

From September 16<sup>th</sup> till November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2010

*It's the End of the World as We Know it /  
La fin du monde tel que nous le connaissons*

**Artists :**

**Marc Bijl, Claire Fontaine, Cyprien Gaillard, Piero Golia, Hadley+Maxwell, Jorge Macchi, Bernhard Martin, Katrin Mayer, Mladen Miljanovic, Frédéric Moser & Philippe Schwinger**

**Curator :**

**Bettina Steinbrügge**

**Opening: Wednesday, September 15<sup>th</sup> at 6.30 pm**

**Press conference: Wednesday, September 15<sup>th</sup> at 5.30 pm at the Kunsthalle  
Mulhouse**

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## Practical information

### **Opening hours**

Until November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2010

Open Wednesday to Sunday, noon to 6 pm, Late-night opening Thursdays until 8 pm

Closed Mondays, Tuesdays

Open on Thursday, November 11<sup>th</sup>

Free admission

### **Guided tours**

Free guided tours on Saturdays and Sundays at 3 pm – Admission free

Groups upon reservation: + 33 (0) 3 69 77 66 47 (2 euros per person, minimum 5 person)

### **Address**

La Kunsthalle Mulhouse / La Fonderie

Centre d'Art Contemporain (contemporary art center)

16 rue de la Fonderie

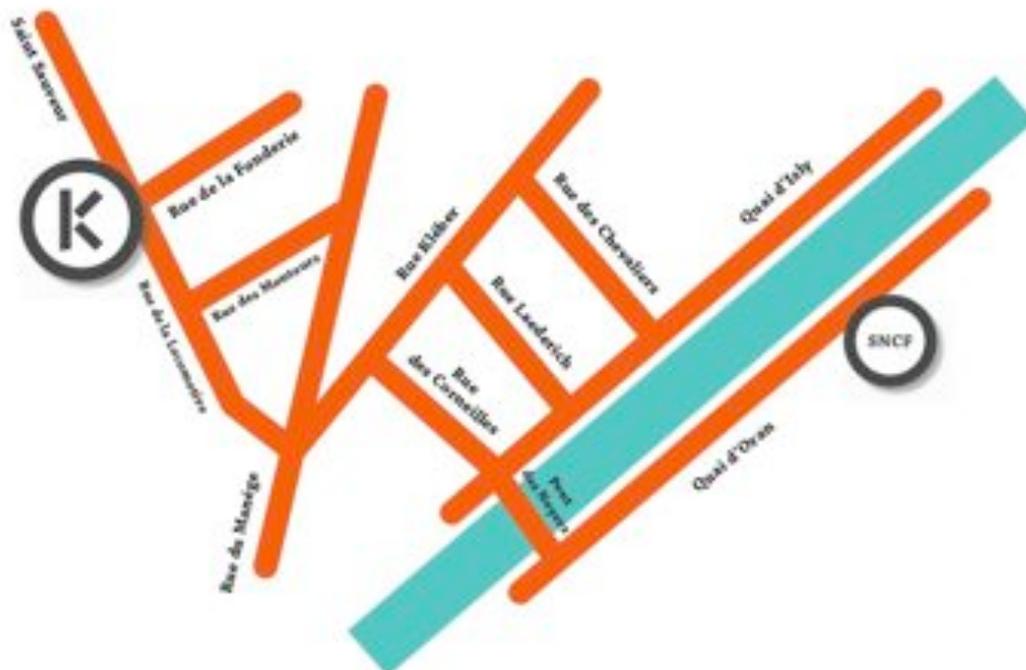
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## EXHIBITION

In 1987 REM recorded the song: "It's the End of the World as We Know it" (and I feel fine). The song originated from a previous, unreleased, R.E.M. song called "PSA", which is short for "Public Service Announcement". The accompanying video depicts a young skateboarder rifling through an abandoned, collapsing farmhouse and displaying the relics that he finds to the camera. This REM song is one of these that were addressing incredible social concerns of the time. But with its appendix "(and I feel fine)" it also showed a positive attitude towards the future. This can be found in contemporary art practice as well. What art history and theory describe as "détournement" signifies the complex practice of dismantling existing aesthetic structures and reassembling them in an altered and subverted way in order to question or critique society, traditional values, and the status quo. All art, in some ways, conveys a vision for the future. Be it, in earlier times Brueghel's "Ikarus", Picasso's "Guernica" or Yoko Ono's "Instruction Pieces", pieces of art point visions of future out, sometimes hidden and reflected. In this understanding, artists are challenging the Zeitgeist, and at the same time, contributing to its permanent renewal.

