court, and media, the new Church. For centuries, *free time* was organized by religion, but also by the Marquise de Rambouillet, Rousseau, Jules Ferry or even Paul Valéry. Leisure however and so long as we move away from any consumerist considerations, is being reborn in an artistic practice that no longer feels ashamed of its amateurishness or strive for production. Valéry’s pure and untarnished exercise can nowadays be found in gardening as well as in choirs or digital music. The notions of *self* and self-production stem from it. There is no cause here to search for artwork or masterpiece, but instead to express our faith in this cultural re-appropriation by the individual that promises cross-fertilization

and high expectations. In the sovereign and unproductive amateur, that has returned to the surface at the beginning of the century, lies an opportunity of *maturation* the artist will take: a horizon of expectations.

### 3<sup>RD</sup> REASON TO HOPE

## Experiments and the involvement of the eye

Scientific perspectives will never be enough to question *what is happening to this worldly century*<sup>20</sup>. Thankfully, *transhumanity* has an array of protectors and detractors such as Heidegger and Jean-Didier Vincent. Although the marriage of science and art has several seductive aspects, it also has a festering side. Science has experimented on many sensitive and worrying subjects, such as psychiatry in the past and nowadays in neurobiology and cybernetics. People are as disturbed by this now as they were when they witnessed Charcot’s great hysterical episodes at the Salpêtrière hospital in Paris. Nowadays,





**Aaron Koblin**, *Flight patterns* (excerpt), 2007

Aaron Koblin is the head of the *Data Arts* department at Google and an American artist. He mixes *big data* and visual arts in order to illustrate our cultural and societal practices through *datavisualizations*. For instance, *Flight Patterns* uses data from the *Federal Aviation Administration* (FAA) to take model on and sketch from the U.S. and Canadian air traffic.

Aaron Koblin, directeur du département *Data Arts* chez Google, est un artiste américain. Il mêle arts visuels et *big data* pour illustrer nos pratiques culturelles et sociétales au travers de *datavisualizations*. *Flight Patterns* utilise ainsi les données de la *Federal Aviation Administration* (FAA) pour modéliser et dessiner le trafic aérien américain et canadien.

though, science is going through another revolution, one that is far from cybernetics and the appeal of its compensating sanctuary, it is what Michel Serres introduces as the third revolution of human knowledge: the digital. After the invention of writing and printing, the revolution of information has begun.

We are not looking to approach the links between art and technique, but rather to reiterate with Michel Serres that the rise of the digital world is a cognitive revolution that could trigger human evolution. The epistemologist passionately says that “*the new technologies have condemned us to becoming intelligent!*”<sup>21</sup>. By storing our memories and our knowledge into a hard-drive, computer technology is allowing us to be more creative than ever. Two consequences are already at play in the world of aesthetics (testimonies of this amazing condemnation to intelligence) in the field of iconology and in the field of involving the eye.

Doesn't contemporary iconology profit from digital science? The work of historians and art critics has changed since Aby Warburg's *Mnemosyne Atlas*. Digital work on images is changing the jobs of both curator-archivists<sup>22</sup> and art historians through the details, the amount of material and the juxtaposition in a visual corpus. With Michel Serres's input, how could we not see the benefits the digital world brings to a researcher in iconology when it helps him to, for instance, find the thread of *Vanity* in ten centuries of paintings? What about the representation of the hand, the flower or war? The knowledge that has been opened by digital opportunity isn't only beneficial to art historians, it is a new outlook on things, and a new inwardness. This is evidenced in Boisrond's recent work on Godard and Delacroix. Visual experience indeed neither comes from consumption nor a command to enjoy, but is constantly enhanced by metapsychology, what Walter Benjamin called an *aura*. The current technological revolution in its own way invites an intelligence of the eye. The society of images isn't always what

we think it is, it is also the storage space of the shapes that leads us to ponder the world. Images think, according to Daniel Arasse: *what we see* is mirrored by *what is looking back at us*. Georges Didi-Huberman suggests in that way, that observing art is never only about externality or a simple matter of having: “the terms of the visible become unavoidable, that is to say dedicated to a matter of *being*, when seeing means that something is doomed to being beyond our grasp; in other words, seeing is losing.”<sup>23</sup> Doesn't this renewed creation start, more often than not, with such *loss*?

12. Georges Bataille, *Le coupable*, Gallimard, 1973 (free trans.)

13. Georges Didi-Huberman, *Survivance des lucioles*, Minuit, 2009 (free trans.)

14. Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche*, PUF, 1965 (free trans.)

15. *Ibid.*

16. *Ibid.*

17. Philippe Sollers

18. Philippe Sollers, *Discours parfait*, Gallimard, 2010 (free trans.)

19. Julia Kristeva, *Soleil noir*, Gallimard, 1987 (free trans.)

20. Martin Heidegger, *Chemins qui ne mènent nulle part*, Gallimard, 1986 (free trans.)

21. Michel Serres, lecture at the INRIA, december 2007

22. Interview with Steve Crossan, director of Google's Cultural Institute

23. Georges Didi-Huberman, *Ce que nous voyons, ce qui nous regarde*, Minuit, 1992 (free trans.)



# THE SHAPES

If art is a concept and creation a process, the work of art is an expression of reality. In this, an artwork is born with a decisive and determined shape. In the first sense of the word, a shape is historically linked to a technique and a discipline: a wall and its fresco, the wooden panel followed by the canvas, the plainsong or the sonata, photography, theater...

The shape dictates the discipline and restricts the artist by setting limits to his field of possibilities. Artistic shapes are in constant evolution; we will then have to illustrate the current transformations or resurgences to explain how the *constraints of shape* are nothing more than a stimulus for tomorrow's creations. But further than that, shape is also an endless source of concepts, where its anthropology shows its immanence and where it continues its *mission to testify*.

