

In situ

In situ was born in the context of the current lockdown of the population: Kanal-Centre Pompidou has been forced to close its doors and postpone its programme of events. And so the question arises: how can we continue to exhibit works of art and showcase the work of artists?

The spread of the coronavirus is above all a social crisis, one that highlights inequalities and political objectives in need of revision. Above all, it reminds us of how important to us are contact, touch and closeness to us, to our bodies, to our environment.

I propose to take over six windows on the ground floor of the showroom as if we had scraped the inside of the museum to push the works to stick to the surface of the windows, exposed to the gaze of passers-by. First of all, the size and position of the building raise the question of distance and so of scale, allowing us to see the exhibition both from a distance, by car, but also from up close, on foot.

In my projects as curator/artist, I always find it important to create shifts in practices, frictions between the different fields of the art world and its actors.¹

I have here chosen to call upon Gabriel Tapia in his capacity as a tattoo artist to work with me on the scenography. The first gesture of the exhibition is to stick a sheet of white vinyl on all the windows, a sheet reminiscent of the walls of the white cube. Placed on the façade of the art centre, it here becomes a skin, a permeable epidermis, a vibrating thickness. The idea is to tattoo Kanal in a radical change of scale, the size of the black line drawing, once printed, being multiplied by 100. The drawing represents an imaginary vegetation somewhere between coral and trees, a mutant vegetation, in the image of our time. We turn upside down the support and its object and make visible from a distance something that normally coils itself up in the depths of the body.

Once this scenographic gesture has been performed, I propose to compose the next step of the exhibition on a scale that takes into account the closeness of the viewer in a relationship between the exterior and the interior. The works of the artists appear in windows cut out in the vinyl, the latter acting as a huge passepartout frame (Marie-Louise).

This programme brings together three artists who each question, through their respective idioms, our relationship to the body, to the territory and to danger, themes that are eminently topical.

The relationship to the body with Claude Cattelain, who creates works permeated with the time it took him to create them from 'poor' or recycled materials. In the works shown here, it is impossible not to see the performance that brought them to life. I also perceive in them an endurance, a wearing down, and an almost initiatory humility.

Hicham Berrada acts like a researcher, perhaps even a chemist. He manipulates substances, gases, pigments, but also various metals, dipped in products that dissolve them. He films changing landscapes that propel us between the cosmos and the infinite smallness of bacteria.

Hervé Charles's concerns are both photographic and ecological. He also transports us into immersive landscapes, his photographs being taken in the field, where he surveys often dangerous areas or areas marked by a recent catastrophe (volcanoes, fires, flooding). Documentary precision overlaps with mysticism in his work. Although often framed in such a way that they show no sky and so no horizon line, his pictures let the eye wander and allow us to explore the image and its thousand details.

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¹ It seems to me that this concern resonates in particular in the current context and echoes other professions with no recognized status.