

galerie frank elbaz.

Bojan Šarčević

galerie frank elbaz.



Bojan Šarčević
The Future of Nostalgia (Granite), 2021
Granite
60 x 70 x 35 cm (23 5/8 x 27 1/2 x 13 3/4 in.)

galerie frank elbaz.



Bojan Šarčević
The Future of Nostalgia (Marble), 2021
Marble
60 x 70 x 35 cm (23 5/8 x 27 1/2 x 13 3/4 in.)

galerie frank elbaz.



Bojan Šarčević
Untitled, 2022
Acrylic resin, acrylic, leather
50 x 60 x 3 cm (19 5/8 x 23 5/8 x 1 1/8 in.)

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Bojan Šarčević
L'Extime, exhibition view, galerie frank elbaz, Paris, France, 2020

galerie frank elbaz.



Bojan Šarčević

Homo Sentimentalis (cheville), 2020

Marble block, chest freezer, frost, sound system, mannequin, limestone, silk blouse, jute rope
194 x 140 x 144 cm (76 3/8 x 55 1/8 x 56 3/4 in.)

galerie frank elbaz.



Bojan Šarčević
L'Extime, exhibition view, galerie frank elbaz, Paris, France, 2020

galerie frank elbaz.



Bojan Šarčević

Homo Sentimentalis (hanche), 2020

Marble block, chest freezer, frost, sound system, mannequin, carved marble, silk blouse, jute rope

Block: 93 x 210,5 x 127 cm (36 5/8 x 82 7/8 x 50 in.)

Mannequin: 167 x 100 x 67 cm (65 3/4 x 39 3/8 x 26 3/8 in.)

Base: 150,5 x 82,5 cm (59 1/4 x 32 1/2 in.)

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Bojan Šarčević
L'Extime, exhibition view, galerie frank elbaz, Paris, France, 2020

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Bojan Šarčević
L'Extime, exhibition view, galerie frank elbaz, Paris, France, 2020

galerie frank elbaz.



Bojan Šarčević

New Emotional Style, 2020

Marble block, ice cube machine, ice, sound system, carved marble, limestone, birch wood
179 x 81 x 169 cm (70 1/2 x 31 7/8 x 66 1/2 in.)

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Bojan Šarčević

Homo Sentimentalis (cuisse), 2020

Carved marble, limestone, birch wood, mannequin, silk blouse, jute rope

Mannequin: 169 x 78 x 56 cm (66 1/2 x 30 3/4 x 22 in.)

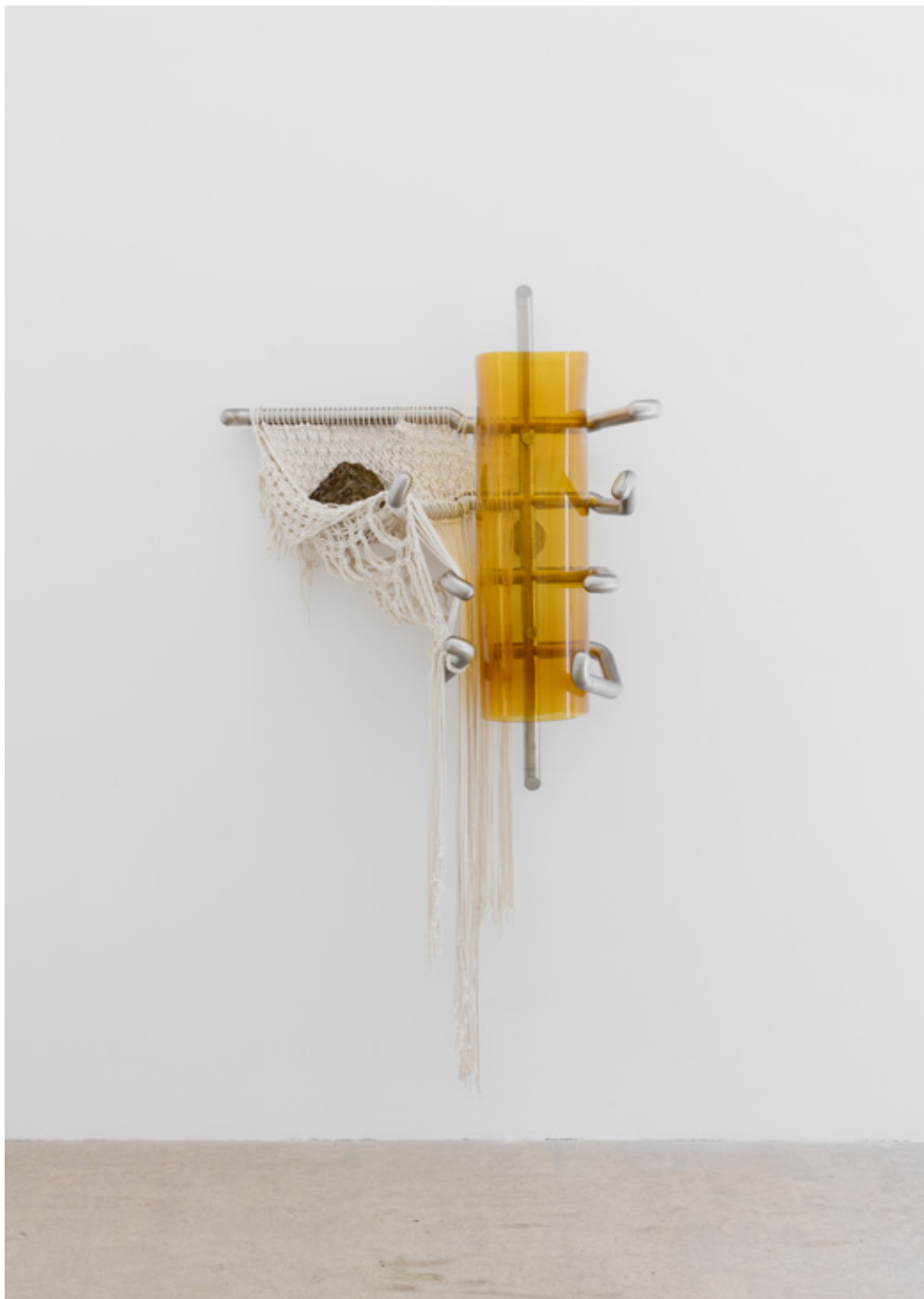
Head: 54 x 30 x 50 cm (21 1/4 x 11 3/4 x 19 5/8 in.)

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Bojan Šarčević
L'Extime, exhibition view, galerie frank elbaz, Paris, France, 2020

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Bojan Šarčević
Vertèbre, 2020
Stainless steel, blown glass, cotton, volcanic rock
213 x 104 x 67 cm (83 7/8 x 41 x 26 3/8 in.)

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Bojan Šarčević

Thank you for pointing to your perineum, exhibition view, BQ, Berlin, Germany, 2020

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Bojan Šarčević

Thank you for pointing to your perineum, exhibition view, BQ, Berlin, Germany, 2020

galerie frank elbaz.



Bojan Šarčević
Sentimentality is the core, 2018
Freezer, ice crystals, speakers, vibrator, soundtrack
Courtesy Stuart Shave/Modern Art, London

galerie frank elbaz.



Bojan Šarčević
Sentimentality is the core (detail), 2018
Freezer, ice crystals, speakers, vibrator, soundtrack
Courtesy Stuart Shave/Modern Art, London

galerie frank elbaz.



Bojan Šarčević
Invagination, 2016
Aluminium rails, plasterboard, epoxy, dry meat
Courtesy Stuart Shave/Modern Art, London

galerie frank elbaz.



Bojan Šarčević
Invagination, exhibition view, Stuart Shave/Modern Art, London, UK, 2016

galerie frank elbaz.



Bojan Šarčević
In the rear window, exhibition view, BQ, Berlin, Germany, 2015

galerie frank elbaz.



Bojan Šarčević
In the rear window, exhibition view, BQ, Berlin, Germany, 2015

galerie frank elbaz.



Bojan Šarčević

He, 2011

Onyx

248 x 124 x 40 cm

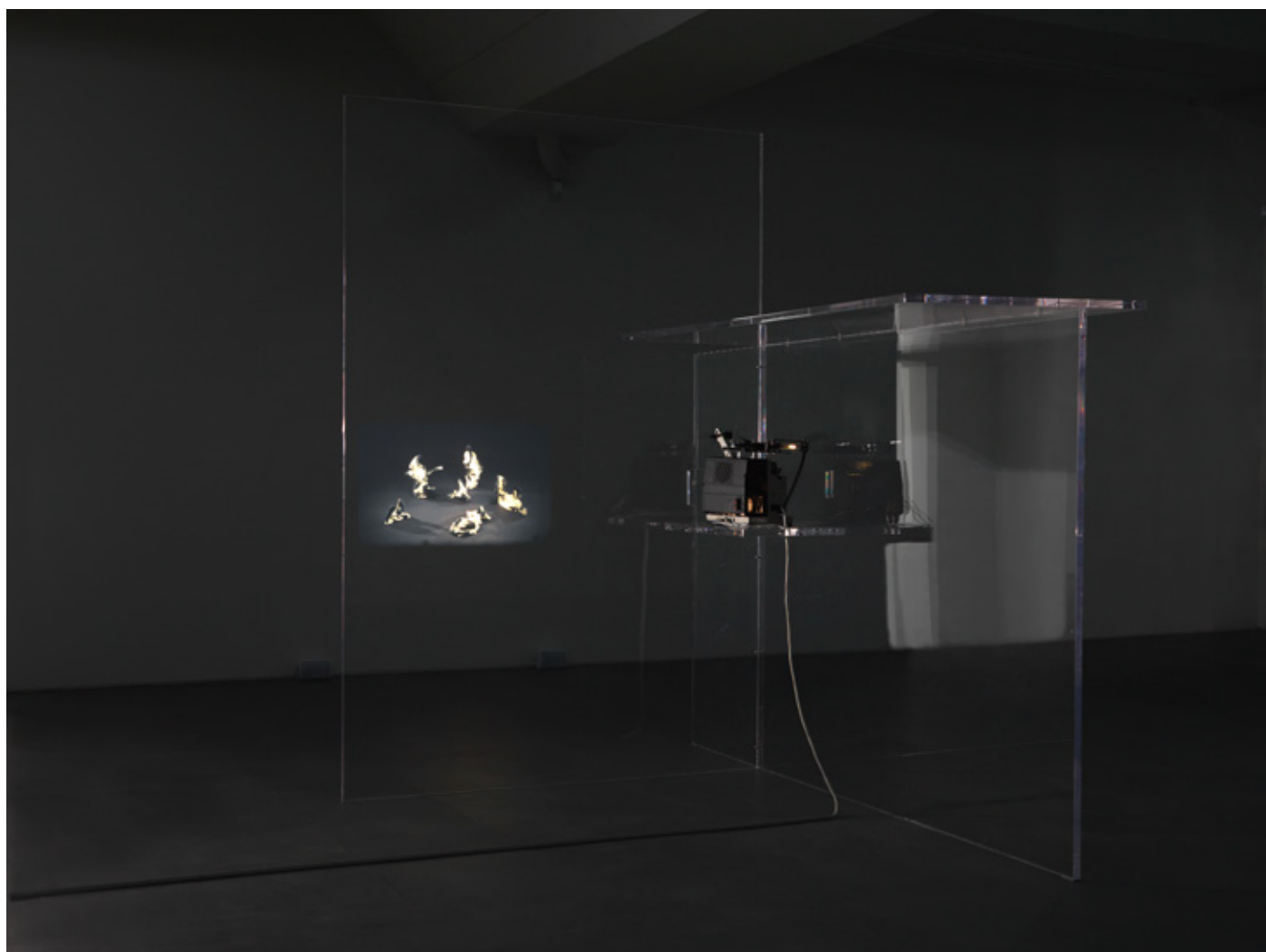
Installation view, Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, Vaduz, Liechtenstein

