

JAN FABRE STIGMATA – ACTIONS & PERFORMANCES 1976-2016

#janfabrelyon

JAN FABRE

EXHIBITION STIGMATA – ACTIONS & PERFORMANCES 1976-2016 => 30.09.16 - 15.01.17
PERFORMANCE ON 29.09.16 WITH EDDY MERCKX AND RAYMOND POULIDOR



Jan Fabre, *Sanguis / Mantis*, 2001
View *Sanguis / Mantis* performance. 22 May 2001, Subsistances, Lyon
Photo: Maarten Vanden Abeele
Courtesy Angelos bvba
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JAN FABRE, STIGMATA – ACTIONS & PERFORMANCES 1976-2016
 83 glass table tops, 800 objects (drawings, photographs, artefacts, costumes, maquettes): 40 years of performances and actions!
FROM 30 SEPTEMBER 2016 TO 15 JANUARY 2017

NEW PERFORMANCE

‘An attempt to *not* beat the world hour record set by Eddy Merckx in Mexico City in 1972 (or how to remain a dwarf in a land of giants), with commentary and live filming.

THURSDAY 29 SEPTEMBER 2016 at 6.00 pm

SUMMARY

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Jan Fabre, the story of the performance, his exhibition, and the world hour record set by Eddy Merckx.

When Jan Fabre spoke to me during the summer of 2013 about *Stigmata*, which he was working on with Germano Celant for Rome, I already knew that the show was going to have its Lyon version. A lightning return journey to the MAXXI confirmed it.

Our first contacts with Jan go back to 2003 actually, when the other Jan (Jan Hoet, director of the Ghent SMAK), and I were preparing the retrospective of the artist's filmed performances. It was titled 'Jan Fabre, *Gaude succurrere vitae*' (17 September - 19 December 2004). After that show, mac^{LYON} kept something like 800 m² of single and multi-screen films, duly scenographed by the artist, with first option for Lyon on his performances to come. It is the biggest and most complete collection of this sort in Europe.

In 2016, 'Stigmata' presents the totality of Jan Fabre's actions and performances since 1976 and has the merit of interrogating, not the action or the performance, but the way to exhibit it, the way to present it and curate it. The question I asked Marina Abramović & Ulay in the middle of the 1980s was an old one, and I asked Jan the same question in 2000.

Here, the formula the artist came up with was a crystal-clear scenography in which one's field of vision takes in everything that is exhibited. It is a novel way of addressing the subject – glass table tops rather than pedestals, and the object is compared with the image in which, when it is animated, it figures as the hero. We are thus plunged into the heart of a translucent scene, like a 3/4 shot round a raised floor, while we take in the figure of the hero in a low-angle shot. It is an image of the body ritualised on stage.

In Lyon, Jan Fabre has grasped the space in its entirety, adjusted the scenography, integrated new pieces; in short, he has come up with a wonderful variation on the theme of 'presentation'. And what is absolutely marvellous is that he has added a completely new performance, involving a bicycle, a great cycling champion (track cycling, in this case), and a body struggling with the limits of its stamina. The performance lasts an hour. Jan Fabre is the hero and its title is: '**An attempt to *not* beat the world hour record set by Eddy Merckx in Mexico City in 1972 (or how to remain a dwarf in a land of giants)**'.

Will Jan Fabre beat the world hour record that Merckx set in 1972? He has no intention of doing so, but he is training! As a tribute to the man they called 'The Cannibal', a sportsman with a voracious appetite for victories, the artist is letting himself be devoured by 'the beauty of failure'. To expose his body in paroxysms of effort-intelligent flesh dictating our relationship with the world – is a poetic, artistic embodiment (a coalescence of humour and tragedy) of that quest to test the limits of endurance, which has always nurtured the work of Jan Fabre.

The performance will take place in the presence of Eddy Merckx, Raymond Poulidor, and Bernard Thevenet, with a Tour-de-France style commentary from Ruben Van Gucht and Daniel Mangeas. Spurring him on, there will be 2000 flags in the colours of Flanders, Lyon, France and Belgium waved in the 4000 hands of fervent supporters. The exploit will be filmed live, using five cameras and giant screens. Once the 'rushes' have been edited, the work will join the rest of the now considerable collection in the Lyon Museum. Our thanks to Jan, whose generosity is as light and discreet as his physical condition is rude and abundant.

