

DOSSIER DE PRESSE

18.02 - 06.05.2012

CONTRE L'HISTOIRE

Yael Bartana, Michael Blum,
Mark Boulos, CANAN, Judi Werthein



CENTRE D'ART DE FRIBOURG
KUNSTHALLE FREIBURG

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CENTRE D'ART DE FRIBOURG
KUNSTHALLE FREIBURG

COMMUNIQUÉ DE PRESSE

Du 18 février au 6 mai 2012

CONTRE L'HISTOIRE

Yael Bartana, Michael Blum,
Mark Boulos, CANAN,
Judi Werthein

Rencontre avec la presse :
vendredi 17 février à 15h

Vernissage :
vendredi 17 février à 18h



Yael Bartana, *The Recorder Player from Sheikh Jarrah*, 7'27, 2010
Courtoisie Annet Gelink Gallery, Amsterdam

Contre l'histoire réunit cinq artistes internationaux pour une exposition exclusivement portée par le support de la vidéo. Medium privilégié pour rendre compte de l'actualité, il est aussi celui choisi par ces artistes pour mettre en perspective le rapport individuel au fait historique, et la capacité de l'individu à prendre position, que ce soit par son action ou par sa capacité interprétative. Précisément parce qu'ils mettent en jeu les codes de l'image filmée (typologies, montage, etc.), les travaux vidéo de Yael Bartana, Michael Blum, Mark Boulos, CANAN et Judi Werthein montrent combien le traitement d'un sujet relève d'une construction et d'une esthétique particulières, et combien les formes de représentation participent fondamentalement de la transmission d'une histoire récente et de son contenu.

L'exposition *Contre l'histoire* explicite cette double dimension de la proximité et du rejet du fait donné comme historique, de la structure qui composerait la tendance dominante, et rassemble des positions d'artistes à rebours de la restitution des données historiques. L'interrogation porte autant sur l'événement historique ou la notion de réalité, que sur les moyens affectés à leur entendement.

L'omniprésence de la télévision, l'un des premiers canaux de diffusion des informations – qu'il y ait censure ou non –, a habitué le spectateur à s'entretenir du monde par le biais de documentaires, reportages, films d'animation, fictions qui médiatisent les faits.



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Au-delà du passage en revue des formats qui existent pour nous raconter la réalité – ici ceux appartenant à la vidéo –, il est des subjectivités données à lire en même temps que le détournement des formes esthétiques. Quant à la position du visiteur, celle-ci est aussi questionnée : conscient des clichés véhiculés par certaines représentations et de la manipulation dont il peut faire l'objet, son opinion est vulnérable, mais quel regard critique assume-t-il malgré tout face à l'histoire, à laquelle il participe, et comment se maintient-il face à la pensée collective ? Qu'il oppose la liberté de son action ou son incrédulité, qu'il dispose de sa propre capacité – ou incapacité – interprétative, de ses propres moyens de résistance et de pensée, l'individu peut s'avérer, à tout moment, un être politique.

Le film *Secure Paradise* de **Judi Werthein (*1967, Buenos Aires)** prend appui sur un fait réel, une sorte d'enclave bavaroise au Chili qui se révèle être un sinistre environnement. Des photos d'archives sont commentées par différents témoins ; une multiplicité de points de vue qui laisse en suspens la compréhension. Parallèlement, Judi Werthein met en scène le New-Yorkais David Kleinman dans *Do You Have Time ?* (2011). Ce long monologue est filmé en plan fixe, avec un cadrage rapproché et sur fond noir, selon des conventions propres à de nombreuses émissions télévisées. Le sérieux et la gravité viennent cautionner une singulière histoire des Etats-Unis que nous livre, d'une traite et avec verve, cet inconnu érudit.

Tout en affirmant le parcours individuel comme témoignage valide de l'histoire, **CANAN (*1970, Istanbul)** mêle différents registres narratifs et visuels, qui peuvent évoquer le conte traditionnel, le film d'animation comme le roman-photo. Son récit autobiographique croise l'histoire politique de son pays, avec un motif récurrent, le *Waq Waq Tree* (2010) qui sert de révélateur à la permanence des mécanismes de répression à travers les temps.

Parmi les deux diptyques de **Yael Bartana (*1970, Ifar Yehezkel, Israël)**, *Summer Camp/Awodah* (2007) met en parallèle des images tournées en 2006 à Jérusalem dans le cadre de la reconstruction d'une maison palestinienne (*Summer Camp*) et un film de propagande de Helmar Leski (*Awodah*, 1936) invitant les juifs d'Europe de l'est à émigrer en Palestine. Le croisement de ces contextes – une scène véridique de résistance et un idéal scénarisé aux motifs divergents –, réunis par la musique originale d'*Awodah* au lyrisme exacerbé et par le thème du labeur, dénonce l'instrumentalisation de la réalité à des fins politiques et veut évoquer la « désintégration de l'entreprise sioniste » par ses propres moyens.

Michael Blum (*1966, Jérusalem) recourt au procédé journalistique de l'enquête pour évoquer les effets de la globalisation. Dans *Capri in Tangerang (Her Sneakers)* [2011], sa quête porte sur les conditions de production d'une paire de chaussures de marque, prétexte à un voyage en Indonésie au cœur des systèmes de sous-traitance.

Enfin, **Mark Boulos (*1975)** révèle dans une opposition dialectique et délibérément manichéenne, les effets réels de l'internationalisation des échanges économiques, entre micro et macro-politique. Cette relation exploitant-exploité figure au cœur de l'installation *All That Is Solid Melts into Air* (2008). En plaçant en miroir deux vidéos – l'une du Chicago Mercantile Exchange réalisée le premier jour de la crise financière de 2008 et l'autre des membres du groupe politique armé *Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta* qui défendent les ressources naturelles de leur région et revendiquent leur part des bénéfices générés par l'exploitation du pétrole –, l'artiste crée une altercation fictive entre des communautés se disputant le même bien.