## 4<sup>TH</sup> REASON TO HOPE

### From hybridization to montage

The multiple threads that weave an artwork together with its historical context, its *here and now* or its *olden days*, have long been known. The dramatic changes in modern art and in Marcel Duchamp's work are well known and have considerably increased the various shapes of art since 1950. There isn't much point in dwelling any further on the obvious cross-fertilization and hybridization of the shapes that art expresses, except maybe to testify to their intensification in the last ten to fifteen years. The *hybrid* form however isn't recent: 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century baroque constitutes an anthology in this, whether in the alliance of theater, music and dance, or perhaps

less notoriously in the educational programs of 16<sup>th</sup> century Jesuit schools, where education through games mixed ideograms, bodily gestures and imagery (reminiscent of the modern Montessori school<sup>24</sup>). And more recently, haven't John Cage, Picasso and James Thierrée combined different genres?

It is true that the last two decades have turned interdisciplinarity into *undisciplinarity*. Such systematic hybridization is both intensive and extensive. *Intensive* on the one hand, through the summoning by one type of art of another existing media: the vitality of the current Circassian performances, theater aiming at total art, installations in galleries. All these are a testimony to this condensation of shapes. *Extensive* on the other, through the creation of new hybrid shapes at the crossroad of older shapes: poetic *sampling*, culinary design, *street art*, *flash art*...

Paul Ardennes warns us that this increased *undisciplinarity* runs the risk of being deceptive if the process of hybridization betrays its own system, or if it attempts in fiction to mislead reality. Scores of contemporary spectators are exposed to the saturation of hybrids. However, through the repetition that the hybridization of shapes is ancient, we are also reminded of its potential, if the renewal of symbols, creation's own cellular elements, is called to the *montage table*.



Both the movie-maker and the collector know that *montage* organizes the encounters on a *plateau* which is reminiscent of Deleuze and Guattari's. It is at that point that hybridization stops being an artificial system and becomes a work of *montage*, that the symbol machine becomes a fantastic reason to hope. On the montage table, two dimensions are at play: the first is temporal and helps us to glide from one image to the next as if from cause to consequence (the long-take), and the second is from the realm of semiology and offers a counterpoint between two images like the polysemous minimum of any word in a language. The symbolic fertility of an artwork, as well as the fertilization of the spectator, are ensured through these two dimensions. The most beautiful and fertile hybrid works carry within themselves the *heterotopia of the montage*: movies by David Lynch, Sokurov or Harun Farocki, the works of Pierre Huyghe and Doug Aitken, the artwork of Valère Novarina... the same goes for any endeavor that has this posterity to look forward thanks to the juxtaposition of differences, the play on tiny differential variations and infinite speed, the connection of emotions and gestures by shaking up organized shapes. Montage is therefore a double reason to hope: by the artwork already created on the one hand, and their symbolic posterity on the other. In these works of montage and hope, "the point isn't exactly the sole extraction of constants from variables anymore, but rather to coerce the variable themselves into a state of constant variation<sup>25</sup>."

## 5<sup>TH</sup> REASON TO HOPE

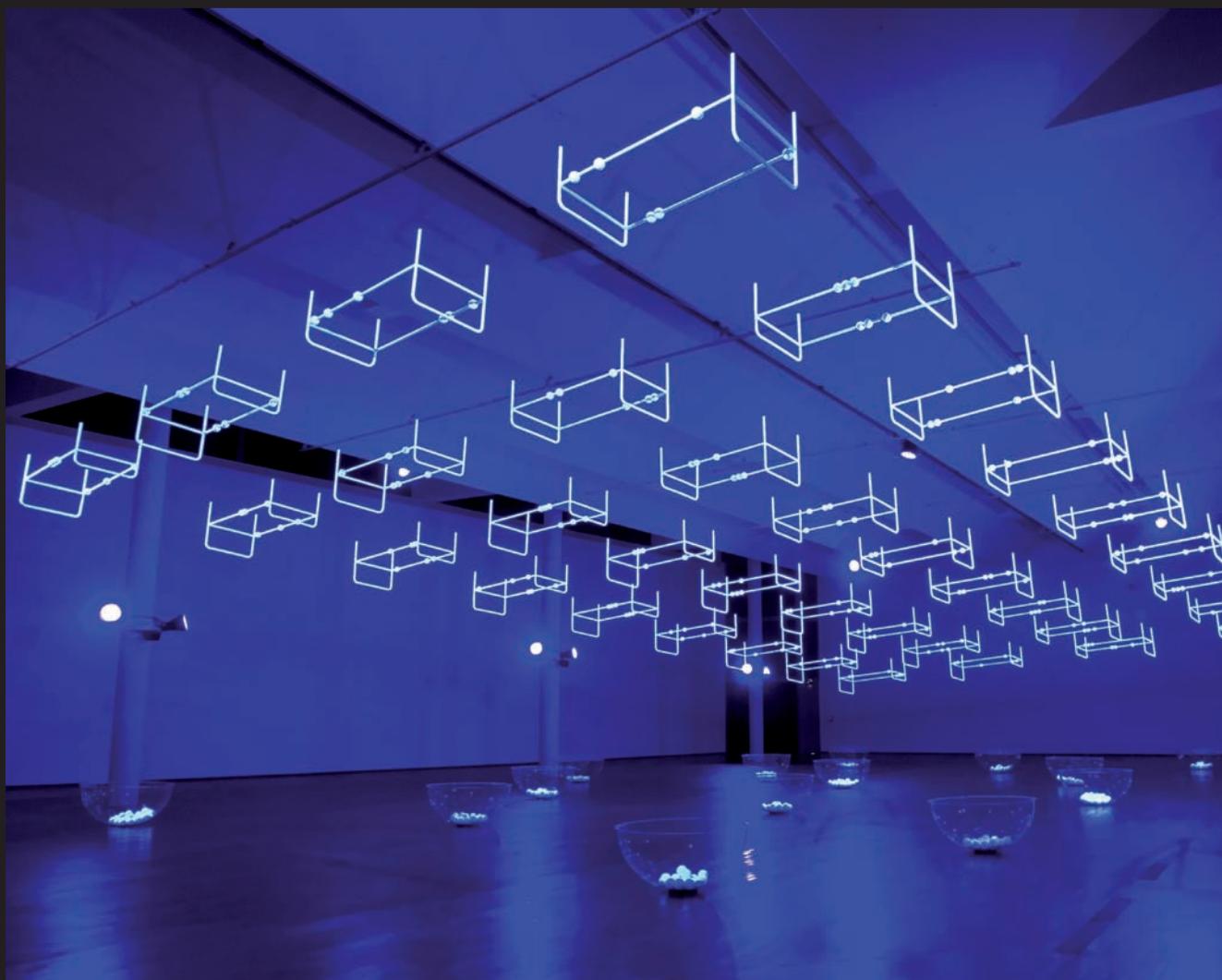
### Beyond the digital, the immanence of shapes