To enjoy the live experience: rendezvous at the Georges Prével Vélodrome in the Parc de la Tête d'Or, only a stone's throw from the Musée d'Art Contemporain (mac^{LYON}). The velodrome has been requisitioned for the nonce, on 29 September, from 6.00 pm – i.e. one hour before the 'Stigmata' opening.

Thierry Raspail
Director of mac^{LYON}

‘An attempt to *not* beat the world hour record set by Eddy Merckx in Mexico City in 1972 (or how to remain a dwarf in a land of giants).’

Will Jan Fabre beat the world hour record that Merckx set in 1972?

For one hour, the artist will be on the track, cycling in the shadow of the great champions, in the presence of Eddy Merckx, Raymond Poulidor, and Bernard Thevenet, with a Tour-de-France style commentary from Ruben Van Gucht and Daniel Mangeas, spurred on by fans waving 2000 flags and with live cameras filming the event.



In a salute to the talent of the man they called ‘The Cannibal’ because of his voracious appetite for victories, Jan Fabre allows himself to be caught up and swallowed by the beauty of failure.

**Rendezvous Thursday 29 September 2016 at 18h (6.00 pm) at the Vélodrome Georges Préveral in the Parc de la Tête d'Or, Lyon 6e
Admission free**

In resonance with the Biennale de la Danse, which will be in full swing in Lyon from 14 – 30 September 2016

**From 30 september 2016 to 15 january 2017,
STIGMATA – ACTIONS & PERFORMANCES 1976-2016:
how do you exhibit performance?**

In 2004, the Musée d'Art Contemporain de Lyon (mac^{LYON}) presented Jan Fabre's films in their entirety. After the exhibition 'Gaude succurrere vitae: Rejoice to come to the aid of life', 17 September – 19 December 2004, the Lyon Museum of Contemporary Art (mac^{LYON}) kept a collection of single and multi-screen films, making it the largest collection of his work in Europe!

In 2016, the exhibition STIGMATA presents actions and performances from 1976 to 2016. It is a journey around the memory of Jan Fabre, involving 40 years of creation, from his very early performances and actions up to the performance he created for Lyon on 29 September 2016.

The mise en scene for this exhibition is by Jan Fabre and Germano Celant. It presents an overview of all his performances and actions. 'THE BEST WAY I CAN EXPRESS THE SCENOGRAPHY AND MATRIX OF THE EXHIBITION: FIRST WE DECIDED ON THE LANDSCAPE, THE TABLES WITH PHOTOGRAPHS, ARTICLES AND THINKING MODELS, SECOND WE PLACED THE TREES, THE SCULPTURE-COSTUMES, IN THE LANDSCAPE, AND THE THIRD STEP WAS CREATING THE HORIZON, THE WALLS WITH THE QUOTATIONS FROM MY NIGHT DIARY, DRAWINGS, PHOTOGRAPHS AND SCREENS.'



View of the exhibition JAN FABRE – STIGMATA – Actions & Performances 1976-2016, MAXXI, Roma, 16 october 2015 - 16 february 2014
© M3 STUDIO (Rome)
© Adagp, Paris 2016

The exhibition involves more than 800 objects: drawings, photographs, artefacts, costumes, maquettes (which Jan Fabre calls 'thought models'), films, works in blue ballpoint pen, and more.

Stigmata – Actions & Performances 1976–2015 was designed by Jan Fabre and Germano Celant, exhibited at the MAXXI in Rome, then shown at the M HKA in Antwerp. In autumn 2016, Jan Fabre revamped the scenography, added pieces, objects and a new performance for Lyon.

The voluminous catalogue which accompanies the exhibition is a long conversation between the artist and Germano Celant. It is fully illustrated.

Published by Skira in English, with a booklet in French.

There is also a special issue of Beaux Arts Magazine.