galerie frank elbaz.



Bojan Šarčević
She, 2010
Onyx
248 x 168 x 41 cm
Installation view, Dallas Museum of Art, TX, USA

galerie frank elbaz.



Bojan Šarčević
Breath-taker is the Breath-giver (film B), 2009
2.46min super-16mm film
Courtesy Stuart Shave/Modern Art, London

galerie frank elbaz.



Bojan Šarčević
Only After Dark (film 5), 2007
Super-16mm film
Dimension variable
Courtesy BQ, Berlin

galerie frank elbaz.



Bojan Šarčević
Keep illusion for the end, 2005
Oak, brass, copper, concrete
220 x 160 x 180 cm
Courtesy BQ, Berlin.

galerie frank elbaz.

Texts



samedi, 30 janvier, 2021



ACCUEIL > LES RUBRIQUES > APPAREIL > BOJAN ŠARČEVIĆ – L'EXTIME

BOJAN ŠARČEVIĆ – L'EXTIME

galerie frank elbaz

Laure Jaumouillé

Avec L'Extime, Bojan Šarčević présente sa première exposition personnelle à la galerie frank elbaz. Il y expose des sculptures imposantes formées de blocs de marbre légèrement teintés de couleurs verte, rose et bleue.

Chaque de ces blocs est évidé pour accueillir des congélateurs fonctionnels. Les congélateurs semblent être littéralement « ingérés » par les cubes de marbre. A cet imaginaire polaire est associée une piste sonore atonale qui résonne aux alentours des œuvres.



Bojan Šarčević, *Homo Sentimentalis*, 2020
photo Claire Dom

A proximité de cet univers de givre et de cristaux de glace, on observe trois figures de taille remarquable. Celles-ci entourent les blocs de marbre et interagissent avec eux, comme si elles étaient dotées d'un comportement ou encore d'une puissance d'agir. Leurs têtes de pierre sculptées et leur masculinité évidente entre en contraste avec le raffinement de leurs vêtements. Par ailleurs, ces figures sont ligotées selon la tradition japonaise du *shibari*. Le terme lui-même signifie « attaché, lié ».



Bojan Šarčević, Homo Sentimentalis, 2020
photo Claire Dorn

Le titre de l'exposition *L'Extime* fait écho au concept d'extimité développé dans la lignée de Lacan, notamment par le psychiatre Serge Tisseron. L'extimité tend à dévoiler des parts de notre intimité jusque-là envisagées comme secrètes. Il s'agit d'une pratique tout à fait naturelle que l'on peut même considérer comme nécessaire à l'équilibre psychique humain. Ainsi il semble possible de s'interroger sur l'état intérieur de ces figures ligotées, privées de parole, et dont les visages semblent meurtris. Cependant, Lacan attribue une autre signification au terme « extime », à savoir le mot anglais « uncanny », qui peut être traduit en français par « inquiétante étrangeté ». Un lien entre ces deux définitions peut paraître pertinent, à savoir, que nos sentiments les plus intimes nous paraissent parfois profondément étrangers.



Bojan Šarčević, Homo Sentimentalis, 2020
photo Claire Dorn

En outre, on observe que les figures et les blocs de béton sont le plus souvent reliés, soit par un câble, soit par la position d'un personnage assis sur l'un des congélateurs.

L'exposition porte la trace de dualités prégnantes : les œuvres sont à la fois brutes et raffinées, réfrigérées et sensuelles, techniques et physiologiques. On y voit l'émergence du « Cyborg » tel que défini par Donna Haraway [1] ; à savoir la dissolution des frontières entre la machine et l'être humain. Tandis qu'il s'empare de la technologie caractéristique de notre époque, Bojan Šarčević assemble les « reliques » d'un futur hypothétique. Ces « chimères » de l'avenir semblent d'ores et déjà partiellement pétrifiées.



Bojan Šarčević, Homo Sentimentalis, 2020
photo Claire Dorn

Notes

[1] HARAWAY Donna, *Manifeste Cyborg, science, technologie et féminisme socialiste à la fin du XXe siècle*, in : *Manifeste cyborg et autres essais : sciences – fictions - féminismes*, p. 29.-92., Paris, Exils Éditeurs, 2007, (1991).

Laure Jaumouillé

Frontispice : Bojan Šarčević, Homo Sentimentalis 2020, photo Claire Dorn.

L'Extime

October 22, 2020 - February 27, 2021

galerie frank elbaz, Paris

66 rue de Turenne
75003 Paris - France
Tuesday - Saturday
11am - 7pm
and by appointment
t. +33 1 48 87 50 04
info@galeriefrankelbaz.com

CRITIQUE

«L'EXTIME», ROCS EN SCÈNE

Par Judicaël Lavrador (<https://www.liberation.fr/auteur/15643-judicael-lavrador>)

— 25 janvier 2021 à 18:11

A la galerie Frank-Elbaz, Bojan Sarcevic met en scène des mannequins-aliens en plastique adossés à du marbre et des machines.



L'expo évoque l'arte povera, qui alliait les matériaux bruts et la quincaillerie industrielle. Photo Claire Dorn

Silhouette idéalement musclée, trois mannequins noirs, sans tête, du type de ceux qui trônent dans les magasins de sport au rayon protéines, se sont répartis l'espace de la galerie Frank-Elbaz. Leurs corps massifs, leurs épaules de déménageurs, mais plus encore leurs poses ambiguës en imposent et suffisent à garantir à l'exposition de l'artiste Bojan Sarcevic la tonitruance d'un spectacle haut en couleur qui va battre tout à tour le chaud et le froid, se glissant entre l'humour et la terreur, les clichés et les vraies trouvailles, la science-fiction de boulevard et le portrait actualisé d'une humanité transgenre. Ces mannequins sont habillés de rien, d'une chemisette de soie blanche translucide pour l'un, à imprimé léopard pour l'autre, et dans la même gamme, raffinée décontractée pour le troisième. En bas, ils (elles) ne portent rien, sinon un entrelacs de grosses cordes savamment nouées dans les règles de l'art du shibari, pratique bondage nipponne.

Erotisme ficelé

Sarcevic livre donc une exposition de sculptures apprêtées qui relève le défi de la représentation du corps humain ou héroïque en imposant une vision post-humaine de la chose. Ces créatures ne sont ni des hommes, ni des femmes, ni des héros, mais des aliens asexués, transgenres, puissants et coquets. De la statuaire antique ou Renaissance, ils gardent le goût du marbre. L'exposition, en effet, les adosse ou les assoit contre d'énormes blocs du noble minéral. Roses, saumonés ou verts et veinés de blanc, les blocs arborent une surface lisse, soigneusement polie, mais une forme géométrique et vaguement mécanique : on dirait des moteurs de machines industrielles ou bien des carrosseries de véhicules. Ce sont aussi des réceptacles pour des congélateurs. En leur sein, en effet, sont incrustés des petits frigos dont la vitre laisse entrevoir le cœur de glace.

L'exposition est la mise en œuvre d'un scénario. Les sculptures, mutants au sexe indéterminé et à l'érotisme ficelé mais furibard, seraient nées, à l'instant, de ces couveuses de marbre antique et de frigos électriques. Réminiscence de l'arte povera, qui alliait les matériaux bruts et la quincaillerie industrielle, l'installation de Bojan Sarcevic tient aussi de la comédie SF loufoque *Hibernatus* et d'une superproduction vulgarisant les théories d'un monde post-humain. Ce qui laisse la porte (du frigo) ouverte à toutes les interprétations. Dont celle-ci, grossièrement suggéré par le titre de l'expo, «l'Extime», à entendre comme l'inverse de «l'intime» : le monde tel qu'il va, et le progrès, pour le dire vite, met l'humain hors de lui, le laissant de marbre et sans âme, même s'il le rend solide comme un roc.

Dérision chic

Sarcevic invente finalement le péplum plastique. Mais prend la peine, cela sauve le show, d'y instiller une dose de dérision chic. L'un des blocs de marbre est en effet coiffé d'une banale petite machine à glaçons qui, toutes les dix minutes, en crache une poignée qui se déverse au sol. Avant de fondre, formant une flaque glissante sur laquelle toute l'expo, ses mannequins, son marbre italien, la vision du futur, la vision de l'homme et de la femme confondu dans une espèce mutante, viennent eux aussi patiner, hésiter, mais aussi se rafraîchir. Comme on rafraîchit un cocktail dans un hôtel - il n'y a que là qu'on trouvait ces machines à glaçons. Dès lors, ce petit accessoire, le seul à bouger dans l'expo, suffit à la réchauffer et à la décoincer, rendant son scénario plus cool et ses protagonistes moins figés.