The aforementioned digital revolution as an epistemological modification of the eye should also be approached as a potentiality of shapes. If from as early as the 1960s digital art takes its first steps with computer assisted drawings, it is in the last fifteen years that we have been able to witness a veritable permeability of artistic creations<sup>26</sup> to computer technologies. *Permeability* insists on the

fact that the digital has now become so much more than a simple technical *tool*. There is no need to quote the multitude of developments in every discipline: cinema, Computer Generated Images (CGI) and 3D, music sampling, architecture, self-edition, editorial renewal<sup>27</sup>, new Oulipian projects... Even artistic careers know such evolution. IRCAM (Acoustic/Music Research and Coordination Institute), for example, now offers the job of *Réalisateur en Informatique Musicale* (Computer Music Director) where the computer scientist/musician can now assist in the composition and the interface for the interpretation of the piece<sup>28</sup>. The most recent digital initiatives now go beyond the sole use of a powerful calculation, but approach the potentiality of an information system: from data animation with *datavisualisation* (*We Feel Fine* by Jonathan Harris and *Flight Patterns* by Aaron Koblin), or from digital image artefacts with Kanye West and Chairlift's *datamoshing*. Serge Tisseron reminds us<sup>29</sup> that these potentialities are only beginning; the prospects for robotics, CGI or interactive developments are huge. Holography for example will soon be mastered and will break another barrier in the physical immersion of the spectator in a virtual world. This will be even more revolutionary than 3D. It might have to be, again, under the condition that techniques and hands-free creation are reconsidered so that we might, once again, find individuality in our post-industrial world. As Bernard Steigler says: "It is in this removal of the hand that we have to inscribe what we have to realize, and this *has to* must be *the default we need in the hand* (...) which is only possible through the consideration of how invaluable the hand has been to the *logos*<sup>30</sup>".

A *shape* however is much more than a tool or an artistic discipline. Once historically separated from the distinctions of containers and contents, the phenomenology of the aesthetic experiment grants survival and fertility to *shape* by bringing it closer to the concept. The *baroque* shape, the *fractal* shape or even the *monster* shape<sup>31</sup> are still crossing the centuries and bringing the *olden times* and the *here*





**Claude Lévêque**, *Le grand sommeil*, 2006

Claude Lévêque is a visual artist whose work – usually *in situ* – uses images, sounds and lights. His artistic pieces offer to discover reality in a new and inherently subjective way, to express realness by the poetic reflection he imposes on his active spectators.

Installation *in situ* MAC/VAL, Vitry-sur-Seine. 36 carcasses de lits en PVC, boules blanches en polystyrène, demi-sphères en Plexiglas, lumière noire. Diffusion sonore : musique de salle de pachinko. Conception sonore en collaboration avec Gerome Nox. Photographie Marc Damage © Claude Lévêque, Courtesy the artist and kamel mennour, Paris

Claude Lévêque est un artiste plasticien dont les travaux – généralement *in situ* – utilisent l'image, le son et la lumière. Ses œuvres proposent de redécouvrir le réel sous un angle nouveau et foncièrement subjectif, d'évoquer la réalité par le reflet poétique qu'il impose à ses spectateurs-acteurs.

“An art, a religion can sometimes believe that they have vanquished dreams. But each time, images have survived. All they had to do was to invent others worlds for their retreating armies.”



Yves Bonnefoy<sup>32</sup>

*and now* closer together: “we must not say that the past casts a light on the present or that the present casts a light on the past. Quite the opposite: an image is what makes the *olden times* meet the *here and now* in a lightning bolt that creates a constellation<sup>33</sup>.” This constellation of shapes strides across the *thousand plateaux* of art, in the same way *intertextuality* decides of how literary a text is, when it is pierced throughout by *inherited sequence transforms*<sup>34</sup>. We must detect through the centuries the future of the *roman arch*, the *gothic pointed arch* or even the *baroque inflection*, for example. This last shape, according to Gilles Deleuze, ensures a concept of *Folding*<sup>35</sup> at the same time as Simon Vouet’s draped pattern and the *trompe l’œil* ceilings of 1630 were invented. Any and all curve and change now pay their respects to the inventivity of the baroque movement and its *liturgy of illusion*. Shape is therefore ever in excess of its uses; its immanence, survival and mutation, the best reasons we have to hope for tomorrow’s creation.

As such, *reinterpretation* is a manifestation that is too often despised when it should as a matter of fact be praised for its dialectic quality that stands halfway between academicism and avant-gardism.

