

APPARATUS 22 - *Several Laws. Multiplicity Review*

Académie royale des Beaux-Arts de Bruxelles

Address: Rue du Midi, 144 B-1000 Bruxelles

Program: February 1 - 24, 2017 | from Monday to Friday from 9:00 to 18:00

In this exhibition of Apparatus 22, the human body and its natural or artificial shields (skin and clothing) are at stake and become the battlefield of contradictory ideological projections, bearing conflicts or simmering with hidden controversies.

Where regulated ideals of glamour, beauty and consumerism schizophrenia are dictated by current ideologies, however, without completely shedding the profound humanity triggered by these ephemeral and transitory containers of a fragile yet resilient reality.

The deep dialectic tension pulsating within the same epidermal superficiality of appearance, or, more precisely, within this first garment which is the skin, is central to *Several Laws. Multiplicity Review*. It is manifest through the choice of material and the poetic use of language, as well as through the significant performative potential of the works.

First time shown in academic context, the works are (re)read under the topic of *Stealth (furtive, camouflage)* investigated by the biennial project of research and academic reflection developed by Brussels's Académie royale des Beaux-Arts. The exhibition puts precisely into question the registers of visibility or non-visibility, the notions of occultation, resistance and commitment in relation to the present.

The focal point includes a series of large frames covered by wrinkled or finely veined and hand dyed leather. Bearing a range of tones alluding to a panel of cosmetics samples, they refer as much to the fascination for colour as to an implicit hint at social and racial hierarchies. The short poetic texts inscribed on leather underpin, in contrast with the soft and enveloping appearance of the medium, the political dialectic of the project.

The skin perceived as an (auto)biographical field, but also as the first interface of the individual with the public and collective space is of regulated according to social conventions and values. The use of make-up as psycho-biographical camouflage, the addiction to tanning, the surgical and cosmetic bastions, the fear of old age, are all obliquely under scrutiny in the works and give the measure of the emancipation which needs to be carried out.

The *Erratic Statistics* act as a mobile counterpoint to the large monochrome leather canvases. Reminiscent of Cadere's wooden bars, covered in multicolor leather stripes of unique varieties, they implicitly express the random hierarchy of our individual or social chromatic-cosmetic blendings.

The paradoxical activation of this invitation to think our paradigms on appearance is materialized in *Infinite Contradictions*, a flag made of three large pieces of black leather sewn together and attached to three heavy poles. Metaphor of Apparatus 22 collective creative dynamic, the piece can also be activated with the participation of the visitors.

Taking into consideration the color chosen - black, the tension between centrifugal and centripetal dynamics contained in its triptych configuration, the sculpture could be misunderstood as an anti-flag, a symbol of immobility. On the contrary, Apparatus 22 invites us to grasp it as a way to embrace multiplicity, the fruitful coexistence of divergent perspectives offering a solution to problems that may appear first to be appear incongruous. A union triggering here, if not the strength, at least a constructive / positive reflection...

Apparatus 22 is a transdisciplinary art collective founded in January 2011 by Erika Olea, Maria Farcas, Ioana Nemes (1979 - 2011) and Dragos Olea; they are currently working in between Bucharest and Brussels.

Apparatus 22 works around concepts and develop projects that highlight the critical potential of clothing and the fashion industry, a conceptual development genuinely following their experience with Rozalb de Mura cutting edge label (2006-2010).

Overstepping the limits encountered in the fashion world, their artistic practice ventured in more expansive – inclusive and participative - processes where reality and fiction, narration and critical approach are entangled and nourished by cross references from literature, philosophy and also design, sociology or economy.

The collective participated in exhibitions and festivals at La Biennale di Venezia 2013, MUMOK, Vienna (AT), Brukenthal Museum Contemporary Art Gallery, Sibiu (RO), MAK, Vienna (AT), Steirischer Herbst, Graz (AT), Akademie Schloss Solitude, Stuttgart (DE), Salonul de Proiecte, Bucharest (RO), TIME MACHINE BIENNIAL OF CONTEMPORARY ART, D-0 ARK UNDERGROUND, Konji (BIH), TRAFO Gallery, Budapest (HU), Futura, Prague (CZ), Ujazdowski Castle – Centre for Contemporary Art, Warsaw (PL), Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart (DE), Contemporary Art Museum (MNAC), Bucharest (RO), KunstMuseum Linz (AT), Osage Foundation (Hong Kong), Progetto Diogene, Turin (IT), Nest, Den Haag, (NL) etc.

Founded in 1711, the historical creative haven where James Ensor, Van Rysselberghe, Victor Horta, Magritte, Delvaux once acquired and developed their practice, the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of Brussels (ArBA-EsA) is a cross-disciplinary arts school made up of 17 distinctive « cursus » or departments, ranging from the CARE or MULTI masters in curatorial or editorial practices to ISAC (the Superior Institute for Arts and Choreography), alongside more « atelier-based » departments such Painting, Sculpture, Photography, AEsP etc.

The Share WEEK is a week of reflection, workshops and talks that the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of Brussels organizes at the beginning of the 2nd quadrimester each year.

This year, all the activities workshops talks and exhibitions programmed by the Academy's direction are placed under a multifaceted thematic cupola, STEALTH, tackling the ideas and concepts of visibility / invisibility of political and aesthetic commitment to the present in a mediated form.

This programmation was started by inviting the French transdisciplinary collective *les gens d'Uterpan* to inaugurate the academic year 16-17.

Between 15-19 November 2016, followed a week focussed on French Theory

This is not only French Theory /Pensez-vous français? featuring philosophers and thinkers such as François Cusset, Philippe Roux, Mario Côté, artists like Vincent Meessen, Ismaïl Bahri & Hela Laminne, in collaboration with Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM), ESADSE of St-Etienne, and the Academy of Sousse.

During the SHARE WEEK 2017, also placed under the Stealth thematic cupola, Apparatus 22, besides the *Several Laws Multiplicity Review* exhibition project, gave a talk (*Apparatus 22 On Statistics, Suprainfinit, n°3 and Arches of Roses*) and a workshop (*Suprainfinit, l'Avenir Redux*), alongside the proposals by Les gens d'Uterpan (Fr), Various artists (BE) and by Loïc Horellou and Jean-Michel Gériidan from the Ecole des Beaux-Arts de Cambrai.

Among the speakers, we could also underpin the presence of Guillaume Désanges, besides further speakers specialised in varied fields such as international conflicts jurisprudence (J. de Hemptinne), high-debit financial fluxes (Alexandre Laumonier) etc...

(www.arba-esa.be)

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