

SELF- GUIDING BOOKLET

ENGLISH
VERSION



GRAND LARGE — HAUTS-DE-FRANCE

44

**AN ANOTHER
WORLD///
IN OUR WORLD**

ANOTHER WORLD///IN OUR WORLD

A CONTEMPORARY TAKE ON FANTASTIC REALISM

Curator: Jean-François Sanz / artistic director of the Fonds de dotation agnès b.

Artists: Boris Achour, Véronique Béland, Yoan Beliard, Abdelkader Benchamma, Santiago Borja, Rémi Bragard, Vincent Ceraudo, Emma Charrin & Olivier Muller, Alexis Choplain, Arnauld Colcomb & Bertrand Planes, David De Beyter, David Droubaix, Veaceslav Druta, Éric Duyckaerts, Jean-Louis Faure, Nicolas Floc'h, Yona Friedman, GENERAL IDEA, Norbert Ghisoland, Jean Gourmelin, Rodney Graham, Giulia Grossmann, Martin Gusinde, JACKSON, Louis Jammes, Magdalena Jetelová, Ismaël Joffroy Chandoutis, Véronique Joumard, Emmanuelle K., Bertrand Lamarche, Eva L'Hoest, Barbara & Michael Leisgen, Augustin Lesage, Pierre Mazingarbe, Corey McCorkle, Pierre Mercier, Jean-Louis Montigone, Gianni Motti, NASA, Dennis Oppenheim, Jean-Michel Othoniel, Adrian Paci, Trevor Paglen, PANAMARENKO, Abraham Poincheval, Enrique Ramirez, George Reavey, Gwendoline Robin, Lucien Rudaux, Bettina Samson, Dennis Stock, Anaïs Tondeur, Agnès Troublé dite agnès b., João Vieira Torres, Gilberto Zorio

“Modern science has shown us that behind the visible there is an extremely complicated invisible.” J. Bergier & L. Pauwels, *The Morning of the Magicians*

How to master the strangeness of the world? Registering the failure of a too-rational approach, this exhibition is a voyage summoning us to probe the Earth's mysteries.

With this in mind it offers a discovery of fantastic realism, a major feature of the 1960s counterculture, via works by contemporary artists challenging dominant forms of knowledge and hybridising scientific and esoteric knowledge. A mutant little brother of Surrealism, fantastic realism, founded by Jacques Bergier and Louis Pauwels at the magazine *Planète* (1961–1972), was a state of mind urging the conquest of new intellectual realms that mingled the rational and the fantastic with science, history and philosophy. Certain elements of context conjure up the broad social importance of a key period surfing a wave of confidence in the advance of knowledge.

The exhibition presents an extensive and diverse body of work that updates this approach in the light of contemporary issues and technological and scientific progress. Extravagant, hermetic, sensual, the works invite us to explore the residues of traditional, mythical or magical cultures, to probe modified states of consciousness, the limits of our sensory perceptions, the hidden codes of nature and the still indecipherable laws that govern the cosmos.

Is it because they still retain a measure of mystery, that these works make us more sensitive to the strangeness of the world?

Exhibition produced as part of MuséoSciences, in partnership with the Agnès b. Endowment Fund, the Frac Provence-Alpes-Côte d Azur, the Fresnoy - Studio national des arts contemporains and the LaM.

CURIOSITY CABINET

FANTASTIC REALISM: A STATE OF MIND

Planète Magazine, Jean-Louis Faure, Jean Gourmelin, Emmanuelle K.

Planète Magazine, founded by **Louis Pauwels** and **Jaques Bergier** in 1961 (last edition in 1968), in addition to their literary work *The Dawn of Magic* (1960), paved the way to a new way of thinking called Fantastic Realism. The magazine symbolizes their will to 're-enchant' the world by bringing together science, esotericism, philosophy and fantasy literature. Their taste for hybridisation materialises in the 'curiosity cabinet', which serves as an introduction to the exhibition but also gives a perspective on the movement.

Emmanuelle K., poet and story-teller of the Situationist Movement, reads some of the cited texts that show the violent attacks by Surrealists on Fantastic Realists. One can listen to the introduction to *The Book of the Damned* by Charles H. Fort (1874-1932) and the article *Le crépuscule des bonimenteurs (The Twilight of the Dogs)* by the filmmaker Robert Benayoun that makes a firm condemnation of Bergier and Pauwels interpretation. He was the canonical author in Pauwels and Bergier's hearts, as well as the father figure of the Fantastic Realism movement. In his writings, Benayoun offers a cutting opinion of Fantastic Realism and of Fort's work.

Jean-Louis Faure is a convinced anti-militarist. He fled to South America to avoid conscription for Algeria. Artistic director to many different magazines in the 1960's -prosperous years for *Planète*- he endeavoured to rewrite History. By repurposing objects, using pastiche and the concept of uchrony, the artist tries to show the absurdity of our History.

In *Kurt Schwitters en Angleterre (Kurt Schwitters in England)*, *aboyant (barking)* ; *Félix Eboué* ; *Récalcitrons (Obstinating)*...., we are faced with horrors from the Second World War. Jaques Bergier was one of the victims and rare survivor of Birkenau, as well as a resistant fighter.

Jean Gourmelin is, directly connected to *Planète* as an illustrator. His drawings were particularly appreciated by Pauwels and Bergier in their striking metaphysical dimension and simple technique. Luce Gourmellin, his wife, gives a comment on the relationship he had with them: “With the first, he began a long friendship. With the second, he used to talk about mathematics and the notion of space & time. Out of a simple drawing sketched on a restaurant table cloth, he would give an explanation and he (Bergier) would understand it.” The result of these passionate exchanges is the abundance of drawings, embodiment of the utopian world of Bergier and Pauwels, on the line between science-fiction and fantasy.