Resurgence, reuse and revival grant a power to creation; Gustav Leonhart knew it, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, William Christie and Jordi Savall know it; musical reinvention is a creation. The current return to gardening<sup>36</sup> is nothing if not a reappropriation of the poetry of enclosure. Moreover, the *garden* shape, the *novel* shape, the *St George* shape, the *rhizome* shape all constitute the stock of power for the future and in being beyond the artistic discipline, they only make the reasons to hope that much clearer. Images and artworks, shapes and concepts, all have the same future that Didi-Huberman describes as “the extraordinary pregnancy of a motif, the indistinct breath (of which) could be thought of as the *maternal quality of an image*<sup>37</sup>.”

24. Interview with Frédéric Filloux, managing director of digital operations at Les Echos

25. Gilles Deleuze et Félix Guattari, *Op. Cit. Mille plateaux*, Minuit, 1980 (free trans.)

26. See the works of Edmond Couchot

27. See the initiative *France Culture Papier* in collaboration with Bayard

28. Interview with Laurent Bayle, director of La Cité de la Musique

29. Interview with Serge Tisseron, psychiatrist and psychoanalyst

30. Bernard Stiegler, *Mécréance et discrédit*, Galilée, 2004 (free trans.)

31. Jean Clair, *Hubris: la fabrique du monstre dans l’art moderne*, Gallimard, 2012

32. Yves Bonnefoy, *Rome, 1630*, Flammarion, 1994 (free trans.)

33. Walter Benjamin, *Le livre des passages*, Le Cerf, 1989 (free trans.)

34. Julia Kristeva, *Théorie d’ensemble*, Gallimard, 1968

35. Gilles Deleuze, *Le Pli, Leibniz et le baroque*, Minuit, 1988

36. Interview with Gilles Clément, gardener and landscape artist

37. Georges Didi-Huberman, *Gestes d’air et de pierre*, Minuit, 2005 (free trans.)



# An outlook, an artwork

## The resolute choice of a main thread

The work of philosopher and art historian Didi-Huberman has been linked to an anthropology of *shapes* and *images* for more than thirty years. For his studies, he uses various discipline-related tools such as psychoanalysis, aesthetics and ethnology.

His 2009 short text *La Survivance des Lucioles* (*Survival of the Fireflies*), published by the Editions de Minuit, offers to find through the works of Dante, Pasolini and Laura Waddington, an incredible lesson in optimism that broke away from the doxa of decline. In this study, we have therefore made the conscious decision to follow this demanding yet optimistic philosophy as our main thread.

“Our current *Unease in culture* is apparently headed in that direction, direction in which we are most given to experience it. But it is one thing to identify the totalitarian machine and another altogether to grant it such a quick, definitive and absolute victory. (...) To suppose it, is then akin to believing what their machine wants us to believe. It means only being able to see complete darkness or the blaring light of projectors. It therefore means to not be able to see the spaces of possible overtures, of small light, of a *spirit of defiance*, be them tiny, intermittent, nomadic or in unlikely places<sup>38</sup>.”

Such *defiance*, such assertion means that the fireflies of art are not dying out, but that the problem might just simply be in the *desire of seeing*. They shall undoubtedly stay relevant in the philosophical production of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century.

This book however is decidedly not a pamphlet or a manifesto. Started in the 1980s on such dark material as hysteria, the plague, the study of demons and dermatography, it stems from

a rigorous, profound and unprecedented work.

It was a demanding task that has sometimes been referred to as anti-brightness because of its details and denunciations, of its discoveries and study of teratology. How does it manage then, thirty years later to utter such a resounding “*Yes in the night crossed with glimmers*”?

It may be that there really are a crossing and a course rooted in the most demanding of *self-awareness*, which Bataille describes as the *last act* of the transformation of man from animal to human, one which proudly declares with Rimbaud “Ah! To return to life! To stare at our deformities<sup>39</sup>.” Isn’t the anthology of the *Misshapen*, rather than a recourse or an artefact, an essential *lesson*, a point of moving to, if not originating from, any ulterior consciousness of *shapes* and assertions? This is what Didi-Huberman seems to suggest after the works of Bataille and Nietzsche. The *yes* of art and poetry of the world, the *yes* of Dionysus can only be uttered after “(*the hero has*) *thrown away the hero in (his) soul*”; without the awareness of the deformity of the world, this *yes* is fake, alike Zarathustra’s donkey that only resents the world or the jester who mimics lightheartedness.

The figures of Hysteria in the Salpêtrière Hospital and its compensations if it accepts the *glamour* of photographic art; Clemente Susini’s *Anatomical Venus* and its system of assembly and dismantlement of the organs which provokes a *topological admiration for the living*; the surfaces of bodies with the experiments in dermatography as medical fiction and the projection onto oneself of someone else’s stare; Georges Bataille’s magazine *Documents* with its teratological theme and its assertion that the universe is *nothing if not deformed* and resembling *shit*<sup>40</sup>. None of these are suitable for perverse contemplation or what the current thrillers present as morbid. They are



rather *lessons in things* pupils go through and are made aware of through observation. Symptoms.

Such symptoms though are very different from magazine psychology, they go beyond the trivial and tautological inference of sentences like “*you have symptoms, therefore you are ill*”. It attempts to “*make symptoms a matter of being instead of having*”<sup>41</sup>. What those symptoms are about isn’t some hidden doctrine or shameful resentment, but instead the formidable game at the beginning of any creative endeavor. Those misshapen figures are the starting point of knowledge, or rather a *gay science*.

“Surprised children are told in all comical solemnity that *life isn’t a burst of laughter* by their teachers and mothers alike. So they are afforded the freedom to be mischievous by a gentle hand, only to have it taken from them by a more forceful one. I believe however, that in the miserable mind that was stunted by such training, there remains a paradise that is still luxurious and that starts with the clamor of broken dishes<sup>42</sup>.”