GERMANO CELANT IN FACT, THE WHOLE OF THE STIGMATA EXHIBITION REVOLVES AROUND THIS INSTRUMENT [LA TABLE], WHICH CREATES A TRANSPARENT AND FLAT LAKE [...] ON WHICH MATERIALS FLOAT LIKE REDISCOVERED FRAGMENTS OF YOUR PERFORMANCES, FROM THE COSTUMES TO THE RECORDINGS, FROM THE PHOTOGRAPHS TO THE DRAWINGS. WHAT DOES THE TABLE REPRESENT FOR YOU, IS IT A TOOL OR SYMBOLIC MATERIAL?
JAN FABRE FOR ME THE TABLE IS A KIND OF STAGE, A TERRITORY, A BORDER [...] THE TABLE WITH THE GLASS PLATE AND THE TWO WOODEN TRESTLES THAT I MADE MYSELF WHEN I WAS 18 I STILL WORK AT TODAY IN MY PRIVATE HOUSE. I DESIGNED THIS TABLE FOR ALMOST NO MONEY FOR PRACTICAL REASONS. BECAUSE YOU COULD CLEAN IT EASILY, YOU COULD NOT CUT INTO THE SURFACE OF THE TOP, AND I COULD PLACE A LAMP UNDERNEATH THE TABLE SO THAT I COULD COPY PHOTOGRAPHS OR DRAWINGS. FOR ME THIS TABLE IS AN IMPORTANT WORKING INSTRUMENT AND YOU SEE THIS IN ALL MY LARGER DRAWINGS OF THE SERIES THE HOUR BLUE THAT ARE THE SIZE OF THAT TABLE.

GC SO IT'S ALSO A KIND OF MODULAR ELEMENT.

JF I OFTEN USED THIS TABLE AS A BED. BECAUSE AS A YOUNG GUY I ALREADY HAD NERVE AND NEUROLOGICAL PROBLEMS, MY BODY WAS OFTEN OVER-HEATED AND IT WAS ALWAYS NICE TO SLEEP ON THE COLD GLASS. SO THE WORKING TABLE BECAME A BED OF PURIFICATION. I'M EXPLAINING THIS TODAY IN BEAUTIFUL WORDS, BUT ESSENTIALLY IT CAME OUT OF AN INSTINCT OF SURVIVAL.[...]

THERE ARE MORE THAN 800 ITEMS (PHOTOGRAPHS, ARTICLES, MODELS, AND SO ON) IN THE EXHIBITION, THE AVALANCHE IS THERE BUT IT HAS A LIGHT FEELING, NOTHING FEELS FORCED. I'M VERY SATISFIED WITH THE SOLUTION WE FOUND TOGETHER, BECAUSE THE EXHIBITION EXPRESSES THE FLUIDITY OF MY WORK, THE CHANGEABLE AND ON-GOING PROCESS AND IT EXPRESSES MY SYSTEMATIC CHOICE FOR EXPERIMENT.'

*Extract from the interview with Jan Fabre and Germano Celant,
published in the exhibition catalogue*



Jan Fabre, *My Body, My Blood, My Landscape*, 1978

Performance
Photo: Marc Gubbels
Courtesy Angelos bvba
© Adagp, Paris 2016

1958

Born in Antwerp, Belgium.

~1965-1972

As a child, Jan Fabre is already fascinated by animals, and particularly by insects, to the point where he pitches a tent in the family garden in order to observe them and experiment on them. As a teenager, he pays regular visits to the Antwerp zoo. His discovery of the work of Jean-Henri Fabre adds to his knowledge of the animal world.

1976

First performances, after studies at the École des Arts Décoratifs and the Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts, Antwerp.

1977

Beginning of the series *L'Heure bleue**, done in ballpoint. He shuts himself up in a room in order to redraw it entirely with nothing but a blue ballpoint pen.*.

**For Jan Fabre L'Heure Bleue is the moment just before dawn, and the first glimmering of daylight. The key moment when animals are silent, when nothing moves and when day conquers night. And the moment when Jan Fabre, insomniac, creates.*

For *Window Performance*, he shuts himself for seven hours, naked, in a shop window in an Antwerp shopping street, accompanied by snails whose shells he has painted in the black, yellow and red colours of Belgium, because he has the feeling that his country is in a state of cultural hibernation.

1979

Jan Fabre makes news with his '*Money*' performances, in which he asks spectators to lend him a banknote which he immediately burns in order to make a drawing on the ground with the ash. This gets him punched a few times and arrested: it is against the law to burn the nation's money.

He presents the action *Cleaning the Museum* at the Maison Jacob Jordaens by wiping the floor with industrial floor-cloths in the Belgian national colours. One of the floor-cloths is inscribed in ballpoint pen with the words: 'Belgische kunst is uitwrinbaar [sic]' ('Belgian art can be wrung out'). On one of the others, he draws snails.