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YAEL BARTANA



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Yael Bartana

BIOGRAPHIE

Née en 1970 à Ifar Yehezkel, Israël
Vit et travaille à Amsterdam et Tel Aviv
Représentée par la galerie Annet Gelink, Amsterdam

EXPOSITIONS PERSONNELLES (SÉLECTION)

- 2011 *...and Europe will be stunned*, Pavillon polonais, 54^{ème} Biennale de Venise
Zacheta Gallery, Varsovie
Australian Center for Contemporary Art, Melbourne
- 2010 *...and Europe will be stunned*, Moderna Museet, Malmö
If you want, we'll travel to the moon together, Annet Gelink Gallery, Amsterdam
If you want, we'll travel to the moon together, Sommer Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv
- 2009 *Mur / Wieza*, Museum of Modern Art, Varsovie
Mary Koszmary, Contemporary Jewish Museum, San Francisco et Jewish Museum, New York
Auto Sueno y Materia, Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo, Madrid
- 2008 P.S. 1, New York
Summer Camp, Kerstin Engholm Galerie, Vienne
Foksal Gallery, Varsovie
Mary Koszmary, Center for Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv

EXPOSITIONS COLLECTIVES (SÉLECTION)

- 2011 *Aesthetic Journalism*, Quad, Derby
Rabble-Rousing Going forward backwards in modern art, Gemeentemuseum, La Haye
Be My Guest: 10 Encounters with Aboriginal Art, Museum of contemporary aboriginal art, Utrecht
You Are All Individuals!, Castrum Peregrini, Amsterdam
Out of Place, curated by Noah Simblist, Lora Reynolds Gallery, Austin
The Right to Protest, Museum on the Seam, Jerusalem
Poland-Germany. 1000 years, Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin
- 2010 *Overview Israeli Video 2000-2010*, Haifa Museum of Art, Haïfa
The Yvonne Rainer Project, BFI Gallery, Londres
Breaking News, Fondazione Fotografia, Cassa di Risparmio di Modena, Modène
Mur / Wieza and Mary Koszmary, 29th Bienal de São Paulo, São Paulo
Les Promesses du Passé, Centre Pompidou, Paris
- 2009 *Mary Koszmary*, Ludwig Museum, Budapest
Trembling Time: Recent Video From Israel, Tate Modern, Londres
Early years, Kunst-Werke, Berlin
Artes Mundi, Cardiff



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Yael BARTANA

Summer Camp / Awodah, 2007

DVD, 12'



Yael Bartana, *Summer Camp / Awodah*, vidéo couleur et n/b, son, double-canal, 2007
Courtoisie de l'artiste

Yael Bartana sonde la conscience que l'on a de son propre pays à travers l'exemple du sien, Israël, et de la propagande que celui-ci orchestre en sa faveur. Tout ce qui touche à une dimension spirituelle à l'instar des cérémoniaux, l'espace public, et les corps et structures sociaux l'intéressent particulièrement, en ce qu'ils sont instrumentalisés avec le désir de construire et renforcer une identité nationale.

Dans ce diptyque, Yael Bartana montre d'une part un extrait d'*Awodah* (1936), film de Helmar Lerski (1871-1956) réalisé dans le but de promouvoir l'immigration des juifs de l'est de l'Europe en Palestine et vantant notamment les techniques modernes de construction mises à leur disposition sur place, et d'autre part, avec *Summer Camp*, la reconstruction pierre par pierre d'une maison palestinienne détruite par l'armée israélienne, à Anata, Jérusalem. Les villageois, avec l'aide de membres de l'*Israeli Committee Against House Demolition* (ICAHD), ont entrepris ce projet en 2006, sans le soutien du gouvernement et tout en sachant que ce projet peut à tout moment être à nouveau anéanti. Yael Bartana joue de la symbolique de la renaissance, image chère à Israël, et reprend les codes des films de propagande (plans rapprochés, apologie du labeur et de l'effort physique, exaltation du corps, etc.) pour faire l'éloge de la résistance que produit aussi le conflit israélo-palestinien. Projetées dans une construction de bois rudimentaire, ces deux œuvres sont accompagnées d'une seule bande-son, celle composée par Paul Dessau (1894-1979) pour *Awodah*. La musique, à l'origine conçue pour accentuer le lyrisme des images, unit deux films à la réalisation et aux images similaires mais aux propos divergeants. Yael Bartana explique avoir recours au « langage idéologique héroïque de l'entreprise sioniste afin de prouver sa désintégration ».



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Yael Bartana

Profile, 2000

DVD, 3'

The Recorder Player from Sheikh Jarrah, 2010

DVD, 7'27"



Yael Bartana, *The Recorder Player from Sheikh Jarrah*, vidéo n/b, son, 7'27", 2010
Courtesy Annet Gelink Gallery, Amsterdam

Mettant à son service l'ambiguïté de l'imagerie politique, Yael Bartana associe dans ce diptyque deux vidéos qui illustrent l'absurdité des symboles de pouvoir. Dans *The Recorder Player from Sheikh Jarrah*, une jeune femme joue de la flûte, adoptant une attitude crédule ou narquoise, devant des rangs de soldats impassibles et statiques.

Profile, quant à lui, documente une séance de tir d'un corps de l'armée – en Israël, le service militaire est obligatoire pour les hommes comme pour les femmes. Filmées de profil, les soldates, concentrées, visent une cible quasiment absente de l'image, laissant la question du motif de leur acte sans réponse. L'image est fixe et la vidéo ne connaît aucune progression narrative. L'importance est donnée aux détails : les mains et les armes, la tension palpable, l'obéissance aux ordres donnés, le phrasé lui-même martial, le mécanisme du geste mettent en avant les rituels propres au monde militaire et la dissolution de l'individu dans le collectif menant à l'absence de tout raisonnement autonome. Yael Bartana dénonce l'utilisation de ces types de représentations comme véhicules de l'identité nationale d'Israël.

Yael BARTANA

GALIT EILAT AND CHARLES ESCHE TALK TO Yael BARTANA

Dear Reader,

Below is the edited transcript of a series of conversations between Yael Bartana and the curators Galit Eilat and Charles Esche. The conversations took place over several days in Eindhoven/NL at the time of Yael Bartana's participation in Play Van Abbe/Strange and Close at the Van Abbemuseum. The transcript begins in the middle of a meditation on the impact of Israeli—and other—societies on the individual imagination, and the necessity of finding a position outside one's home in order to reflect upon it.