The promethean dimension of Bataille’s game is to go and look for *gay science* even in a toy that has been ripped apart: “to the point of staring with curiosity and a big knife in hand at what is inside this screaming toy<sup>43</sup>”. The game is then also this accident of *shape* that goes farther than the *played* and the *non-played*, “that takes place between cruelty and pretence: here, a child is staring with a big knife, but it is fake. The toy is screaming because it has been ripped apart, but it is only a toy. The pretence doesn’t prevent what it is imitating from being genuinely ripped apart. Such is the great force, such, also, is Bataille’s *game*”<sup>44</sup>.

*Gay science* is rewarded with self-awareness. *Symptoms* and *the Misshapen*, beyond denunciation are being looked at because *they are looking at us*: the *Sonderkommando* pictures from Auschwitz-Birkenau are only aiming at such a dialectic of images which does seem to have something to say about our spit; in the same way as the *starry patches* in Fra Angelico’s *Madonna of the Shadows* and the cruelty of Florentine humanism.

Where then, is hope for such Science? In this case, precisely in the *transformation of symptoms into works of art* that Didi-Huberman detects everywhere. For once it has been released from its current moralizing psychology, once it has been considered phenomenological, the symptom can be turned into artwork. Not in the same way as a messianic accession, but in terms of simple childspilay that plays precisely to better fool.

As such, the *transformation of symptoms* has its place in poetry and aesthetics, in a poetic view of creation, in the “last act” of the human being and in the aesthetics of the eye that go beyond loss and resentment. The transformation of symptoms into works of art should be in every textbook, in every discipline and in every exercise. It is what allows Didi-Huberman to close his *Survivance des Lucioles* with: “It is our responsibility not to let fireflies disappear. In doing so, we must ourselves assume the freedom of movement, a withdrawal which is not a retreat, a diagonal strength, the faculty to show shreds of humanity, an inflexible desire. We must therefore, standing back from reign and glory, in the open breach between past and future, become fireflies ourselves and thus renew a community of desire, a community of emitted glimmers, of dances in spite of all, of the transfer of thoughts. Saying *yes* in the night crossed with glimmers and not to settle for the description of *no* in the blaring light.”

Nietzsche, Bataillen, Deleuze, Sollers, or *how to organize our pessimism* in a resounding *yes*. From the Ecstasy of St Teresa by Bernini, to Andrei Tarkovski’s films and from Homer to all the firefly-creators of tomorrow who will use symptoms, lies all of *yesterday’s joyous energy*<sup>45</sup>.

38. Georges Didi-Huberman, *Survivance des lucioles*, Minuit, 2009 (free trans.)

39. Arthur Rimbaud, *Une saison en enfer*, Gallimard, 1999

40. Georges Bataille, *Informe*, Documents, n° 7, Gallimard, 1970 (free trans.)

41. Georges Didi-Huberman, *La ressemblance informe ou le gai savoir visuel selon Bataille*, Macula, 1995 (free trans.)

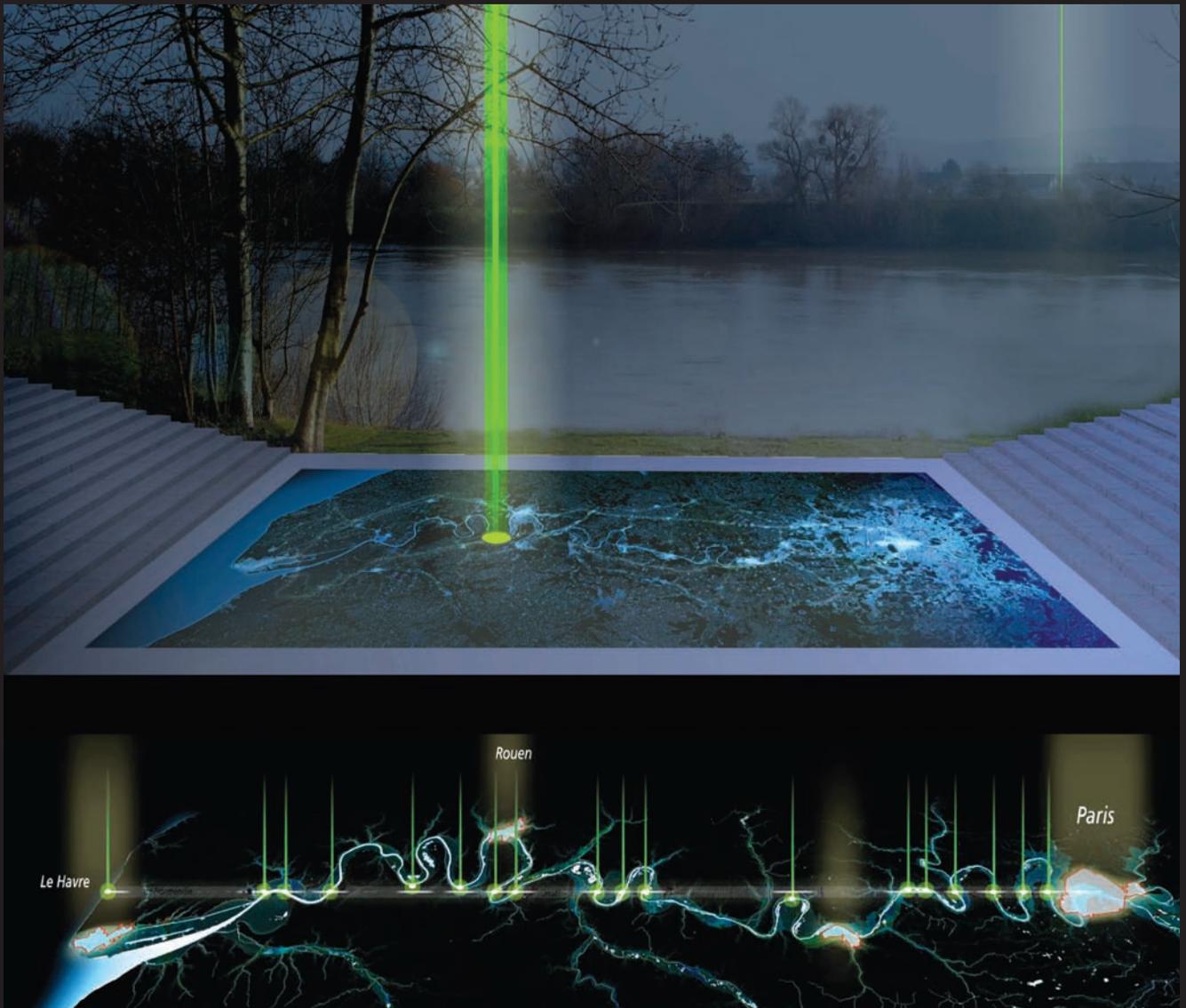
42. Georges Bataille, *Les Pieds Nickelés*, Documents, n° 4, Gallimard, 1970 (free trans.)

