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LA MOITIE DES CHOSES (THE HALF OF THINGS) Simon Fravega, Chloé Quenum, Jean-Charles de Quillacq, Clément Rodzielski, Benjamin Seror

A proposal by: Mélanie Bouteloup & Nicolas Fourgeaud

02/03 - 03/04 /// 13/04 - 15/05 /// 25/05 - 26/06

Three openings from 6pm to 9pm : Tuesday 2 March, Tuesday 13 April, Tuesday 25 May

The Half of Things is a project that brings together five artists in three successive exhibitions, accompanied by two publications. In this series of exhibitions, Bétonsalon will serve both as a place of work and an exhibition space: the invited artists will have the options of working there from day to day or of working at a distance, and playing with the possibilities of a display that continuously evolves or of proposing deeply considered one-off performances. The exhibition will provide an opportunity for them to test some fragile aspects of their practices over a limited period or to go deeper with works in progress. The two publications will include interviews, artists' writings, critical texts (literary or academic), scripts and more. *The Half of Things* offers the possibility of a deep and critical encounter with the works of several artists of the same generation.

To varying degrees, the artists participating in this project share an approach that conceives of the exhibition as a pivotal site for the realization of the work. Each proposition can either make its process accessible or hide it; it can propose reified objects or, on the contrary, focus on the performative aspects of the artist's practice. Each proposition will furthermore have the opportunity to emphasize one aspect or another, according to the paths taken by the projects and the artists' shifting perspectives over the course of the exhibition. Confronting such practices, it is difficult to limit the work to a physical object or circumscribe it in an empirical way. Identifying the work becomes complex because it cannot be reduced to a thing that is simply present in the here and now: the gestures and actions that preceded the display of objects or the creation of a performance, the announcement of events still to come, and even the production of documentation become decisive elements in articulating the meaning of the work. *The Half of Things* will shed light on practices that explore how the long-time duration of the exhibition and the generative process determine the definition of a work, be it an object or a performance. The exhibition space, with all its limits, will, more or less, provide us with an account of those processes. Or of the ways in which an object can slip from being an object into being an event, and vice-versa, without anyone noticing...

For the final diploma of his degree, **Simon Fravega** presented two performances: *Just Do It* and *Rock In Progress*. *Just Do It* is a kind of lecture-performance in which the artist seems to attempt to teach us strategies of inadaptation¹ to the world. In order to substantiate its physical demonstrations—which he himself executes—he uses a lot of accessories: slides projections of images he found on Google, balloons, lycra tights, plastic handguns, sequins... He defines himself as an “imposter”: a character that could slip into roles or situations that would allow him to test his skills, which he either possesses, or not, but which he has the desire to test. Failure or success therefore become highly relative notions. The fall of the ice-skater rubs shoulders with the mythical tale (William Tell), to produce a kind of alternative history of the world. *Rock In Progress* is a short performance that was born from a workshop created by the artist in the School of Fine Arts in Grenoble, and the object of which was the re-exemplification of typical attitudes taken from the world of rock music and its stars. Here, the artist attempts to reproduce the position of the legs of different rock-singers, photocopied on A4 sheets of paper. The sheets fly and the legs are stuck down to the ground, lit only by two small torches attached to his calves; the whole thing is like a tiny make-shift stage, equipped only with low-tech projectors. Simon Fravega uses objects issued from various amateur practices or from popular culture to compose subversive and poetic re-enactments that may remind us of Greil Marcus’ project of a secret history of the twentieth century (*Lipstick Traces*). For *The Half of Things*, Simon Fravega hopes to lead a research workshop about sporting performance: its activities will be documented daily throughout the duration of the exhibition and will be subsequently presented in the form of a report.

For the first edition of *Playtime* in Bétonsalon, **Jean-Charles de Quillacq** presented a performance called *Spectre Citron (Lemon Spectrum)*. Dressed in his Sunday-best suit, for the duration of two hours, he wielded, outside the Bétonsalon space, a kind of totem composed of a long wooden handle made from a branch of mimosa with a wooden plank attached at one extremity, covered on one side with a photograph of a work by Roman Signer being exhibited in a gallery, and on the other side, fixed in the centre of a patch of yellow spray paint, some marquetry representing Brancusi’s *Endless Column*. In the background, Jean-Charles de Quillacq had beforehand stuck two other photographs onto the windows of the Bétonsalon: a young women posing with an air of nonchalance before a lake, and another portrait, this time a close-up, of another young women dressed in a swimsuit. Jean-Charles de Quillacq kept his eyes closed at all times, but had painted wide-open eyes onto his eyelids, to evoke the “smoky eyes” of the young woman posing in a swimsuit. Jean-Charles de Quillacq is working on the potential of images for creating ephemeral physical spaces. *Spectre Citron* aims to be a kind of architectural breakthrough. For *The Half of Things*, the artist will exhibit some of the preparatory elements for this performance. He will also take advantage of the context to present some of his old works in a new way. The artist writes: “I don’t think of my installations as finished objects, but as generators of relations, within which tensions are maintained as they stand without moving towards their resolution”.

