

Folie Culture

Numéro 100, automne 2008

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/60210ac>

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Éditeur(s)

Les Éditions Intervention

ISSN

0825-8708 (imprimé)

1923-2764 (numérique)

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Citer cet article

(2008). Folie Culture. *Inter*, (100), 129–131.

in order to enrich the CPOA. To this day, more than 700 works of the collection are on lease to ministries, government organizations and Quebec delegations around the world. The Museum also offers the possibility to see a large selection of works of the collection in the present exhibition on the walls around the atrium of the Charles Baillargé Pavilion. The *Prêt d'œuvres d'art* collection plays an important role in the diffusion of Quebec's artist's works. By presenting the works outside the usual network of museum and galleries, it raises from the numbers of fans of art actuel, from one year to the next.

1989 Territoires d'artistes: Paysages verticaux

During the summer of 1989, the Musée du Québec (as it was then called) presented the international event *Territoire d'artistes: Paysages verticaux*. This important exhibition, organized by Louise Déry and presented outside the walls of the gallery (because of the refurbishing happening at the Museum and to the point that they closed it) gathered 14 artists of diverse origins, including Michael Snow, Daniel Buren, Angela Grauerholz, Giuseppe Penone and Dominique Blain. By responding to the proposition of realizing a work of art, *in situ*, in relation to the city, these last artists have marked our landscape by their presence in the summer time. This event marked our history and collective imaginations in indelible ways.

2001 Le ludique

Looking at the concept of play while bringing together twenty artists from Quebec and France, the exhibition *Le ludique* was presented in 2001 at the Musée national des beaux-arts, then at the Musée d'art moderne of Lille Métropole in Villeneuve-d'Ascq, in France. This exhibition, realized by invited curator Marie Fraser, has had a remarkable success with the public and the critics. The Musée was able to reaffirm its role in the promotion of art actuel. Indeed, *Le ludique* has open the way to a series of thematic exhibitions in art actuel initiated by the Musée, such as *Doublures: Vêtements de l'art contemporain* (2003), *L'emploi du temps* (2003), *Avancer dans le brouillard* (2003), *Raconte-moi* (2006) and the forthcoming *Emporte-moi*, scheduled for the year 2009.

Massimo Guerrera Darboral

As the first foray of relational art at the Musée, the individual exhibition of Massimo Guerrera has

been possible thanks to the curator in art actuel at the time, Anne-Marie Ninacs. This demanding exhibition focusing on the meeting of shared experiences has transformed the way we engage with Museums in various ways. It pushed its limits further. In the exhibition room, the artist has partially recreated his atelier in order to transform the room into a space open to explorations and exchanges. The public was invited to wander, sit, look, manipulate, eat and discuss in the heart of the artist's installation. This was an audacious and judicious proposition, which allowed all to rethink their usual conceptions about art, the status of the artist, the place of the audience and the object's many functionalities. ■

FOLIE CULTURE

International Festival Folie/Culture, 1984

White/asylum
Broken silence
Tribute to Foucault

These three affluent lines speak out the amplitude of the program and the multiplicity of points of view proposed to discuss the event. It is a radical trajectory conceived to shake ignorance about the general suffering in madness and the interventions in art actuel. Thinking of the white/asylum, we see the space of all creations hidden in the artists' doubt, in the reclusions of the mad. In "breaking the silence", speech claims its right of expression on the public sphere. And the tribute to Foucault (deceased in 1984, few months before the festival) establishes a filiation in the elaboration of a critical approach. One that confronts the scenarios reserved to the mad and other alienated citizens, in a system based on reclusion in asylum and other institutions – both places carrying more and more the weight of their arbitrariness.

This international event comes out of this encounter between *Autopsy* and *Obscure*. The first had the mandate to defend the rights of institutionalized people. It wanted to create awareness and inform the agents involved (people in power and the general population) to the different community aspects regarding mental health. The second is a cooperative association of production in art actuel. *The Festival international Folie/Culture* is a major event. It will be one of the foundations of the socio-artistic organization of the same name.