Judicaël Lavrador (<https://www.liberation.fr/auteur/15643-judicael-lavrador>)

L'Extime

de Bojan Sarcevic

Galerie Frank-Elbaz (75003), jusqu'au 27 février. Rens. : www.galeriefrankelbaz.com



de sacs poubelle. L'engin était visiblement en marche car j'entendais le moteur. Les fenêtres étaient baissées mais il n'y avait pas de conducteur. Une chanson de George Michael sortait de l'autoradio. C'était le titre *A Different Corner*. Cette scène, cette image d'une machine, a généré en moi un certain type d'émotion, lié à une mémoire précise, et m'a réellement ému. Ça a duré trois minutes, c'était sublime et ça m'a beaucoup travaillé. Ce moment questionnait l'idée de nostalgie. J'ai aujourd'hui 45 ans, je n'arrête pas de regarder en arrière. D'où je viens? Quel est mon parcours? L'adolescence est un moment où l'on devient indépendant et on se définit, notamment à travers la musique.» Au-delà de ce télescopage de références – entre géopolitique, culture pop et histoire de l'art; on pense notamment aux aspirateurs ready-made de Jeff Koons – se joue une recherche formelle ambitieuse. Chaque réfrigérateur dissimule une enceinte qui permet de diffuser la musique. Les ondes sonores influencent directement la structure des cristaux de glace. Ces formes organiques interagissent avec les lignes industrialisées des réfrigérateurs dans un ballet macroscopique au rythme ralenti par le froid.

Lorsqu'on regarde le travail de Bojan Šarčević, qu'il s'agisse de ses précédentes expositions chez Modern Art ou de ses propositions pour la galerie berlinoise BQ, on constate qu'il investit des formes très variées et n'applique aucune recette. Il acquiesce: «Je n'ai pas de méthode. Chaque nouveau projet m'amène à repartir de zéro. Plus jeune, je paniquais face à cette idée; je ne possède pas un savoir-faire ou une technique que je pourrais appliquer et décliner à l'infini. Il me faut construire une démarche qui m'est propre. Ceci étant dit, je ne suis pas intéressé à l'idée de rentrer dans un système.» Quand on lui demande si sa pratique se développe dans un atelier, il répond: «Certains projets nécessitent de grands espaces et d'autres fois, ma table de cuisine me suffit largement. Je vis entre Bâle et Paris et je m'adapte à cette mobilité. Ces dernières années, mes recherches se partagent entre mon ordinateur, une table et des notes prises dans un carnet.» Ce nomadisme physique se traduit par une aptitude au déplacement sémantique:

« Dans mon travail, beaucoup de choses se construisent autour de la reconnaissance. À partir de quel point on reconnaît quelque chose que l'on ne comprend pas? Qu'est-ce que ça veut dire de reconnaître quelque chose mais de ne pas le comprendre? »

Ce décalage se joue à plusieurs niveaux, parfois simultanément, mais toujours dans un élan poétique. Avec les deux sculptures monumentales *He* and *She*, Bojan Šarčević fait se rencontrer l'histoire de l'art à celle d'une roche ancestrale, jouant sur les échelles temporelles. Les deux pièces sont d'imposants blocs d'onyx, une variété d'agate dont les bandes circulaires et concentriques dessinent d'impressionnants motifs. Employée comme pierre d'ornement et comme objet décoratif, elle naît d'un processus de transformation lent et complexe, réactions chimiques d'intercalations argileuses et d'oxydes minéraux. Face à ce travail de la nature, l'artiste procède à des coupes nettes qui permettent de rentrer littéralement dans la matière et dans le temps. Ces incisions rectangulaires rappellent la rigueur de l'art minimal. Les formats de ces œuvres, leur rapport au corps humain, résonnent avec les dimensions des blocs de marbre utilisés dans la sculpture antique. De la même manière, leur titre leur offre une incarnation, un peu comme s'il s'agissait d'une représentation d'une civilisation lointaine, tant dans l'espace que dans le temps. Au sujet de cet ensemble de pièces, l'artiste explique qu'il s'agissait de questionner son rapport à l'image : « Un peu comme j'ai pu le faire avec mes films, où je filmais en pellicule 16mm des petites sculptures, des maquettes afin de leur donner une texture, le principe est ici inversé. Je cherchais à retrouver une pictorialité dans l'objet. *He* et *She*, c'est de l'image pure, mais en sculpture ! »

Le travail de Bojan Šarčević développe son lyrisme dans ses zones floues. Parfois, il produit des moments incongrus. Ainsi, le communiqué de presse de l'exposition *Invagination* se résume à une phrase, qui elle-même synthétise la manière de penser de l'artiste : « *Invagination* refers to the idea of something being turned inside-out, turned-in, or folded back on itself » (*Invagination* fait référence à une chose retournée, tournée ou repliée sur elle-même). Avec ce facétieux jeu de mots, il met en avant un esprit à la souplesse créative, sans pour autant imposer une lecture au profit d'une autre : « Je ne cherche pas à ériger un discours, je ne pense pas que l'artiste détienne le sens du monde. En tout cas, moi, je n'essaie pas d'exprimer ce sens. J'éprouve la nécessité de construire à partir de l'extérieur, à partir de l'extériorité du monde. C'est une notion paradoxale, car elle est autant politique qu'elle ne l'est pas, et j'essaie de la faire rentrer dans mes pièces. J'essaie d'avoir un certain sens du monde, une intuition, mais en même temps, je ne pourrais pas l'expliquer. Au fond, je ne cherche pas à produire un discours

articulé ou un discours militant. Je pense que regarder, percevoir quelque chose, c'est déjà donner sens à cette chose. »

En ce sens, Šarčević déploie une vision kaléidoscopique, basculant incessamment de la figuration à l'abstraction, de l'infiniment petit à l'immensément grand, du commun au singulier, à travers des dispositifs aussi simples qu'ingénieux.

Texte de Justin Morin

The variety found in Bojan Šarčević's work – specifically his capacity to explicitly reinvent himself – has led critics to categorise him as a conceptual artist. But this label carries its share of clichés. Above all, it tends to overlook one of the best qualities of the sculptor's works: their emotional power. The title of his recent fourth solo exhibition at the London gallery Modern Art sounded like an announcement: *Sentimentality is the Core*. Šarčević's ability to generate complex emotions, going so far as to mix politics with intimacy, the monumental with the trivial, minimalism with lyricism, is the common thread throughout the artist's body of work.

As such, this exhibition presents several industrial refrigerators, placed along the walls of the gallery's empty space. These *ready-mades*, monoliths of plastic and metal, blend into the white environment of Modern Art. Inside the freezers, nothing, no ice cream or side of beef, just emptiness, or, more accurately, only ice crystals and assortments of ice in abstract sculptural forms. Only some music – ghostly and faraway, mixed with the muffled humming of machines – fills the space. It is easy to pick out artists such as Sade, Billy Idol, Chaka Khan, and even George Michael from the soundtrack. These hits from the end of the 80s act as autobiographical hints. Born in 1974 in Belgrade, Bojan Šarčević grew up with this music. Even though he didn't live through the war (his family left Bosnia in 1991, several months before the start of the war) the ghostly power of the installation is troubling. The exhibition feels like an abandoned supermarket and transforms itself into a narrative machine, an anachronistic collision of teenage memories and the collective subconscious. For all that, *Sentimentality is the Core* does not claim to be a historical testimony. When asked about the origins of the project, the artist replies: "Everything comes from a situation that greatly influenced me. I was at Amsterdam airport. I had just gotten off a plane, around 11 pm. I needed to take a bus into town. There was no one around. It was cold, and I could see the moon. Everything was deserted. In front of the bus stop, I saw a dump truck, parked halfway up on the sidewalk, filled with trash bags. I could hear the motor running. The windows were down but there was no sign of a driver. A George Michael song was playing on the radio: "A Different Corner". This scene, this image of a machine, created a specific emotion in me, linked to a specific memory, and it really moved me. It lasted three minutes, it was sublime, and it really made me think. It was a moment of pure nostalgia. I'm 45 years old now, and I am constantly looking into the past. Where do I come from? Where am I going? Adolescence is a time when we become independent and we define ourselves, notably with music." Beyond this collision of references – between geopolitics, pop culture and art history; we think notably of the ready-made vacuums of Jeff Koons – an ambitious search for form plays out. Each refrigerator hides a speaker that plays music. The sound waves directly influence the structure of the ice crystals. These natural shapes interact with the industrial lines of the refrigerators in a macroscopic ballet slowed down by the cold.

When one looks at Bojan Šarčević's work, either his previous exhibitions at Modern Art or his proposal for the BQ gallery in Berlin, one sees that he uses very varied shapes and applies no set recipe. He agrees:

"I HAVE NO METHOD. EACH NEW PROJECT HAS ME STARTING AGAIN FROM ZERO. WHEN I WAS YOUNGER, THIS THOUGHT MADE ME PANIC; I DIDN'T HAVE THE KNOW-HOW OR A TECHNIQUE THAT I COULD APPLY AND DEVELOP AD INFINITUM. I HAD TO CONSTRUCT AN APPROACH THAT WAS ALL MY OWN. THAT SAID, I WASN'T INTERESTED IN FITTING MYSELF INTO A SYSTEM."