REPURPOSING TO SEE THE PURPOSE

Yoan Beliard, Rémi Bragard, David Droubaix, Erik Duyckaerts, GENERAL IDEA, Gianni Motti

Repurposing is fundamentally linked to contemporary artistic practices. Since the 1950's it has been used to demonstrate a rupture with the past and to offer a new vision of what already exists.

Planète gave an alternative explanation of our history and strange phenomena through a new analysis of texts and interpretation of vestiges. Contemporary artists opened a new field of reflection, by looking closely at our society through repurposing ordinary

artefacts. From books to newspapers and scientific journals or *Planète* magazine covers, the artists presented here give a new sense to forms we cannot see anymore because we are too accustomed to seeing them. Between strange and ridiculous, quirky and mundane, the works refresh our way of seeing by making us rediscover the mechanisms of our world.

Gianni Motti is a radical artist. By re-interpreting daily events, natural disasters or accidents, he claims them as his own. In the series *Revendications*, the artists becomes responsible for the Challenger Spaceship explosion (1986), or an earthquake in California (1992). These staged photographs of AFP (Agence France Presse) feeds and other documents question the manipulation of images and information.

In a more scientific direction, artist **Erik Duyckaerts** presents a new take on the Theory of Evolution where humans would have an extra finger on their hand. *One Forearm Hypothesis* mimicks the solemnity of science in order to go against our certainties and the future of mankind.

David Droubaix questions 1960's literature and highlights censored works. These works have been used to feed far-right conspiracy theories that are widely spread online today. In *Wer durch das Schwert lebt... (Live with the Sword...)*, the artist impales these aggressive theories and demonstrates the importance of making things visible in order to not forget them.

Yoan Beliard's *Ghost Faces* and *Objets réminiscents* triggers the visual imaginary where fantastic realism thrives. *Ghost Faces* are directly inspired by *Planète's* covers. They are made of plaster with

mirrors for eyes, like a reflexion of the past and the present. *Reminiscent Objects* are memorabilia that have been placed in a cave to begin a calcification process. These ordinary shapes become mysterious and seem to turn into fossils from another time.

Good Luck from Swanage by **Rémi Bragard** is a collection of postcards showing a globe from the city of Swanage, England. The massive sculpture was first made as a pedagogical project and has since become a sort of altar to Science. The effect is enhanced by headstones that are actually solar system information panels. The pictures are undated, but span over a century. They are placed in a manner that invites our gaze to follow the Earth's rotation. This succession of illustrations from different times, showcasing varied viewpoints of our planet, offers the public a journey through space and time.

Nazi Milk is an iconic image by the Canadian Collective **GENERAL IDEA** at the root of their reflection on modern history's taboos. Much like an advertising poster, the image of a young blond boy calls to mind the third Reich by the reference to Adolf Hitler's moustache made by leftover milk. It has become the symbol of horrors rooted in our History, impossible to hide in spite of the aesthetic design of the image, reminding us of how commercial advertisements work.

Jacques Bergier and Louis Pauwels have endeavoured to understand these 'truths to be told', in *The Dawn of Magic*, where a third part of the book traces the occult and sectarian origins of the third Reich. The alternative theories, sometimes more fantasy than history, answer the need to try to understand the unconceivable.

ARTISTS BOOKS

Yona Friedman, Rodney Graham, Jean-Michel Othoniel, George Reavey

Fantastic realism is built on literary references from Fantasy, Surrealist and Esoteric literature.

With *Farewell to Faust (Vaarwel Faust)* surrealist poet **George Reavey** puts himself under 16th century poet Christopher Marlowe's guidance. The work is composed of a poem by his wife, inspired by the ghost of Marlowe, and a poem by Reavey dedicated to Marlowe. Literature meets the supernatural and spiritualism fields of studies of fantastic realism.

Recently, the artists **Jean Michel Othoniel** Graham confronted their work to that of Raymond Roussel and Edgar Allan Poe, masters of Esoteric and Fantasy literature. The edition entitled *Locus Solus*, by Jean Michel Othoniel introduces us to Raymond Roussel's book, also a celebrated and enigmatic figure of surrealism whose literary work is made up of numerous esoteric references. Othoniel leads an inquiry to understand what inspired Roussel's work.

Rodney Graham passes on the work of Edgar Allan Poe. In *The System of Landor's Cottage*, Graham prolongs Poe's last short story where he describes his discovery of a property whilst walking in an idyllic countryside. Graham adds a new room to the house, occupied with a mysterious machine whose use remains unknown. The tone of description is similar to that of Poe's, and accentuates the idea that the work has been interfered with. As if Graham owned Poe's words and spirit.

Artist and architect **Yona Friedman**, regarded as utopian, never stopped finding solutions to cohabitation, including ecological, technological and cultural issues.

Manuels (Instruction Manuals) is a comic book technique the artists uses to generate abstract and generic thoughts that could be difficult to grasp. Through a vocabulary of images and short captions, *Hypothèses (Hypothesis)* offers a pedagogical and philosophical interpretation of power relations in the universe, and their echo and similarities through human and animal behaviours.

