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*Découper le temps en son lieu / Cutting out Time in
its Place*

Parcours expérimental / Experimental Journey

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Foreword

Bernhard Rüdiger

Cutting out Time in its Place is an experimental journey that unfolded between 2015 and 2017, like an alternative follow up to the third book by the Art Contemporain et Temps de l'Histoire (Contemporary Art and Temporalities of History) research unit, *Le Temps suspendu (Time Suspended)*, published by the Presses Universitaires of Lyon ¹. This current publication retraces that journey, from the point of view of recounting this experience based on the most recent exhibition in the *Réfectoire des nonnes*, the gallery space of the ENSBA Lyon, that took place in December 2016. Recorded over two days, on September 16th and 17th, at Aisey-sur-Seine by Yann Annicchiarico, Axelle Bonnard, Jenny Lauro-Mariani and Bernhard Rüdiger, the conversation was transcribed and edited with the participation of Vincent Ceraudo, Maité Marra and Philippe Rousseau.

The decision to record voices is not in this case due to a technical choice dictated by ease, but is considered to be a real tool. The oral form and its written elaboration was the chosen method used to test the conversation format in the present time of the action and its sharing. Speaking in front of others is a community activity and is never considered to be that of an individual. This is the reason that the names have been erased in the final draft, excepting those rare moments where they appear in brackets, when they provide a strictly personal narrative.

Constantly at the heart of our working methods and our publications, here group conversation takes on the tool-like form of research. It is the expression of thought captured in the present time of its unfolding. This publication is an attempt to transcribe the real nature of the ongoing work.

To define this form of collective dialogue in a more precise fashion we have used the

¹ *Le Temps suspendu ; Art contemporain et temps hors de l'histoire*, G. Careri and B. Rüdiger, dir., ed. PUL Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 2016, with L. Acquarelli, Y. Annicchiarico, S. Bergala, B. Duvernay, J. Lauro-Mariani, Th. Léon, A. Mengoni, M. Montazami, Ph. L. Rousseau, E. L. Santner, A. Tournon, R. Ubl.

term *interlocution* that was developed by Hans Georg Gadamer in the 1960's². He used it to better identify the object that finds itself at the heart of the discussion, challenging modern science's notion of objective truth founded on experimentation. For this, he referred to the founding fathers of Christianity and a completely different idea of truth, to show that what is true is not the object which is verified and measured, but rather that which emerges at the moment of its oral transmission. In a certain sense, for Gadamer truth is found in the relative nature of the exercise of discussion itself. In the context that interests us here, that of the aesthetic approach, interlocution confers a predominant role to the subjective point of view and the dialectical possibility of the encounter of different subjectivities. The conversation between artists and theoreticians is an exercise in an intersubjective definition of issues and develops a constantly evolving common object.

Since a first experimental exhibition at the *Réfectoire des nonnes* in 2011, the research unit has been working on the elaboration of *tables*, visual tools that enable a discussion of a theoretical nature. This process has provided a way of organizing a dialectical exchange and the actual research itself. The model of this type of visual argument through the juxtaposition of images was developed between 1925 and 1929 by Aby Warburg in the form of panels in his *Mnemosyne Atlas*, and we have applied it to our questions, re-orientating the tool and its theoretical approach in a decisive fashion. This publication retraces the work of interlocution between individuals based on visual objects and the construction of an atlas in the space of the gallery, in the context of *Vision* in the Palais de Tokyo in April 2016 and later in the *Réfectoire des nonnes* in December of the same year. It describes in detail what has been an important

development in our eyes: the transformation of visual tools. In Aby Warburg's *Mnemosyne Atlas*, similar to the panels of our book *Le temps suspendu*, the *tables* are built up through the juxtaposition of images, of visual tools that refer to absent objects. Even though the discussion and the creation of our tables had already marked an important theoretical shift with regard to how Warburg used the image, it continues to be a matter of visual arguments which structure the exercise of the conversation thanks to their representation in the form of photocopies and their vocal evocation. This publication speaks about the decisive shift that was developed through the radical transformation of the nature and place of the visual tool in our conversations. Here it moves from the status of images to that of an object created by processes and gestures. The tables that we created during the two exhibitions in 2016 form an atlas of models, of visual objects that were created as the discussion progressed.

The re-transcription of the discussion is not in this case a verbal thought process struggling with visual, and referential arguments which address artworks that are of interest to us, but rather the oral and manual implementation of their reification. The discussion is not based on images, but rather on gestures that transform the evocation of a referent into an action. The gesture that allows a model to be built is here a place of thinking that transfigures the exercise of interlocution in a decisive fashion.

Thinking is here a gestural *praxis* that determines arguments and exhibits them in the concrete space where they are given form on a visual *and* verbal level.

The artworks that we are studying here in this last atlas are no longer present as images that stimulate debate. They have been developed with what the latin word defines as *labor*, as work. They have been transformed, that is to say they have been trans-developed as models, following the idea of a decidedly concrete *durcharbeiten*. It is a question, as Freud suggests, of working through something, of understanding the artworks being studied by literally becoming involved in a movement in and through their matter, through the gesture and through the emergence of speech.

The long term work of this group of artists and theoreticians on history and its suspension led us, from 2011 onwards, to pay closer attention to the relationship that

certain artworks maintain with the place of their creation or their exhibition. It is this locality which fundamentally threw the referential use of the image into crisis in our later tables, requiring a more precise analysis of the factual and dialectical relationship with historical places. *Cutting out time in its place* is to be read as a statement that on one hand refers to the material work of cutting, necessary for the fabrication of a model, and on the other to the temporal strata that our models show, not generally, but in relation to specific and exemplary places. More precisely; the material and conceptual operations which provoke the construction of our models allow us to think differently about artworks and develop an interlocution of a different nature.

Time is once again at the heart of the group's interlocution. This publication intends to be a work done in the present, of speech emerging in and through the matter of the gesture. It is an attempt to provide the image with this depth that Walter Benjamin spoke about in *The Arcade Project*:

“It's not that what is past casts its light on what is present, or what is present its light on the past; rather, image is that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation.”³

3 Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin. Harvard University Press, USA, 2002, p. 462.

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Origins

— The work that we will try to summarize in this publication finds its origins in the use of an existing tool. The *Mnemosyne Atlas* of Aby Warburg, a methodological model based on a confrontation of a corpus of images of artworks. We first used it in 2011 as a method of working on the exhibition *Le temps suspendu ; une exposition expérimentale* at the Réfectoire des nonnes in Lyon.

— Rather than simply convoking images of the artworks that the group was working on at the time, the idea was to organize their exhibition for the purposes of concretely confronting them to one another, in other words in space, in order to create the experience on a physical level. In parallel to this, reproductions of two prototypes of *Atlas*, panel 56 of *Mnemosyne* by Warburg and the *Block*, from Gerhard Richter's *Atlas* that deals with the events of September 11th [IMAGES] were displayed. We began to discuss the exhibited works on the basis of these two prototypes. Beginning with connections that emerged between the artworks, we summoned other images and texts and thus the initial artworks were infused with a new, fresh dynamic as part of a much deeper whole.

— Once the exhibition had been mounted, we built a number of panels of an atlas by organizing sets of images on tables placed in the center of the space, based on different discussions that had been generated by the artworks. We concentrated our research on the complex relationship which exists between natural history, the history of mankind and traumatic repetition, basing the work in particular on Gerhard Richter's own work around the events of September 11th. We were interested in how perception finds itself shifted, for example when the subject is captured in the wake of some form of trauma where it can no longer recount its experience.

— The interest that we showed later on, in our most recent exhibition, for the relationships that exist between the artworks being studied and their materiality, and the development that led us to work on an atlas made up of maquettes, is a direct result of these initial discussions.

— Beginning with this first exhibition and the dialectical mechanism at work between the artworks being exhibited and the assembled tables of our atlas, we worked together over a number of sessions, each one lasting a few days. From these sessions emerged two paradigms on which we then focussed our attention and research. In the years that followed, we ultimately reworked all of this material, creating the book *Le temps suspendu (Time Suspended)* which was published in 2016.

— The book was created using two paradigms. The first is connected to the shock and its relation to traumatic experience. The paradigm of the shock is based on the suspension of the subconscious mind and sensitive perception of a subject which, when caught up in a critical experience, favors an awareness of the present moment, losing all notions of time, as if blinded by an all too violent reality. This particular condition of experience does not allow for the construction of any narrative, as no memory has been elaborated. This has allowed us to develop a specific view of contemporary artworks, often connected to the issue of catastrophe and the post-war period, which is able to work with tools that are inherent to blindness, capable of suspending our perception. Blindness and suspension able to transmit something of a historical reality, not by showing it, but rather by hiding it, leading the spectator to touch it in a different manner.

— This is the contact with reality that Lacan calls the *tuché* ⁴.

4 In his second book of physics, Aristotle distinguishes two types of chance events. Those which happen automatically, *by themselves* (automaton), chance events where no intentional intervention is possible, in the case of an object (or with animals). The second category of chance is that of things which happen by luck (tuché), where it could be possible to assume that the being connected to the event might have had some kind of choice or interference in the event.

In his 11th seminar, Lacan used these two concepts to speak about one aspect of repetition in psychoanalysis as an *automaton*, a network of signifiers, which is held together by itself. Something is built with no participation from the subject (for example the signifiers linked to heritage and to what pre-exists of the subject and which are kept in a principle of stability, repressed to maintain a state of well-being). On the other hand, the *tuché* is the encounter with the real. It is chance, the unexpected, the extra curricular, the accident which can reactivate that which was absent or interrupted, repressed. The

— The other paradigm came to us from a vision of natural history. More specifically a vision of another type of temporal suspension on which we worked, beginning with the series *The Wave* by Goustaue Courbet and it's refusal to conform to History Painting in the context of the imminence of the events of the Commune. [IMAGE VAGUE]

— In this way we have, in the book *Le temps suspendu*, developed a reading of artworks in a specific manner, one that does not show history as a characteristic subject or theme, but which works more so on the temporal paradigms inherent to it. For the purposes of making this book, we have worked on the construction of a number of new panels of an atlas for the purposes of organizing discussions around the works involved and the individual texts which were in the process of being written. This book is the result of a long term work on the atlas.

— We have continued to work on certain qualities of the tool of the atlas in the wake of the book's publication by reengaging a collective approach. Certain issues continued to be developed, such as those produced by the work of Gerhard Richter for example, or even that of Pierre Huyghe, which occupied an increasingly central place as we reflected upon natural history.