Years after the publishing of the REM song, in 1999, the American Sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein published a text called "The End of the World as we know it". Wallerstein divides this text between an appraisal of significant recent events and a study of the shifts in thought influenced by those events. "The End of the World As We Know It" concludes with a crucial analysis of the momentous intellectual challenges to society as we know it and suggests possible responses to them." According to Wallerstein, we live in a post-capitalistic society, in the age of passage. Structures are going to disappear and the new is not yet at the horizon. This notion implies a certain chaos that holds the historical chance for social influence. His view should be rallied to as a point of departure rather than dismissed as a dead end. What kind of future do we really envisage? How can we design a topography of this passage? How can we record a peculiarity of this process?

J.J. Charlesworth wrote in a recent issue of *ArtsReview* : "Now that the initial drama of the financial crash has passed, we're into a much weirder moment where everyone is trying to maintain some working notion of normality, even so it's becoming obvious that these are not longer normal times. Carrying on making, showing and writing about even serious art, without some acknowledgement that the society art operates in has completely lost the plot, starts to seem slightly futile. So what to do?" Jacques Rancière claims a new form of political subjectivity that would accept the point that we start from equality, from the idea that there is a universal competence – that there is a universal capacity that is involved in all those experiments and that we are trying to expand – to expand the field and the capacities of that competence. Like Wallerstein, he sees us in a kind of interval, in a time without a goal. And he poses the question: "What do we think we are able to do together?" And actually, what does emancipation has to do with that?

The artists and artists groups invited take a stand : From the financial crisis, the decline of the welfare systems or the fetishistic visual industries to new hopes, utopias and alternative conceptions of common society. Like a seismograph, the exhibition will filter the signs and images of our current life while undermining the governmental power and providing new aesthetic contexts. The exhibition features contemporary works by international artists comprising critical, satirical and subjective responses to the realities of today showing their own personal formulas to express the realities of contemporary life and to offer a means of negotiating a path through it. The concept follows the desire to critically comprehend the current social, political and economic processes in a global world, without which contemporary art couldn't be reviewed and understood.

## **Curator : Bettina STEINBRÜGGE**

Bettina Steinbruegge is a freelance curator, writer, lecturer and publicist in Berlin. She studied art history, English philology and comparative literature. From 2001-2008 she directed Halle für Kunst Lüneburg eV, supervised the artist-in-residency Schloss Bleckede and taught art theory and curatorial practice at the University of Lüneburg in the Department of Cultural Theory. Since 2009, she is co-curator of Forum Expanded, a division of the Berlin International Film Festival.

Her last publications, published at JRP / Ringier, are "Cooling Out - On the Paradox of Feminism", "Outlandos", the first monograph of Jeanne Faust and together with the Haute Ecole d'Art et de Design in Genève "EDU TOOL BOX", a book on art education. Bettina Steinbrügge writes for catalogues and various art publications such as the magazines Art South Africa, or IDEA, and sits on juries, such as the "International Competition of the Outdoor Gallery of the City of Gdansk" since 2005.

## ARTISTS

**Marc Bijl, Claire Fontaine, Cyprien Gaillard, Piero Golia, Hadley+Maxwell, Jorge Macchi, Bernhard Martin, Katrin Mayer, Mladen Miljanovic, Frédéric Moser & Philippe Schwinger**

### **Marc Bijl**

*Fundamentality VII*, 2009

Installation

Courtesy / Marc Bijl, Upstream Gallery, Amsterdam, The Breeder, Athens

Marc Bijl's main focus is on political events, the perception and association of social structures and control systems which manifest themselves particularly in the public space. In most of his works, he discusses its symbolic phenomenon. The installation *Fundamentality VII*, composed of construction material and graffiti, alludes in its simple materiality and objectivity towards the minimalist constructivism of Sol LeWitt and at the same time is a tribute to the everyday acts of vandalism. Bijl makes use of these cultural codes as signs, behind which are hidden a history of ideas as well as social constructions. In *Fundamentality VII*, different designs of high-and low culture clash, infiltrating the very system of the signs and sometimes even turning them around. The viewer must reorient himself, find his way in the new coordinate system, or review his judgments. The question of power and influence is under question in order to, again and again, refer to the current social desire for structure and order. In contrast to the conservative dictum, however, Marc Bijl celebrates the charm of decay and destruction as liberation.