SEEING BEYOND THE VISIBLE

Magdalena Jetelová, JACKSON

The exploration of fantastic realism is also a deep exploration of a pivotal moment of History. Indeed the 1960's are synonym of a new world scarred by a painful past, but also full of hope in new technology, especially the media that accelerates and intensifies the broadcasting of images and information.

In *The Essential Is No More Visible* **Magdalena Jetelová** evokes the memory of the Atlantic Wall, a defensive wall built by the Nazis after their conquest of Europe. These series of bunkers built along the coast of Norway all the way to Spain have become mysterious unidentifiable shapes, after their erosion.

This bunker, like a black monolith and martial artefact obstructing the horizon by its heavy mass, embodies a reflection on the passing of time and the relics of History that scarred Europe. Projected quotes from philosopher and urbanist Paul Virilio (who wrote a book on bunkers), reinforce the memory of this tragic event.

The Essential Is No More Visible reminds us that the event is now invisible, submitted to time and mystical and cosmological parameters, but was once materialised by tangible things. In a wider sense, this title phrase triggers a questioning of the way we ponder what is essential and how it can escape our senses and become imperceptible.

JACKSON's *Fog News* confronts us to the aspect of society marked by the dematerialisation of information and our History as well. In this installation made of a fog projector onto which a stream of

live news is projected, Jackson turns the invisible frame of informative media into a visible matter. The molecular and evanescent aspect of fog turns news images into impalpable and elusive ideas. The constant distortion of images due to the evaporation of fog enhances the fugitive character of information. *Fog News* appears as an echo of the ever-changing nature of our reality and the impossibility for the human brain to grasp its essence.

SCIENTIFICALLY FANTASTIC

Rémi Bragard, Alexis Choplain

Planète magazine always claimed its scientific dimension in a goal to use rationalist approaches to decipher phenomena considered nonsensical and pointless by conventional researchers and rationalists. This process is at the root of fantastic realism, meaning looking for “the complicated invisible behind the simple visible”. In the same spirit, Alexis Choplain and Rémi Bragard stage famous scientific phenomena, nonetheless ignored by a majority of outsiders, in order to create surprise and wonder.

Alexis Choplain with *Signo_*, invites us into his world, where research is as important as the result. The artist bases his experimentations on vibration phenomena and highlights physical reactions thwarting our perception. *Signo_* is a sound and water device. A trickle of water flowing continuously interacts with a sound flow and thus vibrates. Added to the mixture is a stroboscopic light. As a result, the water seems to freeze and sometimes flow upwards, in a complete paradox with basic physical theories such as gravity.

Rémi Bragard, in his video entitled *Le phénomène de caléfaction ou la danse infernale de la goutte d'eau (Phenomenon of caléfaction or infernal dance of the water drop)* shows our capacity of amazement about situations seemingly magical for non-scientists. The artist collects videos published by people having fun by pouring water on a 400 degrees Celsius slab. At this heat, caléfaction happens, creating a layer of steam underneath the drop of water, preserving it from evaporation.

ARNAULD COLCOMB & BERTRAND PLANES

1977, France / 1975, France

MODULATOR - DEMODULATOR

2014-2019

Two transmitter and receiver modules, wood, sound, screen, variable dimensions.

Courtesy of the artists

With their installation *Modulator - Demodulator*, duo Arnauld Colcomb and Bertrand Planes invite us to experience the blurred limit between the visible and ethereal. With the strangeness of their equipment, they conjure figures from the past.

The piece works on the principle of synesthesia: a visual signal (Jacques Bergier's figure) is transmitted from an image on the wall with the use of a transmitter shaped as a megaphone. The signal is then transformed into a sound frequency and travels through the exhibition space to reach the second transmitter shaped as satellite dish.

The image displayed on the screen, behind the receptive aerial, gives shape to phenomena invisible to the human eye. The piece becomes interactive: by walking through the two transmitters, we are interfering with the signal. Thus, the image is altered.

Playing with invisible phenomena that nonetheless exists, and allowing us to interact with it re-enchants our connection to technology and science. Bergier and Pauwels would surely have approved, fascinated as they were by the "complicated invisible" of our universe.

GILBERTO ZORIO

1944, Italy

TO PURIFY WORDS

1978

Terra cotta and steal, diametre: 270 cm

Frac Grand Large — Hauts-de-France collection / Purchase in 1983

Major figure of the Italian avant-garde movement Arte povera of the 60's and 70's, Gilberto Zorio positions his artistic production under the sign of ritual and cosmic. His use of organic and raw materials magnifies the idea of a magical and mysterious artistic practice that we are witnessing.

To Purify Words belongs to a body of work created in 1969 that focuses on reflections embodied by the shape of the star. According to Zorio, the shape of star personifies the vital relationship of humanity with time and the space surrounding us. Indeed, the star could be seen as a magical and esoteric allegory, and as a sign of the scientific realm as well.

Made of terra cotta, and then broken up, one of the branches is pierced by a hole which could be used for speaking into. Inside the branch is a container filled with alcohol, like a symbolic filter purifying the words exchanged with the star.

To Purify Words appears as a transmitter, a link between humanity and its surroundings, set on the border of materiality and spirituality.

A timeless shape marked by the passing of time, *To Purify Words* embodies human aspirations of enlightenment, especially the discovery of hidden truths.

BARBARA & MICHAEL LEISGEN

1940-2017, Germany / 1944, Austria

THE MOUTH THE EAR THE EYE

1980

Set of three diptychs, from the series *Les écritures du soleil*, cibachrome photos, 80 x 100 cm each
Frac Grand Large — Hauts-de-France collection / Purchase in 1983

Barbara and Michael Leisgen, German photographers, work on landscapes as they would a painting where each stroke is borrowed from a natural occurrence.