Galit Eilat: ...It's a part of the collective narrative in Israel, and it's hard to ask questions about this narrative from inside the country. I think that when Yael left the country, when she took some distance from it, it became possible for her to look at herself and the society of which she was a part. You don't see yourself as different from the society in which you grow up, so when you leave it, it's like looking at yourself in the mirror, like the Lacanian Mirror stage. You start to see yourself separated—from your mother and from the world. But in Israel, there is an extra step of separation: from the nation, because in Israel, the nation is really like a family.

Yael Bartana: I think the trauma is not just individual, it's collective. If something bad happens, then it is seen as collective punishment. It's no longer the individual...

GE: It's always collective trauma. We are one body.

Charles Esche: But I have to say that I recognize this from my own biography, too. There's a profound difference in the conversations you can have with someone who has lived his or her whole life in the Netherlands and somebody who hasn't. When I was in Sweden, I felt the same thing. I mean, I understand the exceptionalism of Israel, but...

YB: No, it's not special for Israel; it's true of every society. Eva Hoffman said that every immigrant is an amateur anthropologist. You're always an outsider as an immigrant; you look at society in a different way. The same thing can partially happen when you step outside of your own nation and then look back at it. When I was about twenty, I experienced this in another way, when somebody from my family refused to serve in the occupied territories. At that time he was serving as an office in Jenin, when he decided that he can't do it anymore. He was convicted 4-month captivity and I had to drive him to jail.

CE: Did you experience this new perspective as a liberation or as a trauma? As though suddenly you needed to criticize something you didn't have to criticize before?

YB: First of all, I felt privileged, because I have a place to put my feelings: in my work.



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I think any creative person would deal with it like this, and in that way, I'm lucky. Lucky, but then again, I suffer because I'm trapped in between. That is, it is you're home, you cannot be free of it, but you're constantly criticizing it, aware that you don't want to represent what it stands for. If you come from Israel, you are often seen as its ambassador, and you have to be very clear about your position.

CE: I think that in my life, it has become increasingly difficult to feel represented by a democratic government. This is partly because we all move through different countries but also because, ever since the recent wars that the British government has involved "me" in, it is not so simple to feel that the government on my passport represents me in any way. The wars are not politically or ideologically justified; they are national or Western crusades. Yet I can hardly just choose a better nationality. Maybe that's another way in which Israel is a kind of laboratory of the former West. Today, politics is more defined by nationality or culture than by ideas, and you cannot change your nationality or cultural background as easily as your mind.

GE: What you're describing is quite interesting, because you take responsibility for your state. It means that you are a citizen, and that you recognize the state as an authority, as an entity.

CE: For sure, which is maybe different in Israel. The works that interest me from Israel are very conscious of their position with relationship to the state. I don't think that's true for the vast majority of British or Dutch artists, even the interesting ones. Yael was describing how, in her education, people ignored the fact that they were Israeli and aligned themselves with some universal Western art history. I think that

became increasingly unsustainable in Israel, but it is also unsustainable here in Europe.

GE: But both you and Yael are doing the opposite by accepting the nation-state, by accepting the situation and the responsibility that comes with it. However, why should we accept the nation-state? We are, in general, against the nation-state. So why do we take the responsibility and the blame for it? When in another situation we might say, "The old system is over. We want to build a new system," when it comes to guilt and responsibility, we feel like citizens. It's a question of identification: when you take responsibility, it means that you are identifying yourself with something. You don't take responsibility for something you don't identify with.

CE: I think there's a kind of mythology of cosmopolitanism, and on a certain level, this myth operates in the art world. We can all work in the same institution and none of us are Dutch and this doesn't interfere much with our working lives.

GE: At least we would like to see it that way.

CE: Yes, perhaps we're kidding ourselves. But once you step outside of this little world, which has permitted a bit of cosmopolitanism, and look at immigration politics or education or military decisions, you see the nation-state is absolutely present. Then this idea of some breakdown of the nation-state looks laughable. Twenty years ago, there seemed to be more of a possibility for international cooperation than there is now.

GE: Yes, but the British passport is not you—and this is also a question for Yael: Why, then, do you have this over-identification with the state?



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For example, your last work *Wall and Tower* is about the establishment of a state—not just the Israeli state, but the state in general. You build a wall, and you build a tower—and establish yourself!

YB: Establishment and its consequences. What happens after the establishment—

GE: Yes. But you didn't address any other kind of establishment. You address a very specific establishment: a state with a flag. And this seems like over-identification, repeating the rituals that you criticize.

YB: I'm not repeating. That's not true. True I am repeating or even mirroring the mechanism.

GE: You're documenting?

YB: in the past, I never documented the actual ritual. I always document the side effects. For example in *Trembling Time*, I documented the complete halt of traffic on a roadway during the minute the commemorative siren sound and not the military and state ritual. *Wall and Tower* is staged.

GE: But with *Wild Seeds*, you almost create a ritual, or at least you make something that is basically a children's game into something else that marks a historical moment. It even takes its name from a particular Gaza settlement—Gilad's settlement. Is *Wild Seeds* a kind of pivot point in the work?

YB: Yes, in the sense that the camera does not just document but rather actually creates the situation. *Wild Seeds* is the first

work in the exhibition, which feels like a statement.

[...]

GE: *Summer Camp* began when you met Jeff Halper, correct?

YB: Yes. I met Jeff Halper [Founder of Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions, or ICAHD] through you in "*Liminal Spaces*." I'd wanted to make a piece about a house for a long time, so I contacted him and explained that it wasn't going to be a documentary about his activities, but an artwork where I would compare his work to a Zionist ethos. I was very transparent. I didn't want to do a film that would be a surprise in the end. I interviewed him to get to know a bit more about his activities and his personal background—how he initiated the committee and so on. He's an American Jew and he studied anthropology. He's driven by this notion of "facts on the ground" and a desire to make things visible. Reconstructing a house is very visible and it also shows how many houses need to be rebuilt. ICAHD always does this action in collaboration with local communities, so it's not as if they come from the outside and decide, "We want to be good citizens. We want to resist the state by doing this."

GE: From *Summer Camp* on, building really becomes a part of your work, but building as a point of resistance. Usually building is something that is for the future. But, in this case, it's kind of the opposite.