43. *Ibid.*

44. Georges Didi-Huberman, *La ressemblance informe ou le gai savoir visuel selon Bataille*, Macula, 1995 (free trans.)

45. Philippe Sollers, *Paradis II*, Gallimard, 1986 (free trans.)





**Lena Soffer**, *Grand Paris*, 2008

As part of Antoine Grumbach's *Seine Metropole* project for the Grand Paris, Franco-Venezuelan landscape artist Lena Soffer proposes a project in which "a ray of light like that of a lighthouse rises from each point where the Paris-Le Havre axis crosses the Seine river, in order to contemplate, discover and decipher what makes those places so special that their very diversity enhances the landscape of the Seine".

Au sein du projet *Seine Métropole* d'Antoine Grumbach pour le Grand Paris, l'artiste paysagère franco-vénézuélienne Lena Soffer propose un projet où « un rayon de lumière tel un phare s'élève à chaque point où l'Axe Paris-Le Havre coupe la Seine, afin de contempler, découvrir et déchiffrer ce qui fait le génie de chacun de ces lieux, qui par leur diversité font la richesse du paysage de la Seine ».

# THE WORLD

The world is growing, so how could creation not grow, too? In this rather quick bet lies the will to step back a little from the cultural society of the West and its current questions. Economy, history and anthropology all have greater purposes than cultural industry, and each of these disciplines are witnessing deep movements on the face of the Earth that can't ignore the impact they will have on arts and culture.

## 6<sup>TH</sup> REASON TO HOPE

### Global constraints and the shift in symbols

From Baudelaire to André Gide, romanticism has almost established this theory: *Art is born from constraints, lives off struggle and dies from freedom*<sup>46</sup>. The infinite potential of creation must be restrained: from versification, sonata shape, the *Rule of Three Unities* and the *Golden Ratio* to the literary games by Queneau and Perec, the artist retracts himself by setting the limits of his own exercise. A sign of luxury, surely. The world itself usually takes care of imposing them: morale, destitution, famine, epidemics, with Sade, Giorgione and Poe as their famous representatives. Here again, dialectics must go beyond the commonplace opposition of constraints and freedom, poverty and wealth, struggle and sufficiency. Rome, 1630: Borromini, Pietro da Cortona, Bernini, Poussin, Vouet, Velázquez and l'Algarde... the artistic growth that fuels the new radiance of the Peninsula and the architectural transformation of the eternal city is taking place *on a background of misery and general decadence*<sup>47</sup>. "The invention of a Roman baroque style happens *on a backdrop of plague, epidemics, economic destitution and degradation of the name of artist* which is a paradox as this is *the reflection, if not the cause, of the baroque contemplation on existence*<sup>48</sup>.

There is no point in mentioning the crises and constraints that exist in 2012 and that will probably linger in the coming decades. Let us just say, then, without naivety or pessimism, that the socio-economic hardships are also the basis for the creations of tomorrow. There are some signs of it already: demographic constraints (nine billion people on Earth by 2050) have paved the way for new architectural laws and street art to deal with urban density. Rethinking urbanism would force creation in every way possible (from the control of the sea to underground cities). Increased mobility and mobile technologies are already promoting shapes that are new and original (augmented reality, mobile art, and Carl Jagnefält and Konrad Milton's *Rolling Masterplan* in Sweden). The environmental considerations will also have to bring about a new set of practices and disciplines, and new hybridizations of urbanism and land art, halfway between artistic and ecological practices (the gardens of Detroit City), are in keeping with what Gilles Clément calls the *global garden*. A bigger chain of events is about to take place, however, one in which the economical and social changes of the next fifty years, such as the reduction of space, the acceleration of time or the increased inequalities will induce important *shifts in symbols*. The modifications and displacements of symbols will, as always, generate some mutation in shapes and new concepts to create;



science and philosophy will support such changes. The artist will neither be new nor dead, he will be shifted, as he always was. Art in 2030 and 2050 will have been *realized* with its stream of infinitesimal variations and will have brought its rhizomes forward onto the world stage.

## 7<sup>TH</sup> REASON TO HOPE

### Network empathy and politics of the mind

As Paul Valéry claimed in 1939, we must build a political economy of the mind. Although still small and limited, its influence is starting to be felt in Europe. Some organizations, like *Ars Industrialis*, are laying claim to a notion of politics of the mind, as opposed to cultural politics. Authorities around the world have, since the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, initiated the implementation of this policy on its most urgent side: the preservation of works of the mind. Safekeeping, defense, promotion and maintenance, so many necessary but minimal actions<sup>49</sup> are being done towards museums, libraries, urban and landscape capitals and the immaterial heritage of humanity.