The photographs entitled *The Mouth*, *The Ear* and *The Eye* belong to the series *Sun Writings*, a collection of pieces where the sun becomes a paintbrush revealing mysterious celestial symbols.

With a skillful manipulation of the camera consisting of capturing sunlight in swift and sharp movements, the artists create traces that are used as a basis for a new language.

These revelations of form are open to interpretation. At times reminding us of hieroglyphics, at times drawings coming from prehistorical wall art. The frame of the picture itself, in a natural environment at twilight is reminiscent of a mystery about to happen.

Does this language come from a forgotten archaic society? Is it the expression of a divine power or nature itself? Through the photographic medium, Barbara and Michael Leisgen offer a new symbolic understanding of nature, embracing truths to be seen and deciphered.

PIERRE MERCIER

1946-2016, France

ORION I / ORION II / ORION III

1982

Three black and white photographs with potassium cyanide and anamorphosis,
75,5 x 60 cm each

Frac Grand Large — Hauts-de-France collection / Purchase in 1983

Photographer and sculptor, Pierre Mercier also uses diverse artefacts to question the place of the body in Art. In the photograph series *Orion I / Orion II / Orion III*, Pierre Mercier plays with our perception of image with a display of sculptures recalling 19th century aesthetic, underneath a starry sky.

However, the statues are actually living models covered in clay and the sky is an original photograph made and altered by the artist.

Behind these illusionist technical procedures is a desire to confront our western representations that place humankind at the center of the universe. Orion seems like the obvious choice of representation here, as he is the emblematic figure of the transformation of a hunter into a constellation.

Is it safe to say that this anthropocentric model justifies our central place in the world? Could it be a cleverly reassuring trick in the face of the unknown and inexplicable? Pierre Mercier is offering a new way thinking about infinity, in using fixed bodies in the immensity of space.

BORIS ACHOUR

1966, France

SOMME (1) SOMME (3)

1999

Two framed colour photographs, 57,5 x 84,5 cm / 55,5 x 82,5 cm
Frac Grand Large — Hauts-de-France collection / Purchase in 2000

With Boris Achour, art becomes a space for playing with repurposing and discrepancy.

The artist came to fame in the 1990's with his *Actions-peu* (Actions-few), recorded performances where the artist interacts with urban surroundings through a discreet and derisory series of movements.

Behind these artistic gestures lays a determination to shake the art world's conventions, to add value to the ordinary and highlight the invisible side of daily life. His series of photographs *Sommes* is an example of this reflection.

These shots were all taken in a wealthy area of Los Angeles. We see the artist himself, asleep on hedges separating neighboring properties. Boris Achour embodies a disruptive element in a seemingly controlled and neat reality. He instills the notion of disorder and consequently makes a surrealist atmosphere, hence making the audience doubt the reality of the images.

Somme (1) and *Somme (3)* breach our understanding of what is genuine and intertwine the reality and fiction that define our day to day life.

ABRAHAM POINCHEVAL

1972, France

THE WANDERING KNIGHT, THE MAN WITH NO HERE

2020

Installation / Sculpture: armor, resin, shell, variable dimensions. Courtesy of Gallery Semiose Abraham Poincheval & Mathieu Verdeil, video, 2018, 15". Courtesy of the artists

Abraham Poincheval is an artist famous for his unusual and extreme performances. He considers creation as an adventure, like his hero, the explorer Yuri Gagarine. His radical propositions led him to sit on an egg until it hatches, lock himself up in a rock for a week or in a bear skin in the Museum of Hunting and Nature in Paris.

The issue of 'detention' guides the artist's practice and reflection on the notion of internal travel, with a strong connection to initiation rituals.

In *The Wandering Knight*, the man with no here, Abraham Poincheval masters a singular and brave syncretism of two aspects of his work: claustrophobia and travel, by entering 30kg medieval armor while crossing Brittany by foot from east to west. *The Wandering Knight* calls forth an Arthurian imaginary on his path through Brittany, arousing thus a connection between past and present, myth and reality.

The strangeness of this performance is documented in a film directed by Mathieu Verdeil who followed the artist's course. The armor on display, a commemorative sculpture consumed by vegetation, is a new piece especially produced for the exhibition in the Frac Grand Large, the original having been purchased as a sculpture by Frac Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur.

DENNIS STOCK

1928-2010, United-States

PLANET OF THE APES

1967

Book of 12 black and white prints, photographs taken on movie set, 36 x 26 cm each
Frac Grand Large — Hauts-de-France collection / Purchase in 2008

Dennis Stock is primarily famous for his photographs of James Dean published in *Life* magazine. However, he was also part of a generation of photographers who contributed to the rich documentation of significant events in the U.S.A in the 1960's, such as the Hippie movement, the Vietnam War and the rise of Hollywood.

Planet of the Apes is part of a series of photographs taken during the shooting of the movie *Planet of The Apes* in 1968, which was an adaptation of the science-fiction novel written by Pierre Boule in 1965. We see actors and extras walking on the set location, between takes. The 'ape-men' naturally mixing with technicians in an ordinary surrounding creates a fantastic atmosphere.

Beyond the unreal atmosphere produced by the meeting of two distinct universe, Dennis Stock catches the spirit of a time of high hopes placed in the space conquest. Indeed the literary success of science-fiction sagas and movies such as *Planet of the Apes*, *Dune* or *2001 A Space Odyssey* open to a new imagery that does not seem so far.