When asked if his inspiration comes while working in his workshop, he replies: "Some projects require large spaces and at other times, my kitchen table is sufficient." I split my time between Basel and Paris and I adapt to this mobility. For the past few years, my research has been split between my computer, a table, and the notes I take in a little book." This physical nomadism is translated by an aptitude for semantic displacement: "In my work, lots of things are built around recognition. When can we recognise something we don't understand?" This discrepancy plays out on several levels, sometimes simultaneously, but always in a poetic manner. With the two monumental sculptures *He* and *She*, Bojan Šarčević brings together the history of art with that of ancestral stone, playing with temporal scales. The two pieces are imposing blocks of onyx, a variety of agate in which circular and concentric bands form impressive motifs. Used as an ornamental stone and as a decorative object, onyx is formed by a very slow and complex transformation process, chemical reactions of loamy intercalations and of mineral oxides. In response to this work of nature, the artist made clear straight cuts that literally allow us to penetrate matter and time. These rectangular incisions recall the rigor of minimal art. The format of these works and their relationship to the human body resonates with the dimensions of the marble blocks used in ancient sculptures. Similarly, their titles give them an incarnation, almost as if they were representations of a far-off civilisation, far both in space and in time. When speaking of these pieces, the artist explains that he was questioning his relationship with images:

"A LITTLE LIKE I WAS ABLE TO DO WITH MY FILMS, WHERE I WORKED WITH 16MM FILM AND LITTLE SCULPTURES OR MODELS IN ORDER TO GIVE THEM A TEXTURE; HERE THE PRINCIPLE IS REVERSED. I WAS LOOKING TO FIND A PICTURALITY IN THE OBJECT. 'HE' AND 'SHE', IT'S PURE IMAGE, BUT IN SCULPTURE!"

Bojan Šarčević's work develops its lyricism in these blurred areas. Sometimes, it creates incongruous moments. As such, the press release for his exhibition *Invagination* is only one sentence long, which itself synthesises the artist's way of thinking:

“INVAGINATION REFERS TO THE IDEA OF SOMETHING BEING TURNED INSIDE-OUT, TURNED-IN, OR FOLDED BACK ON ITSELF.”

This facetious play on words showcases a spirit of creative flexibility, without going so far as to impose one reading at the cost of another: “I am not looking to construct a rhetoric; I don't think that the artist has ownership of the meaning of the world. In any event, I'm not trying to proclaim this meaning. I need to construct starting from the outside, from the outsideness of the world. It's a paradoxical idea, because it is as political as it is apolitical, and I try to integrate that into my pieces. I try to have a certain idea about the world, an intuition, but at the same time, I wouldn't be able to explain it. Essentially, I am not looking to produce an articulate or militant argument. I think that by watching or perceiving something, we are already giving meaning to that thing”. In this way, Šarčević unfolds a kaleidoscopic view, sweeping endlessly from the representational to the abstract, from the infinitely small to the immensely large, from common to singular, using practices that are as simple as they are ingenious.



Bojan Šarčević, *Sentimentality is the Core*, exhibition view, 21 November – 21 December 2018. Courtesy Bojan Šarčević & Modern Art, London © Bojan Šarčević

Numéro



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Photographie Lifestyle People by Say Who



L'avenir glaçant de l'artiste Bojan Sarcevic à la galerie Frank Elbaz

NUMÉRO ART 04 DÉCEMBRE 2020

A la galerie Frank Elbaz à Paris, Bojan Sarcevic imagine une humanité à l'Âge de glace, pétrifiée, et s'hybridant avec les machines. Inquiétant et fascinant.

Par Thibaut Wychowanok .



Vue de l'exposition L'Extême de Bojan Sarcevic à la galerie Frank Elbaz, Paris. Photo Claire Dorn

Le 22 décembre 1976 sortait sur les écrans “L’Âge de cristal” de Michael Anderson. Le film, jouissif nanar d’anticipation, se voulait une critique acerbe de la société occidentale et des totalitarismes. En 2274, l’humanité s’abandonne désormais à un hédonisme débridé (la libération sexuelle et les drogues post-Woodstock sont dans le viseur) au sein de dômes high tech. Ces superstructures technologiques régissent la vie de leurs habitants et les maintiennent, hors de la nature, dans un bienheureux asservissement....

Une architecture, des objets, des drogues, ainsi que des machines contraignent l’action et la pensée.

Rien de bien méchant si ce n’est qu’à 30 ans, tout être humain doit être sacrifié... surpopulation oblige. Inspiration évidente de *Matrix*, le long-métrage (qui donnera également une série) fascine par l’actualité des sujets traités : obsolescence des hommes transformés en objets de consommation, culte de la jeunesse et du divertissement, tropisme pour le groupe et sa sécurité au détriment des libertés individuelles.... Plus intéressant encore, “L’Âge de Cristal” met en lumière la manière dont une société et son idéologie sont forgées grâce à des structures, elles, bien matérielles : une architecture, des objets, des drogues, ainsi que des machines qui contraignent l’action et la pensée.



Vue de l'exposition L'Extime de Bojan Sarcevic à la galerie Frank Elbaz, Paris. Photo Claire Dorn

L'exposition de Bojan Sarcevic à la galerie Frank Elbaz pourrait être un spin-off, une variation plus complexe, contemporaine et ambiguë du film de 1976. L'artiste, né à Belgrade en 1974, aujourd'hui installé à Paris, y déploie un saisissant *set* de science-fiction aux références 70s et 80s assumées. Sans doute, ces décennies ont marqué comme nulle autre notre imaginaire, et ont été le creuset des formes esthétiques de l'anticipation et de notre fascination pour la technologie, toujours à l'œuvre au XXIe siècle. "2001, l'Odyssée de l'espace" inaugure le bal en 1968, suivront "Star Wars" (1977), "Alien" (1979), "Blade Runner" (1983)...

Les larges monolithes sculptés en marbre de Bojan Sarcevic évoquent le film de Kubrick, dans des versions pastel plus décoratives. Ils accueillent des machines métalliques : des congélateurs industriels fonctionnels qui forment des sarcophages high tech, des capsules de cryogénéisation ou des machines à glaçons. Trois personnages demeurent figés au sein de ce film comme mis à l'arrêt : des mannequins aux têtes minérales en pierre ou marbre sculpté. Leurs blouses de soie évoquent irrésistiblement les costumes de "Star Wars".



Vue de l'exposition L'Extême de Bojan Sarcevic à la galerie Frank Elbaz, Paris. Photo Claire Dorn

Moins kitsch que celui de “L'Âge de cristal”, l'univers de Bojan Sarcevic met en forme un petit théâtre des idéologies architecturales du XXe siècle. Deux sœurs ennemies cohabitent : le progrès industriel et le retour à la nature organique, comme s'opposent, au cœur de son travail, un design révolutionnaire et un plus bourgeois, une esthétique décorative et une fonctionnelle, la soie des vêtements et le métal de la machine, le marbre ornemental et la pierre brute. Leur contamination réciproque au sein des œuvres est effrayante, fascinante, froide et mortifère. Après l'Âge de cristal, place à l'Âge de glace. Des glaçons se déversent à intervalles réguliers, depuis une machine automatisée, pour finir en flaques sur le sol. Ces cubes modernistes se liquéfient pour disparaître à jamais. Doit-on y voir l'échec de la civilisation industrielle, de son idéologie et de son design ?

À l'enfermement étouffant des sarcophages répondent les cordes tissées sur les corps de style bondage shibari.

Tout comme dans le film de Michael Anderson, l'angoisse de mort est omniprésente. Congélation, fossilisation... il faut à tout prix arrêter le temps et éviter la mort, au détriment de toute dynamique de vie. Un mannequin a gardé sa pose méditative, assis sur le marbre comme sur un bureau ou une photocopieuse. Les deux autres sont statufiés en plein action. Comme dans "L'Âge de Cristal", l'infrastructure et les objets, malgré leur apparente beauté, forment des outils d'aliénation et de pétrification. À l'enfermement étouffant des sarcophages répondent les cordes tissées, qui se déploient comme des décorations de style bondage shibari autour des corps des mannequins. Le vêtement est une autre forme de contrainte, aussi physique que sociale.



Vue de l'exposition L'Extême de Bojan Sarcevic à la galerie Frank Elbaz, Paris. Photo Claire Dorn

L'exposition de Bojan Sarcevic est pourtant plus subtile et retorse que le film de Michael Anderson. Le titre de l'exposition, "L'Extême", est révélateur.

Toute cette mise en scène est l'expression de sentiments intimes, extériorisés sous formes de blocs minéraux, de figures humaines et de machines. Dans ce monde post-humain, l'intimité de l'être fait corps avec la technologie et le minéral, qui se transforment eux-mêmes en objets humanoïdes. Moins qu'un asservissement de l'homme par la technologie et le design, Bojan Sarcevic souligne plus subtilement le fantasme ultime de l'homme de faire corps avec la nature millénaire (la pierre) et la technologie pourvoyeuse d'éternité (la congélation) pour soulager son angoisse de mort. Ce monde est à l'arrêt, comme pour passer à la postérité. Les personnages y prennent la pose, comme sur une photo ou un selfie, pour qu'à jamais leur image demeure. Quitte à se transformer en objet. Un humanité de marbre? Décorative et fonctionnelle.

L'Extime de Bojan Sarcevic à la galerie Frank Elbaz, jusqu'au 27 février, Paris.

Bojan Šarčević's "L'Extime"
by Tomas Weber
October 22, 2020–February 27, 2021

Galerie Frank Elbaz, Paris

November 12, 2020



View of Bojan Šarčević's "L'Extime" at Galerie Frank Elbaz, Paris, 2020. Image courtesy of the artist and Galerie Frank Elbaz. Photo by Claire Dorn.

Bojan Šarčević's aloof, unyielding mixed-media sculptures skirt the boundary between glacial reserve and slushy poignancy. In his first exhibition at Paris's Frank Elbaz, he delivers frostiness and emotion in a single blow.

Three works in the first room, all titled *Homo Sentimentalis* (all works 2020), involve immense, magnificently polished marble blocks, ranging from ivory white to deep grey, that are carved with ridges, indentations, and geometrical notches. Muscular plastic mannequins wearing

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perhaps running or dancing, at the back of the room. The legs and feet of these vaguely alarming, hybrid forms are all neatly bound with jute bondage rope.

Two of the marble blocks have been hollowed out to contain readymade ice chests, the lids of which are open. Switched on and fully operational, they release cold air into the space; empty of products, ice and frost build up inside. On top of one block sits an ice-maker that regularly spews out cubes onto the gallery floor. Each block is equipped with a sound system emitting an assortment of glitchy noises. The empty freezers, humming in their ultramodern marble units, have a contrastingly sad and retro feel, like an outdated dream of the future—a mood enhanced by the blouses' vintage prints.