YB: That's what's so fascinating for me about this organization: the act of resistance is something constructive. Normally, resistance evokes destroying, breaking down a house...

CE: But it is also simply about making one's mark on the earth, on the world, on the canvas, or whatever, isn't it?



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YB: I think one of the things that I'm interested in is how you can take an ethos, for example, or a symbol, and turn it upside down. You take the same ethos of Zionism and you flip it—flip it so that it works against the same mechanisms that constructed it.

GE: Is this why after Documenta you started showing your film together with Avodah?

YB: I felt like I needed to give more context to the film. And then I slowly came to the solution of showing the two films back to back. Maybe it can be read as didactic, but the reference to the work is clear: I'm showing you what happened in the '30s when Zionism wanted to create a belief that you can build a home on the land of Palestine (the reason the film was made was to recruit people to build Israel). Summer Camp uses the same ethos but with a different meaning.

CE: The ideology of Avodah is an ideology of resistance. It starts with this strange, dramatic music, the word "Palestine" and this British flag. In this way, it speaks about occupation, about a clearly foreign force. You know "Palestine" and the British flag. At that time, Zionism was in favor of liberation. It was an emancipatory movement that became, through a long history that we don't have to go into here, something else. It started with these high hopes: the kibbutz, socialism in Israel, new land and a new architecture and society—an experiment for which I still have a huge amount of respect. Of course, at the same time, ethnic cleansing was part of the foundation of the state, and so for a long time there was an ambivalence about Israel. In the recent past, with Lieberman, the Gaza war and so on, this ambivalence has completely disappeared. It was dream-nightmare that became just a nightmare.

GE: Yael is now reading Altneuland, Theodor Herzl's story, you know? People usually refer to Herzl as the founder of Israel, but the book is really a novel, a kind of fiction that became fact. Unfortunately, few people are reading Altneuland today in the spirit in which it was written.

YB: I realized that, looking at the film, you can recall that it's connected to a historical moment because of the music and editing and the style. But if you are not interested in Israel, you could take it perhaps as an act of settlers in general.

CE: Why this particular film?

YB: Avodah was just a fascinating film, so beautifully made but with a brutal relationship to the land. You see the influence of German and Soviet cinema as well, which might lead you to question the uniqueness of the whole Zionist movement and how much it is connected to other movements at the time.

GE: At this time, most of the filmmakers came from Poland to Israel.

YB: Helmar Lerski, the maker of Avodah, is Swiss. He also worked on Metropolis. You can see in his camerawork his understanding of light. His way of sculpting the figures in light is something that I think is still amazing today.

GE: Yes, of course, you gave up on Riefenstahl, so—

YB: I gave up on her?

GE: Yeah, you gave up on her so you found—

YB: I never gave up on Riefenstahl...



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CE: So, what made you move from the foundation myths of Israel to Poland? Why Poland first?

YB: I think it is very much connected to Israel, but I wanted to create a new laboratory. A new place to explore, experiment. What I initially felt is that Poland and Israel have a lot in common. We have to deal constantly with our reality and history; so does Poland. Perhaps many other places do, too, but these issues are quite specific in Poland. So many Jews had lived in Poland since the 15th century. And I have to say that when I went to Poland, I felt very connected to the place on some strange level. It's something I never felt in the Netherlands or in Sweden.

CE: What about in America?

YB: In America, on some level, yes, but in a different way. In Poland, it was a really deep, metaphysical, emotional link. I could

feel the place. If I couldn't feel connected on that level, I wouldn't have stayed there working for four years. There was something there that attracted me so much that I really wanted to open all the wounds. On an intellectual level, it was also about knowing that this place was used by the state of Israel to such a large extent. It was connected to this whole machinery of Zionism and the Holocaust.

GE: I think Polish artists also relate to this question quite a lot of work by Arthur Zmijewski or Pawel Althamer that reflects on the Israeli question.

YB: and the Jewish question.

CE: Yes, on the Jewish question. How Poland deals with that question of loss, which is a European loss. You know, this absence is a gaping wound even in Eindhoven. But it is not really addressed in the old Western Europe.

[...]



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MICHAEL BLUM



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MICHAEL BLUM

BIOGRAPHIE

Né en 1966 à Jerusalem
Vit et travaille à Vienne et Montréal

EXPOSITIONS, PROJETS ET PROJECTIONS (SÉLECTION)

- 2012 *Seid realistisch, fordert das Unmoegliche!*, rotor, Graz
- 2011 *Beyond the Truth*, Mestna Galerija, Ljubljana
Evento, Bordeaux
All That Fits: The Aesthetics of Journalism, QUAD, Derby
An Exchange With Sol Lewitt, Cabinet, New York & Mass MoCA, North Adams, Massachusetts
Oriental Dream, 10m2, Sarajevo
- 2010 *Blind Dates*, Pratt Manhattan Gallery, New York
Les Grands Corpus: Michael Blum, Aurelien Froment, Adrian Paci, Liu Wei, Musee d'art contemporain, Montréal
- 2009 *The Imposter, Mobile Archive*, Art in General, New York
OK. VIDEO: COMEDY, 4th Jakarta International Video Festival, Jakarta
Place Beyond Borders, Cittadellarte - Fondazione Pistoletto, Biella
Windows Upon Oceans, 8th Baltic Biennial, Szczecin
Gets Under the Skin, CCS Bard College / Storefront for Art and Architecture, New York
Branded and On Display, Salt Lake City Art Center, Salt Lake City
- 2008 *Questioning History*, Nederlands Fotomuseum, Rotterdam
Never Looked Better, Museum of the Diaspora, Tel Aviv
Be(com)ing Dutch, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven
Data Recovery, GAMeC, Bergamo

MICHAEL BLUM

Capri in Tangerang (Her Sneakers), 2011
DVD, 45'



Capri in Tangerang (Her Sneakers), vidéo couleur, son, 45', 2011
Courtesy One Fifty Productions, Vienne/Montréal

Diplômé en histoire de l'Université de Paris Panthéon-Sorbonne (1988) et de l'Ecole Nationale de Photographie d'Arles (1992), Michael Blum met les moyens artistiques à disposition d'une étude sociopolitique du monde économique et de son fonctionnement. *Capri in Tangerang (Her Sneakers)* se présente comme la suite d'une enquête documentée dans *My Sneakers* (2001). Réponse à une interrogation simple, cette première vidéo voyait Michael Blum partir pour l'Indonésie où sont produites lesdites baskets selon une information communiquée par Nike. En cherchant à découvrir les conditions de production de ses chaussures, achetées à Paris, Michael Blum fait face à de nombreux obstacles et se rend compte qu'il ne pourra jamais répondre à sa question. Il finit par quitter le pays.