This "reality meeting fiction" was much used and commentated on by Pauwels and Bergier, in their deep fascination of major Science Fiction and Fantasy works depicting a fragment of reality that should be taken seriously.

DENNIS OPPENHEIM

1938-2011, United-States

POLARITIES

2018

Photocopy, photograph, text and drawing on cardboard, 84,2 x 107 cm
Frac Grand Large — Hauts-de-France collection / Purchase in 1985

Dennis Oppenheim's work has always shown a strong relationship between space and landscape and is at the origin of Land Art, a major artistic movement of the 1960's.

Polarities introduces the artist's intimate relation with photography showing mysterious drawings that illuminate natural landscapes.

These shapes could bring to mind the Nazca geoglyphs or crop circles.* They are, however, made from his father's last illustration and one of the first drawings of his one year old daughter Chandra. Reproduced by the artist with magnesium torches, the dimension of these 150-meter long temporary artworks accounts for the sky shots and preparatory sketches with a map of the action.

Through the monumental is expressed the ephemeral. The ephemeral of a life that was celebrated in 1972 and is still palpable in the artwork of this man, son and father.

**A crop circle is a circle pattern that can be found in cereal fields. These mysterious shapes are at the basis of numerous theories such as natural phenomena, human interventions, extraterrestrial occurrences... or more fanciful creations.*

DAVID DE BEYTER

1985, France

MAGICAL PLACE IV (UCANCA VALLEY)

2018

Chromogenic printing, 2 (140 x 94 cm)

Courtesy of the artist and Gallery Cédric Bacqueville, Lille

David De Beyter explores the boundary between reality and fiction with his photographs. He is interested in different communities, such as the scientific ufology enthusiasts he meets here in Spain. These enthusiasts are trying to make the modern myth of the UFO (unidentified flying objects) tangible.

The *Magical Places* series is a fictional investigation based on ufological documentation (stories, documentary images, testimonials, etc.). His photographs revisit supernatural scenarios inspired by collected stories to create a sort of 'docu-fiction' through made-up scenes (ship crash, etc.).

Magical Place IV (Ucanca Valley) is performed in the Spanish island of Tenerife, where the site of Ucanca Valley is known as a place that often appears in these types of stories. David De Beyter reenacts the birth of the UFO myth on the island in 1974, when a ballistic missile created a luminous halo of thirty kilometers in diameter between the Canary Islands and the southern Sahara. In the center of the image, the two 'cuts' made directly on the negative by the artist become the object and subject of analysis of the community of scientific ufologists.

With this series, David De Beyter questions the aging of a belief and questions places through their potential to create fiction and storyline.

BERTRAND LAMARCHE

1966, France

LOBBY (HYPER-TORE)

2016

Sculpture, flexible tubular crown, motor, diameter: 110 cm, height: 34 cm

Courtesy of the artist and Gallery Jérôme Poggi, Paris

Bertrand Lamarache's work finds a particular voice in modern engineering's achievements. Through his artistic propositions, he restitutes and enhances mechanics from which his fascination of complex procedures transpires.

Lobby (Hyper-Tore), is at the crossroad of Art and Robotics, in its tubular structure connected to an engine. Powered on, the piece expresses its complex geometric features: self rotating uninterrupted movement in a closed space.

This structure materializes forces dissected as symbols of power after the war and, in its shape, reminds us of Minimalist art but also a scientific indication of blackholes. Torus is the basic geometric form for nuclear reactors' engineering, indispensable to nuclear fusion.

Bertrand Lamarache, in *Lobby (Hyper-Tore)*, exposes an invisible mathematic phenomenon unconsciously leading many aspects of our lives. His work is an echo to many of Jaques Bergier's scientific research, for whom mastering atomic science was the key to building tomorrow

LUCIEN RUDAUX

1874-1947, France

Lucien Rudaux is mostly known for his work on making science accessible, especially astronomy. An amateur painter, his passion for spatial observation guides him in his production of pieces showing different panoramas seen from diverse positions in the solar system.

He was noticed by the astronomer and famous editor Camille Flammarion and their collaboration saw the release of many popular major works on astronomy, their most famous being *Sur les autres mondes* (*On the other Worlds*, only in French), published in 1937.

The illustrations are remarkable in the originality of the viewpoint presented. *Une phase de la Terre vue dans le ciel lunaire...* (*A phase of Earth seen in the lunar sky*), *Une phase de Jupiter vue d'un de ses proches satellites* (*A phase of Jupiter seen from a close satellite*), or *Jupiter vu de son premier satellite* (*Jupiter seen from its first satellite*) turns the audience into an explorer of systems unknown by the public.

The artist's radical choices are responsible for the rise of new imagery. Its consequence is intensified by the gift of Lucien Rudaux, whose strikingly realist lines endeavor to reconstitute scientific hypotheses and data of the time.

Even today, the precision in his visuals are objects of fascination. Lucien Rudaux, more than a precursor, is a scientific avant-garde figure. Indeed, many of his landscapes are consistent with today's knowledge of these planets.

Without a doubt, the work of this artist would have had a prominent place in *Planète* magazine, at the crossroad between wild fantasy and assertive science.