— Following the book's publication, the notion of materiality became fundamental to this new approach and led us to develop a different form of atlas. It arose from the encounter between the study of Courbet's *Wave* and the panel from Richter's *Atlas* that deals with September 11th. More accurately, it was based on the dust generated from the collapse of the twin towers and the way that Gerhard Richter on one hand treated the smoke generated by this dust in the depth and thickness of the only painting that he dedicated to the subject, the painting entitled *September* [IMAGE], and on the

subject is touched by the Real in a different manner and can be re-elaborated in other, unexpected ways. What is suspended – traumatic experience for example – find with the *tuché* the opportunity to return: a reformulation which could perhaps be anti-traumatic. "The function of the *tuché*, of the real, as encounter – the encounter in so far as it may be missed, in so far as it is essentially the missed encounter – first presented itself in the history of psycho-analysis in a form that was in itself already enough to arouse our attention, that of the trauma." Jaques Lacan, "Tuché and automaton in The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis", Book IX, translated by Alan Sheridan, New York, W.W. Norton and Co., 1998, p 55.

other hand his interest for the highly transparent window panes used in the construction of skyscrapers. In the *Block* of his *Atlas*, he places these panes of glass in relation with nano-structures that compose a perfectly organized material. At the time he was working on screen printed paintings of perfectly aligned atoms, based on photographs of the nanostructure of Strontium, a substance which explodes when it comes into contact with oxygen.

— These approaches, of utmost importance to the book, took on a whole other meaning for us at the moment where we went back to speaking about the works exhibited by Richter in Dresden: of the concrete locality of the city and its material destruction in the latter stages of the Second World War. We came to Dresden both by way of the evocation of its bombing by W.G. Sebald in our work dealing with trauma, and because Richter was invited to exhibit his work in the town of his birth on the occasion of his 70th birthday.

— It was precisely at that moment that we decided to make maquettes and to go back to the other objects that had accompanied us in the period after the book had been written; those by Pierre Huyghe, that we had already dealt with when speaking of trans-coding, but also those of Eadweard Muybridge and Michael Snow. We continued to work on those objects, while at the same time taking a radically different step at the moment when we decided, in quite an intuitive manner, to focus our attention on the gestures of artists. Instead of taking the images of the artworks that were of interest to us and placing them one beside the other so that the juxtaposition would bring out their material nature, we decided to create maquettes of these works, and thus introduce a gestural dimension into the fabrication of the images of the atlas. Thus, the atlas was deployed in three dimensions in space. The possibility of walking around these forms and the gestures that produced them became a determining factor. We displayed this first step of the new work as part of the exhibition *Vision* at the Palais de Tokyo.

— Going back to Aby Warburg and to the way in which he appropriated the tool of the atlas, it must be said that resemblance, in the sense of what Warburg calls a

Pathosformel, something which is at the center of his work on Mnemosyne, is not really at the heart of our interests. We have not concerned ourselves with resemblance, an essential unavoidable link on the same panel for Warburg, but have preferred to concentrate on what opposes the images that have been brought to our tables, on their juxtaposition. One could say in a certain sense, that from the very beginning we have not respected a semantic field which is essential to this tool, one of the approaches which underpins the practice of the Warburgian atlas and the way in which it builds connections between images.

What we found interesting in the *September Block* of Richter's Atlas for example, was the fact that these operations can not be considered for their resemblance, but rather as a juxtaposition of different gestures, that Richter made in 2006, retrospectively gathering together different visual and plastic operations done in 2002 and 2003. What interests us in the transparent panes of glass, the atoms and the painting *September*, is precisely the manifest difference in the visual operations in the same semantic field that Richter brought together later on, post-September 11th.

— For this reason, the operations that we carried out were different to those described by Giovanni in the introduction to the book *Le Temps Suspendu* in relation to panel 56 of Warburg's *Atlas*. Let us say that in the case of Warburg, the object being targeted is a field of energy in the ancient Greek sense of the term, in the sense of an energy that passes from one image to another, from one artwork to another⁵. Warburg collected together images of artworks taken from different contexts, trying to show this energy that operates in the background of artworks set in a complex temporality. Panel 56 of *Mnemosyne* emphasizes ascending forces, elevation and descent, and consequently their resemblance. We have clearly not worked on this particular semantic field.

— We very quickly abandoned the idea of resemblance of images! In other words, right from the very first displacement, where we put our work for the exhibition in 2011 in place, and later on with the book, we had already taken a significant step in a

different direction. We sought to identify, through the juxtaposition of images, their limits, to move them outside of their semantic field, to highlight the tension that exists between one image and another, for the purposes of presenting the different fields.

— To a certain extent we wanted to counteract all of that, to create tension between the artworks being evoked. Our attention was focussed primarily on the passages. And so, we began to build pathways, it was no longer a question of rectangular tables, but of pathways, of axes.

— For example, the central axis of Courbet's *Waves* which runs horizontally across the panel of our book [IMAGE], separates two opposing approaches. Closer to the bottom, a pathway began that would culminate with a painting by Klee and his cyclic perception of time. Near to the top a different line shows the destruction of Vendôme's column that culminated with the History painting *The Intervention of the Sabine Women* by David. We used to work with polarities, between on one hand the representation of the history of mankind, and on the other, natural history and the absence of the human figure. The same thing with the panel *Machinique*, built upon fields of tension: where the mechanical eye of Dziga Vertov faces off with the eye in the paintings of Mikhail Matiouchine, a confrontation developed in the Russian avant-garde, somewhere between a mechanical approach and a suprematist one.

— We worked on opposition, and the study of Richter's *Atlas* was central to this. It is from here, the internal oppositions to the panel dealing with the events of September 11th, that a consideration of the material and specific nature of the gestures of artists emerged. It is an artist's atlas which emphasizes the materiality of things. It continues to be a question of images, but images of maquettes, of elements that are used for work, sources of inspiration. These images render a form of materiality, that has become important for our work, perceptible.

— However we, and this is an essential question, have decided to move from images to three dimensional objects. Our work is done through gestures and not through

images. We emphasize the gesture through the modeling of the artworks to which we refer, in this way re-situating the issues raised by the materiality of an object. The gesture of building the maquette shifts the issue of the materiality of an object, of the space of the artwork to that of a thought process. The gesture becomes a tool for thought. Our atlas of maquettes has been imagined through the gestures that we carry out and not only through the objects that it juxtaposes. One could speak here of an inversion.

— It seems to me that the first important passage is established at the moment when we move from what we have developed in the panels of atlas of the book, the exercise of juxtaposition as a field of tensions, to what you call an inversion, the use of gestures during the first version of our exhibition *Le temps découpé en son lieu* for *Vision*. But, in a different fashion to Richter, who is indeed an artist, and whose *Atlas* refers to the materiality of artworks, we employ the process of fabrication of artworks as a space for thought. There are of course images of maquettes in Richter's *Atlas*, photos, cut-outs from newspapers, but they always refers to something that has been made elsewhere, it is an atlas that refers to the manual manipulations of other objects.

— The textual and interpretative formula was for Aby Warburg a space of transformation of the images being summoned. A certain chapel, once taken out of its context, was reactivated in a panel of his *Atlas* by an interpretive and sensitive work, by the historian who, through the position that he took and the views he expressed, worked on the materiality of the artwork. Here we have gone further: for us materiality is not the result of discourse, it is part of discourse itself, discourse comes into being through materiality. That is to say, one takes the plaster, one smooths it, one pours it and works on it, and this produces a specific knowledge, this is not so much an inversion as a shift in dimension. From a verbal, intellectual and descriptive, and thus referential dimension, we move to a thinking in the midst of becoming, because the gesture itself is the thing being spoken about.

— From a slightly closed place which is one of texts and references, – a narrative form of thinking – we have moved towards a space where things are experimented on a practical level and are put into words.

— An interlocution, a work of expressing ourselves to each other that itself produces knowledge.

— That's it, but which has produced a knowledge belonging to the group. I have the impression that the moment of the inversion is one where we say yes, this interlocution has existed, but it will remain a closed bubble if we do not position ourselves somewhere within a concrete reality, a materiality that is reintroduced into objects through the gesture, carried out within their reality, within a context.

— What I'm trying to emphasize here, is the fact that the gesture, our gesture, for example, of spreading the plaster, as Richter spread his *Stripes* so to speak (in reality they are lines that have been "spread" by a sliding color pixel), is not only a gesture which represents both the maquette of the construction of the walls of the museum in Dresden and even a materialization of *Stripes*, it is itself the production of knowledge. It is as legible for a spectator as the gesture itself. It is not a verbal expression, and yet it can be understood. We have seen it, we have understood the gesture. We pull something from left to right, we spread a material, and reading this gesture that has been carried out, produces, by itself, an understanding of a complex, non-verbal, a plastically shaped context.

— In the sense employed by the inventor of the word, the futurist Umberto Boccioni, plastic and dynamic.

— Something else that seems pertinent to me, is that this materialization of the gesture in no way excludes speech, we continue to produce a discursive knowledge between ourselves, we speak of the plan of our atlas, we speak about the pieces. And so, we spoke for quite some time about the piece by Pierre Huyghe, about the way that

it was set up on the roof of the Metropolitan Museum in Central Park, opposite the Museum of Natural History, and how Pierre Huyghe himself referred to the fossilized mummy exhibited in the latter in the catalogue that accompanied the exhibition.
[IMAGE NOTE ON COPPER MAN]

— We will look at this in more detail later on, but our maquette of the Albertinum room in Dresden, where Richter exhibited, emerged first and foremost from the gesture of spreading plaster and an understanding of it gained through discussion, while our maquette of Pierre Huygue's work emerged from a dialogue that we developed between his work and our ideas about the importance of natural history. In the first example it was a dialectical and gestural process that led us to define the maquette, whereas in this second example, we began with speech that produced knowledge to arrive at the most pertinent gesture.

— But for a reader, someone who looks at the work from the outside, he or she says to his or herself "so they are producing knowledge through the use of the maquette", he could have imagined that there was no more verblativity, or that one does not exclude the other.

— It has been necessary to re-explain it each time, over the last fifteen years, that the group refuses to take one side or the other, refusing to oppose the theory and practice of art. We will ultimately end up creating manifestos which employ one gesture and four phrases, "we refuse"!

— I have often noticed when discussing the project with other people, that they are no longer able to understand if it is a discursive approach or not, as they are not able to imagine that the gesture produces knowledge which is legible through its traces and not through its narration.

— One more detail if I may. We made an exhibition. Yet when one says that, one must specify that one is describing something which is made little by little, in stages,

an experience that ultimately results in an exhibited form. The second stage of the exhibition at the Réfectoire des nonnes was enhanced with artworks presented in the second room. A first part of this exhibition was the result of collective work, the work in the second room is made up of individual pieces created by artists from the group. I would also say that this second exhibition project, *Le temps découpé en son lieu 2*, separates, in a much more obvious fashion, the experience of maquettes of work of understanding through speech. We have accompanied the exhibition with a publication, large format sheets to be handled and read independently of one another, with each sheet referring to one of the maquettes, collecting images and information about the context and the work being done.

— In effect, it is documentation that is not intended for mediation, one must sit down and take the time to read it. It has been designed for people to carry it away with them.

The Wind Rose

— As we were making preparations for this interview, it seemed important to draw the map of the exhibition *Le temps découpé en son lieu 2* for the publication. The first gesture was to draw a wind rose, also known as a Compass Rose.