Often described as a fuzzy longing for an idealized past, nostalgia is also a spreading chill, a freezing of time. That the Cold War never really thawed is perhaps a familiar idea, but it is a topic on which this artist, who was born in Belgrade and grew up in Sarajevo at the time of the Bosnian War (1992–95), can be assumed to have some thoughts. More immediate contemporary resonances are found in everything from empty supermarkets to the Arctic's failure to fully freeze over. The latter especially is hard to ignore in light of the open freezers' profligate consumption of electricity.

“L'Extimé” is a neologism coined by Jacques Lacan that translates into English as “extimacy”: an intimacy that has little to do with interior states of mind, but which takes place out in the world amongst its objects, in full view, in the cold, or in supermarkets. It's a fitting concept for a sculptor whose work conveys both remoteness and intimacy. In Šarčević's sculptures, materials contrast and correspond in understated ways. Marble, for example, is crystalline; so is ice. The exquisite material of classical sculpture is here used to house industrial freezers, while the task of representing the muscular human form is delegated to plastic mannequins. A prospect of connection, even an erotics, is raised by the knotted rope.

In Lacanian psychoanalysis, extimacy refers both to how our innermost feelings can seem strange to us, and how, conversely, we can project those feelings onto external objects in ways that render them unnervingly intimate. Šarčević makes strange familiar material processes such as freezing or melting, while hinting at—but never quite evoking explicitly—sensations such as desire and nostalgia. These sculptures propose that even the most commonplace emotions are so densely woven, so oddly composed out of the most incongruous materials, that if they were to be taken apart and scrutinized, really seen, they would barely be recognizable.

Šarčević's interest in freezing has been evident since his 2018 show at Modern Art, London, called “Sentimentality is the core,” as well as his show earlier this year at BQ, Berlin, “Thank you for pointing to your perineum,” which respectively featured freezers and an ice-maker. In this exhibition, however, the web of references is denser and the experience of occupying the space is more intense. The humanoid figures, set off against colossal marble blocks, offer a sprightly physicality in a time of social distancing. Open and supple in its associations, this exhibition resists easy interpretation. An eerie chill dominates the space.

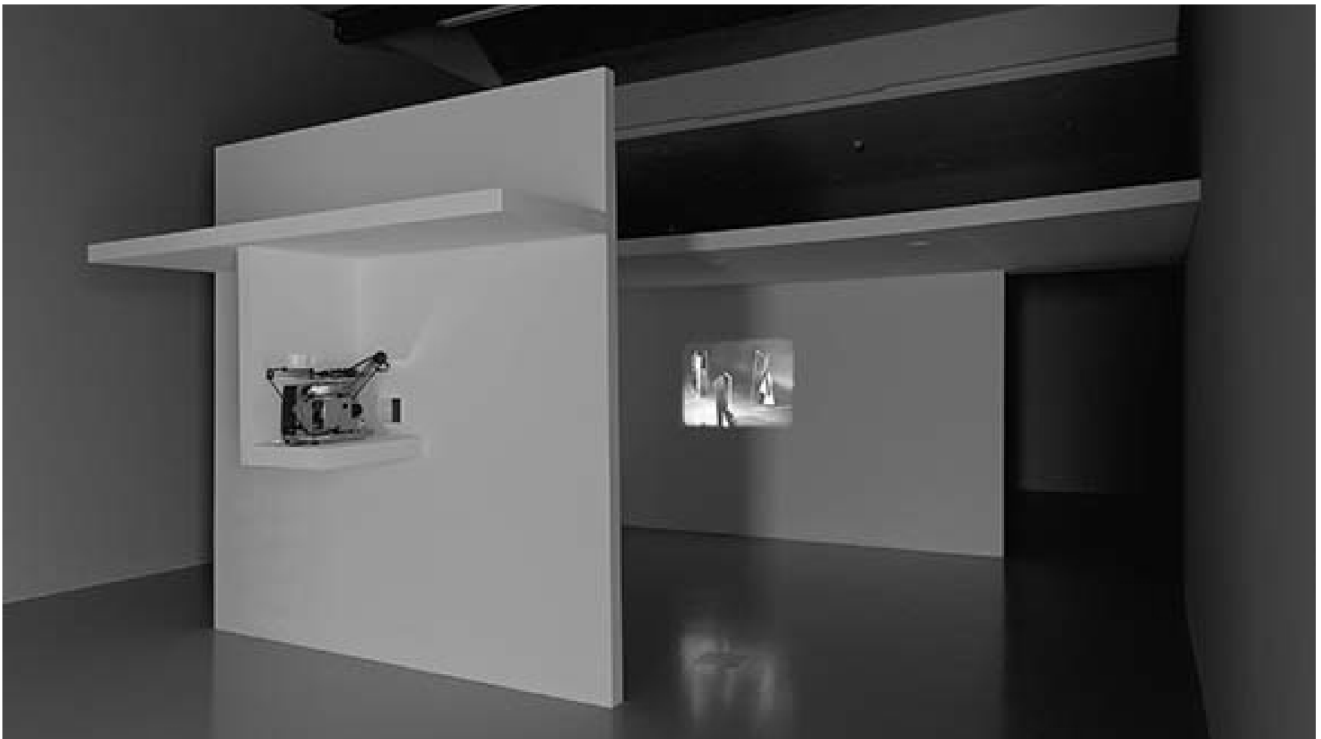
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tomas Weber is a writer based between London and France. His writing on art and culture has appeared in *Artforum* and the *Los Angeles Review of Books*.

MORE FROM GALERIE FRANK ELBAZ

Bojan Sarcevic, L'ellipse d'ellipse

par Pauline Mari



Très remarqué en 2007, avec l'exposition « Only After Dark » au Crédac, Bojan Sarcevic bénéficie actuellement d'une présentation rétrospective à l'Institut d'art contemporain de Villeurbanne. Par son titre même, « L'ellipse d'ellipse » positionne l'artiste franco-bosniaque sur le terrain de l'art conceptuel et du post-modernisme. L'ellipse suggère un raccourci sémantique qui nous renvoie ici à la trentaine d'œuvres (sculptures, films, photographies et collages) dont nous avons à retrouver les énoncés. Elle indique par ailleurs une trajectoire cyclique. Effectivement, Bojan Sarcevic pratique une rhétorique du recyclage. Il remet en orbite les poncifs du modernisme.

Les pièces exposées offrent une belle synthèse de ses réflexions sur le conflit entre la forme et la fonction né dans les avant-gardes qui a trouvé avec lui une illustration remarquable dans le détournement du

médium. Ainsi *Only After Dark* (2007) et *The Breath-Taker is the Breath-Giver* (2009), deux scénographies très convaincantes, mettent en abyme les aberrations qui fondent la rencontre d'esthétiques ennemies : l'informel et le géométrique, l'organique et l'industriel, etc. *Only After Dark* est une série de cinq films projetant d'étranges compositions faites de Plexiglas, béton, placage de bois, fil de cuivre, viande ou branches d'arbre dans de petits pavillons conçus par l'artiste. C'est donc la sculpture que semblent citer ces fragiles équilibres, tout comme la cage de Plexiglas transparent qui enferme l'appareil de projection. En fait, Sarcevic figure l'impossible conversion du cinéma en sculpture. Il renforce les différences entre cette dernière, qui a longtemps incarné l'utilitarisme, et le cinéma, espace des représentations. *The Breath-Taker is the Breath-Giver* conserve ces dissonances. Là encore le film est apparié à la sculpture dans des arrangements de matériaux hétérogènes (sable, métal, carton et papier de couleur).

Dans ce parcours peuplé d'ellipses, le principe hétérogène est un fil rouge. On le retrouve avec *At Present* (2011), une pastèque évidée contenant un bifteck cru posée sur une table en acier laqué et dans la rencontre impure de vêtements sales avec le métal (*Favorite Clothes worn while She or He worked*, 2000). On le perçoit également avec *Spirit of Inclusiveness* (2002), un pan de mur extrait de la cathédrale de Cologne dont la composition en cuivre, zinc, acier et laiton, pourtant sans prétention baroque, laisse perplexe. Ces pieds de nez à la « bonne forme » imposent dès lors au médium un changement de nature. L'architecture, comme l'était le film, se décline en sculpture : *Replace the Irreplaceable* (2006) est un modèle réduit du grand magasin Petersdorff de Eric Mendelsohn à Wrocław en Pologne (1927-1928), bois de poirier et laiton y remplacent le bronze et le verre.

Intrigué par l'architecture puriste, Sarcevic affectionne pourtant les espaces en angle, ces zones bâtarde que l'on étouffait d'ornements durant la période Art Déco pour en masquer le caractère ingrat. *World Corner* (1999) est un encastrement de briques prélevé d'une maison en ruines et placé dans le coin de la salle d'exposition, concurrence déloyale faite au « vrai » recoin du *white cube*. Or, depuis *Non Site Petrified Coral with Mirrors* de Robert Smithson (1971) – un amas de pierres au pied de deux miroirs faisant l'angle d'une pièce –, on sait que même cet endroit sans intérêt peut s'ouvrir sur un au-delà. L'architecture est définitivement promise à la fiction.

Dans cette lignée, Sarcevic révélait en 2004 la série *1954*, des images d'intérieurs déserts tirées de la revue *Baumeister* éditée cette année-là dans l'Allemagne d'après-guerre. À ces étangs de purisme, symboles de la reconstruction moderne, l'artiste avait imposé quelques découpes dont il réintérait les fragments sur un mode décoratif. Un losange, par exemple, supplante la rampe d'un escalier. On se souvient que Christopher Williams avait placé en 1998 un mobile de Calder au-dessus de l'escalier créé par Mies Van Der Rohe pour l'Arts Club de Chicago, et ceci grâce à la magie du montage (*Main Staircase for the Arts Club of Chicago, 1948-1951*). Mais la série *1954* tient davantage de Martin Boyce, plasticien fasciné par les *Arbres cubistes* de Joël et Jan Martel réalisés pour le jardin de l'Exposition internationale des arts décoratifs et industriels modernes de Paris, en 1925. Boyce a dû remarquer que même le béton ne parvient pas à tuer l'ornement. La vue de l'arbre s'impose. Chez Sarcevic, la conclusion est de cet ordre : autrefois fonctionnelles, ces architectures ne sont guère plus que de jolies vignettes. Des espaces désormais inutiles qu'un coup de canif aura suffi à changer en banal ornement. L'ellipse, c'est donc l'escalier qui fait retour.