1980

Jan Fabre presents his play *Théâtre écrit avec un K et un matou flamand*, which causes public indignation later on tour in the USA because of the nudity of the performers (including Jan Fabre himself).

1982

Jan Fabre breaks contemporary theatrical conventions with *C'est du théâtre comme c'était à espérer et à prévoir*. This eight-hour play, which goes beyond all physical limits, quickly enters into legend (There was a revival of it in 2014 as part of the Biennale de la Danse).

1984

He takes part in the Venice Biennale where, in the same spirit, he presents *Le Pouvoir des folies théâtrales*. This play revisits the history of theatre in the form of tableaux, using bodies as words. The work achieves fame in the annals of contemporary theatre and tours the world.

1986

He founds his dance and theatre company, *Troubleyn*, taken from his mother's name, which means 'remain faithful' in Flemish.

1990

Using 150,000 ballpoint pens, Jan Fabre covers the walls of the Château de Tivoli, near Mechelen (Belgium), in blue ink.

1994

Jan Fabre is published by Éditions de L'Arche, Paris.

1999

Jan Fabre founds the magazine *Janus*. The name refers to the Roman God: 'Janus, the God with two faces looking in opposite directions, omnipresent and enigmatic.' The magazine was a locus for convergence between disciplines and personalities: curators, artists, writers, scientists, and so on.

2000

Jan Fabre joins Paris Gallery Daniel Templon, where he exhibits some of his famous beetle sculptures – a monk, an angel and a globe.

2001

For the 55th edition of the Avignon Festival, Jan Fabre produces a play for the Cour d'Honneur of the Palais des Papes: *Je suis sang (conte de fées médiéval)*. It is a huge theatrical fresco on the theme of the human body.

The same year he produces a five-hour performance in Lyon, *Sanguis / Mantis*, during which, while wearing armour, he has blood samples taken at regular intervals by a nurse. He uses the blood to write a manifesto.

2002

Jan Fabre is invited by Queen Paola to create the work *Heaven of Delight*. For this he has the roof of the Hall of Mirrors in the Royal Palace in Brussels covered in the wing cases of beetles (1.4 million in all). Shimmering in the light, the wing cases change colours, passing through all the shades from green to blue and contrasting with the mirrors and the golds on the walls.

2003

He exhibits at the Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona and also at the Galleria d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Bergamo (Italy).



Jan Fabre, *Me, Dreaming*, 1978
View of the exhibition *Jan Fabre. Hortus / Corpus* (10 avril - 4 septembre 2011)
Collection Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst Antwerp, M HKA, Antwerp (Belgique)
Photo: Attilio Maranzano
Courtesy Angelos bvba
© Adagp, Paris 2016

2004

The Lyon Musée d'art contemporain (mac^{LYON}) expose l'intégralité des films de Jan Fabre. presents Jan Fabre's films in their entirety. After the exhibition 'Gaude succurrere vitae' *Rejoice to come to the aid of life*, 17 September – 19 December 2004, mac^{LYON} keeps a collection of single and multi-screen films, making it the largest collection of his work in Europe! The same year, he produces *Virgin / Warrior* at the Palais de Tokyo with Marina Abramović, (all the joint works of Marina Abramović & Ulay belong to the mac^{LYON} collection).

2005

Jan Fabre is the artist of honour at the Avignon Festival. This attracts a great deal of criticism of the festival: large sections of the press rail against him. His shows, in which the body occupies a central place, and where music, dance, song, and improvisation all conspire to disturb the spectator, are the subject of much censure, but at the same time, they earn him worldwide recognition.

2007

He realises a permanent work for the Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature, Paris: a ceiling entitled *La Nuit de Diane*, designed as a homage to the goddess of hunting. He overhangs this chamber of Diana, lined with green silk velvet like a jewel case, with an assemblage of feathers, which has both a calming and a disturbing effect. The owls that emerge from it have human eyes.

In March, Jan Fabre opens the 'Troubleyn Laboratorium' in Antwerp. This acts as the venue for all his activities apart from his artist's studio. He invites visual artists, theatre people, philosophers, authors and researchers to move in permanently and integrate. They include Marina Abramović, Fabrice Hyber, Fabien Verschaere, Luc Tuymans, Chantal Akerman, ORLAN, Pascal Rambert, Robert Wilson, Juliao Sarmiento, and Jan Lauwers. He creates a rehearsal room there for *Troubleyn*, his theatre company, as well as a scenery workshop and a large show venue with a 17 metre wide stage, which he lends to friends looking for somewhere to perform in Antwerp. He also makes it the headquarters for his visual arts company 'Angelos'. As he explains, 'It is a place of experiment on the body and on language. A place which creates a climate in which all venues, all disciplines, and all people meet. A place where artists have the time to research and experiment without being subject to the need to produce something, which theatres demand.'