However, there is another part to be played in politics: the encouragement of creation. *Encouragement* and not *help* or *support* as we wish to broaden this part to include the scope of intellectual promotion as opposed to financial support. The political encouragement or artistic creation is rather weak. There are beginning to be signs of changes: no more cities without a cultural center, no more economical studies without mention of the cultural sector. If consumerist and *short-sighted* hegemony can still be criticized, the future of politics lies in a *transgenerational* horizon that focuses on the very-long-term and in which the works of the mind will have found their place. In the same way the political space will keep on growing both geographically (federation, continent, world) and temporally (looking ten, thirty, fifty, hundred years ahead), the politics of the mind

(but which, in the long-term?) will learn to overstep preservation to focus on creation. Some first attempts have already been made in Europe<sup>50</sup> and with UNESCO<sup>51</sup>. As Chérif Khaznadar<sup>52</sup> says, the African, Oceanian and South-American continents, along with the people of Asia, constitute a wonderful well of creativity that still needs more transnational encouragements. *A global government for the future* already has a considerable array of policies and laws aiming at encouraging intellectual creation. On a slightly shorter term, Europe already has such an opportunity: it can use its condition of federation to assert the coherence of its diversity instead of its own cultural identity. The birth of the politics of the mind will take place in that very spot, by the institution of the sovereignty of the artist. Let us simply theorize that the cogs of the worldwide political machine are gargantuan, if not yet active. Let's recognize that when the European federation of tomorrow, and the global one shortly after, establishes a means to encourage creation and the practices of the mind, the forces at play will be able to catalyze the processes of desire of some ten billion people.

*Politics of the mind* won't be born from the will of a single political *chief*. Transnationality, the networking phenomenon and social aspirations have already brought forth some new collective forces in the world which are both ever changing and free from hierarchy. Network topology (rising phenomenon in this beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century), its character that is both diachronic and immanent, its lack of center or focus point promote new social tendencies that go well beyond any public authority. Networks, in the broader sense of the word, have invented a new governance above any government: a community ideal dear to Michel Maffesoli<sup>53</sup>, the importance of manners and the *detrterritorialization* Pierre Musso spoke of, the civilization of empathy Jeremy Rifkin<sup>54</sup> wishes for... these are but a few of the many current forces that have an influence on artistic creation. New trends are emerging, even if they are not



# “Making decisions cannot be anything other than creating fictions.”



Bernard Stiegler<sup>55</sup>

yet visible outside of a technological community. The Internet has already inspired several new creative processes. *Flickr*, *Dribbble*, *Vimeo* and *Fablab* have become cooperatives of creation where the notion of recombination and *creative commons* are being used. The *Workshop* and the process of creation experienced by cinema and live performance are now back to the visual arts that romanticism has erected as an individual and solitary way to create. *Being part of a network* is a concept that is slowly overtaking technology and is striving for a change in political forces: “the time has come for the rise of a democratic ideal in which reason plays a major part, a community where emotion becomes a cardinal virtue<sup>56</sup>”. Tribalism may not be, then, a withdrawal into oneself, as long as it subscribes and adheres to the true nature of *evening school*, through “Humanities that surface from a child’s copybook, that blend in with the Lares<sup>57</sup>”.

Networks and transnationality will maintain a distance between the will of a chief and artistic creation by fragmenting it throughout the world. Even the economy of creation, as far as our study can tell, will know dramatic changes. The notion of an artistic *commission* is currently experiencing some profound transformations: if it was once reserved to Court and Church, and then to the patrons of the Arts, it is now no longer the prerogative of the chief, whether

public of private. The joint commission of a spontaneous and labile group has established its first organization: the *Nouveaux Commanditaires* (New Patrons) initiative which allows, under the wing of the Fondation de France<sup>58</sup> to liaise between artists and potential buyers who are gathered for what might be a collective or private commission.

The *evening class*, dear to Alain may just lay the foundations for the true politics of the mind of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, where no more interventions will come from a hierarchy. This is neither a naive optimism nor a belief in a future amicability between the people, but perhaps the chance for glimmering and ever-changing anti-structure, for a desiring machine in which the network creates combinations.

46. André Gide, *Journal*, Gallimard, 1980 (free trans.)

47. Yves Bonnefoy, *Op. Cit.*

48. *Ibid.*

49. Interview with François Hers, artist, cultural advisor at the Fondation de France and director of the Fondation Hartung-Bergman

50. See “Europe creative” 2014-2020 program

51. UNESCO-Aschberg grants, *Artist Mobility...*

52. Interview with Chérif Khaznadar, director of La Maison des Cultures du Monde

53. Interview with Michel Maffesoli, sociologist

54. Jeremy Rifkin, *Une nouvelle conscience pour un monde en crise, vers une civilisation de l'empathie*, Les liens qui libèrent, avril 2012

55. Bernard Stiegler, *Op. Cit.*

56. Michel Maffesoli, *Homo Eroticus, Des communions émotionnelles*, CNRS éditions, 2012 (free trans.)

57. Alain, *Les passions et la sagesse*, Gallimard 2001 (free trans.)

58. Interview with Francis Charlon, director general of the Fondation de France





**Carole Benzaken,** *(Lost) Paradise, 2006*

Carole Benzaken draws inspiration from the everyday world and crafts it into fragmented images which express a huge celebration of life. This close relationship with images as well as the ironic adoption of their codes (blending, inlays, zoom in/out) create a play on diffraction and juxtaposition, on rhythm and light.

© ADAGP, Paris 2012

Carole Benzaken puise son inspiration dans l'univers quotidien pour le détourner en images fragmentées, en une vaste célébration de la vie. Cette proximité entretenue avec les images, comme l'adoption ironique de leurs codes (fondus, incrustations, zooms avant ou arrière), obligent à jouer avec la diffraction et la juxtaposition, avec le rythme et la lumière.