Tourné dix ans plus tard avec le souhait de constater le moindre changement, *Capri in Tangerang (Her Sneakers)* reprend la question à l'origine de *My Sneakers* mais avec pour objet les chaussures de la fille de l'artiste, par hasard des Nike elles aussi. Une fois encore, l'artiste doit faire le constat de leur impossible traçabilité. S'il n'atteint pas son objectif, ce n'est pas seulement que l'on fait preuve de protectionnisme, mais c'est aussi qu'il y a multiplication des usines et que toutes produisent, sur le même modèle, des chaussures distribuées par une multitude de marques. En optant pour la forme du documentaire, Michael Blum cherche à maintenir son attention sur la paire de baskets exclusivement : « Je travaille avec des méthodes empruntées à l'arsenal du journaliste, du détective, du chercheur ou de l'amateur. Mais éthiquement, je suis artiste. » Les moyens qu'il affecte à son entreprise lui permettent de porter un regard critique sur la globalisation et ses effets ; avec d'une côté ceux qui produisent et de l'autre ceux qui consomment, il mesure l'impact du moindre geste d'achat.

MICHAEL BLUM

If contemporary art is to have any purchase on shaping culture – rather than simply affirming it – it must be able to deal directly with the dominant ideas of our age. The monolithic presence of global, free-market capitalism is pushing every other concept of social organization into the shadows. Economic rationalism is presented more as a force of nature than a political and social choice, and to imagine different ways of doing business, exchanging culture or even surviving is increasingly difficult.

It is in the face of such rigid closure that Michael Blum's work operates. One of his earlier video works, *Wandering Marxwards* (1999), takes us on a journey through North American retail splendour to the accompaniment of a voiceover, spoken by the artist, who wonders how we can extract Marx from the trash-can of capitalist history. In the process, he seeks to uncover a poetic, even soulful, Marx from a supposedly dry economic text.

Another video work continues to touch on economic globalism but this time in a more overtly personal and traumatic way. *My Sneakers* (2001) starts with a beautiful description of the artist suddenly glancing down at his sneakers in wonder at their absurd colour. From this epiphany, Blum embarks on a journey to Indonesia to find the people and conditions under which they were manufactured. This ultimately forlorn quest mutates into a process of education and dawning understanding. Meeting factory workers, especially women, whose relationship with sneakers is totally different from that of any European consumer, draws us close to the marginalized community that underpins Western affluence. The final sequence, when the sneakers are returned for recycling to the streets of Jakarta, is strangely moving, as though we are saying goodbye to an old friend. It is not only in video that Blum explores the personal implications of globalization. His public work *400 years without a grave* is a long time to shut up (2002) is a simple gravestone to a somewhat forgotten Dutch explorer, Cornelius de Houtman. From speakers hidden inside, a deathly monologue echoes, as if Houtman were speaking from beyond the grave, telling of his bitterness and his lack of renown. Funny and arrogant, de Houtman emerges as the prototypical grey-suited CEO. The element of historical research continues in other works such as the text installation *Piety, cleanliness and punctuality are the strength of a good business* (2002), and his collaged publication *potlatch.doc*. The latter seeks to illustrate Bataille's description of potlatch (ritual gift-giving and destruction of goods by the leader of a tribe) with a collection of historical and contemporary images that was freely distributed in waiting rooms in Amsterdam and Paris.

These and other works intercept and confront us with carefully controlled information about the unrecognized environment around us. It is this technique of disclosing images and signs from the underbelly of capitalism that marks Blum out as an artist working in the interesting field of engaged autonomy – locked into the system while using art as a way to provoke new ideas about its future.

Charles Esche in *Cream 3*, Phaidon Press, London, 2003



CENTRE D'ART DE FRIBOURG
KUNSTHALLE FREIBURG

MARK BOULOS

MARK BOULOS

BIOGRAPHIE

Né en 1975 à Boston

Vit et travaille à Amsterdam

EXPOSITIONS PERSONNELLES (SÉLECTION)

2010 The Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, Vancouver
ARGE Kunst Galerie Museum, Bolzano

2008 Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Amsterdam

EXPOSITIONS COLLECTIVES (SÉLECTION)

2011 *Über die Metapher des Wachstums*, Frankfurter Kunstverein, Francfort
Sundance Film Festival New Frontier, Salt Lake Art Center, Salt Lake City

2010 6. Berlin Biennale für zeitgenössische Kunst, Berlin
Morality ACT V: Power Alone, Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam
Morality Act III: And the moral of the story is..., Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam

2009 *Now Showing: New Film and Video*, Wolverhampton Art Gallery, Wolverhampton
2nd Biennale of Contemporary Art Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art
Obsession for Collection, Summerfield Gallery - University of Gloucestershire, Cheltenham

MARK BOULOS

All That Is Solid Melts into Air, 2008
DVD, 15'



Mark Boulos, *All That Is Solid Melts into Air*, vidéo couleur, son, double-canal, 15', 2008
Courtesy the artist

L'installation *All That Is Solid Melts into Air* met en regard deux projections portant sur les implications du commerce du pétrole et le contrôle que d'aucuns cherchent à exercer sur lui. L'une montre des vues du Chicago Mercantile Exchange filmées le premier jour de la crise financière de 2008. Au cœur d'une des places boursières les plus importantes au monde, les inquiétudes et crispations se lisent sur les visages des traders dont les réactions physiques et les cris alternent avec des images chiffrées du tableau des cours. La seconde vidéo a été tournée au Nigeria. L'artiste y a vécu parmi des pêcheurs, par ailleurs membres du groupe politique armé Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) qui défend les ressources naturelles de la région face à leur propre gouvernement et aux entreprises occidentales comme Shell. La violence à laquelle recourent ces derniers est, à leurs yeux, à la hauteur de leurs revendications : le partage des bénéfices générés par l'exploitation du pétrole. En lutte contre l'exploitation des travailleurs, la pauvreté locale, le vol d'une matière première qu'ils considèrent leur appartenir, la destruction de la nature, ils réclament leur dû.