2008

He is guest of honour at the Musée du Louvre, Paris; the first living artist to see his works exhibited there. With curator Marie-Laure Bernadac, Jan Fabre creates a trail entitled '*L'Ange de la métamorphose*' in the Department of Flemish Painters and sets up a dialogue with some of the old Masters, like Bosch and Rubens. Jan Fabre performs *ART KEPT ME OUT OF JAIL* at the Galerie Darue.

2011

He creates the installation *Le Regard en dedans (L'Heure bleue)* for the listed Royal staircase at the Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique.

2012

He works with Pierre Coulibeuf on the film *Doctor Fabre Will Cure You*.

2014

For the 16th Biennale de la Danse in Lyon, Jan Fabre, reprises *C'est du théâtre comme c'était à espérer et à prévoir*, a foundational piece of dance theatre, lasting eight hours, for 9 performers and spectators.

2015

First performance of *Mount Olympus. To Glorify the Cult of Tragedy, a 24-hour Performance*, a play for three generations of dancers and actors lasting 24 hours, first performed in Berlin, Amsterdam, Thessalonica, Rome, Bruges, then, in 2016, in Antwerp, Seville, Vienna, Jerusalem and Brussels.

2016

Jan February is officially invited to St Petersburg to *Jan Fabre. Knight of Despair / Warrior of Beauty*, a wide-ranging solo exhibition at the Hermitage Museum. On 29 September, Jan Fabre performs '*An attempt to not beat the world hour record set by Eddy Merckx in Mexico City in 1972 (or how to remain a dwarf in a land of giants)*', at the Vélodrome Georges Prével in the Parc de la Tête d'Or, Lyon.



Portrait of Jan Fabre next to « Doctor Fabre Will Cure You »
Photo: Lieven Herreman
Courtesy Angelos bvba

Born in 1958 in Antwerp, Belgium
Lives and works in Antwerp, Belgium

RECENT SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2016

Stigmata – Actions & Performances : 1976-2016, macLYON, Lyon, France

Jan Fabre. Knight of Despair / Warrior of Beauty, Musée de l'Ermitage, St. Petersburg, Russia
Tribute to Hieronymus Bosch in Congo, Het Noordbrabants Museum, Bois-le-Duc, Netherlands

Vanitas Vanitatum, Omnia Vanitas, Deweer Gallery, Otegem, Belgium

Spiritual Guards, Piazza Signoria, Palazzo Vecchio et Forte di Belvedere, Florence, Italy
Knight of the Night, Ronchini Gallery, London, England

Sacrum cerebrum, Brafa, Tour & Taxis, Brussels, Belgium et Art Bärtschi & cie, Geneva, Switzerland

The Man Who Bears the Cross, At The Gallery, Antwerp, Belgium

2015

30 years / 7 rooms, Deweer Gallery, Otegem, Belgium

The Years of the Hour Blue, Magazzino, Roma, Italy
Knight of the Night, Galleria il Ponte, Florence, Italy

Contour 7, Mechelen, Belgium

Tribute to Hieronymus Bosch in Congo, Espace Louis Vuitton, Tokyo, Japan

Stigmata – Actions & Performances 1976-2013, M HKA, Antwerp, Belgium

The Lime Twig Man, At The Gallery, Antwerp, Belgium

Tribute to Hieronymus Bosch in Congo (2011-2013), Wetterling Gallery, Stockholm, Sweden

Hommage au Congo Belge, Galerie Daniel Templon, Paris, France

Metemorphosen – Ovidius en de hedendaagse kunst, Rijksmuseum Twenthe, Twenthe, Netherlands

2014

Do we feel with our brain and think with our heart?, Magazzino, Rome, Italie et Galerie Daniel Templon, Brussels, Belgium

The Spiritual Sceptic, At The Gallery, Antwerp, Belgium

Like a Virgin – Maria als Wonder Woman, Odapark, Venray, Netherlands

Zeno brains ans oracle stones, La Llotja, Palma Mallorca, Spain

Insectentekeningen en insectensculpturen 1975-1979, Rijksmuseum Twenthe, Twenthe, Belgium