Few milestones have shaken the planet "psy" during the sixties and the seventies: the publication of Michel Foucault's *Madness and Civilization* (in 1961); an experience bringing the closure of a psychiatric hospital in Trieste and in other Italian cities following the law 180, in 1978, which was meant to integrate all medical structures in the treatment of mental illnesses; the birth of the anti-psychiatry movement with practicing authors and doctors from England, United States, France, Italy; an awareness by people preoccupied with the massive use of medication in general. Artists and writers are at the same time interested in the phenomenon of madness as a turbulence zone and suffering in our time.

The *Festival international Folie/Culture* is a first. From September 27th until October 7th, organizers propose a program established according to 3 major themes:

« Les murs de la folie » takes an editorial stance and presents an overview of the actual situation. It offers a critique against the dehumanization of treatments in mental health. It is a plea for the reinsertion of the mad, to extricate them from the inferno of the hospitals where they have been confined for centuries. It wants to bring them in the society of humans. These radical texts are opposing the mechanist systems of the prisons established to contain them, not to cure.

« Créativité en folie » opens a space for artists with texts by Gilles Arteau, Guyotat, Paul Valet, Helen Doyle, Chantal Veilleux and Yves Giguère. We can also find a presentation of various experiences in creation as alternatives to practices found in asylums. Indeed, the groups *Cheval bleu* and *Trames de France* integrate various forms of creation to liberate madness of the mental prison where it is confined: writing, photography, theater, etc. Similarly, we can find texts on « art brut », on Victor Cordier as well as the *Hôpital malade* by Jean-Claude Gagnon. It is here that we can also discover a generous film and video program coming from Europe, Canada and the United States. All art films and documentaries engaging with madness. Elsewhere, a theater presentation of *Scan Lines* by the Belgian theater group Plan K stirs the imagination. In the section « exposition », we discover the photographs of Brigitte Ostiguy and André Morneau from Quebec, the posters of the Musée d'art brut, in Lausanne, and the moving drawing exhibition *Débile, éthylique, psychotique*, by Victor Cordier, sent

contrary to good sense to wars and conflicts (Corea, Algeria) and endlessly moving between institutions and houses for immigrant workers. At last, we can experience a sound installation by Neam Cathod amplified by a dynamic and controversial workshop done with some of Robert-Giffard residents.

« Alternatives en tête » proposes some clues and new territories regarding mental health treatments and the reintegration, in the social continuum, of yesterday's outcasts. Chiara Strutti has come to talk about the Trieste experience, where the asylum has been officially closed in 1980. She discusses the modalities bound to the choice of reinserting clients in the services integrated in local health networks. Michel Hock presents the work of *La Devinière*, a service open yearly and 24 hours per day to welcome and take care of heavy cases of children experiencing psychosis. Mental health, psychosis and schizophrenic episodes don't have the same schedule as the workers in mental health. They can happen all the time. Two major authors are pushing the reflection further on the "asylum system" and the alternative practices during the last fifteen years. First, Robert Castel with four publications between 1973 and 1981 on the alternative phenomenon in mental health, and, of course, Howard Buten, unavoidable with his landmark book called *Quand j'avais cinq ans je m'ai tué*.

The event will draw attention to two major points. On the one hand, it will be the beginning of a hybrid group called Folie/Culture, which will pursue the exploratory adventure of these connections between art and madness, madness and culture. It will also continue to make the population aware of the perilous aspects of mental health, as well as alternative practices and their limits for art actuel. On the other hand, the ministère des Affaires sociales will send a mission to Trieste to see, on location, how the closing of the asylum went.

Sans frontière, Quebec and Chicoutimi, 1995

A decade later, in March and April 1995, Folie/Culture organized another major event, its 4th festival which took place over two different periods. This festival shares the ideologies of Folie/Culture: juxtaposition and amalgamation of art and social activism as a main territory of culture to investigate. It is a place to perform where poetry and the amplitude of imagination would frequently shake the unbearable conventions of reality, to create chaos on the human scale.

In the program (video and film), we find Robert Morin and *Yes Sir! Madame* (1994), a retrospective by Pierre Goupil, a compilation by Boris Firquet (1994), five productions by the Brothers Quay de Grande-Bretagne (1979-1988), *Une histoire autour de la folie* (1992) by Bertrand de Solliers and Paul Muxel from France, *Alitia* (1991) by Yves Labelle and *Autofilmages/ Installations* (1993) from Francis Pierrick Sorin.