### **Claire Fontaine**

*Il ya trop d'innumaniter est j'ai pas trouver mon droit*, 2007

Yellow neon, transformer and cabeling, 10 X 400 x 4 cm

Courtesy the artist and Air de Paris, Paris

Photo : Marc Damage

*Brickbats (Téléphone arabe)*, 2007

Fifty seven individual elements, brick and brick fragments, epon durabrite folded prints and elastic bands, dimensions variables.

Courtesy the artist and Air de Paris, Paris

Photo : Marc Damage

The press release on the occasion of her exhibition at Galerie Neu in Berlin stated : Whenever there is a change in space and time, it is the result of a conflict and a refusal, and never the effect of so-called progress. The critical practice of fictional artist "Claire Fontaine", consisting of Fulvia Carnivale and James Thornhill, is based on the production of significant gestures which highlight a space of possibilities that distinguishes between the signifier and the object for exploring the empty space between signifier and signified. It is the representation of something invisible that oscillates between abstraction and the literal characters. Book covers of mass theoretical discourse have the sole purpose of concealment of bricks, or political statements "disguise" themselves in the garb of ubiquitous neon signs. This ambivalence of the material points to the transition and recovery mechanisms of today's cultural practices ; they point to the potentials and problems of authorship and originality, and they describe the world economy, which the descriptive models of sociology have long since internalized : Reality is the same as the effect of reality.

## Cyprien Gaillard

1 / *Belief in the Age of Disbelief (Banja Luca)* *Belief in the Age of*, 2005

2 / *Disbelief (Paysage aux trois tours)*, 2005

3 / *Belief in the Age of Disbelief (L'arbre incliné / étape VI)*, 2005

*Belief in the age of disbelief*, 2005

6 Etching 36 x 47 cm

Courtesy Private Collection

Cyprien Gaillard deals with the relationship between architecture and nature. Minimal aesthetic and a romantic streak are combined with vandalism and a young anarchist spirit. The series of engravings *Belief in the Age of Disbelief* transplants modernist skyscrapers in the Dutch countryside idyll of the 17th Century. Once symbols of modernist utopian promises, these buildings now stand for racial conflict, urban decay, crime or violence. What has become of these utopias ? Cyprien Gaillard accepts the ramshackle beauty of these settlements that have degenerated into ruin and social trouble spots, which are razed in the case of Pruitt-Igoe, Scampia or the Paris "Banlieues" by a baroque firework. He formulates end stages in which, by use of the remains of a lost civilization, survival is tested. They, the remains, are the last resources. They also take in the almost utopian idea of "sustainability", the idea of a better society, born of the spirit of dystopia.

## **Piero Golia**

*Oh my god, that's so awesome, 2009*

Film 35 mn

Courtesy : Piero Golia, Bortolami Galerie, New York et Fonti Galerie, Naples

In his interventions, performances, sculptures and installations, Piero Golia practiced the heroic poetry of extreme acts from the challenge of performing a near-impossible masterpiece to some other legendary activity. Golia moved from Italy to the U.S.A and now lives in Los Angeles, a place that blurs the boundaries between reality and invention, and forms the perfect setting for his research into the process of myth-making and his ironic view of contemporary society. By combining artfulness with generosity, *and* poetry with humor, he takes art to a place where everything seems possible any time. With *Oh my god, that's so awesome !*, he presents a 35mm projection, which was recorded by a camera that was thrown from an airplane. This camera never seems to touch the ground, but rather evokes the seen as an unstoppable, relentless vertical fall into a landscape that could not be more beautiful. He creates a paradoxical situation, based on a disturbed balance between means and ends, thus making clear that nothing ends the way we would like it.

## **Hadley+Maxwell**

Detail from *Improperties*, 2010  
found photograph and oil paint, 22.5x17cm  
Courtesy : the artists and Jessica Bradley Art + Projects

Hadley+Maxwell, collaborating since 1997, examine cultural history, contemporary philosophy, models of subjectivity and its aesthetic forms of expression in a wide variety of artistic forms and techniques. They use video, music and installation to explore human relationships and the possibilities of new positing. Iconic images are combined with traditional imagery and a vocabulary taken from the pop-cultural, artistic and political movements in recent history. By always referring to their imbalance, such as in *Improperties*, they form a critique of ideological positing while at the same time focusing on its utopian content and its inherent desire for affiliation or change.