# By way of overture

**“These words by Louis XIV about the gardens of Versailles: ‘You shall infuse some childhood into this’”<sup>59</sup>**

To express a decline in artistic creation means to include in it an illusory *vectorized* history, a ridiculous concept to immanent creation.

Through the nature of the human being, the successive montage of shapes and symbols and the encouragement of the world, art is constantly reborn. Creation is strong and lively, the unease we feel is that of culture, a blurry and hesitating notion, halfway between the resentment of people and the affirmation of man, between social standards and individual expectations, between marketing and poetry. The creative force will always be rooted by our side; what is to become of it? To hope *for* creation, it is necessary that the downstream chain (the *cultural sector*) knows how to seize it, with gentleness and benevolence. This relay must know a great deal about botany so that the roots of creation might always grow and bloom into artistic flora. Buffon and Deleuze are in agreement, the botanist’s benevolence is quite frankly philosophical. Fertilizations occur in Deleuze’s *Folding*, an infinite and differential work that transforms shapes and textures into a form of expression combining elements of the matter with the mind. In order for there to be a fold or a blooming flower, a gentle light is required rather than a blaring projector. Cultural industry should remember this childish and merry *lesson in things*: that in terms of plants, the stasis is just as much the result of eternal night as it is of constant light, that fertility needs folds and creases, lights that shimmer and blink. Neither a command to look nor a command to say,

but the promotion of an experiment: the *unfolding*. Once done, it leaves a crease like a meaningful void. This is where the cultural world should be, in a gynaeceum of future fragility. Creations needs cracks like the *timidity slits* in botany, a space for air and light in the foliage. The *Slits* or *Folds* allow creation to take place in a childish world. *It began in the midst of children’s laughter, with their laughter will it end.* The game of creation has a promethean quality to it, and its experience must be made from the earliest days. Both first and last lesson, creation needs school in the broadest sense of the word. The experiences of seeing, of hearing, of writing and practicing necessitate the structure of transfer, either academic or independent between the hatching of the desire to create and the learning of knowledge. Contributions to it are made throughout the world: *Khan Academy*, French musical initiative DEMOS, the presence of Claude Levêque at elementary school... Politics of the mind undoubtedly give resolute hope to the future generations, even if there is still much to do in this field. Schools all over the world are the places where the *fireflies* of tomorrow are born, in these open breaches between past and future. Childhood represents both the peak in the desiring process and the residual figure of any creation. The transmission of desire, symbolic life, and the thirst for thought are all absolutely necessary in a world of mind. *Gay science* stands there, in the experience of desire in turn cheerful and cruel, calm and passionate. The creative game is then a childish one, in which study and exercise make the basis for the roots of imagination. And so, the game of creation, beyond the concepts of *played* and *non-played* shall continue to develop self-awareness, which is nothing if not the pinnacle of an extremely lively humanity.

<sup>59</sup>. Philippe Sollers, *Carnet de nuit*, Gallimard, 2006 (free trans.)



## About Louvre Alliance

Created in January 2004, Louvre Alliance is the brainchild of two former Arthur Andersen partners, from where they inherited an economic culture of business and rigorous work ethics.

Louvre Alliance is a strategy and management consulting firm that operates, in France and abroad, for both the *economic world* (public or private) and the *cultural world*.

Having inherited the best practices and paying special attention to *writing* and *discourse excellences* as well as *progress made in the field of social sciences*, Louvre Alliance lays claim to tailor-made services.

From the very beginning, Louvre Alliance has worked closely with Attali & Associés, a consulting firm founded by Jacques Attali who invested his faith in Louvre Alliance by becoming its Supervisory Board Chairman. Since then, both firms have shared the same spirit of service and high expectations for excellence.

Louvre Alliance offers a range of actions that are closer to services and support than the presumptuous delivery of affirmations. Our approach stems from such a standpoint. We take complexity into account and know the requirements of business and economic rationalism even though we are aware that the main focus might be elsewhere. The management of an organization with its social aim, its characteristics may enjoy new flavors as human achievements are primarily based on *culture*, *serenity* and *measure*.

### CONTACTS

Christine Silbermann, Partner  
csilbermann@louvrealliance.com

Jean-Michel Mathieu, Partner  
jmmathieu@louvrealliance.com

Bertrand Moineau, Partner  
bmoineau@louvrealliance.com

Louvre Alliance  
www.louvrealliance.com  
20, rue des Pyramides / 75 001 Paris  
Tel. +33 (0)1 42 86 44 70

## About the Forum d'Avignon

*Investing culture differently.* The Forum d'Avignon which was created in 2008, aims at deepening and promoting the links between culture and economy in addition to its role of social cohesion and territorial attractiveness.

*A think tank about culture.* Relying on a worldwide network of artists, experts, international consulting firms and public and private partners, the Forum d'Avignon produces major editorial work around themes suggested by its advisory board. Its panel of international studies (free download from the website) in conjunction with its blog Culture is future, open three perspectives: the financing of culture and its economic models, the digital world and innovation, and territorial attractiveness.

*The international meetings of culture, economy and media.* Every year, the Forum organizes and supports international meetings in Avignon and Essen – with the Forum d'Avignon-Ruhr. The proposals stemming from these discussions between ambassadors of culture, creative industries, economy and media are relayed by the national and international bodies.

Follow the Forum d'Avignon  
www.forum-avignon.org

### CONTACTS

Laure Kaltenbach  
Director general of the Forum d'Avignon

Olivier Le Guay  
Editorial manager of the Forum d'Avignon

Forum d'Avignon  
www.forum-avignon.org  
Grand Palais, Cours La Reine, Porte C  
75 008 Paris  
forum-avignon@forum-avignon.org