This wind rose emerged from an important discussion that took place during the mounting of the exhibition, at a time when we were faced with the question of positioning the maquette of Richter's work along with those of Gordon Matta Clark and Pierre Huyghe, as these three works have a very strong link to a very specific place in the world. We placed them in the Réfectoire des nonnes according to the actual positions of the buildings where the artworks in question are located, using the wind rose to guide us.

— In attempting to apply this method to other maquettes in our exhibition we realized that there was a significant difference between the three maquettes that we had defined as belonging to the central axis of our atlas, and the other models which were placed to the north and south of this line of work. It is for this reason that, in the end, these three maquettes, unlike the others, are placed on a table, on stands, positioned according to their architectural references.

— It is important to note that we drew the plan of the exhibition that we mounted by lining up the North – South axis with the edge of a sheet of paper. The drawing of the plan for the walls of the exhibition space of the Réfectoire des nonnes was consequently repositioned on the sheet according to its real position in relation to the north which, as is usually the case, is located at the top of our map.

The models were relocated on the map in order to redraw the atlas that we have built in the exhibition space. From left to right, the three objects of the central axis. In other words the three models which, inside the space of the Réfectoire des nonnes, have been placed according to the position of the three very specific locations as determined by the wind rose. The three spaces are the Albertinum museum in Dresden, destroyed

in 1945 and rebuilt after the war, the Metropolitan Museum of New York which is one of those rare buildings that finds itself inside the perimeter of Central Park, and *Conical Intersect*, a work by Gordon Matta Clark, which was dug out of one of the buildings that was destroyed during the construction of Beaubourg in the current Quartier de l'horloge in Paris. On our map we placed a small symbol of the wind rose beside these three models along with an outline to indicate that they are on stands.

The central axis

Gerhard Richter at the Albertinum

— In the exhibition which was organized for his 70th birthday in the Albertinum in 2013, in his native city of Dresden, Richter decided to only exhibit abstract works. [IMAGE ALBERTINUM] The exhibition was composed of a new assembly of transparent glass panes called *House of Cards*, of screen prints from the series *Strips*, of paintings on glass *Flow*, that were made using huge basins of moving liquid color that the glass came into contact with, being caught on the surface. [IMAGE SALLE] In the room of *House of Cards*, of which we have made a maquette, two publications are also exhibited. One is from 1957 and is called *Elbe*, it is composed of monotypes that Richter left behind in Dresden when he fled from Eastern Germany in 1961, the year that the wall was built. The second comes from 2008 and is called *November* and is composed of the lithographic reproduction of 27 sheets where Richter made ink-stains which spread through the material, from one sheet to another. Thus the publication contains 54 printed sheets.

Pierre Huyghe on the roof of the MET

— The second subject which interested us was an exhibition by Pierre Huyghe on the roof of the Metropolitan Museum of New York which took place in 2015. Pierre Huyghe installed an aquarium with a large smooth stone suspended within it on the terrace of the MET. [IMAGE] This aquarium overflowed when it rained, spilling water

all over the terrace. Around the aquarium, Pierre Huyghe displaced a certain number of slabs which covered the ground. Plants and animals began to emerge from between the slabs, thanks to the water from the aquarium which nourished them and ended up creating a kind of biotope.

— A number of things were of interest to us: firstly the notion of biotope, and also the link that Pierre Huyghe made between his installation and the Museum of Natural History located on the other side of Central Park, where a mummy discovered in the 19th century is conserved. A man, an American Indian, whose body seems to have been mineralized, copperized, as he suffocated to death in a copper mine and was then exposed to his mineral laced surroundings for a very long time ⁶. [IMAGE]

— The other issue which affected the development of the model emerged from discussions around the text for the book *Le temps suspendu* in which Philippe went back to Smithson's interest for Central Park, as the place of the picturesque. He guided us to a photograph that Smithson had taken of Central Park with three steps cut into a piece of shale. [IMAGE PHILIPPE] And so we began to see, through the eyes of Smithson and of Philippe, that Central Park had been imagined as a park to represent nature such as it was before the planned construction of the city. It is as such the only place in the city where shale was not leveled for the purposes of creating city housing. It is the one place in the city where we are supposed to be able to wander among the traces of the past.

Gordon Matta Clark in Beaubourg

— The third piece, *Conical Intersect* by Gordon Matta Clark, [IMAGE] interested us for the parallel that Gordon Matta Clark made with the conical hole of his work and the gaping hole left behind in the urban fabric of Paris by the destruction of the unsanitary neighborhood of Beaubourg in the 1930's and its completion in the mid

6 *The Copper Man*, conserved in the New York Museum of Natural History, was discovered in 1891 beside Chuquicamata in a collapsed mine in the Atacama desert in northern Chile. The green surface of the skin of this 7th century miner had been preserved thanks to the dry atmosphere of the desert and the ionization of the copper present in large quantities in the underground gallery. See, Arthur C. Aufderheide, *The Scientific Study of Mummies*, ed. Cambridge University Press, 2003, p.305.

1970's, making way for the Quartier de l'horloge and the IRCAM. This hole in the city center could bring to mind Mussolini's pharaonic project, where he destroyed the city center of Rome in order to excavate the remains of the antique Roman forum. [IMAGES BEAUBOURG 70 ET ROME]

— The Centre Pompidou in Paris was built on top of this space, a building which is a kind of UFO. A UFO in the sense that it is certainly not an organic extension of the city, and that the project can also be imagined as a Roman forum, a public place of the city and of culture. One can project a new forum in the city, and Gordon Matta Clark, invited in 1975 to participate in an exhibition which celebrated the construction site, employed one of the buildings that was in the process of being demolished, hollowing out a cone which, from within the body of what would be the future Centre Pompidou, opened onto rue Beaubourg.

— It is also the material nature of the building which is of interest to us. Gordon Matta Clark cut into the materials of the building and it is of course common knowledge that the walls in Paris are largely made of plaster.

— This led us to a closer examination of another piece by Gordon Matta Clark, made later on in 1977, following the suicide of his twin brother who was also an artist ⁷. He created two artworks in Paris on this occasion. One was called *Descending steps for Batan*, for which he dug a square hole in the floor of the Lambert gallery, descending underground, continuing to dig deeper over the course of the exhibition. The other was composed of a series of photos taken in the catacombs of Paris. We established a significant link between the project of *Conical Intersect* and the catacombs that were plaster quarries which supplied raw materials for the construction of Parisian walls. It is one of the more ancient buildings in the city, built from the

7 Gordon's twin brother was called John Sebastian Matta, aka Batan. He was a painter and also drew. The two sons of designer Anne Clark and painter Robert Matta lived with their parents in Paris from 1947 to 1948. Following their separation the twins often visited Paris to spend the summer vacation with their father. Batan lived there for a few years after high school. At the moment of his suicide by defenestration he shared a studio with his brother in New York. See: Maxime Morel et Marine Nédélec, "John Sebastian Matta, dit Batan. Souvenirs et mythologie artistique : la figure du maudit ?", in *Morel Maxime, Nédélec Marine et Paulhan Camille (dir.), Une traversée dans la famille Matta*, proceedings of the study day, Paris, June 19th, 2014.

plaster and local stones that Gordon Matta Clark also used to create his work. The Beaubourg construction site destroyed a living neighborhood in the city. This building made way for an innovative construction, which remains nonetheless, inorganic. With it the history of the city and people who lived there disappeared, for the purposes of a new, willing and abstract forum, Beaubourg place and the Centre Pompidou.

The other maquettes, the balance

— We built four maquettes around this central axis. As with the first three, the work done was collective, even though it was partly connected to the individual development of an idea. Throughout our discussions and as the work progressed, we realized that the other maquettes did not treat the idea of place in the same way as those on the central axis. Their positioning in space could not then be based on the wind rose.

— These other maquettes are arranged to the north and south of the central axis following the method of work already being used in the panels of the atlas that were created for the book, in this way forming pathways.

— The maquettes are organized according to a logic of juxtaposition, and so they propose pathways within the space of the Réfectoire des nonnes. In this second exhibition of the maquettes, we concentrated on the tension which emerged from the different approaches taken from one maquette to another. It is the tension which is created between these others maquettes and the three located in the central axis, that we began to call a pendulum amongst ourselves, to emphasize the back and forth movement in thinking that they produced.

The Rose

— An artwork which interested us greatly in our discussions around the idea of

locality was *The Rose*, by Jay DeFeo. [IMAGE] Rosa Joly proposed this work and its surprising materiality, and so we attempted to better identify the idea of matter and the precise relationship that it establishes with place. DeFeo's work was developed over a period of 9 years in her studio on Fillmore Street in San Francisco, from 1958 to 1966. The work became a unique and obsessional endeavor, and the artist rarely, if ever, left the studio.

— Something else which also interested Rosa was the whole context of San Francisco which surrounded Jay DeFeo's studio. A place that would become, in parallel to the creation of this artwork, the center of a scene filled with artists and poets. One of the important features of Rosa's approach was that of confronting this work, very centered on the person of Jay DeFeo, with the movement of people in the same studio, to better understand the importance of the notion of community that emerged around the Sixt Gallery, founded in 1955 in the same street which had become the nerve center of the nascent *Beat Generation*, also known as the Fillmore Street community.

— The maquette employs the idea of a vision of the community which frequented the studio. An inverted view to a certain extent. The studio is copied and doubled as if behind the Rose, an eye at the sole vanishing point, there lies an equivalent space. The central point of Rosa's rose has been pierced as if the other empty space was observing Jay DeFeo working on her painting, along with the community of Fillmore Street who visited the studio. The copied and doubled part of the studio space in fact functions like a true optical chamber.

— This maquette raised many questions when it was time to display it. Its functioning as an optical chamber highlights this singular vision, the relationship with the studio and with the community. It represents a completely different relationship with the place, a biographical and subjective one. The maquette is moved to the north of the central axis, finding itself isolated in another room in the place.

Underground Cinema

— The other object which was developed on the basis of the discussions with Philippe and Vincent was the *Underground Cinema* project by Robert Smithson, which interested us for its concrete relationship with matter and the ground. Smithson's idea was to hollow out a cinema under the ground, in a mine, and to film the moment of digging for the purposes of projecting it in the same cinema. With an inherently Smithsonian irony – a project that was completely concrete and yet radically theoretical. The project was never made and only exists in the form of traces, of drawings. [IMAGE]

— We find ourselves faced with the project for a site which the use of film intends to transform into a non-site, according to the approach developed by Smithson at the time. Smithson's site/non-site dialectic was the subject of our discussions, the place of representation or of exhibition was by definition for Smithson, a non-site. One is in a non-site when one looks at a work of art, and this contradiction interested Smithson greatly, this idea of bringing perception back to the site, this gallery hollowed out in the earth, with everything that can be atmospheric, concrete and entropic about this place.

— We understood from this maquette that it was a question of theoretical places, of a consideration of the place and at the same time of an articulation with the idea of a concrete world. So we placed this maquette, along with the ones that followed, to the south of the central axis. All three of these theoretical places have a specific relationship with the space of exhibition. *Underground Cinema* was installed on a supporting column in the space.