- **Partage :** ,
- **Du même auteur :** **Les dérives de l'imaginaire , Vincent Lamouroux « Néguentropie », Tamar Guimarães, L'Au-delà (des noms et des choses), Un réel**



View of Bojan Šarčević, 2012. From left: *She*, 2010; *Presence at Night*, 2010; *He*, 2011.

Bojan Šarčević

INSTITUT D'ART CONTEMPORAIN

Bojan Šarčević's exhibition "*L'ellipse d'ellipse*" included twenty-six works retracing his path since 1999, demonstrating the breadth and consistency of his multifarious explorations. Sculpture, collage, construction, installation, and film are among the specific means by which he establishes and comprehends form, its connection with materials, the memories it conveys and situations it evokes, and finally the relationship it maintains with space.

Works from the past few years greeted the visitor in the first room, where *She*, 2010, and *He*, 2011, a pair of large stelae sculpted in onyx, polished on one side and left rough on the other, pursued their dialogue with each other and with *Presence at Night*, 2010, a delicate tree branch coming out of the wall, to which, one saw as one approached, two long blond hairs are attached. Each of these three sculptures is enigmatic and silent in its own way: The first two are as monumental as the third is discreet, even if the bands of the stone echo the ramifications of the branch. While *She* and *He* represent sculpture as monolithic, *Presence at Night* is more akin to drawing in space. Yet the first two works also possess an undeniable graphic dimension, while the last defines virtual volume in space—mineral, in the first case, animal and vegetable, in the second. Ultimately, these are just different configurations of matter, and in the end they evoke human presence by way of proportion

and even mythology (Daphne transformed into a laurel, for instance). The tensions thus brought to light by this first room animate the entire exhibition, whether the presence/absence of the body suggested by clothes (*Favourite Clothes Worn While She or He Worked*, 2000), interiors (the collages of *1954 C, D, G, and H*, 2004), or objects. This tension was also played out in the preciousness and roughness of the materials and forms, as in the brass and wire *Untitled*, 2007, and the raw planks of *Leftovers*, 2002/2012; and in the architectural and mental space constructed via the fragmentary evocation of the icons of modernist architecture.

But it is with his films that Šarčević best succeeds in keeping these differences in balance. Here, two series of projections, “Only After Dark,” 2007, and “The Breath-Taker is the Breath-Giver,” 2009, were presented in particularly effective setups: For each projection, Šarčević has constructed a pavilion, made of plaster and Plexiglas, respectively, that suggests Constructivist sculpture as much as it does the architecture of Mies van der Rohe. Everything is contained within it—the screen, the support for the 16-mm projector, a place for viewers, the time of the experience. The short films show arrangements of various materials, from tissue paper to modeling clay, that take on geometric or organic forms. These become strange actors in a silent drama, animated into stunning ballets through the camera’s movements. At the end of this trajectory, *World’s Corner*, 1999/2012, was striking in its apparent simplicity: In a completely empty and perfectly immaculate exhibition space, grafted to a corner, is a dilapidated room—misshapen plinths, dirty, buckling linoleum, chipped paintings on a cracked wall. What is it that’s being revealed here? The past of the exhibition space, which the neutrality of the white cube was supposed to have effaced, or what the place might become?

—Guitemie Maldonado

Translated from French by Jeanine Herman.

ARTFORUM

PRINT NOVEMBER 2010

**UNBOUNDED
ENTHUSIASMS: THE ART OF
BOJAN ŠARČEVIĆ**



Bojan Šarčević, *World Corner*, 1999, bricks, plaster, wallpaper, wood. Installation view, Carlier/Gebauer, Berlin.

“TO WHAT EXTENT SHOULD AN ARTIST understand the implications of his or her findings?” This is the cryptic question that Bojan Šarčević posed to a panel of artists, critics, and curators he’d convened on the occasion of his 2006 two-venue exhibition in Ireland, at the Project Arts Centre, Dublin, and the Model Arts and Niland Gallery, Sligo. The show debuted a group of works—miniature geometries of brass threads dangling almost imperceptibly against an expanse of elegantly distressed wallpaper—that appeared far from the kind of research-based production his query would seem to address. Yet the seminar, held at the Dublin venue, was no mere discursive supplement. If Šarčević broached the broader topic of meaning in art—as was borne out by the ensuing expansive and open-ended discussion, which took the outcome out of the artist’s hands and offered no easily summarized “findings”—he also answered its own question. And this response was articulated via the creation of a defined structure (in this case, the colloquium form) that serves as an engine of relatively unbounded knowledge production. It’s precisely this kind of generative and multiplicitous rubric that has unified Šarčević’s stylistic shape-shifts, over the past decade or so, through roughhousing architectural interventions, films and videos, delicately filigreed sculptures, and a diversity of photo-based work.

The problem was that, thanks to the presiding doxa of reception, readings of Šarčević’s work had tended to overlook this central strategy. There are understandable reasons for this. Consider, for example, one of Šarčević’s earliest pieces, *World Corner*, 1999, for which he physically extracted the corner of a room in a condemned apartment building in Amsterdam, cut an equivalent-size corner from a room in Berlin’s Carlier|Gebauer gallery, and fitted the Dutch corner into the German gap. While the new addition sat more or less flush with the venue’s walls and floor, a suture of splattered plasterwork around it made plain that a transplanting process had occurred. And in this sense, *World Corner* would seem to map onto Šarčević’s peripatetic background: Born in Belgrade, he lived with his family in North Africa for some years, then moved to Sarajevo as a teenager. At the age of seventeen, at the outset of the Bosnian war, he left that city and has since sojourned in Montreal, Paris, Amsterdam, and Berlin (where he now lives). So far, so tidy: *World Corner*’s suggestions of migration and adaptation chime with Šarčević’s Eastern European name and far-flung, war-torn background, offering, in a highly respectable post-Minimal idiom, an allegory of geopolitical instability, nomadic drift, and contingent identity. But

while Šarčević is not unconcerned with these issues, this isn't how his art communicates, where it originates, or how it is internally organized.

Šarčević's interest, in the case of *World Corner* (which was shown on two further occasions, in Watou, Belgium and Paris), lay in upending and refocusing the experience of a given space, in creating something at once incongruous and assimilated, in making a collage in three dimensions. He was, he says, inspired by a memory of Jean Eustache's film *Une Sale Histoire* (A Dirty Story, 1977), in which a man describes discovering a peephole in a Paris café's bathroom and fantasizing that this aperture predates the whole city, which grew up around it. When *World Corner* was plugged into a gallery space, it too seemed paradoxically both a foundation and an empty center. It was evidently older than what surrounded it; figuratively speaking, it might have been the cornerstone on which each structure was built.

Glimmering here is the idea that the conceptual ambit of Šarčević's art might be disproportionate to its apparent physical restraint. Though his work always seems to be shifting gears in terms of medium and appearance, it consistently demonstrates what multitudes a particle of reality can contain when it is unmoored from its context, and how that untethering might modulate experience on the visual—as opposed to critical or conceptual—plane. We can see this dynamic in other early works—for example, *Favorite Clothes Worn While S/He Worked*, 2000, for which Šarčević persuaded members of various uniformed professions (including maids and car mechanics) to spend two weeks working in their “best” clothes and then exhibited the stained results in a pseudo-museological display. Here, carried over from *World Corner*, is an impulse to simultaneously emphasize and normalize incongruities. *Favorite Clothes* . . . engages other issues as well, e.g., labor's indignities and its insidious colonizing of the self. But at the same time, these works are rooted in a notion of the material trace as suggestive origin; both prompt viewers to build outward—into a hemisphere of delimited signification—from what is effectively abstract mark-making, as invested in texture and facture as Dieter Roth's grease stains or Lee Bontecou's soiled, cut-up conveyor belts.



Bojan Šarčević, *Favorite Clothes Worn While S/He Worked*, 2000, twenty-seven wardrobe items, MDF tables. Installation view, Gesellschaft für Aktuelle Kunst Bremen, Germany, 2000.

Rather than viewing them as determinative, a stable platform on which interpretation can be built, one might see the external references that Šarčević offers in such works as something like the fragments of an old, decaying scroll: They at once serve as points of orientation and imply, materially, the vast expanse of everything that *isn't* there to be read. They thus take an audience accustomed to reading works of art, unlocking predetermined content, and treating reception as a form of mastery and set them afloat in endlessly bifurcating realms of signification, inviting them to fill in the blanks themselves. This is especially clear in two works whose references are loaded indeed: *Spirit of Versatility* and *Spirit of Inclusiveness*, both 2002, are corner-hugging mimics of decorative detailing from holy places. The former is a painted-wood, silvery-gray, sci-fi-looking spread of interlocking geometric forms based on *muqarnas*, the richly niched corbels found in mosques; the latter is a life-size replica, in glowing plates of steel, zinc, brass, and copper, of one of the curved, vaulted corners of Cologne Cathedral. Particularly in the wake of 9/11, this overt counterposing of Christianity and Islam might conjure a nimbus of

sociopolitical import and rhetorical intent. But in fact, via its mismatching of aesthetic regimes, the work undoes the kind of neat conceptual symmetry (e.g., Samuel P. Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* [1996]) that would enable such a reading. What both works offer is undeniable and estranged material presence: Here, Šarčević makes Islamic architecture feel startlingly futuristic and allies Christianity with the textures of Minimalism. To the extent that *Spirit of Versatility* and *Spirit of Inclusiveness* do contain a political or topical argument, it may consist in the notion that failure of imagination—the kind that posits two religions as a simple binary—is itself an ethical transgression.