NASA'S PHOTOGRAPHS

APOLLO 12 - ALAN BEAN - CHARLES PETE CONRAD, 1969

APOLLO 8 - MOON VIEW, 1969

APOLLO 17 - RONALD EVANS - EARTH RISE WITH CRATER RITZ, 1972

APOLLO 8, VIEW OF THE EARTH TAKEN BY WILLIAM ANDERS, 1968

Prints, 19,1 x 18, 8 cm / 20 x 22,5 cm / 18,3 x 24 cm / 19,4 x 20,2 cm

Agnès b., Paris collection

The photographs taken by Appollo Mission's various crews perfectly blend with a hypothetical chronology of spatial imagery initiated by Lucien Rudaux's illustrations.

30 years separate Rudaux's paintings and these photographs testifying that the 20th century went through a deep technological revolution. In this world, astronomical reveries become facts and reality in the shape of the conquest of Space.

These historical images were used by NASA as scientific research instruments as well as informative data. On top of this, they possess a real aesthetic due to the genuine beauty of the panoramas and the technical genius of the Kodak company. Indeed, the company developed specific emulsions in order to capture the true nuances of celestial bodies, without the use of filters or obstructions due to terrestrial or lunar atmospheres.

The series of lunar and terrestrial viewpoints is imbedded with timelessness. They represent a turning point in the way we see our blue planet and the importance of preserving its fragile ecosystems, whose global beauty is uncovered here for the first time.

Mission Appollo 8's captain, Frank Borman, says it perfectly himself: "We thought we were going to discover the Moon, but we discovered Earth."

VÉRONIQUE JOUMARD

1964, France

MOONS, SUNS

1993

Series of 4 cibachrome photographs, polyester base on aluminum, 127 x 190 cm each
Frac Grand Large — Hauts-de-France collection / Purchase in 1993

From sculpture, installation or photography, artist Véronique Joumard creates devices bringing indispensable energy sources into view.

The installations or sculptures created by the artist feature raw materials from the industrial sector such as lamps, light bulbs, resistors and electric cables like suggestions of our modern urban lives ; the photograph series stretches our perspective and shows invisible interactions with celestial bodies.

Suns, Moons is a series of four photographs showing telescopic views of the sun and moon through different angles. Behind the precision and beauty of these images is highlighted the bond between human and celestial bodies: the sun being the source of light on Earth and the moon, regulator of oceanic currents.

As a parallel to Lucien Rudaux's illustrations and the NASA photography's of space, *Suns, Moons* embodies the fascination of men for outer space since immemorial times, in art and science.

PANAMARENKO

1940-2019, Belgium

VERTI-VORTEX

1981

Model of spaceship, iron, rubber and magnet, 40 x 210 x 35 cm

Frac Grand Large — Hauts-de-France collection / Purchase in 1983

Belgian Artist PANAMARENKO's practices can be placed between two universes: art and science.

Since his graduation from Beaux Arts School, his fascination for mechanics and technology has been used for creating vehicles and futuristic objects through his mastery of drawing. PANAMARENKO's work is on the border of science and fiction.

Like a 'mad scientist', his racing cars, aircraft and other models, which are all perfectly functioning pieces, are parallel to more poetic and surrealists objects. *Verti-Vortex* belongs to the latter category.

The metal dragonfly is an introduction to a science fiction inspired bestiary, although it does come from a study of prehistorical animal anatomy. *Verti-Vortex* opens possibilities of interpretations and invites us to imagine a world where this insect could live.

Between rationality and fantasy, PANAMARENKO's artwork entertains a natural dialog with fantastic realism theories and applies modernist scientific concepts in order to force us to imagine what might be hiding behind our perception of reality.

BETTINA SAMSON

1978, France

BACKLIGHTING

Subtitle: For a Future Exploration of Dark Matter I, 2012

Subtitle: For a Future Exploration of Dark Matter II, 2011

Glass melted and etched by sandblasting, 101 x 62 cm each

Frac Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, Marseille collection

Bettina Samson is interested in the physical properties of matter. Her work focuses on turning invisible phenomena visible by using the cosmos as her platform of representation.

In both sculptures from the series *Backlighting*, the artist uses drawing as a way to reveal physical processes unknown to the general public.

Bettina Samson engraves glass slabs and removes layers of glass by way of revealing abstract shapes, working her way into the medium through a sandblasting procedure. Her practice reminds us of Joseph Albers's artistic productions. He was a painter of the Bauhaus School and became famous for his geometrical variations around the square shape.

These engraved frameworks are actually a series of computer signs under the control of a spectroscope, device detecting black matter in the universe.

These *Backlightings* transport us into a rich invisible world evoking complex and unknown machinery that sheds light on the original elements from our universe.

In her practice, Bettina Samson enters a long genealogy of explorers and scientists, in a quest for the 'the complicated invisible' structuring our world, as Pauwels and Bergier's would say.

ABDELKADER BENCHAMMA

1975, France

FOSSIL

2020

Ink and collage on paper, mural, variable dimensions

The Horizon of Events, 2018-2019, ink on paper, 250 x 150 cm each

Courtesy of the artist and Templon, Paris – Brussels

Abdelkader Benchamma is an 'heir of fantastic realism'. At an early age, he discovered *Planète* magazine, eagerly devouring its content. Its aesthetic and themes have had a long lasting influence on his artistic practice and his search for the invisible.

Commissioned for the exposition, this new piece by Abdelkader Benchamma, *Fossil*, combines a monumental mural with framed images, complementing or projecting them by clarifying or modifying their interpretation.