## **Jorge Macchi**

*12 Short Songs*, 2009  
Still from Single Channel Video, DVD (NTSC), Color, Sound, 9'.  
Courtesy the artist & Galerie Peter Kilchmann, Zürich

Jorge Macchi works with found objects from everyday life and takes them as a starting point for their poeticization as well as a moment of discovery of social contexts and needs as they are crystallized only in the transformation of the everyday. His findings, for example newspaper clippings, stimulate, on the base of pure chance or random combination, new narratives and insights into everyday life. The video projection *12 Short Songs* combines two recurring themes : newspaper headlines and the mechanism of a historic music player. The newspaper headlines are perforated and turned by the music device, resulting in a crystalline and soothing music, in complete contrast to the headlines which are all taken from the first days of the financial crisis. He combines the rough with the dreamy, which ultimately triggers an effect of the uncanny.

## **Bernhard Martin**

*Le reposoir d'amour refusé*, 2010  
Installation  
Courtesy Bernhard Martin

The paintings of Bernhard Martin are versatile, thematically charged, dynamic, restless and challenging in their aesthetic effect. They appear as the picturesque visualization and banishing of a flood of thoughts. Martin uses an extremely wide and consciously achieved repertoire of style, which sets no technical boundaries and allows him to act the same in his paintings at several levels of reality and image. He repeatedly uses the return reference to the picture as a picture and plays with its expression. This results in a fragmented, often humorous and enigmatic imagery, which is also figurative, and doesn't stay in clearly readable narrative structures. The installation *Le reposoir d'amour refusé* makes available states of the human psyche, feelings, hopes and failures, as well as drugs, sexuality or violence. Distinct temporal and spatial relationships are dissolved, the image space is interpreted manifold and shows itself as a picturesque installation. Like the transparent figures themselves, the viewer is drawn into a vortex picture, in which various forces interact, perhaps to compensate for each other.

## **Katrin Mayer**

*Balloons / "Your very own words." Indeed! And who are you?* (Brion Gysin), 2010  
Foil Balloons, hélium, posters  
Courtesy Katrin Mayer, Galerie Antje Wachs, Berlin

Katrin Mayer discussed in her work the importance of artistic, popular and everyday images and examines the inscriptions of cultural semantics in specific spatial and temporal contexts. Mayer researched motifs, which she re-staged under different conditions by embedding spatial interventions in the exhibition situation. In *Balloons*, helium-filled balloons float across the floor. On the adjacent wall hangs a poster, which evokes in form a picture story of associative connotations that have to do with consciousness, dreaming, introspection, reflection and illusion. She plays with references to Andy Warhol's *Silver Clouds* (1966), references to his masks and his shy and volatile illustrations, to the fascination of the escapist and its decay phenomena.

## **Mladen Miljanovic**

*Social Orthopedics*, 2010  
Fastbelts, drawing reproduction – digital print  
Dimensions variables  
Dessin : 25 x 19 cm  
Courtesy Mladen Miljanovic, Galerie Antje Wachs, Berlin  
Crédit photo : Eva Wurdinger, Drago Vejnovic

Mladen Miljanovic deals with the possibilities of new artistic strategies in which social interactions will be developed against the background of his own life experiences in his homeland of Bosnia - Herzegovina. In his installation *Social orthopedics*, Miljanovic explored parts of the former Yugoslav cars *Zastava 101* in a kind of "applied social art". To this purpose, he examines safety belts as possible instruments of discipline and spatial narrowing and finds a minimalist, serial form that extends the artifact to art and cultural history and places its positing in the light of current events.

## **Frédéric Moser & Philippe Schwinger**

*France, détours, Episode 1- Devoir et dérouté, 2009*

HD Vidéo, 26'36, photographies, textes, posters

Courtesy Moser & Schwinger, Galerie Koch Oberhuber Wolff, Berlin et Galerie Jocelyn Wolff, Paris

Frédéric Moser and Philippe Schwinger come from the theater. Their works are a mix of theater, video and installation. They create a complex game of fake authenticity and subtle refraction, which attracts visitors because of its formal precision and emotional intensity.

Since 2001, Frédéric Moser and Philippe Schwinger have taken the struggle of youth with both emancipation and social standardisation as a chance to discuss the political, ethical and economical paradigms that shape social reality. Inspired by Jean-Luc Godard, Frédéric Moser and Philippe Schwinger have been working since 2009 on a *De/Tour de France*, in the format of a documentary TV-show and in *détours*. They follow the thesis of Jacques Rancière, that to think the real means to fictionalize it. The young people that they question, in different social settings, on the circumstances in which they live, do not confirm the stereotyped image that the media and politicians try to draw of them. Their reality is more complex. Moser and Schwinger rethink "France" as a narrative and as a discourse that reestablishes a space for an adolescent's emancipation.