Tribute to Hieronymus Bosch in Congo (2011-2013), *Tribute to Belgian Congo (2010-2013)*, PinchukArtCentre, Kiev, Ukraine

2013

The Years of the Hour Blue 1977-1992, Busan Museum of Art, Busan, South Korea

Hommage à Jérôme Bosch au Congo, Palais des Beaux-Arts, Lille, France

Stigmata – Actions & Performances 1976-2013, MAXXI, Roma, Italy

Skulls & Mosaics, Guy Pieters Gallery, Saint-Paul of Vence, France

Insektenzeichnungen & Insektensculpturen 1975-1979, Kunsthalle Recklinghausen, Recklinghausen, Germany

Chalcosoma, Small Bronzes 2006-2012, Skulpturenpark Waldfrieden, Wuppertal, Germany

Gisants (Hommage à E.C. Crosby et K.Z. Lorenz), Galerie Daniel Templon, Paris, France

2012

ART IS A MEDUSA, Giuseppe De Nittis Museum Gallery – Palazzo della Marra, Barletta, Italy

Insektenzeichnungen & Insektensculpturen 1975-1979, ikob, Eupen, Germany

One Man's Death Is Another Man's Chocolate & 9 Chapters, Galerie Klüser 1 & 2, Munich, Germany

Chalcosoma – Small Bronzes 2006-2012, Guy Pieters Gallery, Knokke-le-Zoute, Belgium

Chapitre I – XVIII – Cires et Bronzes, Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels, Belgium

Zeno Brains and Oracle Stones, Mario Mauroner Contemporary Art, Vienna, Austria

Pride Comes Before a Fall of the Lash, Gallery 604, Busan, South Korea

Kerkmeester, De Nieuwe Kerk, Amsterdam, Netherlands

Offering to the God of Insomnia et Tribute to Hieronymus Bosch in Congo, Mario Mauroner Contemporary Art, Salzburg, Austria

Pietas, Parlood, Park Spoor Noord, Antwerp, Belgium

Les Années de l'Heure bleue, dessins et sculptures 1977-1992, Musée d'Art Moderne, Saint-Etienne, France

2011

Les Années de l'Heure bleue, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria

Hortus / Corpus, Musée Kröller-Müller, Otterlo, Netherlands

Art Kept Me Out of Jail, Muzeum Sztuki Lodz, Lodz, Poland

Jan Fabre, Chimères & portrait d'un artiste en évasion, Galerie Daniel Templon, Paris, France

Jan Fabre, The Carnival of the Dead Streetdogs & The Catacombs of the Dead Streetdogs, Galerija Vzgalica, Ljubljana, Slovenia

Jan Fabre, Borrowed Time – Photographs and Drawings, Mestna Galerija – Mgml / City Art Museum, Ljubljana, Slovenia

Jan Fabre, Umbraculum, Tobacna 001 Cultural Centre, Galerija 001, Ljubljana, Slovenia

Jan Fabre, the Jewels of Death. Bic Blue Drawings,
Mario Mauroner Contemporary Art, Vienna,
Austria

Brain Models and Drawings by Jan Fabre, 3rd
Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art,
Thessaloniki, Greece

Tribute to Hieronymus Bosch in Congo, Magazzino,
Roma, Italy

2010

Art Kept Me Out of Jail. Performance installations by
Jan Fabre 2001-2004-2008, M HKA, Antwerp,
Belgium

Chapitre I – XVIII – Cires et Bronzes, Galerie Guy
Pieters, Paris, France

Umbraculum para Medellín, un lugar en la sombra
para reflexionar y trabajar, Museo de Arte Moderno
de Medellín, Medellín, Colombia

Le Temps emprunté, Museo Carlo Bilotti Aranciera
di Villa Borghese, Roma, Italy

Brain Drawings & Models, Galerie Clara Maria Sels,
Düsseldorf, Germany

De geleende tijd, Museum de Fundatie, Zwolle,
Netherlands

Umbraculum para São Paulo, um lugar na sombra
para pensar e trabalhar, Instituto Tomie Ohtake, São
Paulo, Brazil

Is the brain the most sexy part of the body?, Topkapi
Palace, Istanbul, Turkey

THEATER

2015

MOUNT OLYMPUS, To Glorify The Cult of Tragedy,
a 24-hour Performance

2014

ATTENDS, ATTENDS, ATTENDS... (POUR MON
PÈRE), A solo performance for Cédric Charron