Marc Boulos crée une sorte d'altercation fictive en plaçant en miroir ces deux modèles. Outre de saturer l'espace avec un excès d'informations et le volume du son élevé, il articule un jeu d'oppositions (le bureau et la forêt, le propre sur lui et l'environnement sale, l'excès d'argent et la misère), tout en montrant la théâtralité involontaire et la similitude du comportement de ces communautés : les financiers spéculent à l'aide de formules hasardeuses, alors que les guerillos invoquent des esprits pour les guider dans leurs intentions. Cette abstraction est renforcée par le titre de la pièce, tirée d'une phrase du Manifeste du Parti communiste (1848) de Karl Marx : le pétrole est aussi virtuel au Nigeria d'où il est pompé et n'est donc plus, qu'aux Etats-Unis où il n'est qu'une valeur théorique.

MARK BOULOS

ECSTASY, MILITANCY, AND MARXIST FILMMAKING

par Karl Lydén

After travelling up the Niger delta by boat to interview the guerrillas of MEND – who fight the oil companies responsible for the environmental massacre that is starving the local population – then convinced the Western viewers of *All That Is Solid Melts into Air* that there is more wisdom in Egbesu, the god of war, than in financial derivatives, the young US artist Mark Boulos set off again for the coconut forests of the Philippines. Karl Lydén met up with him, just back from yet another exploration of Third-World militancy: No Permanent Address, his current project, will be presented in October at the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, in a video installation about the *persistence of Communism beyond its oft-heralded death*, but with the emphasis on an aspect of love.

Karl Lydén: Your *All That Is Solid Melts into Air* (currently on show at AR/GE Kunst in Bolzano and at the Berlin Biennale, has this enchanting, Heart of Darkness-like opening scene, where a small boat is going upstream to meet with the guerrillas, and the camera is showing only so much of the water and the river banks, and only so much of what is to come. And then a sort of dialectic crescendo starts?

Mark Boulos: Yes, it's a double channel video: on one screen you see the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, on the first day of the Credit Crisis. The shouting traders are buying and selling these complex financial products called futures and derivatives. And I like the term "futures": the money doesn't exist yet, the commodity doesn't exist yet, nothing exists yet. To me, it symbolizes the metaphysics of capitalism. The average liberal critique of capitalism is that it's too materialistic, and the Marxist critique is that it's not materialistic enough. Rather, it's metaphysics with a very tenuous relation to reality, which is precisely why it will collapse. On the other screen you see members of The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), an armed organization fighting the oil corporations and the Nigerian government for control of the oil resources that they live on top of but don't benefit from. The people of the Niger Delta are desperately poor: the oil industry has killed the environment and the fish that they live from. I'm interviewing two fighters, who are explaining their relation to the War God Egbesu, who protects them and make them bullet proof in battles. Here, the religious beliefs make the revolution possible.

KL: This made me wonder: doesn't the very dichotomy construct two extreme models, two mirroring and irrational belief systems, where the viewer is left in between, in the critical position of simply revealing the illusion of both the traders and the freedom fighters?

MB: I worried about that possibility. Actually, I tried to do the opposite, by making strange the financial system, and by showing the rational aspects of the Nigerian resistance. And after hearing what people say about the film, I don't think they feel smarter than the fighters. Rather, it seems like most people identify with the Nigerians, and they do it simply because they make sense, because they're intelligent and sympathetic. Maybe we, as Westerners, don't believe in their religion, but we see that their analysis and response to the material conditions seem both rational and justified.



CENTRE D'ART DE FRIBOURG
KUNSTHALLE FREIBURG

KL: You just got back from the Philippines, filming with a revolutionary movement called New People's Army. How did that happen?

MB: Five years ago I read an article on the BBC, which described the first gay wedding in the Philippines, which was held by the New People's Army (NPA). It was a gay communist wedding where a NPA commander married a 20 year old foot soldier, and they stated: "All love is revolutionary, especially gay love. We commit ourselves to each other and the revolution". And it really grabbed me, because it was almost word for word what Žižek was describing as the condition for true love in our age: not two lovers looking into each other's eyes, but two comrades standing hand in hand, looking into the horizon.

I contacted Jomo Sison, the founder of the Philippine revolution who lives in exile here in the Netherlands. His office helped me make contact with the Philippine underground. So I was able to go to the Philippines, and to film with two armed units of this Maoist organization which is organizing the peasant masses. I was living with them for months, hiding in the coconut groves from the military which surrounded us by 10 kilometers in any direction. The New People's Army is considered a terrorist organization by the EU and the US, and I'm making a video installation about the persistence of Communism beyond its supposed death, but emphasizing an aspect of love. I spoke to Christian pastors on the frontline, to a gay guerrilla, and to women guerrillas. Perhaps one could say it's about sexuality, Christianity, and feminism, but I just came back a couple of weeks ago, and I'm still in the beginning of the editing process.

KL: When making these films, and when living in the Niger Delta or the Philippine jungle with your characters, where there any questions you felt you couldn't ask?

MB: Well, there were questions I didn't want to ask. Because it would be distracting from the point I wanted to make, and from the critique of liberal human rights journalism, which sympathizes with third world people as long as they remain victims, and at best victims of themselves. In Nigeria, I heard rumours that there were child soldiers, for example. But let's not forget that Joan of Arc was sixteen years old, and that when you're sixteen there are many things you'd rather do than die in typhoid. Also, in the Philippines they had a really ugly history of internal purges, not unlike Stalinist purges. In the 1980s, the paranoia grew out of control, and they killed thousands of their own people who were probably innocent. But that's not what my film is about, and I don't want to show pitiful victims or mindless dogmatists. I film them because I sympathize with them. I'm a Marxist, or perhaps one should say a Marxist filmmaker. And I guess this is really my method... I'm testing the limits of my own beliefs as well. To me, the art project is as much about challenging my own ideas and seeing what I honestly believe, as it is about planning a film and then make it. Of course I believe in third world revolutionary movements: which philosophy student doesn't? And I wanted to see how true all this was.