Traveling

— A different approach to an abstract place was proposed by Thomas Léon through the study of *Stalker*, a work by Andrei Tarkovski, and in particular the scene in the film where the main character, the Stalker, falls asleep. [IMAGE] The camera movement radically changes angle, switching from the point of view of the human to

an overhead shot. The camera pans along in a straight line. It films a body of water which covers the ground of an abandoned building. One can observe a marshy place, a mix of plants and water which contains many lost objects, residues of human culture. This straight line begins with the face of the sleeping Stalker and ends, after a long shot that moves across the surface of the water, on the hand of the same Stalker. Thomas became interested in this impossible and contradictory shot for its use of space. The problem which emerged was that the line couldn't be continuous, or that if it could, then it had to be a suspended moment, and that it was perhaps, and this is generally the case with the films of Tarkovski, a shift in vision from man to the Divine.

— The panning shot has to some extent been transformed. The video projector is suspended from the ceiling at around a meter from the ground with the image being projected onto the floor tiles of the space.

Snow in Chauvet

— This maquette, supplied by Yann, as a work that was made for the occasion, ahead of time in a studio, was the subject of a long discussion. The composition of this tiny maquette required that two people handle it, which quickly became an important feature of this object when we were working on the maquettes collectively. This structure under tension, which could bring to mind the tightropes of circus walkers, is made of sticks and strings. It suspends four sheets, translucent rhodoïds onto which have been printed monochrome squares. The color of these sheets comes from the four central pixels of the two cuts made by Michael Snow when he moved from *Wavelength* (1967) to *WLNT (Wavelength for those who don't have the time)* (2003), and thus the first and last image of the film. In effect, in 2003 Michael Snow began digitizing the film made in 1967, cutting it into three 15 minute slices that he then layered, creating a 15 minute long film with three layers of images, *WLNT (Wavelength for those who don't have the time)*. [IMAGES DES DEUX FILMS]

— In the original film, a mechanical zoom reduces the image at the same time as

its sinusoidal sound, its wavelength, becomes sharper and sharper. In the 2003 version, different layers of high and low frequency sound, different stages of the progression of the zoom, an overall view and close up, along with the three events which imply human action, superimposed in a kind of general chaos.

The stick and thread structure of the maquette carries a different object, an image that has been woven like a rug, interweaving two prints of the same film still taken from the film *The Cave of Forgotten Dreams* (2010) by Werner Herzog. [IMAGE DU PHOTOGRAMME]

— The two woven prints are placed at the foot of the maquette's structure. This still has been taken from the film that Herzog shot in the cave of Chauvet, at that very particular moment where Herzog stops in front of a representation of two deers painted one on top of the other in opposite directions. He expresses surprise that archeologists had dated the execution of the two drawings, using carbon dating, 5000 years apart.

— This maquette has always been placed on the edge of the atlas. It implies a double theoretical relationship: two objects are interwoven. But it also emphasizes a relationship with the double place. A concrete relationship with the place, the cave and Snow's mechanical zoom, but also a complex problematic of time which is at work in these stratified spaces.

— The maquette found its place in a niche that was hollowed out in the wall between the room containing the maquettes and the space containing the artworks. It seems less interesting to me to explain the next room and the reasons for installing the artworks in space, as they are not involved in the same logic of the atlas, but rather organized in space following the classical rules of the perception of an artwork. It is sufficient then to simply indicate their position on the plan. It is more important to talk about the changes and discussions which occurred during this final installation of the atlas. To understand how *Snow in Chauvet* ultimately finds itself in a niche in the wall.

From *Temps découpé en son lieu 1* to *Temps découpé en son lieu 2*

— In the first version of our three dimensional atlas, exhibited on the occasion of *Vision* at the Palais de Tokyo, the maquettes were all organized in a similar fashion to our previous work, according to lines of tension and the pathways which began at nodal points. [IMAGES VISION] We walked between the tables of our atlas, moving from one maquette to another, from one content to another. The central axis of the maquettes of Richter, Pierre Huyghe and Gordon Matta Clark, was already in place, with three lines of tension extending outwards. *La Rose* by Jay DeFeo started out from the maquette by Gordon Matta Clark, *Underground Cinema* started out from the maquette of Pierre Huyghe and led to the Chauvet cave by Michael Snow. From the other side of the atlas the maquette of Tarkovski represented an isolated counterpoint. *Underground Cinema* maintained a concrete link with the maquette of Pierre Huyghe, the projector showing the film from *Underground Cinema* was set up under the maquette of Central Park with Huyghe's maquette, while the maquette of the Rose, and that of Tarkovski and Yann's maquette, *Snow in Chauvet*, were given statuses that were both different and opposed to one another.

— And yet something essential occurred in the second exhibition that took place in the Réfectoire des nonnes in Lyon. We no longer developed axes as we had for the panels of the book. Our exhibition methodology was once again organized around this very strong axis which was placed in the center, and we established different relationships with the other maquettes.

— It was at this moment that we questioned the tables on which the maquettes were placed and which did not belong to the central axis, in other words, we became aware that we had developed the status of what an image in an atlas normally is. After our experience in the Palais de Tokyo, the tables could no longer exist in the same way.

— And so in the Réfectoire des nonnes, only three maquettes retained a status

close to that of *Vision*. We decided to keep the maquettes of Richter and Gordon Matta Clark that were placed on tables, at a height of 110 centimeters, whereas for Pierre Huyghe it was a question of a volume of the same size. This height was very important for us as it allowed us to look at the objects with a view normally reserved for maquettes. One sees them as objects, from a slightly overhead position. This decision to place the maquettes at a height of 110 centimeters became a significant moment in the work, as the fact of deciding on this height for the central axis allowed us to clarify the status of the others, particularly the maquette of Jay DeFeo, that had effectively been connected to a place, but which actually had a much stronger link to a social context.

— Our discussions led us to understand that this maquette could not be arranged in the same way and we ended up raising the height of the two tables to bring it up to eye level. At the end of the collective endeavor around the exhibition of the atlas, Jay Defeo was finally placed in a different room and lined up with the door which opened onto the main room, emphasizing its function as an optical mechanism.

— The *Snow in Chauvet* maquette was placed in a niche, we hollowed out a hole in the wall, it was also at table height but its position in the wall no longer allowed one to stand over it. The niche only allowed one to look through it.

— *Underground Cinema* by Smithson has always posed a problem and never really managed to find its place on a table, with its telluric link to a space below ground being so strong.

— We completely abandoned the idea of the cave that we had created using stones in the first version. We mounted the projector on a column in the room, which, like Smithson's extractions is made from stone taken from a precise place. The projector is raised to a height of over two meters and its light projected onto a pile of sand on the ground, with a mirror set into center of this pile.

— And so, Tarkovski was on the table for the exhibition at the Palais de Tokyo, which was absurd, as it was not a maquette but rather a series of projected images. It was a model of Tarkovski's panning shot which created a different relationship with the spectator. Even though it may have been a reduction, it established what is important in a maquette, an apparatus of potentialization. The maquette is always a potential object. Similar to how a mathematical formula provides the possibility of putting a process into practice, the maquette is a place of praxis. The overhead view, that of the divine, is a form of prototype, a way of filming often used by Tarkovski. It shows that which is beyond the human scale. It is an approach that interested us greatly during our discussions around the notions of natural history and catastrophe.

— Ultimately, this maquette could not be placed on a table. So we ended up turning the projector around, placing it in the same position as Tarkovski's camera in order to project the image onto the ground. The materiality represented in Tarkovski's image was doubled up by the materiality of the floor of the Réfectoire des nonnes.

The Central Axis

Dresden

— We have already spoken about why we were interested in Richter while working on the book, in particular when addressing paradigms of shock and suspended time. We also emphasized that the importance of materiality in our recent work comes in large part from the study of his work. In 2002, in a continuation of his thinking about History Painting since the 1960's, Richter prepared an exhibition in New York in which he only exhibited grey panes of glass, displaying the shiny side to the empty space of the room and the different tones of gray smoke towards the wall. Spectators saw themselves more or less reflected in these huge mirrors that cover all of the walls in the room. At the same time he developed a series of works with transparent glass placed against the wall and structures in which he placed the panes of glass upright, with the panes becoming increasingly transparent. It was at that specific moment that he began to work with nanotechnology companies who make hyper transparent glass for buildings. In the *September Block* of his *Atlas*, he contrasts the transparency of these works on glass with the hyper-vision of painted nano structures and the dense and impenetrable smoke of the collapsing towers of the World-Trade Center.

— In recent years, and more specifically in the exhibition *Strips and Glass* in 2013 at the Albertinum in Dresden, for his 70th birthday, Richter reused a screen-printing technique that he had previously developed when creating the *Strips* (extremely thin lines of color taken from photographs of one of his abstract paintings, with the colored pixels of a single vertical line being multiplied and spread across the width of the canvas).

[IMAGE]

For this return to Dresden, Richter only exhibited abstract pieces which were clearly not History Paintings. Nevertheless, for the first time the glass panels were slanted towards the sky. This *House of Cards* was installed on the upper floor of the building

whose rooms were equipped with skylights made from sandblasted glass. This suggested that these fragile glass objects might be bombarded at any time.

— There is also a second link that Richter made with History by exhibiting the series of monotypes entitled *Elbe*, a first abstract work made while he was a student in the school of art in Dresden, that he had left with friends who stayed behind as he fled Eastern Germany. This understanding of the historical context of Dresden, and in particular the importance of the Elbe, is linked to a certain number of autobiographical experiences, with my own family coming from Dresden (Bernhard). In the years that followed the First World War, my grandfather abandoned Dresden, traveling along the main commercial thoroughfare at the time, the Elbe. It was an essential trade route that had linked the port of Hamburg to Dresden since the Renaissance. In the wake of its destruction and before the Russian invasion, many people fled the city along this route, similar to the large number of youths who, following the completion of the Wall in 1961 swam from East to West across this border. By re-exhibiting a series of monotypes called *Elbe* from 1957, Richter highlighted this strong image of the river route, as a place where East meets West.

— Once we had understood this, another, different aspect became of great interest to us, that of the materiality of the building itself. The Albertinum belongs to a small group of buildings that were not completely destroyed, and that would be the first buildings to be rebuilt. In effect, in a large popular movement of the nascent German Democratic Republic of East Germany, the city center was rebuilt using the original stones and according to ancient techniques.

This can be felt quite strongly when one arrives in the city, the city center has been built using burnt stones, and at the same time being surrounded by a modern city that has been built using reinforced concrete.