Chloé Quenum works with a reservoir of objects: chairs, frames, papers, mirrors... From one display to the next, those objects change their positions, angles, basis weight, size... They are cut up, photocopied, photographed, assembled, taken to pieces and once again redistributed. In each installation, they are (at least partially) requalified by the use the artist makes of them. The exhibition is, for the artist, like the production of a situation, and the performance of the installation of the objects is part of the work. These processes are at the very heart of her practice: the performance of installation (whether accessible to the viewer or not), variations of the situation, documentation as

a supplementary product and not reducible to a “trace” function. The lists that Chloé Quenum will present, in the form of posters installed in the exhibition space, make use of the list, as defined as a documentary or organizational tool. In fact, those lists are meant to “describe” certain characteristics of the assemblages that she will realize. The terms or the categories that rule the organization of these lists are, however, difficult to make intelligible. The refusal of a clear and precise denotation serves to make those lists a little more “opaque”. *The Half of Things* will be an opportunity for Chloé Quenum to work on presenting the passage back-and-forth between different states of her work.

Benjamin Seror was invited to undertake a residency in Bétonsalon in September 2009, to work on the forms of narrative at work in the activity of mediation in an art centre. How is it possible to describe an activity that is on-going? Is it possible to communicate an idea that is in the process of being thought? According to Benjamin Seror, he “is looking to articulate a narrative and the conditions of its experience in what could be called a spectacle of thought”. Poet as well as singer and storyteller, Benjamin Seror enjoys the *mise-en-scène* of himself. In his landmark appearances, he is capable of inventing epic stories about objects that he bought at a flea-market, of resurrecting a forgotten rock-band by interpreting their songs on stage, of singing love songs wearing neon pink leopard-print tights... He uses the performance to communicate a thought that is in the process of being formulated (in other words, to represent it). He explores the possibility of a slippage between the field of objects and the field of performance. For *The Half of Things*, Benjamin Seror has announced a schedule of events connected to an opera called *Five Weeks*: a book that tells the story of a trip to Brussels, an evening of discussion with friends, the presentation of characters, three days that will be spent writing the end of the opera... The story of *Five Weeks* will emerge slowly, through the medium of objects and performances.

Clément Rodzielski likes to circulate images beyond the exhibition space. *Finis les pieds plats*, *Palme*, *Le Livre Miroir* are fanzines distributed here and there, depending on chance meetings. *Document* is a freely accessible work that departs gradually with its viewers. Formed by a pile of sheets to be taken away, the work disappears along with the slim layer of paint covering its edges. Closer to a traditional exhibition of images, *Flash Black* is a series of twelve paintings on A4 sheets, along with a leaflet that presents in black and white photocopies the exhibited paintings on the wall. The exhibited paintings coexist with their medium of distribution. “For things to (really) exist, it’s important for them to have existed twice”. For *The Half of Things*, Clément Rodzielski will initiate a series that will stretch over all three of the exhibitions, adjusting different fragments of a wall decoration—enormous images that are constituted of only eight pieces, which have to be arranged. A multiplication of false connections, reoccurrences: they appear in the very spot where they are out of place. This work largely follows another series: the reordering of an infinity of discards, taken from a directory that a computer has recorded by itself, without the will of its user, “free-wheeling”, in a way. He will also return to the failure of a work commissioned from him by Bétonsalon: the creation of a membership card for the association. The cards were printed but because of a technical problem, remained in their boxes.



Simon Fravega, *Just Do It*, 2009
Performance



Chloé Quenum, *En Mai fais ce qu'il te plait s'il te plait*, 2009 (detail)
Installation



Chloé Quenum, *Vous êtes conviés
Mardi 16 Juin 2009 Galerie Gauche*
Installation



Jean-Charles de Quillacq, *Spectre Citron*, 2009
Performance



Clément Rodzielski, chacun : *Sans-titre*, 2007
A4 paper, inkjet print



Benjamin Seror, *Plusieurs chansons d'amour, un meurtre et un poème élégiaque sur le métro*, 24 avril 2008
Bétonsalon, Paris
Performance

BIO

Simon Fravega

Born in 1981 in Pertuis. Lives and Works in Marseille.

Graduated in 2009 from Ecole Supérieure d'Art de Grenoble

Recent exhibitions

- 2009 *Plateforme*, Théâtre de Privas
Marché des jeunes créateurs, Zoo de l'usine
- 2008 *Festival Point d'impact*, Genève
Festival ACT Genève, Zurich, Berne, Bâle

Chloé Quenum

Born in Paris in 1983. Lives and works in Paris.