This program of *Sans frontière* will be almost identical in Quebec City and Chicoutimi, not to mention that an undercurrent theme will somewhat play on this notion of bipolarity, the double, and will generate multiple projects and singular debates in both cities. In Quebec City, the collective of artists Attitudes, from Montreal, will propose the event *Identités mobiles: mobiles parce que sans domicile fixe*. This is an intervention project for the homeless at the heart of the public space they were otherwise occupying. We have seen the impact on this non-event in public debates. In Chicoutimi, we have presented *Monument humain*, a project of meeting and intervention between ten artists and one hundred old citizens. On the other hand, *Fax ou le cri de la machine*, as a dislocated event, has used the machine to create a network of fifty artists and poets, ten artists coming from elsewhere and ten public personalities. They were asked to scream, told as "an expression of the movement of inner consciousness, as a free expression of sentiment".

In Quebec City, there will be an evening of poetry with twenty poets invited to use all tones to speak. This evening in Chicoutimi will take the form of a Conference, during the night, on St-Anne Bridge. This intervention with the provocative title of *Essai sur le suicide*, realized in conjunction with the space where it was taking place, was seen as too controversial. The conference was not included in the program. At last, we could hear on the radio the *Palimpsestes sonores sur territoires magnétiques*, presented by Avatar at Radio Basse-Ville and CHOC-FM.

Four debates are on the program. « Pathologie double » interrogates the relations between the clinicians and their clients: how does the individual culture of the people intervening respond to the one of the person needing help? Which form does the relation between the two take, beyond their respective role of the person giving the care and the patient? « Le contrôle des meutes » can it be done by something else than brutal force? The controversial proposition of the artists of Attitudes has stimulated the debate on « art

actuel et le passant », by asking the question of the "odious recuperation of a social drama in order to satisfy a purely aesthetic endeavour". In the end, in which conditions can we intervene with people having many problems, since a problem never comes alone?

Sans frontière will have finally played in the polarity of the game of the double and its mirror. This is a mirror without boundaries itself, because it is a material without a surface. It has an immense depth, supposes that madness and culture are in constant dialogue are breaking all borders. It is something that this deployment in the two cities will illustrate. It is also something that the debates brought by social events like the June 24th riots, the homeless downtown and the artistic projects proposed, will confirm.

If there are no secured territory (the mad are thrown out of asylums, artists centers are more opened), there is no possibility of a border between us and them, because, like Adeline Never points out: "the madness is the experimentation without having the choice". We can deduct that to abolish borders between culture and madness, we have to understand that life, in the end, should be this experience because we have no choice to be in it, in the life itself.

With its fourth festival, Folie/Culture will become an established organization. It will present a more and more rigorous annual program by diversifying its interventions. The group becomes more mobile, showing up in the most unexpected places and proposing poetry evenings, video-minutes, manoeuvres, creation and interventions workshops for artists and other people suffering from mental health issues.

Manifestation for the Right to Happiness, 2003

Presented on May 1st in the context of the *Manif d'art*.

Because it has no space for diffusion, Folie/Culture walks in public spaces and occupies its natural territory: the city with its many interstice and ramifications. This situation outside any refuge forces it to keep its attitudes. In the first, its relation to space enables it to navigate without any attachment, to allow an exploratory voyage that leans against projects which respond to the immediate space contingencies, from one event to the next. Secondly, you will find its relation to the necessity of the situation, the urgency of desires in a mechanical process going from the object to its actual staging in the city's dynamics. It is important to be

able to cope with the unexpected and the vacillations of the sufferings of the mad as much as the certainty and uncertainty of fellow artists. In these conditions, it is sometimes imperious to propose a certain amount of happiness, or, in the least, an act of joy that would be conducive of it, if only for the time of the manifestation.