— This anachronism seemed very interesting to us, and it found a particular echo in Thomas Léon's project of a film about Albert Speer⁸, and his architectural work,

8 Thomas Léon, *Lucid Dream*, 2014, an unrealized film project. The script and a note of intention were published in the publication *Thomas Léon, Fantômes et œil machinique* published for his defense of his Advanced Degree in Art

which, in reactivating older techniques, already planned for their state of ruin. Beginning with this anachronism of the technique of construction we began to be interested in the thicknesses of the building of the Albertinum and the absurdity of its reconstruction. [IMAGE]

— Our first gesture was to identify the room in which Richter had exposed his slanted glass panels along with two publications, the afore-mentioned *Elbe*, and *November* from 2008, with its colors spreading from one page to the next. During our discussions around the procedure that Richter employed to make his *Strips*, exhibited in the adjoining rooms, we quickly understood that the extension of the color pixel that Richter transformed into a line – by multiplying the colored dot that he extracted from an older abstract painting – created a new abstract horizon. We reused this process of smoothing and spreading to create the walls of the maquette of the Albertinum’s architecture. We created what we called a “comb”, a spatula that was cut and shaped according to the contours of the Albertinum’s facade, and then combed the plaster until the walls reproduced the silhouette of a vertical section of the architecture that had been spread along their length.

— This was a maquette where the gesture came before thought, and by thought I mean verbalized thought. By doing this, we realized how the *Strips* functioned and it was through this gesture that we began to understand the relationship to architecture, reconstruction and thus to the Elbe. It was following this that we created a table with the same width as the maquette of the room, covered with strengthened paper which extends out from the Albertinum to the banks of the Elbe.

— Here too we used two of Richter’s processes, employed in the monotypes exhibited in the room in question. The first was to strengthen the paper with the same gesture that Richter used for *Elbe*, using a roller which inks by rolling a sheet on a wooden board. Here we employed this gesture to stick the sheet to the table. The other was to drip watercolor paint, as Richter did with the inks that soaked through the

sheets of his other publication *November*. Through these gestures we better understood Richter's interest for liquidity, for the nature of the Elbe.

— In the final maquette that was exhibited in the Réfectoire des nonnes, we eliminated any representation of the exhibited works, nothing remained other than the architecture spread over a laminated white sheet and a few drops of watercolor paint.

— The place which interests us is obviously Dresden: the verticality of the bombs that is recalled by the glass slanted towards the glass ceiling, but also Dresden as the place of a certain modern natural history, that of the total destruction that Sebald speaks of. This town reveals something else which helps us to understand how Richter positions himself and how he positions his works in this context.

— We may have looked at it less from the perspective of Natural History than from the point of view of History, of the History of disaster and war, which Marguerite Duras defined when speaking of Hiroshima as a “new desert”, a desert that had never been seen before.

— There is also obviously the relationship with the exhibition organized for his 70th birthday. He returned to his birthplace and observed, with the distance of time passed, his generation which shaped itself in the post-war period. It was the link between his work and the relationship with trauma that interested us and that was addressed by Angela's work in *Le temps suspendu* through an in-depth study of this relationship in the construction of his *Atlas*⁹.

Central Park

9 See Bernhard Rüdiger and Angela Mengoni, *Histoire et réalisme traumatique* and Angela Mengoni, “Aucun sens, aucune pitié, aucune sympathie”: un Atlas à remonter l'histoire-nature, in *Le temps suspendu*, ed. PUL, Lyon 2016.

— We have already said a number of things about Huyghe and the maquette of his exhibition on the roof of the New York MET which are part of this central axis. We have spoken about the aquarium, the slabs and the biotope.

— Here the starting point is in effect a different type of history and this difference is important when it comes to understanding how this central axis has been put together and the relationships that exist with time, time perceived through different places, and also different temporalities, as in this case with natural history.

— The inherent temporality of the spectator was also of interest to us. Spectators at the vernissage of the MET only saw loose slabs, and could ultimately only understand the work if they returned after some time had passed, ultimately being able to observe a biotope developing on the terrace. This allowed us to consider the temporalities of the exhibition which in this case is not founded on the efficiency of the visible. The spectator is faced with a temporality which is not their own.

— It is important to remember the way in which we made the maquette: the first version of the maquette for the exhibition *Vision* in the Palais de Tokyo consisted of a piece of shale covered in moss and lichen placed on the location of the MET on a map of 19th century New York. It is a map which displays the whole grid of the streets, but very few of built up plots with the already finished project of Central Park and the sole building contained within it, the first museum building which went on to become the MET.

— We began to work on the notion of stratification based on this relationship between the fragment of shale placed on the map at the location of the museum and the grid of the city under construction.

— The matter of the underground rock of New York, shale, led us to work on stratification, which has become the main subject of the maquette. This is the reason

why it no longer sits on a stand in the exhibition at the Réfectoire des nonnes, but rather on a large opaque volume, a block, with sand piled up on top of it.

— At the very beginning of this process, we began by trying to produce a biotope and we noticed that we were in the process of setting up a very demonstrative relationship. We began by searching for tiny biotopes on the steep bluff located behind the school in Lyon, similar to those highlighted by Pierre Huyghe, seeking mosses in particular. We placed it on a paper map which was soaked in water that itself began to become a biotope. In the end we abandoned the map, the table and the artificial biotope.

— As for Richter's work, we have, so to speak, set aside the artist's work, to focus our interest on that which is highlighted by the work: what its questions point to. What we are making is in a certain sense the materiality of this exact question of the artwork in its relationship to the place. The questions are raised by the place itself more-so than a work done on the place itself. This is why we came up with the idea of using packed, fused sand to create a visible stratification, using sand colored by use and having been burnt when fused, with the different colors making the stratification very visible. We proceeded through very physical gestures, we packed, we packed, we packed. In the end the block appears like the surface of the shale upon which New York was built by leveling the stone. We ourselves leveled the uneven surface of the packed sand, leaving a rectangle in the center which corresponds to the location of Central Park on the map. The checked pattern of New York becomes visible as it is spread onto our pile of sand, whereas Central Park remains in the relief created by the violence of us striking the material.

— In our previous works, in the book *Le temps suspendu*, we considered the construction of history and its narrative through what could be called a generational history, imagined by the genealogy of men and the transmission of narrative. We compared it to this other history, that of catastrophe engendered by war, the total destruction and elimination of a genealogical temporality. Here we emphasize the

absurd project of men who began by leveling the surface of Manhattan with the project of building a city. We were interested in the material that had been removed. Ultimately the only gesture which remains in the maquette that we created around the work of Huyghe, is that of packing, as if in the end we were only interested in the glacier that preceded New York. We retained the gesture of the glacier which compresses and smooths, completely abandoning Huyghe's artwork as an artwork. A certain telluric locality remains, becoming the essential element of the maquette, contrasting the view of historical and generational time with that of the place of Richter's exhibition.

Beaubourg

— This relationship between different temporalities brings us to Gordon Matta-Clark and to *Conical Intersect*. With the sole exception of a change in the height of the legs of the table of the maquette, we kept the first maquette that we had made for *Vision*. It was a schematic construction of the old building of the Beaubourg neighborhood that was traversed by the path of the cone made by Gordon Matta-Clark in 1975. We took the drawing of his project and reproduced it digitally, in a schematic fashion. We created a structure in plastic which in no way respects the original and organic structure of the 16th century house.

— There is an important chasm, we have schematized the hole of Gordon Matta-Clark. It is a 3D drawing that we milled with a machine, performing an operation contrary to the one proposed by Matta-Clark: we ripped the hole from the materiality of the world, of the house. We built it, we materialized it using machines by eliminating any relationship with the physical body and work that were so important to Gordon Matta Clark.

— The operation carried out for the purposes of creating the surface of the ground with its paved imprint, upon which this maquette is placed, was important. We began with Rue Beaubourg which, according to photos from that era, was covered in paving stones. Few areas in Paris still had paving stones at the time, as, in the wake the events

of May 1968, the local police authorities had covered the paving stones with tarmac so that they could no longer be used as projectiles during demonstrations.

— We built the base of our abstract maquette by creating a plaster imprint of real paving. We poured plaster, as we have a particular interest for the ground of Paris, its streets, its underground, linked to *Descending steps for Batan* and Matta Clark's interest for spaces below ground, the quarry, the place below ground where plaster is collected.

— There was also the idea of comparing the structure that represents the hole of Gordon Matta-Clark, devoid of any organic notion, to the ground that hosts it; being well aware that the ground in Paris is composed mainly of plaster.

— One wonderful surprise occurred when we tore away the quick setting plaster, using rapid contact and taking no particular precautions. Normally some form of grease is used between the plaster and the paving so that the plaster doesn't stay stuck to the ground. We avoided using this matter, grease, which tends to create a certain thickness, a less accurate mold would have generated a form of distance in our eyes. And so we included debris, plant matter and all other kinds of matter that was caught between the paving stones and that remained stuck to the plaster. The mold was fully in contact with the ground, and didn't only capture the imprint of the paving stones, but was also the receptacle of the materiality of the ground that was ripped away. This operation also emerged from a significant experience. The idea of the process of ripping emerges from a common experience (that of Axelle, Yann and Bernhard) linked to a visit to the The Archaeological Museum of Siritide in Policoro, during a visit to Pouilles and the Basilicata, as part of the project *L'Alfabeto* in 2014.

It was there that we saw the displaced tomb of this bronze age princess¹⁰. When we performed the gesture of tearing matter from the ground we clearly had this experience in mind.

10 It is the tomb of a princess, N.314, 8th Century B.C., from the dig at Chiaromonte, località Sotto la Croce, conserved in the Museo Nazionale della Siritide, in Policoro, seen on the occasion of a project of seminars and an exhibition at the Villa Médicis in Rome in 2014 and 2015.

— The history of the tomb of this princess concerns a specific archeological technique that was used in the Basilicata at the beginning of the 1970's. The remains of the princess with her finery and all of the objects that surrounded her in her tomb were removed along with all of the surrounding soil. This is not the usual practice for digs where things are removed bone by bone, object by object, with archeologists digging and cleaning the soil as they go. Here the whole thing was removed. Archeologists cleaned the tomb that they were excavating to a certain extent, leaving bodies and objects half buried in the ground, half sticking out, with all of the surrounding objects, jewelry or remains of clothing that were not extracted for example. At a certain stage in the excavation, they dug a much deeper trench around the plot, they poured plaster into it and using the force of the plaster which enveloped the parcel of earth held at its center, they ripped out the whole of the plot being excavated. One can observe the clumps of earth ripped from the ground with all of the organic elements that they contain. It was not the clean and deactivated object that one sees in a museum.

— These few tombs that have been ripped from the ground display a very beautiful connection that we have with the notion of antiquity, of belonging to an earth which carries the bones of its ancestors within it.

— And also the image of an underground as a place of food, of support, but also concretely made up of the remains that it contains. There is a link between this experience of the ground and that of Matta-Clark who came to look for his brother in the stratified underground of Paris. This is one of the things which interested us about the process that he used to produce a hole in the material of the building of the former neighborhood of Beaubourg.

— This relationship that the maquette established with a place in Paris is not at all the same as the one that was created between the maquette of Richter, catastrophic

history and Dresden, nor that of natural history and the layers of leveled shale upon which New York was built.