The Horizon of Events is the idea at the core of *Fossil*. These three gigantic drawings depict the invisible interactions of celestial bodies in a delicate manner. Two bodies seem trapped in an energy flow. The mural, which the triptych is suspended on, appears as central thread, opening and investing the space around smaller images. The construction of images acts to highlight *The Horizon of Events* and enhances the connection that the artist makes between scientific theories on the universe's expansion

In this invented cosmogony, each wave, dot or stroke of ink, becomes the manifestation of physical processes staging the notion of celestial speed, time and motion as well as other indiscernible notions that the drawing medium is not expected to reproduce.

EVA L'HOEST

1991, Belgium

SHITSUKAN OF OBJECTS

2019

Installation, polymer sculptures and video triptych, stereo lithography, 6'33, sound, color, soundtrack by Christina Vantzou and John Also Bennett, soundmixing: Pierre Dozin
Courtesy of the artist

Artist Eva L'Hoest draws us into her universe, with her installations, videos and sculptures where technology is ubiquitous and the relationship between humans and machines is completely shaken up.

Shitsukan Of Objects is an installation composed of three sculptures and twelve screens. The videos put us in a new reality designed by computer from pieces of memories captured in a MRI scan machine and via artificial intelligence. In order to give life to this world, the artist uses video games data, neuroscientific experiences and algorithms. Blended together, these components create a weightless world where humanity becomes a digital hybrid, waiting in his apathy, for an upgrade.

Shitsukan Of Objects gives life to a new world dominated by computer science. This reality under construction paves the way to new perspectives, hardly understandable a few decades ago but for a handful of scientists, philosophers or sci-fi authors.

SANTIAGO BORJA

1970, Mexico

JUNG-CATCHER II (MODEL)

2020

Plywood (birch), steel and rope, 1 x 1 m

Frac Grand Large — Hauts-de-France collection / Donation in 2020

Santiago Borja's work is at the crossroad of art, anthropology and architecture. The central theme of his work is the creation of original structures mixing contemporary art and design with craftsmanship.

Jung-Catcher II is part of the artist's reflection around the place of magical thinking in a modern world. Following *Tapis Cosmogonia Suspendida*, series of embroidered carpets representing the Inca's cosmogony, *Jung Catcher II*, reproduces the shape of a dream catcher, a traditional item found in Native American cultures.

The dream catcher, whose symbolism calls to ancestral Native American's beliefs in dreams, is confronted with Carl Gustav Jung's psychoanalysis theory. He was the rival of Freud but nonetheless a distinguished psychiatrist of early 20th century.

Jung's prolific literary work shows interest points where science intertwines with esoteric. Indeed, his book *Psychology and Alchemy* contributed to the new popularity of ancient writings on alchemy. He is also the author of an original theory about the construction of the personality. Using the main arguments of Jung's theory, Santiago Borgia translates the concepts in a mandala in the shape of a dream-catcher.

The object's symbolism goes beyond a ritual or psychoanalytic dimension but becomes a hybrid concept, catching in its net a new modernity enthralled by magic and spirituality while needing rationality.

FANTASTIC LANDSCAPES

Emma Charrin en Olivier Muller, Nicolas Floc'h, Trevor Paglen

Following the path of the thinkers of fantastic realism who ventured to show the imperceptible structuring our world, Emma Charrin, Olivier Muller, Trevor Paglen and Nicolas Floc'h reveal hidden territory of our reality that are open to diverse interpretations.

Nicolas Floc'h in *Structures productives (Productive Structures)* suggests a view of a mysterious underwater world that seems unrecognisable at first. His minimalist sculptures-the artist created concrete models on a 1/10^e scale -, have been immersed on Japanese, European and American coasts. These structures, designed with a scientific aim to renew ocean ecosystems destroyed by intensive fishing, embody unknown realities when taken out of their primary use. They invite us to imagine aesthetic treasures from unknown territories and question mankind's fascination for the unreachable.

Trevor Paglen presents photographic testimonials of the American government's secret activities, which are the result of a strong body of research, surveys and photography shoots. *Open Hangar ; Cactus Flats, NV ; Distance – 18 Miles ; 10:04 am and Detachment 3, Air Force Flight Test Center #2 ; Groom Lake, NV: Distance – 26 miles* shows restricted military camp bases that the general public cannot access. The 'culture of secrecy' contributed to feeding widespread fantasies. It was at the origin of popular fictional television works (X-File), as well as a myriad of confidential texts and videos sharing conspiracy theories. With the use of a particular lens allowing one to capture images from kilometres away, Trevor Paglen reveals this invisible dimension, intrinsic and unreachable for our grasp.

The blur, a result of the long distance shot, gives a palpable feel to the idea of secrecy shown by the artist.

Emma Charrin en Olivier Muller chose to disclose spaces 'in between' past and future: the transition of natural worlds undergoing urbanisation, thus disappearing. The couple set up their studio in the outskirts of Tangier and produced a series entitled *Baltellala*. In these intermediary landscapes, some forms and ephemeral installations emerge, like an embodiment of the morning dew. The images may be perceived as a proof of the artist's desire to enchant our world. Their presence reveals the action of mankind but calls to mind a ritual aesthetic, remembrance of ancestral beliefs embedded with invisible powers, guardians of sacred places visited by humanity. In Emma Charrin and Olivier Muller's photograph, focal points are diverse and rich. They call for a poetic vision of landscape where human and divinity co-exist in the 'in-between', between reality and fiction.

FACES FROM THE PAST, VOICES FROM BEYOND

Norbert Ghisoland, Martin Gusinde, Augustin Lesage

The artworks presented here go back before the Second World War, where self-taught artists and unorthodox practises go beyond the traditional frame of Art. Be it photography or painting, these three artists voice their opinion of the world, at times through photographs filled with wonder for nearly extinct civilizations or anonymous people that would be forgotten if it wasn't for photography, or through a painting charged with powers from beyond.