In later works, the referential quality becomes ever more oblique, while the work itself seems to move toward formal transparency—as if to delineate a kind of ether in which viewers' projections of meaning could remain suspended. *Keep Illusion for the End*, 2005, for instance, is a large, freestanding geometric framework of overlapping and crisscrossing three-dimensional outlines—zigzagging lengths of brass, copper, wood, and concrete recede like afterimages behind an irregular polygon made of slender wooden strips—which, seen from one angle, snap into focus to suggest the flattened silhouette of a house. The airy, diagrammatic whole, an elegant study in form and line and (absence of) volume, has a refined neomodernist feel. But the overly elaborated zigzags, reminiscent of Art Moderne moldings, also suggest decor details such as coving. Like the *Spirit of . . .* sculptures, this work puts ornament center stage. In a doubly wry inversion, modernism is remade out of what it repressed, and abstraction is made to do the bidding of its former nemesis, figuration.

Yet while all of this usefully lends itself to talking about the work, these projects could perhaps also be recouped as simply the sediment of the artist's daily life, rather than as Šarčević's attempt to insert his art into a history of ideas. His creative method, he says, frequently finds him trying to reconstruct and amplify some splinter of the real. While *World Corner* sprang from his walking the streets of Amsterdam, Šarčević was living in Berlin, surrounded and fascinated by early-modern architecture, when he made *Keep Illusion for the End* and related pieces, such as the sleek copper stack of inwardly curving, loosely enclosing banister-like forms *Wanting Without Needing, Loving Without Leaning*, 2005, or “1954,” his 2004 series of black-and-white collages that upend the regimented

spatial logic of modernist interiors. And describing these latter works' ostensible thematics doesn't, in any case, fully account for their physical or material fundamentality, which is elegant and anorexic, old and new, and suggests that the work doesn't primarily require interpretation (although it can take it). If we tend to apprehend and remember the world in glancing, indelible details, Šarčević's approach suggests, then an art that harvests and compounds such fragments ought to be a model of, and a cue for, an upgraded state of awareness, of being in the world—a model that invites surrender to the comparative aphasia of an underinscribed encounter, one that doesn't come with a predetermined meaning.

An untitled 2006 series—of which Šarčević's inconspicuous sculptures for Dublin were an outlier—found him bending and welding slender lengths of brass and stringing them with threads, like alien harps or sextants, before fixing them to walls that had been partly painted or wallpapered and partly stripped. The linear elements form a set of emphatic, specific, yet opaque formal decisions for the viewer to navigate, mitigated by what has increasingly become a hallmark of Šarčević's art: a rare, abstract beauty. Once again implying a kind of three-dimensional collage, this procedure morphed across parallel groups of works created the same year. The brass geometries were strung with patterned silk scarves from a Berlin market, in a sensuous conversation between textures. They then found themselves standing like forlorn miniature pylons on complexly planed white cardboard plinths. And this tableau form was adapted (with the brass threads going with it) for Šarčević's 16-mm film series "Only After Dark," 2007, and "The Breath Taker Is the Breath Giver," 2009.



View of Bojan Šarčević, “Only After Dark,” 2007, Centre d’Art Contemporain d’Ivry—le Crédac, Ivry-sur-Seine, France. Photo: André Morin.

The five films that compose the former series are all less than three minutes long, screened within specially made chambers that underline their quality of rapt hermeticism, and accompanied by downbeat and dilatory improvisations for piano, percussion, guitar, and kora. In each, the camera racks up static views of precise arrangements of shardlike Perspex uprights (L-shaped, like corners); groupings of ragged wood, brass, and curved paper; and origami-like card constructions, miniature stone obelisks, and a hunk of red meat that, at the end of the final film, appears to pulse like a beating heart. The accumulation of different angles on coordinate-free scenarios—expanded, in the four-part “The Breath Taker Is the Breath Giver,” to include miniature wooden architectures festooned with strings and nestling in sand; alien-looking, hair-covered objects resembling Chinese scholars’ rocks; and ravishingly lit alignments of crumpled colored tissue,

cardboard, and a hank of blond hair—turns Šarčević’s camera into a proxy for the perplexed but entranced viewer, able neither to fully understand nor to look away.

The editing style, which involves restless cutting among the tableaux, meanwhile imparts to Šarčević’s subjects a quality bordering on animism. (The artist has said that he wanted the sculptural elements to be almost like protagonists, desiring to communicate with one another.) They hover, poised between sentience and dumb objecthood. The film’s liminal objects are echoed in a series of sculptures of surpassing delicacy (“Involuntary Twitch,” 2010), in which horizontal brass plates are held precariously within a system of notched, willowy steel poles. Though they’re composed of hard metals, these assemblies are inestimably fragile—a paradox that conveys itself unnervingly as viewers realize that these scaffolds are literally quivering in the gallery’s air currents. And though they resemble modular shelving systems, they’re resolutely nonfunctional (unless one has, say, a selection of feathers to display). These are near-abstract works haloed by panoplies of cloudy reference—their modernist aspect, for example, is at once present and hard to pin down.

This isn’t mystification for its own sake. For an artist to assign specific meaning to his or her own work—to seek to control “the implications of his or her findings”—is, by Šarčević’s lights, a kind of legislation or moralizing. It’s also deeply limiting, foreclosing the possibility of art’s accessing its profounder registers: where the viewer, rather than decrypting a piety, has a journeying encounter. On that voyage, Šarčević is still a guide but not an autocrat. It is here, one would say, that the tactical élan of Šarčević’s programmatic use of fragments and details might be seen. A sliver of the real, particularly when coaxed into the kind of exquisite obliqueness that he specializes in, is a starting point, asking to be followed through—refusing openness but allowing the viewer to do the completing. The rich specificity of Šarčević’s fragments, their near-Romantic keying to particular places and historical moments, creates spheres of interpretative potentialities, from the aesthetic to the sociopolitical. The artist refutes “meaninglessness,” the perilous obverse of opening up signification—but doesn’t turn the artwork into a cipher.

In 2007, Šarčević produced an artist’s book that juxtaposed images from the whole of his career with texts extracted from a 2004 paper on the transitioning Western Balkans, commissioned by the European Union Institute for Security Studies; he titled the volume

Kissing the Back of Your Hand Makes a Sound like a Wounded Bird, densely alloying specific political realities and expansive poetic polysemy. One might consider this a distillation of what Šarčević is asking for: not an outright rejection of the content-driven approach that has dominated the art of recent decades or a wholehearted return to the modernist formalism that preceded it, but a realization that the two models were artificially cleaved all along. Vouchsafed here is a synthetic practice that does not displace experience—looking, feeling—in favor of decoding and that still acknowledges the existence of the outside world. This is an old modernist problem, but one that stalks us still. What we need is neither an erotics nor a hermeneutics of art, Šarčević wordlessly affirms. We need an art that calls for both at once.

Martin Herbert is a writer and critic based in Tunbridge Wells, Kent, UK.

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Bojan Sarcevic

Born in 1974 in Belgrade, Serbia. Lives and works in Basel, Switzerland.

Solo exhibitions

- 2023 *Vieilles Lâchetés*, Pinksummer, Genova, Italy
- 2021 *L'Extime*, galerie frank elbaz, Paris, France
- 2020 *Thank you for pointing to your perineum*, BQ, Berlin, Germany
- 2018 *Sentimentality is the core*, Modern Art/Stuart Shave, London, UK
- 2015 *In the rear view mirror*, BQ, Berlin, Germany
- 2014 *In the rear view mirror*, Pinksummer, Genova, Italy
- 2013 *Gyrobifastigium*, Modern Art/Stuart Shave, London, UK
- 2012 *Rhombic Oath*, Leopold Hoesch Museum, Düren, Germany
L'ellipse d'ellipse, IAC Institut d'Art Contemporain, Villeurbanne, France
A curious contortion in the method of progress, Kunstmuseum Vaduz, Liechtenstein
- 2011 *At Present*, BQ, Berlin, Germany
- 2010 *Comme des chiens et des vagues*, Modern Art/Stuart Shave, London, UK
True Enough, Pinksummer, Genova, Italy
Eventuellement, Le Grand Café, Saint Nazaire, France
Involuntary Twitch, De Vleeshal, Middelburg, Netherlands
- 2009 *The breath-taker is the breath-giver*, Gallery Carlier Gebauer, Berlin, Germany
- 2008 *Only After Dark*, Kunstverein Hamburg, Germany
Already Vanishing, MAMBO, Bologna, Italy
- 2007 *Only After Dark*, Crédac, Ivry-sur-Seine, France
Untitled, BQ, Cologne, Germany
Kissing the back to your hand sounds like a wounded bird, Bawag Foundation, Vienna, Austria
- 2006 *Replace the Irreplaceable*, Gallery Carlier Gebauer, Berlin, Germany
Sometimes a man gets carried away, Kunstverein Heilbronn, Heilbronn, Germany
To what extent should an artist understand the implications of his of her findings?, Project Art Centre, Dublin and The Model Arts, Niland Gallery, Sligo, Ireland

- 2005 *Keep the illusion for the end*, BQ, Cologne, Germany
Everything makes sense in the reverse, Pinksummer, Genova, Italy
Wanting without needing, Loving without leaning, ArtPace Fondation, San Antonio, TX, USA
- 2004 *1954*, Gallery Carlier Gebauer, Berlin, Germany
- 2003 *Verticality Downwards*, Kunstverein Munich, Munich, Germany
Where the hand doesn't enter, heat infuses, IAC Institut d'Art Contemporain, Villeurbanne/Lyon, France
- 2002 *Spirit of Versatility and Inclusiveness*, BQ, Cologne, Germany
Rien ne peut venir que d'ailleurs, Centre d'Art Contemporain Bretigny, Bretigny-sur-Orge, France, Pinksummer, Genova, Italy
Inova, Milwaukee, WI, USA
TBA Inc., Chicago, IL, USA
- 2001 *Eingang Links*, Kunstverein Dusseldorf, Dusseldorf, Germany
Cover versions, Gallery Carlier Gebauer, Berlin, Germany
Cover versions, Stedelijk Museum Bureau Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands
- 2000 *Strange, I've seen that face before*, Modern Institute, Glasgow, UK
Favourite cloths worn while she or he worked, Gesellschaft für Aktuelle Kunst, Bremen, Germany
- 1999 *It seems that an animal is in the world as water in the water*, BQ Cologne, Germany, and Kunsthalle Lophem, Bruges, Belgium
Irrigation-Fertilisation, Salon 3, London, UK