— We observed a link between the stratification of New York and an American artist's particular vision of Paris. For Gordon Matta-Clark, Robert Smithson set an important precedent and he was confronted with the latter's issue of the site and non-site in a very serious manner, along with his interest for that which can be found in a specific place, the nature of the soil. All of Matta-Clark's work has been *in-situ*, and even when he exhibits in a gallery, which could be the perfect example of the non-site, he brings the site to the gallery, similar to what Smithson did with his mineral ores. When he cut into the house, he moved the remains of the cut house into the gallery, with everything that it shows of the stratification of human lives. This relationship between the stratification of human lives and the purely mineral stratification that he took from Smithson, present in his project in Paris, was of great interest to us.

The balance

— The maquette of Smithson was one of the maquettes which changed the most. All throughout its development we imagined it as linked to Pierre Huyghe's maquette on Manhattan and Central Park. This relationship between the two maquettes allowed us to particularly consider the relationship to spaces below ground.

— Perhaps Smithson at one time imagined filming his *Underground Cinema* in a specific place: the cave system at Flint Ridge located right in the middle of the State of Kentucky. However the image of Flint Ridge, used to illustrate the project, is perhaps solely illustrative¹¹. It could show the idea of being somewhere in the geographical center of the country, somewhere in a place for tourists and in a play on words that mean underground. This pun highlights the irony of Smithson in his relationship to the site and non-site of art. The underground being a concrete place, but also a non-place.

— This maquette was the subject of much discussion. In its first version, it incorporated the projection of a super 8 film shot by Vincent which showed him wandering somewhere underground. It was difficult to see anything, apart from the movement produced by walking and a light at the end of the tunnel. Discussions within the group, beginning with this first version, addressed the true nature of this place non-place, and it is from there that we were able to more clearly define what these three concrete places consisted of for us: that of Richter, of Pierre Huyghe and of Gordon Matta Clark.

— We understood that this particular place, that of Smithson, was an abstract place. We completely changed our approach in the development of our maquette.

11 A drawing-collage of the project *Underground Cinema* (1971) actually contains a photo from *Sports Illustrated*, keeping its caption, and which displays a subjective view of a line of visitors in the cave system of Flint ridge in Kentucky. The largest underground network in the world, with almost 600 kilometers of galleries that have been mapped out, it is located in the region called Pennyroyal plateau at the heart of Mammoth Cave National Park.

— In the version that was presented at *Vision* in the Palais de Tokyo, the filmed images were accompanied by the construction of a stone cave which hosted its projection.

— At that particular moment we were approaching it as a place of materiality.

— The passage from a place of materiality to an abstract place seemed complex. The maquette in the second exhibition was not completely abstract. It referred to a different dimension of materiality.

— It seems to me that our consideration of materiality has shifted in two ways. The stone cave had an illustrative dimension in its first version, and not at all this potential dimension which interests us in our work with the maquette. Beginning with a consideration of the potential of gestures as a paradigm of construction of maquettes we decided that the cave was no longer necessary in the maquette and that even the film was no longer necessary. So we eliminated the film and kept only the projector. A pile of sand taken from another of Smithson's work was used to replace the cave.

— The creation of the maquette of the ground of Manhattan in the gallery of the Réfectoire des Nonnes became very important, and highlighted its stratified materiality in a dramatic fashion, and we ended up establishing a parallel between the underground of Manhattan Island and the material nature of the gallery itself. In fact, the columns of the Réfectoire des nonnes were built using stone which is a product of the stratification of matter on the seabed.

So we decided that the column would become the support structure for the projector used for Smithson's *Underground Cinema*. We wanted to place it very precisely in an in-between state: it was placed neither below the ground, nor at eye level, but was in fact installed too high up. Through a set-up of mirrors which reflected the projectors beam at 45°, the light was directed towards the ground. This resulted from Vincent's intuition, to set things up in such a way that the piece sends the light into another piece

by Smithson which became the receptacle for the ray of light instead of the cave.

— This piece, *Closed mirror Square (Cayuga Salt Mine Project)*, 1969, is composed of a pile of sand with a box made of mirrors set into its center. Our maquette is a pile of sand with a mirror, whereas in reality the original piece was made with a pile of minerals recovered from a specific mine, the materials were extracted and exposed to the light of day. They were then moved off site and placed on the ground of the non-site of the gallery, where they formed a pile which looked like a small volcano, with a box of mirrors in the center which reflected one's gaze, along with light and the surrounding world. The site was shifted, and in our maquette, the mirrored construction placed in the sand received the light entering from another site, from another potential underground.

— Let us say that this passage was the longest and most complex part, and it especially allowed us to imagine or refine the other maquettes. Smithson's thinking was one of the most important points in this reasoning as it also allowed us to take some distance from our previous considerations of places of history, of war, of disasters, of ruins and the issues dealt with in the book concerning shock and more specifically, began with how works of art produce the experience of something which happened in a place, that one can no longer see.

— In effect Smithson adopted a conceptual and materialist approach.

— Concrete too.

— This broader consideration of the materiality of the world allowed us to replace and refine the distinction between the concrete approach of natural history and the biographical approach of the artist as author.

— I also wonder in hindsight how much the question that we raised about the autonomy of the maquette that Rosa created based on *The Rose* by Jay DeFeo, which

tended towards an artwork rather than the potentiality of the maquette, may have influenced this other consideration of where to place Vincent's maquette on Smithson.

— We excluded the two maquettes in question, those of DeFeo and Smithson, from the central axis. We performed a very clear and significant operation by emphasizing that the three maquettes in the axis were indeed maquettes, in the sense that it was a question of the place of potentiality and thought whereas this maquette here, on Smithson, behaves a little differently: it has a real presence in the world like the pile of sand sitting at our feet and the column in front of us. We are not exclusively in a place of potentiality or of projection, we are in a space of co-presence, even if it partially behaves like a maquette in redirecting the beams of light for example.

— The other maquette which allowed us to clarify this distance is the one which addresses Tarkovski's panning shot, and which Thomas proposed to us from the very beginning, almost as a challenge, proposing to work from an impossible place.

— Impossible in the sense that it is a place which only exists in film, on film, in a captured image. Even within the film narration it acts as a spatial paradox. This place is the "zone" that the Stalker is moving through, a space filled with abandoned objects which corresponds to no known physical rules. Through the treatment of the film and the treatment of light, these places are really places with no physical location and this panning shot in particular, itself impossible, is at the heart of the intellectual provocation proposed by Thomas.

— When discussing the installation of the work in the Palais de Tokyo, the maquette of this panning shot presented on a table did not seem to be complete. This was clarified through the progress that we made on what the term "maquette tool" meant to us. At the Palais de Tokyo it was a question of a reduction, of a reproduction, and not a paradigmatic potentiality which is essential to us in any process of modeling.

— Another important point in the development of this maquette was one which

allowed us to consider what could be called “an inversion of the gaze”. In the maquette of *The Rose*, the painting in DeFeo’s studio became a focal point which captured the image of the artist as if it was looking at Jay DeFeo and capturing his image like a camera. This is why the space of the maquette was copied with the two spaces touching each other, like a dark room lying behind the painted surface that we have described in detail above. At the same time, the maquette of the shot in *Stalker* redirects one’s gaze elsewhere, towards the ground. The beam of light which allows us to see the image avoids the frontal nature of the gaze which is usually engaged between the spectator and the work of art.

When working on the book *Le temps suspendu* we worked a lot, in a retrospective movement, on the way in which catastrophe and natural history, through WG Sebald, Gerhard Richter and other artists, challenged the obviousness of the perspective structure invented during the Renaissance, and the Albertian idea of a window onto history. The point of view which is founded on the coherency of a position, of an axis, of a vanishing point and articulated facets, what Alberti called *historia*, can not be applied in the face of total destruction. The way out of this paradigm, of a perspective view, forces spectators to find their place and direct their gaze elsewhere.

— In Andrei Tarkovski’s film, the camera shifts just before the panning shot which films the world from a bird’s eye view. This produces the effect of an inversion of the gaze, it becomes a sort of divine eye. It was when focusing more closely on this shift that we decided that it would not be a maquette on a table. To do this we placed the project at a height of approximately 70cm from the ground, projecting the image directly onto the floor.

— The floor of the Réfectoire des nonnes is covered in dark ceramic tiles which absorb light. So the very starkly contrasted light of Tarkovski’s film, studied in order to emphasize materiality of the disparate, shiny, shattered elements visible throughout the film and in the panning shot, was even more radically thrown into contrast by the material of the floor of the exhibition space which absorbed most of the grey tones of the image.

— One can say that the specific nature of the place which hosted the maquettes also played a role in our work process, highlighting the necessary distinction between the organization of the three central elements and those of Tarkovski and Smithson.

— These two maquettes question the essence of the place, “the place”, the term place.

— They are both theoretical places.

— The concrete and physical space in which the objects are placed, the apparatus in the Réfectoire des nonnes, is what one is aware of upon before ever considering the materiality of the image on the ground or understanding the complex nature of the panning shot. Here the set-up played, similar to what you said about Smithson and the column... I don't quite know how to say it... the role of foundation?

— The foundation and the anchoring to the ground of the apparatus, of this specific place.

— Looking back, one could say that we based the central axis on the work of Pierre Huyghe on the roof of the MET, with the maquette becoming for us the best way of seeing the place where everything is anchored to the ground through the gesture of packing and piling up of the material that we used to make it. To the left and right of the maquette of Central Park one finds that of Richter's room in the Albertinum and the *Conical Intersect* of Gordon Matta Clark in the 16th century house from the Beaubourg neighborhood, both also placed at a height of 110 centimeters from the ground. There was considerable discussion about anchoring and we realized that with the gestures of the other maquettes we were moving further and further away from this reasoning and that they addressed artworks which maintain a less direct relationship with the place, but one which is also more complex. We understood that through the gestures of their creation we were bringing other things to light. We had an

extensive discussion about what we called double nature. It is a question of maquettes which are not simply models of something. They show other gestures which are closer to those of an artwork. Gestures which are much more open.

— These maquettes maintain a perspective relationship, we find ourselves in their presence as if faced with artworks, here and now. But at the same time we also build a potential relationship, with these maquettes also opening up theoretical places. The gestures involved in their creation and consequently the apparatus used to show them, work on this double place, both concrete and abstract.

— These two maquettes that we are talking about, Tarkovski and Smithson, also lead us in the direction of Yann's maquette on the Chauvet cave and Michael Snow's film. This maquette also deals with the question of the site and the non-site, of an encounter with a concrete place – an underground which travels through time – and of the reproduction of these four central pixels, extracts from digital stills of the film *Wavelength*, which is, itself, an intersecting non-place.

— The two maquettes of Smithson and Tarkovski thus lead to Yann's maquette on Chauvet and Snow, which work on similar questions, but which behave completely differently.

— At the other end of the spectrum, on the other side of the central axis, we placed *The Rose* by Jay DeFeo, placed clearly at eye level and separated by a threshold, in another room which opens onto the exhibition space. We have in this way built something that we are now calling a *balance* or *pendulum*, as if it was moving from one side of the central axis to the other.

— The arm of a *pendulum* firmly anchored in Central Park and which, through an imagined back and forth movement, would to some extent allow us to measure the distances growing on both sides of our atlas.