## **Invitation Inédite** led by Cécile Babiolo

### **A new kind of art education project of Cécile Babiolo**

A personal invitation to a new form of encounter between the artistic works of the exhibition and its audience.

### **Audio guide:**

In the form of an audio guide, Cécile Babiolo has developed a meditation piece.

It is a 10 min audio recording, a collage of music, lyrics and a statement of the exhibition curator. Visitors to the exhibition can receive the host either via their mobile phone (by entering a code) or a MP3 player provided by the Kunsthalle. The audioguide is also available for download under [www.kunsthalleMulhouse.com](http://www.kunsthalleMulhouse.com).

## **KUNSTHALLE MEETINGS**

**Kunstapéro:** Thursday, October 7<sup>th</sup> 2010 and Thursday, November 14<sup>th</sup> 2010 at 6 pm see the exhibition and chat while having a drink - 5 euros per person, Reservation : +33 (0) 3 69 77 66 47

### **Kunstdéjeuner (Kunstlunch) :**

Discussion about a work of art followed by a lunch (bring your own lunch box)  
Friday October 15<sup>th</sup> and Friday November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2010 at 12:15am  
Reservation : + 33 (0) 3 69 77 66 47, Admission free

### **"Strolling" Conference :**

Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> October, 6:00pm  
An event in cooperation with the community college.  
A philosophical discussion on the topics of art & aesthetics, moderated by Luc Bohler.

### **Kunstprojection :** (in cooperation with the espace Multimédia gantner)

A selection of experimental films from the espace Multimédia gantner collection will be presented as an echo to the exhibition  
Thursday, October 28<sup>th</sup> 2010 at 6.30 pm, Admission free, no reservation

### **Dialogues N°2 :**

Sunday, October 31<sup>th</sup> 2010, 3 - 5pm  
Exchange of views between the Museum of Fine Arts and the Kunsthalle Mulhouse  
The public is invited to visit two institutions, to cross-reference, to discuss and to mirror.  
Free admission  
Meet at 3:00 p.m. at the Museum of Fine Arts

**Kunstbrunch :** Sunday, November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2010 at 10am  
5 euros per person, Reservation: +33 (0) 3 69 77 66 47

### **For more information:**

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The Kunsthalle is supported by: the town of Mulhouse, the Department du Haut-Rhin, the Région Alsace and the Direction Régionale des affaires culturelles

## To journalists operating outside of the Région Alsace

To make the most of your stay, we can arrange for two tours in the same day : the Kunsthalle Mulhouse and the CRAC Alsace (which are 20 kilometers away from each other).

### **Folklore**

10 October 2010 – 16 January 2011

with : Maria Thereza Alves (Brazil), Alexandra Bircken (Germany), Jean-Luc Cramatte (Switzerland), Collectif DOP (France), Jean-Damien Fleury (Switzerland), Luca Francesconi (Italy), Charles Fréger (France), Susan Hiller (USA), Timo Nasser (Germany), Amy O'Neill (USA), Vanessa Safavi (Switzerland), Eléonore Saintagnan (France) and Ana Strika (Switzerland).

"That's all Folklore" is a journey that expands on "In the Mirror: Folklore Projections", shown at the Fri-Art art centre in Fribourg, Switzerland, from 22 May – 22 August.

This is an exhibition that goes counter to reductionist approaches to the folklore issue and its frequent exploitation for touristic and identitarian ends. Protean, shifting, sometimes forgotten and sometimes very much alive, the "lore of the people" defies definition and classification. At the same time it represents, for the artists of today, a wellspring of references, forms and questionings.

While not attempting a definitive reading – and even less so an illustration – of what constitutes folklore, the exhibition examines from different angles the concerns, intimately linked to folk culture, whose echoes continue to be heard today: local roots and celebrations, the disappearance of singularities, the survival of customs, the ossifying of popular culture in cliché, the presence of mystical signs, relationships with the natural environment, the persistence of magic and myth, etc.

The forms of the works on display are in many cases direct borrowings from or interpretations of popular arts and traditions: vernacular architecture, costumes, songs, cut paper, totems, patchworks, and languages and abstract signs whose origins and decipherment have been lost with the passing of time.

In the CRAC corridors the visitor will find a deliberately low-key presentation of folklore exhibits from Alsace. This break with standard practice and the interconnections thus established blur the boundaries between present and past, vernacular and global, functional and symbolic.

Exhibition curators: Corinne Charpentier and Sophie Kaplan

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