KL: When documenting ecstasy and militancy, do you have any specific method or formal approach? How do you represent such subject positions? Is there any way to avoid the equivalent to what Foucault called the *monologue of reason about madness*, in his preface to *Madness and Civilization*?



CENTRE D'ART DE FRIBOURG
KUNSTHALLE FREIBURG

MB: The structure of filmmaking is always shifting between subjective and objective positions. While the documentary as a journalistic mode often shows the objectively true situation in its facticity, I'm interested in a subjective belief that might be true, but contrary to facts. A belief so strong that it becomes true and constitutive in other ways. For example, in *The Gates of Damascus*, I'm portraying a Syrian housewife who believes that she has stigmata and that she speaks in the voice of Jesus. This moment of rupture, of radical otherness, and of going beyond oneself also amounts to the feminist act of a housewife transforming herself into a saint. It's the political and subjective potential of the everyday transcendental.

KL: This is perhaps the link to your self portrait, *The Origin of the World*, where you, the documentarist, turn the camera on yourself and perform under hypnosis?

MB: In a sense, yes. I'm filming my eye through a two-way mirror, and I recite the passage of Sophocles that Freud quotes in his *Interpretation of Dreams*. So I guess I'm representing and subtracting myself at the same time. But it was also an attempt to try something completely new: basically, every work I do is a negation of the previous. *All That Is Solid Melts into Air* emanates from Marx, and *The Origin of the World* is basically a critique of psychoanalysis. And while the new film from the Philippines is going back to capital – it's about communism after all – it's really about love. The heroes are women recounting how they gave up their children to join the revolution. The hero is the homosexual guerrilla who talks about trying to seduce his comrade. Or the Christian Pastor who says that Jesus came for the poor, and that his love was for the poor. It's really about bringing together Marx with Freud and Lacan, which is, as we both know, the philosophical project of the 20th and 21th century.

in *Mousse Magazine*, n° 24, juin 2010



CENTRE D'ART DE FRIBOURG
KUNSTHALLE FREIBURG

CANAN



CENTRE D'ART DE FRIBOURG
KUNSTHALLE FREIBURG

CANAN

BIOGRAPHIE

Née en 1970 à Istanbul
Vit et travaille à Istanbul
Représentée par la galerie Annet Gelink, Amsterdam

EXPOSITIONS PERSONNELLES (SÉLECTION)

- 2012 *Turkish Delight*, Gallery x-ist, Istanbul
- 2010 *Even A Cat Has Mustache*, Gallery x-ist, Istanbul
- 2007 *Bahname*, Masa Project, Istanbul
- 2006 *Behind the Curtains*, Festival De Rode Loper, Amsterdam
Eyes cannot cognize, KBH Kunstall, Copenhagen
- 2005 *Behind the Curtains*, 9th International Istanbul Biennial Parallel Project, Istanbul

EXPOSITIONS COLLECTIVES (SÉLECTION)

- 2011 Istanbul Contemporary '11, Istanbul
Choosing another strategy Machine-RAUM, Vejle Art Museum, Danemark
Dream and Reality, Istanbul Museum of Modern Art, Istanbul
Where Fire Has Struck, Depo, Istanbul
Confessions Of Dangerous Minds, Contemporary Art from Turkey, Saatchi Gallery, London
Art Dubai 2011
- 2010 *État D'âmes, une génération hors d'elle*, Beaux-arts de Paris
Video et Après, Turquie et Alors, Centre Pompidou, Paris
ACT V: Power Alone, Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam
Like a dream... but not Yours, The National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington
Emploi Saisonnier, La Friche la Belle de Mai, Marseille



CENTRE D'ART DE FRIBOURG
KUNSTHALLE FREIBURG

CANAN

The Waq Waq Tree, 2010

DVD, 21'



CANAN, *The Waq Waq Tree*, vidéo couleur, son, 21'14", 2010
Courtesy X-ist, Istanbul, and the artist

Féministe engagée, CANAN s'intéresse aux histoires portées par les individus, estimant que le personnel relève du politique. Des éléments de sa propre biographie rejoignent par conséquent souvent les récits qu'elle conçoit en s'inspirant de miniatures orientales. La finesse de ces enluminures, vignettes que CANAN anime de façon rudimentaire, s'oppose à la violence et à la cruauté humaine qu'elles représentent et que l'artiste rapporte au monde contemporain.

A partir d'un conte éponyme de la mythologie islamique, *The Waq Waq Tree*, qu'elle choisit de raconter à sa fille au moment de la border, CANAN interprète et met en lien différents événements politiques. Le motif de cet arbre portant des têtes humaines, est repris de récit en récit. Il est un symbole dont CANAN révèle la permanence au cours de l'histoire jusqu'à l'entrevoir dans son enfance : les exécutions, figurées par les décapitations qui donnent à l'arbre ses fruits, sont en Turquie un moyen de répression courant et entretiennent un climat de peur dans lequel beaucoup ont grandi.



CENTRE D'ART DE FRIBOURG
KUNSTHALLE FREIBURG

CANAN

La plasticienne Canan Senol

C'était en 2003, l'exposition s'appelait « Il était une fois... » et mettait en scène les fantasmes sexuels d'une poupée Barbie, femme au foyer, face à un Action Man, mari brutal et père incestueux. La violence ordinaire, domestique, dans un univers rose bonbon : les habitants de Bad Ems, petite ville allemande qui accueillait l'expo, n'ont pas apprécié. Censurée, l'expo, et renvoyée chez elle, l'artiste. « Ils sont venus nous chercher en pleine nuit, avec ma petite fille ! » sourit aujourd'hui Canan Senol – prononcer Janan Cheniol –, 40 ans à peine et figure majeure de l'art contemporain turc. Voilà plus

de dix ans que cette femme pulpeuse aux longs cheveux de jais, au regard volontaire et ironique, construit une œuvre subversive et prolifique, à l'image de la création turque, très engagée, très politique. Dans la vidéo *Fountain*, elle prend le contre-pied de l'urinoir de Duchamp avec un plan fixe sur ses seins, « mamelles » pendantes et généreuses d'où gouttent des perles de lait maternel. Dans le film d'animation *Strange Creature*, l'artiste se met en scène, nue, dans une Genève revue et corrigée d'où Adam a totalement disparu. Dans un autre bijou animé mêlant collages et miniatures d'inspiration ottomane, *Exemplary*, elle revisite les contes des *Mille et Une Nuits* en révélant le poids de la famille et de la religion. Son héroïne, belle parmi les belles, partie d'un petit village de la Turquie profonde pour adopter la modernité stambouliote, finira enfermée sous un tchador, dans la grande ville...