— The idea of *pendulum* also raises the question of temporality which has always been at the core of our research. In the maquettes of the central axis, temporality is a part of the place itself, that is why we chose to position them along the North-South axis. On the contrary, with the pendulum, a biographical temporality, that of Jay DeFeo in San Francisco contrasts with the very extended temporality of the cave of Chauvet where two drawings of animals made at least 5,000 years apart seem to disrupt time. This disruption is shown in the maquette by the juxtaposition of the close up from Michael Snow's film which advances mechanically, not taking human histories into account.

— This relationship with temporality is also reinforced by the fact that, in the exhibition at the Réfectoire des nonnes, the maquette of Jay DeFeo's studio is copied and doubled, becoming an optical machine, something which seizes a moment and, potentially, produces a photograph of a precise instant in Jay DeFeo's life and career, in 1960's San Francisco. When one crosses the threshold of the room one can see into the artist's studio, towards the reproduction of *The Rose* with a tiny hole in its center. One looks at the maquette from the side which represents the Filmore Street studio where the creation of this unique artwork was pursued for almost a decade. Spectators can walk around the maquette and can see the same space from the other side, as if DeFeo's studio had been copied, except that here the fourth wall is closed. We can see a black and white photographic image on the closed wall. This second box, which has the same form as the studio, is in effect a pinhole camera which has been integrated into the maquette. The scale reproduction of *The Rose* has a hole in its center and it is through this tiny hole that Gordon Matta-Clark's maquette was photographed. Walking around it one can understand that the space has been copied and that one is looking at an optical chamber.

— Jay DeFeo in effect began to work with photography again having stopped for a number of years at the end of the creation of *The Rose*. And so one can look at this maquette as a machine which stopped operating at a very precise moment. One understands that it was photographed in the exhibition space of the maquette of

Gordon Matta Clark, but one could also imagine that *The Rose*, the real painting in the studio on Filmore Street, could have been an eye, a machine for photographing life over the decade long existence of this community.

— Perhaps it should be specified that Rosa's maquette is a reduction of the real studio on Filmore Street where Jay DeFeo decided to make *The Rose*, hiding the bow window which usually allowed light to spread into the studio. Bow-windows represented an important architectural progress in facades, characterized by one central window with two smaller lateral windows. The artist deploys matter in a radiant spread, almost a *bas relief*, that we have been able to compare to examples given to us by Le Bernin, reminding us of the way that the baroque could address the question of matter.

— We know that Jay DeFeo visited Italy and that she looked closely at the baroque chapels. As is the case with certain of Bernin's creations, the luminous rays that were supposed to enter from the exterior are materialized in the rays in bas relief. In a similar fashion, Jay DeFeo built the painting like a material which gradually progressed and grew over its 9 years of creation, a painting which when finished, would weigh close to a ton. The painting replaced the window to the outside and like a painting in perspective, Jay DeFeo worked from a central point which is at eye level when placed before her.

— Which also implies a relationship with the body.

— DeFeo was also photographed naked in front of *The Rose*. We were working on this problem of the vanishing point of the Renaissance and Rosa had the idea, in reaction to these discussions, of copying the studio during the creation of the maquette, in other words the interior space of the studio is reproduced in a mirror image behind the *bow-window* which is blocked by *The Rose*. Thus the reproduction of the maquette of the painting has a hole at the center of the vanishing point with a ray of light passing through it from the other side of the maquette, from the copied space of the mirror

image of the studio, which functions like a camera.

— Like a pinhole camera.

— From the outside we look towards the inside of the studio and potentially allow ourselves to be photographed, if you will, as if we were standing there where Jay DeFeo should be standing.

— It seems to me that on the other side of the pendulum, the maquette of the cave of Chauvet and of Michael Snow, *Snow in Chauvet*, responds to, and provokes a crisis in, something which is also related to the problem of perspective and the vanishing point. In order to shoot *Wavelength* Michael Snow created a machine which zoomed forward mechanically, reducing the field of vision according to the same linear decline as the sound wave which accompanies the film. This mechanical progress increasingly closed in on the photographic reproduction of a wave placed on the back wall of the studio where the film was shot, between two windows, unaware of the story as it progresses with the characters existing off screen in a room which is filmed in a tighter and tighter close up. The mechanical zoom of Michael Snow is greatly reminiscent of the problem of the pinhole camera proposed by Rosa, and yet they both produce opposing effects, one frames and the other strips away the frame.

— Staying with relationships of perspective, there is also something in the actual form of the maquette of *Snow in Chauvet*, of the structure made from string and sticks which resembles a trapeze, which we spoke about yesterday, and which through its fragility undoes the machine-like aspect of Snow's project. On one side of the pendulum there is a great precariousness, and on the other side, in the maquette of *The Rose*, a large machine with optical boxes set on two levels of trestles at eye level.

— The pendulum that we are trying to describe here like an opposition which holds and separates the maquette of *The Rose* and that of Chauvet-Snow, is based on our consideration of the relationship with suspended time and natural history. The

temporality of Rosa's maquette emerges from a consideration of the studio community as a purely biographical and affective space. The question of affect was very important for Rosa and it is really quite different from the temporalities dealt with by the maquette of the cave of Chauvet.

— And this question of view is indissociable from human perspective: in the case of Michael Snow the camera moves above men, and yet it behaves as a human eye and in the cave of Chauvet two men, 5,000 years apart, painted one animal on top of another as if they were part of the same herd.

— I (Yann) worked from the object that Snow created in 2003, where he condensed the 45 minute film that he made in 1967, cutting it into three 15 minutes pieces that he then digitally layered. This further reinforces the human absence which was already emphasized by the mechanical zoom which keeps the stories of men out of shot. It further highlights the impossibility of inhabiting such a time which becomes even more machine-like in the cut and digitized version. He condenses time through layering. The other element of the maquette, the cave of Chauvet, functions in a somewhat synthetic fashion. It is founded on an extreme opposite over a very, very long time, impossible to address within the perspective of a historical time opened up through the magic of the two drawings, only perceivable through a scientific process, that of carbon 14 dating.

— Another point which seems interesting to me is that Michael Snow digitized the film, he cut it into three parts and then layered the images of the three pieces on top of one another. Through this process of saturation he eliminated any element which belonged to the physical material of the film. One of the stranger aspects of the film from 1967 is its poor development. Sometimes these accidents give it a dominant red color for example, and by integrating these errors in the handling of the chemical procedure. Michael Snow heavily emphasizes the materiality of the film and of the sound. In this way it is even more surprising to discover the effective presence of characters who are ultimately kept out of view because the camera zoom has already

moved too far along, and yet at the same time this discord highlights the materiality of the film itself. From the moment when Michael Snow made it digital, he cut this connection to materiality, and the layering changed the nature of the perspective itself, with the temporal progression no longer moving forward, and the sound, which in the 1967 film seemed increasingly sharper in frequency, no longer seeming to evolve. Through this layering he radically and intentionally disactivated everything structural about the piece.

— At the same time, it layers but it doesn't accelerate, and ends up producing a form of stratification.

— Yann layered the 4 pixels from the center of the two moments of the cut as well as the first and last image of the 1967 film in its digital version, in other words he worked with the digital code which defined the shade of the color.

— In Herzog's film about the Cave of Chauvet you were interested in the precise moment where he attempts to understand what system to use to film the cave. Speaking with archeologists, he began to understand that the whole of the cave could represent a universe and that it was important to view it in 360°. He understood that the images shouldn't be seen, frontally, as paintings, but rather in a more dynamic manner, like a world unto themselves, and it was at that moment we see the sequence of the 5,000 years which separates the two figures that are layered one upon the other despite the lapse of time that separates them. It is not a representation, but rather a different form of cohabitation within a represented space.

— You (Yann) are all the same coming from work which, in recent years, and in our last book in particular, has maintained a forceful dialogue with Eadweard Muybridge. In 2011, during the exhibition *Le temps suspendu* this was a real trigger. At that time you created an isolated table with a printed image composed of different elements taken from Muybridge's photographs. You took a photograph where he himself serves as a subject in his own work on the movement of the body. You cut out

his figure on a number of levels and then glued it onto a panoramic photograph which he took of his native city of San Francisco. Finally you cut away the sky over the city of San Francisco, replacing it with a panoramic view of the Milky Way.

— (Yann) I replaced the horizon of the city with the Milky Way.

— You are interested in Muybridge who studied the biological world according to the perspective of natural history, and you plunge him into contexts which are increasingly extended, in a disproportionate temporality which has always been at the core of your thinking. And in this maquette where you have created a tension between Herzog's film and what can be seen clearly in the pixels of Snow.

— From this approach to the time of Natural History and of a 360° vision, a vision which thus excludes any centered perspective or vantage point also emerged from the necessity of placing this maquette in a niche, hollowed out of the wall. This organization signals its separation from another space in the exhibition, and participates in affirming the necessity of completely rethinking the placement and organization of all of our maquettes.

— During this discussion, you didn't want the maquette to stay in the space, anchored to the ground like the others and so you proposed to position it on the wall, and this was a very interesting point because it contradicted the construction of the maquette which had no pre-determined point of view, that is to say, that before it was finally placed here, we could move around it.

— In an even more radical fashion, by placing it in the niche, within the thickness of a dividing wall, we can no longer choose to look at it from the side, we can no longer choose to ignore the colored rhodoïds by standing off to one side for example.

— But this also clarifies the way that the maquette functions. The overhead and lateral views don't really serve the essential problem which was to provide structure to

these two extremes, the linear progression of Snow and the 360° view of the cave. There is here an almost desperate and highly fragile attempt to keep these extremes together and the niche enables this vision.

The artworks

— What happens when one moves to the other side of the niche of *Snow in Chauvet* ?

— When one moves to the other side of the dividing wall, this last maquette can be seen from the other side of the niche. You have placed a drawing (Yann) beside it called *Entre ellipses, battements d'ailes et un trou dans le plafond* which shows a celestial vault with a number of ellipses turning around it.

— Before moving on to describe the artworks it is important to note that for quite some time now we have been considering how to show the relationship between our work as artists and our research work. We are all artists or theoreticians who produce work which is autonomous and signed, and this work is the essence and the reason for our presence in this research project. And yet it is never the actual subject of the group's work. Individual work has always been very important to us: we present it in seminars, we speak about it, we consider it to be a fundamental resource, and it is starting from this place that each one of us speaks, but it is not the place of a collective work.

— Gadamer's notion of interlocution was one way of approaching this dichotomy between personal production and collective work. The moment of collective exchange, through positions being taken and the employment of speech in a group, produces a third object, which is the encounter of all of the territories at work for the active individuals within a group. We have established this way of working for a while now and have thus managed to balance our personal production and the exchanges which occur within the group. Nevertheless, for some time now we have been telling ourselves that we have been unable to show this essential relationship publicly. This time we decided that it was important to build a double space, with half of this space

being taken up by the work that we do together, the work of maquettes, and the other half taking the form of an area dedicated to the artworks.