Graduated DNAP from ENSBA Paris

Recent exhibitions

- 2009 *Friche Belle de Mai*, Marseille
Là où les eaux se mêlent, GB Agency, Paris
- 2010 Collective exhibitions with Darren Bader and Marietta Chirulescu, Galerie Carlos Cardenas, Paris
Salon de Montrouge

Jean-Charles de Quillacq

Born in 1979 in Dax. Lives and works in Amsterdam where he is in residency at Rijksakademie.

Graduated from Ecole Nationale des Beaux-Arts de Lyon

Recent exhibitions

- 2008 *I am not a Fortune Teller / prototype*, Laboratoires d'Aubervilliers, Aubervilliers
Playtime, Bétonsalon, Paris

Clément Rodzielski

Born in 1979 in Albi, France. Lives and works in Paris.

Graduated from ENSBA in Paris

Recent exhibitions

- 2010 *Die Menschen finden sich in dieser Welt zum Leben*, Chert Gallery, Berlin
Trop peu de santé, trop peu de preuves, Carlos Cardenas, Paris
- 2009 *L'image cabrée*, Fondation d'entreprise Ricard, curator Judicaël Lavrador
Une haine sans pardon, Module du Palais de Tokyo, Paris, curator Julien Fronsacq
Spector, Federico Bianchi Contemporary Art, Lecco, Italy, curator Joanna Fiduccia

Benjamin Seror

Born in 1979. Lives and works in Paris.

Graduated and post-graduated from École Nationale des Beaux-Arts de Lyon

Recent performances

- 2009 *L'objet de trop / le vase brisé I et II*, Mudac, Lausanne.
RER+tram + métro, Qu'il est long Jeanne le chemin pour arriver jusqu'à toi, Mac/Val, Vitry sur Seine.
Un cri dans la nuit noire, Château des Adhémar, Montélimar.

Recent exhibitions

- 2009 *Bien qu'il ne soit jamais directement fait référence à la notion de voiture, il s'agit bien évidemment du principal sujet*, OUI, Grenoble.
The Clifford Irving show, Ciné 13, Paris, curator Raimundas Malasauskas
Concours de Monument, Dojo, Nice, curator Kristina Solomoukha and Elfi Turpin.
25% de mélancolie, La Box, Bourges, curator Solenn Morel and Elfi Turpin.



Bétonsalon is a non-profit organization that runs a centre for art and research located within a university, in the heart of a neighborhood currently undergoing reconstruction. This neighbourhood, ZAC Paris Rive Gauche, is located on the north-eastern outskirts of the 13th arrondissement of Paris, very close to the Seine and Ivry sur Seine.

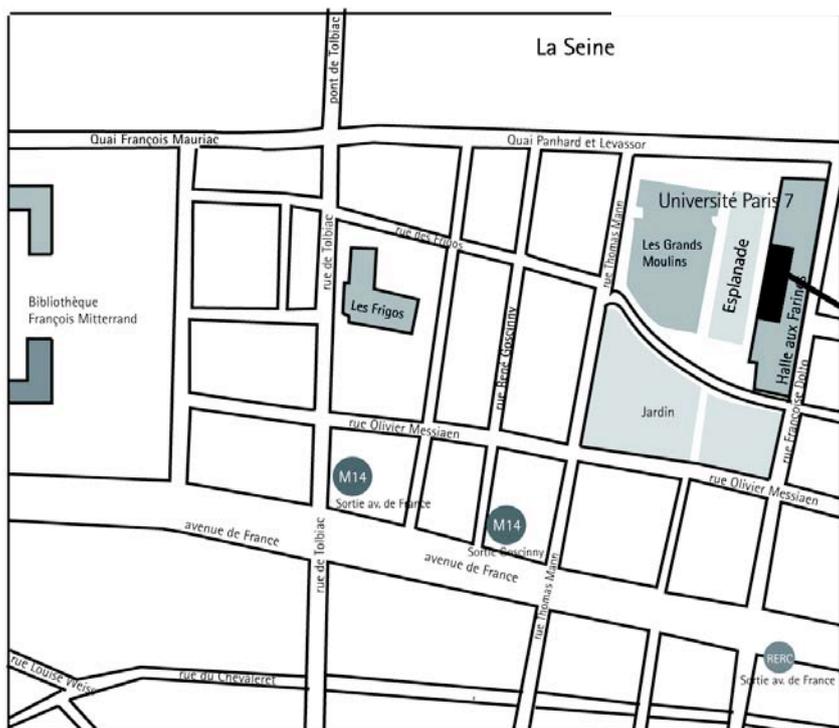
Bétonsalon presents an experimental programme that calls into question the role that an artist, a curator, a cultural centre can play in society, by investigating the presence of art in an urban, social and political context ... The projects take multiple forms and develop on different time scales: workshops, lectures, publications, exhibitions, neighbourhood visits, festivals, performances, interventions in the public space ...

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