Au cœur de son œuvre de conteuse culottée, « l'envie de s'attaquer aux tabous culturels quasi universels que sont le pouvoir de la religion, de la famille, du système étatique et judiciaire,

et au contrôle qu'ils exercent sur les corps ». A commencer par celui des femmes : « activiste féministe », Canan Senol excelle, souvent avec humour, à déconstruire les discours et l'imagerie aliénante « qui forment la femme partout dans le monde ». Avec une liberté d'expression jamais bridée jusqu'ici en Turquie, y compris par les autorités islamistes, au pouvoir depuis 2002. « Chaque pays connaît ses formes de censure. Ici, les politiques nous laissent tranquilles car ils n'y comprennent pas grand-chose, l'art procède de manière indirecte, par allégories... Résultat, à la différence de la littérature, l'art contemporain est devenu un des seuls moyens de critiquer la politique. »

Olivier Pascal-Mousselard, « Les Insoumises »
Dossier « Istanbul, la ville polychrome »
Télérama, n° 3140, semaine du 20 au 26 mars 2010



CENTRE D'ART DE FRIBOURG
KUNSTHALLE FREIBURG

JUDI WERTHEIN



CENTRE D'ART DE FRIBOURG
KUNSTHALLE FREIBURG

JUDI WERTHEIN

Née en 1967 à Buenos Aires
Vit et travaille à Brooklyn, New York

EXPOSITIONS PERSONNELLES (SÉLECTION)

- 2011 *Do You Have Time?*, Aldrich Museum
Contemporary Art Museum in Ridgefield, Connecticut
La Tierra de los Libres, Figge von Rosen Galerie, Cologne
- 2008 *Brinco*, The Dock, Carrick-On-Shannon, Irlande
- 2007 *Corporate Logo*, Art in General, New York
50,000 Beds: An Exhibition by Chris Doyle, Aldrich Museum, Ridgefield, Connecticut
- 2004 *Dodecahedron*, Jessica Murray Gallery, New York
H, Centro Cultural Borges, Buenos Aires
- 2002 *Manicured, Conversations with the permanent collection*,
Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York

EXPOSITIONS COLLECTIVES (SÉLECTION)

- 2011 *Une terrible beauté est née*, 11^{ème} Biennale de Lyon, Lyon
Sin realidad no hay utopia, Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo, CAAC, Séville
- 2010 *CGEM: apuntes sobre la emancipación*, MUSAC Museo de Arte Contemporáneo
de Castilla y León
LUSH LILFE, curated by Omar Chahoud, Gallery Lehmann Maupin, New York
Fetiches Críticos, Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo, Madrid
Bucharest Biennial 2010, Bucarest
Les Lendemain d'hier/ Yesterday's Tomorrow, Musée d'Art Contemporain de Montréal



CENTRE D'ART DE FRIBOURG
KUNSTHALLE FREIBURG

JUDI WERTHEIN

Secure Paradise, 2007

DVD, 13'



Judi Werthein, *Secure Paradise*, vidéo couleur, son, 13', 2007
Courtoisie Figge Von Rosen Galerie, Cologne, et l'artiste

Secure Paradise est le montage d'une série de photographies d'archives d'une communauté allemande fondée au Chili. Invités par un ambassadeur à s'installer à Parral au début des années 1960, ces hommes et ces femmes avaient reçu pour mission de prendre soin de jeunes orphelins. Recréant l'idéal bavarois en plein Amérique du Sud, ils cultivent les champs, se nourrissent de leurs récoltes, construisent leurs habitations et vivent en autarcie, valorisant l'effort collectif et le travail effectué pour le bien commun.

Alors que le diaporama défile, des extraits de différents entretiens sont diffusés pour tout commentaire : aux voix élogieuses évoquant la gentillesse des habitants et la propreté des lieux s'opposent celles d'enquêteurs révélant l'inquiétant fonctionnement de cette communauté dont le financement apparaît mystérieux et qui, sous un apparent dénuement et sous couvert d'éthique, possède des armes, un hôpital très sophistiqué, un aéroport, le seul cimetière privé du pays et un système de surveillance sophistiqué. Afin de ne pas éveiller davantage de soupçons, « Colonia Dignidad » finira par être nommé « Villa Baviera » et sera converti en un site touristique.

AGENDA

VISITES COMMENTÉES

Jeudi 1^{er} mars 2012 à 18h
Jeudi 26 avril 2012 à 18h

Avec Corinne Charpentier, directrice
et commissaire de l'exposition
Entrée libre

VISITE COMMENTÉE POUR LES ENSEIGNANT-ES

Jeudi 1^{er} mars 2012 à 17h

A l'attention des enseignant-es qui
souhaiteraient assurer une visite avec
leurs classes

INFORMATIONS GÉNÉRALES

18.02 - 06.05.2012

CONTRE L'HISTOIRE

Yael Bartana, Michael Blum,
Mark Boulos, CANAN, Judi Werthein

HORAIRES

Du mercredi au vendredi 12-18h
Samedi et dimanche 14-17h
Nocturne et entrée libre jeudi 18-20h
Visites commentées sur rendez-vous

TARIFS

- Tarif plein : 6 CHF
- Tarif réduit : 3 CHF / moins de 18 ans,
étudiants, AVS et chômeurs
- Gratuit : Amis du centre d'art, moins de
12 ans, Passeport Musées Suisses, Carte
Culture, artistes

CONTACT PRESSE

Marc Zendrini
Renseignements complémentaires
et visuels sur demande
marc.zendrini@fri-art.ch

SOUTIENS

Loterie Romande
Agglomération de Fribourg
Canton de Fribourg
Pour-cent culturel Migros
Office fédéral de la culture