— In the room plans which accompany the exhibition, this space was illustrated by an image of Utopia, and Jenny, you wrote a text which accompanied this space that we had defined as being that of the artworks, based on the notion of Utopia. It is a question here of a potentiality which is different to that of the maquettes, we are in a space of concrete meetings where hypotheses and avenues of work are incarnated.

— Something is being played out within this space, something in real time and on a 1:1 scale. Something different to what is at work in Rosa's maquette for example, where the issue is the spectator's point of view, but not at all considered in the same way as when facing an artwork. Here in this room visitor's find themselves in front of four artworks which take up all of the space usually occupied by an artwork, in other words they are to be experienced for everything which is open and undefined about them, each one is like its own separate universe.

— This exhibition room also draws up a first map, a future map. It is a space which is the result of an encounter, it is simply another condition of the encounter with the artworks, and not with gestures produced in common. The surprising thing about this exhibition was that it became a moment for us to really provide a form of existence to a space which we experienced as completely new.

— We were very surprised, when we finished arranging and installing this second area, to see that it enabled the space to exist, in the sense that it also helped the maquettes beside it to exist. We worked on the maquettes for quite some time and when we had finished putting everything into place on the other side, we were able to finally say that a balance had been found. It wasn't a question of the efficiency of the exhibition, rather it was something that was of great concern to us, the potentiality of individual work which can be shown through collective research and vice versa.

— But let us go back to describing the four artworks in this second space.

Yann Annicchiarico, *Entre ellipses, battements d'ailes et un trou dans le plafond*, 2014

— When one moves to the other side of the dividing wall, to one side of the niche of the maquette *Snow in Chauvet* one can see a poster that could be described by its title: *Somewhere between an Ellipse, the Beating of Wings and a Hole in the Ceiling*. Two pairs of ellipses drawn in pencil. Both pairs show the same ellipse twice, with one being shifted and staggered in relation to the other. This shift corresponds to the slant of the rotational axis of the Earth relative to the plane of its orbit around the sun. To sum up, it is a question of a shared physical reality which escapes our perception, something which exists, but which is not visible. Four silhouettes of eagles, also drawn in pencil, based on Muybridge's photographs of his study of flight. A geometric form emerges between the points at the center of each partition of ellipse. This space seems cut into the sheet and opens out onto a stellar vault, it is a photograph of stars.

Bernhard Rüdiger, *Casque avec paratonnerre n.1*, 2011

— The other piece that we presented was a helmet. It comes from a series of sculptures that were made using helmets that anthropologist Elio Modigliani discovered at the end of the 19th century on the tiny island of Eggano, near to Sumatra, that he explored and described shortly before the disappearance of that culture in a book called *The Island of Women*. He described a matriarchal culture associated with different rituals including fertility rituals for which helmets were made, and he made five technical drawings.

The helmets are covered in colored feathers, composed and built using plants and other colorful outgrowths. Sometimes fantastic creatures emerge from the wooden structure of the helmet, lowering their heads to look at the person wearing the helmet. These

head-dresses, built by women who assemble plants, feathers and dyes, who then paint them, are used in ritual dances during which participants' heads are shaken in every direction in order to create tension and attract the attention of the god of fertility.

In our exhibition an earthenware helmet can be seen, placed on an iron element which emerges from the wall at eye level. The helmet looks like the structure of an open house which, theoretically, could be placed on one's head like a head-dress. The roof is perforated allowing antennas to extend out from it, antennas that I made in a similar fashion to the feathers assembled by the women on the Island of Eggano, using scraps of wood glued and colored with my interpretation of the three pure colors that Mondrian adopted following his arrival in New York in 1940, colors which shouldn't look like anything – and ones which should in no way recall nature.

What was interesting to me in this approach of using unnatural colors was that they were imagined in the wake of his flight from Europe and the bombing of London at the beginning of the Second World War, as reality had become so violent that he felt somehow compelled to work in an abstract fashion. This idea of Mondrian, who understood in 1940, being in New York and having experienced the bombing, that mankind's vision of the world and nature had changed, was of great interest to me and led me to work on my own abstract colors, similar to those of Mondrian but not quite the same.

I began to think that the helmets that I wanted to make could be worn for a much more modern ritual: I called them *Modern Helmets with Lightning Rod*. The lightning rod being that which captures divine energy that would rain down without warning. It is a helmet to keep the dark clouds of modernity away, one could imagine wearing it, dancing under the lightning rod, a preventive dance to ward off all catastrophe.

Axelle Bonnard, *Nablus*, 2014

— I displayed a piece called *Naplouse*, composed of an etching with a line drawn in blue chalk using a plumb line. The etching is the result of an encounter between two elements; a reading of a book by Eyal Weizmann, *Walking through walls*, which tells

the story of Nablus during the time of the second Intifada. Unable to take the city, because of its structure, which the Palestinian rebels knew like the back of their hand, the Israeli military decided to develop new solutions. So they built a ghost town, an identical copy of Nablus, in the desert to try to understand its logic, going on to perfect a strategy which aimed to literally pass through the walls of houses. This approach to war ignores any difference between public and private spaces and actually consists of advancing by blowing up walls. This led to the destruction of a massive part of the city's infrastructure.

Then one day I traveled to this city and experienced it for myself, 10 years after the 2nd Intifada. With the passing of time, the marks of war were slightly less present, but I nonetheless experienced the city, having in mind what I knew of its history. Once I got back home after this voyage I made this etching which is a reconstituted map of my path through the city.

Two things are important here. One is that the appearance of this plan has no informative quality and really only serves to re-transcribe an experience of the city and the traces of its history from my own personal experience. The second is that it is not a drawing, but rather an etching. This involves a procedure using acid which eats away at the copper plate in order to really inscribe the ink into the plate, with pressure being applied to transmit it permanently to paper. The ink is absorbed by the paper and the drawing is marked onto the paper.

This map is hung on the wall and, below it is a thin blue line in chalk, made with a plumb line used in construction to draw clear, straight lines, that can then be erased. It is placed just underneath the etching and comes to inscribe our relationship with this map in the concrete space of the exhibition. The line indicates a relationship to construction and provides a horizon. The horizon draws a line between the etching, through which a personal experience is imprinted, and the reality of the space in which we find ourselves as spectators. No other indication, apart from the title, reveals anything of the history of this city.

Ludvig Sahakyan, *Pour que l'orage s'annonce*, 2016

— Ludvig presented a piece with a clay plate of around 50 cm in diameter. He made it *in situ* on the day of the vernissage and it represents an important moment. He took off his shoes and worked on the preparation of this plate with his hands and feet, he flattened out the clay and made this plate, which he then placed on a canvas, a piece of knitted fabric to be more specific, because for him this plate was an offering plate. The function of the offering plate in Armenian culture played a central role in Ludvig's approach. It also refers to an image from a film by Paradjanov¹² in which the artist, thinking back to his childhood, remembers the plate filled with fruit, sitting on a rug, which was offered to visitors, both expected and unexpected, in every Armenian house. The importance of this image resides in the idea that a space for visitors is always prepared, with the visit not being only that of the neighbor or friend but also of he who is radically other, the stranger, but also the divine in the broadest possible sense of the term.

— The title, *Pour que l'orage s'annonce*, really recounts this, a visit.

— Another important aspect, linked to the storm, is that as it dries this clay breaks. It is not nourished by fruit, by men, by rain nor by the storm. It is waiting on an event and this expectation is clearly expressed in the temporality of the exhibition. On the day of the vernissage the clay was humid and well formed but if one returned a month later it was full of cracks, it could no longer hold anything. In Ludvig's approach, this question of time is incredibly important. It is not at all the efficient time of the exhibition, the artwork is not displayed with the efficiency of the visual experience during a visit, it always holds other temporalities within it, temporalities which are part of the cycles of nature or the divine. We are in a different dimension of time, beyond what happens on a daily basis, the time of our expectations or our memory.

— Ludvig's piece is central to the exhibition, in other words it is the only piece that is visible from the room that contains the maquettes. It was a point of anchorage

12 Sergueï Paradjanov, *Sayat Nova, The Color of Pomegranates*, was first distributed in 1969 in the Soviet Republic of Armenia. The film was taken out of circulation and then, once again distributed in a re-edited and shorter version by Director Serguei Youtkevitch in 1971.

and emphasizes, in its visible relationship with the maquettes, the question of the gesture. We said to ourselves in the beginning of this work that we had to return to the atlas in a different manner, through the gesture, because there is an intelligence and a consideration of the gesture that we absolutely wanted to activate after these years of working with the image; and so Ludvig's piece allowed us to clarify many things. Here the gesture is obvious, the imprint of the hands and feet, and of the active gesture, can be seen.

— But it is not archetypal, it is not a gesture which opens up a potentiality as the maquettes do, here it is a gesture whose potential goes largely beyond visual experience and the simple fact of making the piece. The gesture is that of a work of art, as Luciano Fabro¹³ said in an interview in 1986, an artistic gesture is barely an indication. In other words it is delicate, powerful and completely open. There is in this indetermination something important for us in the distinction that we make between the life of a researcher and that of an artist / theoretician. When one makes a work of art, one makes something delicate, open, something which is largely beyond oneself. The gesture is a welcoming opening, especially for things that rise up unexpectedly. On the contrary, in a maquette, we are in a space of potentiality, we are in a place of condensation, in a process.

— It is this juxtaposition between condensation of gestures and opening which found itself confirmed in the text of the exhibition, we said to ourselves that we were right to have done it. The balance between the work of the artist and research was restored, because a space of opening was juxtaposed with the maquettes, with the work of interlocution and the dialectic work based on the atlas. This has allowed us to reposition the atlas as a tool, as a formula, whereas the work of art continues to be something which opens up in quite a different way.

— The indisctinction that you're speaking of is a positive notion. On the room plans this space was accompanied by a text and an image of Utopia. This wasn't

13 Luciano Fabro, *Prometeo irradiato (Prometheus irradiated)*, interview by Francesca Pasini for *Il Manifesto*, Turin, October 29th, 1986.

actually a room plan as such, but a minimal indication which provided traces that were so slight they rendered the observed object, the artwork, difficult to situate.

— The place of the spectator remains undefined in the second room. We welcome someone who can visit the exhibition without knowing what they will do with the piece that they see. In the room of maquettes one is in a space of researchers in the true sense of the term. Like Warburg who, when faced with the construction of images of an atlas which was being developed, based on his own sensitivity, drew lines of force or displayed frequencies to be read, the researcher shows the frequency which brings different objects together in a unique and particular fashion, he or she rewrites history, based on a different characterization, via another frequency that has been brought to light.

— There where artists work on historical context, researchers reflect a historical context. This reflexive approach is fundamental to understanding works of art but it is not an actual experience of the work of art. A work of art is not reflexive, it is something else. We created a distinction between what we do together when we speak with each other, when we share interlocution and a consideration of a work of art, and what happens when we are confronted with its lack of definition as a surprising and open object. Artworks produce art research but they are not in themselves art research.

- And so we have reached an essential point, and we are satisfied.