Chacun sa part de gâteau was a manifestation project for the right to happiness. May 1st is a rule. How to conceive the International Day of Work? without a good manifestation? The *Manif* is seen as something that challenges traffic and the public space. The group, reduced because of bad weather but festive, crosses the Faubourg, takes the côte d'Abraham, claims joyfully and takes over the Lower City with cakes! Indeed, the *sine qua non* condition to participate to this manifestation was to produce a cake. One had to inscribe its claims on it, carry it high and strong in the city and to share it with the people. Like a lemon zest and to give some spark to the whole event, artists were invited to prepare some "Manif kits" to be reused in all contexts.

It was thus possible to rent kits for other manifs in the future.

Artists have used different strategies that operated as trajectory marks, from crowd pleasers to things happening up in the , in short, all methods that would give depth and substance to the manifestation. The duo Cooke-Sasseville with its Boggie would leave a trace of chalk on the ground. BGL and their perambulators made of legs on wheels created a small characters without body nor head and gave amplitude to the pedestrian dimension by doubling each pedestrian. The Fermières Obsédées were wearing uniforms. Claudine Cotton wearing a kit that connects the activists together and Massimo Guerrera using recycled plastic as a sound instrument amplifying the crowd. The collective of the Ateliers de la Mezzanine, along with Miss Cliquetis, had an effigy balancing over the crowd with kites by Chalem and Bouillet, and the characters on a stick done by the ATSA saying that "To manifest is good for your health" would add to the aerial dimension of the manifestation by underlining its spatial depth. Add to the kits, the peripheral element of the *Manif de poche* organized by Sylvie Cotton and Martin Dufrasne, like a small guide for the militant coming with a small instruction manual, a first-aid kit, etc.

It was raining to no end that day, so the kites could not take flight. At the departure point, in the defunct Saint-Roch mall, the group is meeting to get ready. While we proceed to

share the cakes, the group sings slogans and popular songs: *La mélodie du bonheur* and *La ballade des gens heureux* alternates with *À chacun sa part du gâteau*, *Manifeste, c'est bon pour la santé*. All kinds of people mix with the militants, give into the claims and enjoy the festivities. Guy Sioui Durand, as a maestro, conducts the voluntary musicians and the spontaneous *Jouer fou* by Guy Blackburn and Marie-Ange Thériault. The musicians take place with their instruments: a kind of cymbal with a vinyl disc to be played upon with a needle attache to the finger. The instrument is completed by a foot pedal to give rhythm. The small chamber orchestra will improvise a concert under the guidance of the maestro. Further down, the Speaker's Corner welcomes all claims, all popular expression while above the small kites are now flying, showing messages like we encounter in popular areas and streets of some Brazilian cities.

In these polymorph expressions of Folie/Culture, the Manifestation is a convincing example of work done outside the walls of the center. Its will to blend is secured via an activist action organized by artists. It is a typical example of the work accomplished by Folie/Culture, where the social and aesthetic elements share the same space and intentions. Through a colored efficient humour, the action presents itself as an art totally engaged in a common cause where all parties involved belong. The game is not useless because insanities have their rights in the city where the world's functionalism is at its most controlled and structured – in the street. Indeed, there is, in these conditions for happiness as such, an indispensable generalization of spaces for its expression.

DSM + V Dévidoir de syndrômes magnifiques, 2006

Since the end of the fifties, an association of American psychiatrists from the United States doesn't stop to increase the DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders), making it a kind of world "Bible" of mental pathologies. This book is evidently contested, especially since it has become an unavoidable reference for many "psys", not to mention that it is largely distributed in a pocket format. Since there is no serious scientific investigation behind this book, many agents see in it some danger and a vast fraud. The greatest critic that we imagine, when it comes to the DSM, is its clear intention to establish a portrait of the "norm", ranging from

1 to 10. The same way that it seems unconceivable that such book would pretend to contain all aesthetics of the world, the absurdity of this book assures it a greater criticism of the psychiatric universe.

With the event of the *DSM + V*, Folie/Culture presents a model, which deviates and offers a way out of a system. It is a model that would not give an exact measure of things in the sphere of the spirit, thus of the imagination, insanity, creativity and divergence. Since the planet "psy" covers a large territory and intend to pathologize all living creatures, this event wanted to explore multiple risks zones as much as life itself, even if it is outcasted, illegal and mostly polysemic.