Group exhibitions (selection)

- 2023 *HOPE*, Museion, Bolzano, Italy
 „Ich-Maschine“: Alexandra Bircken, Peter König, Bojan Sarcevic, Raphaela Vogel, Hannsjörg Voth, Lambert Maria Wintersberger, BQ gallery, Berlin, Germany
- 2022 Geneva Biennale: Sculpture Garden, Geneva, Switzerland
The Curse of Minerva, Ciaccia Levi gallery, Paris
Standing, Carlier Gebauer, Berlin, Germany
- 2021 *The Dreamers*, 58th Belgrade Biennale, Serbia
- 2020 *La Vie des tables*, Crédac, Ivry-sur-Seine, France
Was machen Sie um zwei? Ich schlafe., GAK - Gesellschaft für Aktuelle Kunst, Bremen, Germany
All the time that came before this moment, Kunst Raum Riehen, Switzerland

- 2019 *Delirious* – Jubilee Edition, curated by Chris Driessen and David Jablonowski, Lustwarande, Tilburg, Netherlands
26 x Bauhaus, Institut Français de Berlin, Germany
De l'immersion à l'osmose, Chaosmose 2, FRAC Ile-de-France, Bussy-Saint-Georges, France
- 2018 *Raymond*, curated by Luca Trevisani, Manifesta 12, Grang Hotel et des Palmes, Palermo, Italy
Décor/Avant-poste, curated by Joe Scanlan, FRAC Pays de la Loire, Nantes, France
I Self Collection : Bumped Bodies, Whitechapel Gallery, London, UK
The Reservoir of Modernism, Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, Vaduz, Liechtenstein
Thick Space, Ruhr University Bochum, Germany
Why are my friends such finks. 1998-2008, BQ, Berlin, Germany
Pinksummer goes to Palermo, Pinksummer, Genova, Italy
- 2017 *Don't Look Like a Line*, Pinksummer, Turin, Italy
Drawing Biennial 2017, The Drawing Room, London, UK
Fade in 2: ext. Modernist home – night, Museum of Contemporary Art Belgrade, Serbia
Maniera 12 & 13: Christ & Gantenbein and Bojan Sarcevic, Maniera, Brussels, Belgium
The Inner Skin: Art and Shame, Marta Herford, Herford, Germany
- 2016 *Invagination*, Modern Art/Stuart Shave, London, UK
A quoi tient la beauté des étreintes, FRAC Auvergne, Clermont-Ferrand, France
Geographies of Dust and Air, Mary Mary Gallery, Glasgow, UK
Theories of Modern Art, Modern Art/Stuart Shave, London, UK
- 2015 *Political Landscape: Art, Resistance, Salzkammergut*, Institute for Art in Public Sphere Styria/Joanneum Universal Museum, Salzkammergut, Austria
Thoughts that Breathe, Fondation Hippocrène, Paris, France
Drawing Biennale 2015, The Drawing Room, London, UK
After Dark, Mamco – Musée d'art moderne et contemporain, Geneva, Switzerland
- 2014 *The Reluctant Narrator*, Berardo Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Lisbon, Portugal
O Narrador Relutante, Berardo Museum – Collection of Modern and Contemporary Art, Lisboa, Portugal
The Empty Pedestal, Museo Civico Archeologico di Bologna, Italy
Fantasmî dall'Est Europa, Museo Civico Archeologico di Bologna, Italy
- 2013 *Die Blendung*, Galerie Sandra Buerge, Berlin, Germany
Film as Sculpture, WIELS, Brussels, Belgium
1966-79, IAC Institut d'art contemporain, Villeurbanne, France
Projections, Musée de l'Abbaye Sainte-Croix, Les Sables d'Olonne, France

- From Albers to Warhol to (now)*, Museo di Santa Giulia, Brescia, Italy
Drawing: Sculpture, The Drawing Room, London, UK
Give Piece A Chance, Le Grand Café – Centre d'art contemporain de Saint-Nazaire, France
- 2012 *After*, JGM. Galerie, commissioned by Marjolaine Lévy, Paris, France
Thank You for the Music – How Music Moves Us, Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki, Finland
Performing Abstraction, Lucian Britto Gallery, Sao Paolo, Brazil
Hirschfaktor, Die Kunst des Zitierens, ZKM Zentrum für Kunst und Medien, Karlsruhe, Germany
- 2011 *Abstract Possible: The Tamayo Take*, Museo Tamayo, Mexico City, Mexico
Silence and Time, Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, TX, USA
Suspense: Suspended sculptures, EX3 Centro per l'Arte Contemporanea, Florence, Italy
The Horizon Behind us, Kaleidoscope, Milan, Italy
- 2010 *Re-Dressing*, Bortolami Gallery, New York, NY, USA
Love of Diagrams, Perth Institute of Contemporary Art, Perth, WA, Australia
Aporien Der Liebe, BQ, Berlin, Germany
Le Carillon de Big Ben, Crédac, Ivry-sur-Seine, France
Célébration – Collection du FRAC Auvergne, FRAC Auvergne, Clermont-Ferrand, France
- 2009 *Contemporary Fine and Applied Arts: 1928-2009*, Tate St. Ives, UK
Transitory Objects, Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, Vienna, Austria
GO EAST II, MUDAM Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean, Luxembourg City, Luxembourg
The Crystal Hypothesis, GAMEC, Bergamo, Italy
Videos Europa, Le Fresnoy, Tourcoing, France
It's about sculpture, Sammlung Haubrok, Berlin, Germany
- 2008 *Notorious*, FRAC Ile-de-France / Le Plateau, Paris, France
No Information Available, Barbara Gladstone Gallery, Brussels, Belgium
Vertrautes Terrain - Aktuelle Kunst in und über Deutschland, ZKM, Karlsruhe, Germany
Many Challenges Lie Ahead in the Near Future, Kolnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, Germany
Eurasia: Geographic Cross-Overs in Art, Mart, Trento & Rovereto, Italy
See history 2008, Kunsthalle, Kiel, Germany
Der Große Wurf, Museen Haus Lange – Haus Esters, Krefeld, Germany
Wen nein Reisender in einer Winternacht, MARTA, Herford, Germany

- 2007 *Like Leaves*, Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York, NY, USA
Re-trait, Fondation d'entreprise Ricard, Paris, France
Après la pluie, Musée Départemental d'Art Contemporain de Rochechouart, France
Point de vue, Kunstverein Nurnberg, Germany
Anachronism, Argos, Brussels, Belgium
Thilo Herinzmann, Antoni Llana and Bojan Sarcevic, Gallery Bortolami, New York, NY, USA
Entre fronteras, MARCO Museo de Arte Contemporanea de Vigo, Vigo, Spain
The Secret Theory of Drawing, The Drawing Room, London, Niland Gallery, Sligon Ireland
- 2006 *Personal Affairs*, Museum Morsbroich, Leverkusen, Germany
Planting the Tele, Mary Mary, Glasgow
Stray, Para/Site, Hong Kong
Dorothea von Stetten-Kunstpreis, Kunstmuseum Bonn, Germany
Strange, I've seen that face before, Staedtisches Museum Abteiberg, Moenchengladbach, Germany
- 2005 *36x27x10*, White Cube, Berlin, Gemany
Universal Experience: Art, Life, and the Tourist's Eye, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, USA
Model Modernism, ArtistsSpace, New York, NY, USA
Material Time/Work Time/Life Time, Reykjavik Arts Festival, Iceland
Menschensgladbach, Stadtisches Museum Abteiberg, Moenchengladbach, Germany
It takes some time to open an oyster, Centre Cultural Andratx, Mallorca, Spain
- 2004 *Time Zones*, Tate Modern, London, UK
Adaptive Behaviour, New Museum, New York, NY, USA
Formalismus, Moderne Kunst, heute, Kunstverein Hambourg, Hamburg, Germany
Real World: the dissolving space of experience, Modern Art Oxford, Orford UK
Tracers, Witte de With, Rotterdam, Netherlands
The Auschwitz Trial: 40 years later, Buergerhaus Gallus, Frankfurt, Germany
3rd Berlin Biennale, Berlin, Germany
Photography, Video, Mix Media 2, DaimlerChrysler Contemporary, Berlin, Germany
Animals, Haunch of Vension, London, UK
Here & Now, Matrichit street site, Bangkok, Thailand
- 2003 *Déplacements*, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, France
Clandestines, 50th Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy
- 2002 *My head is on fire but my heart is full of love*, Charlottenborg, Copenhagen, Denmark

- 2001 *Ars 01*, Kiasma, Helsinki, Finland
Traversée, ARC, Musée d'art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, France
Le détour par la simplicité, Confort Moderne, Poitiers, France
Szenarien, Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn, Germany
Tracking', CCAC Institute, San Francisco, CA, USA
Le Tribu dell'Arte, Galleria Comunale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporana, Rome, Italy
- 2000 *Bleibe*, Akademie der Kunst, Berlin, Germany
Model, Model, NeuAachenerKunstverein, Aachen, Germany
Watou Projects, Watou, France
Centre Soleil d'Afrique, Bamako, Mali
- 1999 *Soft Resistance*, Galerie Gerbauer, Berlin, Germany
Passage, Setagaya Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan
- 1998 *Guarene Arte 98*, Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin, Italy
Manifesta 2, Luxembourg, Lyxembourg

Public collections

- Austria TBA21 – Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, Vienna
- France Centre Pompidou, Paris
FRAC Auvergne, Clermont-Ferrand
FRAC Poitou-Charentes, Angoulême
IAC Institut d'Art Contemporain, Villeurbanne
- Finland Kiasma – Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki
- Germany Daimler Contemporary, Berlin
MMK – Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt am Main
Sammlung Boros, Berlin
Sammlung Haubrok, Berlin
Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach
- Italy Fondazione Morra Greco, Naples
- Japan 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa
- Liechtenstein Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein
- Luxembourg MUDAM – Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean, Luxembourg City
- USA Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, TX