Martin Gusinde, an Austrian missionary and anthropologist, came across tribes whose cultures and oral rites seemed destined to disappear during his travels in Tierra del Fuego in the 1920's. This series of nine photographs records their ancestral traditions, personified by codified bodily rites. The photographs were taken for documentary purposes, but have now become images of a fantastic nature where the painted body materialises a wealth of culture and aesthetic.

Norbert Ghisoland's work records life in the Borinage of Belgium with tens of thousands of portraits taken in his studio. During 40 years, this collection, rediscovered by his grandson, brings back to life a community of Nobles, Miners and families. The photographer's staging embellishes these ordinary images by adding a strange dimension, by dressing up his models and placing them in front of a trompe-l'oeil background

Augustin Lesage was also a Miner. In 1912, at the bottom of a mine, he heard a voice telling him to become a painter. His career of spiritual painter began then, while he maintained his profession. Between 1912 and 1954, guided by his 'voices', he produced hundreds of paintings. These 'inspired' artworks take the shape of temples filled with kaleidoscopic patterns, echoing Eastern and Christian spiritualities. The working conditions in which his art was produced reinforces the magnetism of his extraordinary paintings. His unique and exceptional technique remains inexplicable for a self-taught artist.

ON RADIOACTIVITY

Louis Jammes, Anaïs Tondeur, Agnès Troublé

Jacques Bergier was a scientist and expert in nuclear chemistry and radioactivity before co-creating *Planète* magazine in 1961. Bergier, in his conception of a world where rationality brushes up against the magical, made unprecedented comparisons between ancient alchemy phenomena with modern knowledge of the atom.

The fascination of these free-thinkers for nuclear power and its disastrous consequences have indeed found a particular reminiscence in the work of Louis Jammes, Anaïs Tondeur et Agnès Troublé, aka agnès b. Through three different lenses: documentary, ecological and poetic, we com face to face with the invisible power of forces surpassing man.

Louis Jammes with *Tchernobyl. Mémoire de l'ouvrier disparu dans la catastrophe (Chernobyl. Memory of the worker who disappeared in the tragedy)*, takes us into the 4th reactor of Chernobyl nuclear power plant. The explosion of the reactor in 1986 marks a shift and a deep questioning of scientific progress. In these images taken in the 90's, the artist shows the tragedy in a frontal manner. The use of bromide creates strong contrasts in the black and white images and highlights the idea of desolation. The serial construction incurs a narrative in which the worker is in every single image, like the anonymous ghost of a tragic story.

Tchernobyl Herbarium by **Anaïs Tondeur** points out the dramatic ecological consequences of the disaster, by explaining how radioactivity modified the plants DNA around the power station. By

using wavegrams, the impact of the catastrophe on the living becomes perceptible.

Agnès Troublé's video is a sequence from her feature film *Je m'appelle Hmmm (My name is Hmmm)* released in 2014. The sequence shows a duo of Butô dancers practising in the woods. Butô dancing was created in the 1960's in Japan as a therapeutic way to express post-traumatic stress after the Nuclear Bomb attack. Through Butô, the suffering Japan after war and nuclear bombings, by a nation torn between ancestral tradition and western modernity, is relieved. The dancers movements simultaneously call forth and cleanse, like ghosts from an unforgettable past.

FANTASY WORLDS

Véronique Béland, Adrian Paci

Fantastic Realism is a movement created by Jacques Bergier and Louis Pauwels along with the publication of their book *The Dawn of Magic*. They mix science with the imaginary and fantasy in a quest to reach new ways of thinking.

Their wish to initiate a mixture of genres and shake up modern thinking had a profound impact on people's minds. While it has lost popularity, this intellectual openness and blurring of boundaries between disciplines is found in new artist's works. Their diverse input has contributed to discovering new and fertile ways of thinking.

Adrian Paci and Véronique Béland invite us to dive into the world of dream through their art installation and video. The artist's comparisons upset our perception of reality through their installation showing the unconscious of machinery, as well as new narration modes.

Adrian Paci, a video artist, makes a proposition in *Per Speculum*. He enters a strange dimension where children playing in what seems like an idyllic nature are literally shattering the mirror of a reality. The destabilisation of our points of reference mixed with our incapacity to cling to a fractured reality lead us to fall into a new space with unknown rules.

The movie progresses in a universe shaped around multiple symbols. Hidden realities are conveyed by the mirror. Indeed the title

itself, *Per Speculum*, is a reference to a letter by Saint Paul inviting us to look beyond the Mirror of appearances to find God.

The mirror is also metaphorical to a passage towards the wonderful future (a reference to Alice crossing the mirror to enter Wonderland). The mirror's shards also contain light (the symbol of knowledge) that could dazzle or blind us.

What could be the dreams of the machines surrounding us?

Veronique Béland endeavours to reply to this transhumanist question. In *Mécanique d'évaporation des rêves (Mechanics of the Evaporation of Dreams)*, a robot arm writes the dreams produced by a generator of random texts. The light sensitive ink gradually disappears, just as most of our dreams do. In a very short time, a new literature of dreams becomes perceptible in an ephemeral and fascinating form.

In this new version of the installation, the video artist has added extracts of *The Dawn Of Magic* to the AI's database in order to give the generated dreams a Fantastic Realism feel.