Debates, round tables discussions, conferences have taken place during the five days of the program. The main round table discussion was on the idea that industries and institutions find now their salute with illnesses. The more the pathologies are recognized, the more the healing planet gains capital and the power to manipulate people. All debates – from people that "invent illnesses" according to Jörg Blech's expression to the post psychiatry movement described by Philip Thomas; from the radical refusal of the DSM by Paula Caplan to the act of taking charge of the mad by the State in a horizontal model of integration, as proposed by Patric Coupechoux; and further to the groundbreaking manifesto in favour of a generalized self-medicalization, written by David Cohen – have permitted to raise major questions on the role played by mental illness in our societies, and, above all, on the connections that this particular "market" entertains with the Capital, as soon as we look at the drugstore industry.

In the program, we find *Les fauves du réel*, proposed by *Antitube* and *Tarnation* by American Jonathan Caouette. This event recalls, thanks to the autobiographical mode, a troubled life passed between its schizophrenic mother and his own emerging homosexuality. Daniel Cross will come and present *Homelessnation.org*, a Web project for and by homeless people, bringing the virtual community dispersed in the city to a real site, constructed on the Web as a communal self-service where each people can find traces of their own existence. The *Putain de bal masqué pervers* (a performance evening) with will present (as if they were so many questions) a kind of supplement to the reality. In this event, eight performances – by Nathalie Derome, the Fermières Obsédées, Suzanne Joly, Nahed

Mansour, Christian Messier, Julie Andrée T, Hélène Matte and Roi Vaara. During this event, Claudine Cotton, Christian Barré, Cindy Dumais and Noizefer CWU – will take the public space with few manoeuvres and other street actions. Invited by Avatar's commissioners, Diane Landry with the *Bouclier Magique* and Nicholas Reeves along with *Rom evo*, present two installations at the Musée de la civilization. The lively and resonant beds by Landry, with a lot of sensitivity, give us access into the imprecise world of dreams and indecisive zones... just before one entirely wakes up. In the room next door, Reeves floating cubes teach us how to speak and entertain the audience with a conversation more and more elaborated. Because it is through multiple interferences with humans that machines learn how to speak and can appropriate the human way of thinking.

At the Périscope Theater, the *Labos de la jeune création théâtrale* will present their "théâtre à relais" with a striking creation using the pathology of the living and the DSM, as a point of departure. With a text by Daniel Danis, the group will be able to stage a classical tragedy full of modernity.

The *Dévidoir de syndrome magnifiques* is, in its most concrete, a long paper roll, which includes graffitis of all forgotten illnesses. Every day, debates over lunch at the Café rencontre center-ville¹. These discussions, monitored by Guy Sioui Durand, would bring together Ariane Emond, Jean-Étienne Poirier, Nicholas Reeves and Luc Vignault. All of them would recall, day after day, the events of the *DSM + V* according to various angles of criticism inspired by a wide range of interventions.

We have to mention here the strong association with two centers for artists in Quebec City. Both centers helped in making the event bigger in their program with exhibitions by Diane Landry and Mathieu Brouillard (VU) and with an original response proposed by the collective exhibition *Code blanc* (at Engramme).

The event *DSM + V* has made possible the expression of distress, ordinary or stigmatized madness, by opposing to the normative system of built, structural and bookish institutions, the infinite modalities of our presence in the world. ■

Notes

- 1 It is important not to confuse Labour Day, a statutory holiday in Canada. I am talking here about the international day of workers, which became the Fête du travail (on May 1st), since the 19th century.
- 2 Another space at the margins, which has been the gathering point of the whole event

AVATAR

1994 – Ding Dong Deluxe

The first disc of sound art published by Avatar and OHM Éditions!

How is it possible that the length of shorter pieces are rarely inferior to 60 seconds? That a piece of less than 30 seconds is the exception? That 15 seconds and less is for advertizing? Isn't there the occasion for risks, for an audible audacity? Avatar has invited artists to submit their projects of forgotten sound territory explorations, ranging for the instantaneous to the brief sound. *Dind Dong Deluxe* is a compilation of 99 shorts sound propositions.

In January 1996, the Austrian National Radio had a radio program of one hour on Ding Dond Deluxe and OHM Éditions.

The first release by the collective Avatar on its label OHM Éditions, Ding Dong Deluxe is a one-of-a-kind project. Jocelyn Robert's idea was to put together a whole disc's worth of very short audio art pieces, around 15 to 20 seconds each. A suggestion was even made that this CD could be used with a programmable doorbell! A host of artists were invited to participate. The ones who submitted the most snippets are Georges Azzaria, Neil Wiernik, Phycüs, Pierre-André Arcand, Christof Migone, Jean Routhier and Frances Dyson. Other notable contributors include Chantal Dumas and Dan Lander. The material ranges from Stéphane Caron's Casio tunes to Neil Wiernik's out-of-context quotes and Phycüs' strange sound constructions. The 99th track contains Robert's « Horaire » (the tone of a talking clock) followed, after a short blank, by a 30-minute piece consisting of the 98 previous tracks put in a different order. Ding Dong Deluxe answers the age-old (?) question, "Can you make it short?" This is disconcerting art. (François Couture, All Music Guide.)

[...] a brilliant exploration of forgotten sound territory, between the instantaneous and the brief. About thirty sound sculptors, some famous and other unknown, created 99 super ideas "a jewel to the ear", for an agile CD which offer solace to people worried about Steve Reich's health. (Improjazz, n° 24, avril 1996, p. 10)

The artists: Georges Azzaria, Jocelyn Robert, Neil Wiernik, Phycüs, Bernard Bonnier, Elaine Frigon, Stéphane Caron, Pierre-André Arcand, Dan Lander, Christof Migone, Black Auks, Algojo) (Algojo, Jean Routhier, Louis Ouellet, Glêche Lavrille, Chantal Dumas, Émile Morin, Frances Dyson, John Oswald, Fabrice Montal, Doyon/

Demers, France Deslauriers, Insurgent, Martin Meilleur, Nathalie Lord, Julien Blaine.

La salle des nœuds

La salle des nœuds is an installation started in 1996 in the context of the conference *La parallaxe*. We owe the concept supporting the project to Jocelyn Robert and Émile Morin. The installation is a physical and conceptual structure. It responds to the applications of the complex systems theories in art in networks. *La salle des nœuds* is an independent installation using as a motor « l'attracteur étrange », an equation of the mathematician Lorenz. It seeks to reproduce mathematically some dynamics of the nature. This equation is one of the basis of chaos theory. The installation is a variation of dispositive interrelations and of systems which activate themselves by a mathematical equation. *La salle des nœuds* is also an evolutive work presented on many occasions according to different aspects. The project evolves over time, showing the new developments in the fields of audio and computer arts. From 1996 until 2000, *La salle des nœuds* has welcomed more than twelve artists and was presented in Canada and in the United States.

Although the last version of *La salle des nœuds* was presented in the year 2001, many dispositive and concepts developed remained the core of subsequent projects, namely, *La morue*, by Diane Landry, *L'invention des animaux*, by Jocelyn Robert and *Leçon de piano*, by Émile Morin and Jocelyn Robert.

1996, Version 1.0

Conference *La parallaxe*. Artists: Doyon/Demers, Diane Landry, Roger Morin, Louis Ouellet, Pierre Racine, Émile Morin and Jocelyn Robert. Lieux: Quebec City, Portneuf and Innsbruck.

1999, Version 2.0

Symposium d'art actuel de Moncton. Artists: Boris Firquet, David Michaud, Steeve Lebrasseur, Diane Landry, Émile Morin, Jocelyn Robert and more than a hundred participants coming from Moncton, Quebec City and the Côte d'Ivoire.

2000, Version 2.1

Mois Multi. Artists: Boris Firquet, David Michaud, Émile Morin and Jocelyn Robert. Location: Quebec City.

2000, Version 2.2

Series of events *A Set of Suspicions*. Revised title: *Pedestrian Movements/ Ground Station*. Artists: Daniel Jolliffe and Jocelyn Robert. Location: Artspeak Gallery, Vancouver.