2013

TRAGEDY OF A FRIENDSHIP

2012

THIS IS THEATRE LIKE IT WAS TO BE
EXPECTED AND FORESEEN, Re-Enactment
Creation 1982

THE POWER OF THEATRICAL MADNESS, Re-
Enactment Creation 1984

DRUGS KEPT ME ALIVE, A solo performance for
Antony Rizzi

2011

PROMETHEUS LANDSCAPE II

2010

PREPARATIO MORTIS, A solo performance for
Annabelle Chambon

THE SERVANT OF BEAUTY, A solo performance for
Dirk Roofthoof

2009

ORGY OF TOLERANCE

2008

ANOTHER SLEEPY DUSTY DELTA DAY, A solo
performance for Ivana Jozic

2007

I AM A MISTAKE
REQUIEM FOR A METAMORFOSES

2005

THE KING OF PLAGIARISM, A solo performance
for Dirk Roofthoof
HISTORY OF TEARS

2004

THE CRYING BODY
TANNHÄUSER
QUANDO L'UOMO PRINCIPALE E UNA DONNA,
A solo performance for Lisbeth Gruwez
ÉTANT DONNÉ, A solo performance for Els
Deceukelier

2003

ANGEL OF DEATH, A solo performance for Ivana
Jozic

2002

PARROTS AND GUINEA PIGS
THE SWAN LAKE

2001

I AM BLOOD, un conte de fées médiéval

2000

MY MOVEMENTS ARE ALONE LIKE
STREETDOGS
AS LONG AS THE WORLD NEEDS A WARRIORS
SOUL

SELECTION OF WORKS WITH EXTRACTS FROM THE CONVERSATION BETWEEN JAN FABRE AND GERMANO CELANT



Jan Fabre, *A Meeting / Vstrecha*, 1997
View of the exhibition *Gaude succurrere vitae* in mac^{LYON}, 17 september to 19 december 2004
Collection mac^{LYON}
Photo: Blaise Adilon
© Adagp, Paris 2016



Jan Fabre, *A Meeting / Vstrecha (The Mystery of Art)*, 1997
Courtesy Angelos byba
© Adagp, Paris 2016

GC A YEAR LATER YOU DID THE PERFORMANCE FOR FILM *A MEETING / VSTRECHA* (1997) WITH ILYA?

JF ILYA AND I DECIDED VERY EARLY TO SHOOT THE FILM IN NEW YORK, IN HIS APARTMENT BLOCK. BEFOREHAND I MADE A LOT OF DRAWINGS, I MADE A KIND OF THINKING MODELS OF HIS BASEMENT AND THE ROOF OF HIS BUILDING. ALSO IN MY ANTWERP STUDIO I MADE TWO 'SCULPTURECOSTUMES', ONE FOR ME, A SCARAB COSTUME, AND ONE FOR ILYA, A FLY COSTUME. THE MATERIALS I USED TO MAKE THE COSTUMES WERE ORGANIC MATERIAL FROM HUMANS AND ANIMALS, FOR EXAMPLE HUMAN BONES, PIG BLADDER, ETC.

GC HOW DID YOU PREPARE *A MEETING / VSTRECHA* WITH ILYA KABAKOV?

JF I TOOK A YEAR TO PREPARE THE SCRIPT OF THE PERFORMANCE. WE WROTE SOME DIALOGUES TOGETHER, BECAUSE WE DECIDED THAT HE WOULD SPEAK IN RUSSIAN AND I WOULD SPEAK IN FLEMISH DURING THE PERFORMANCE. IN THE FILM YOU DON'T SEE THAT WE ARE PRETENDING THAT WE UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER. OF COURSE ILYA DOESN'T UNDERSTAND FLEMISH AND I DON'T UNDERSTAND RUSSIAN.[...]

GC THE SCARAB AND THE FLY: THEY COMMUNICATE DIFFERENTLY?

JF THEY HAVE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT SYSTEMS TO COMMUNICATE. THE FLY IS ALWAYS ABOVE GROUND AND THE SCARAB IS UNDERGROUND AND ABOVE. ILYA USES THE FLIES OFTEN AS A REPRESENTATION OF A UTOPIAN POWERFUL CIVILISATION. FOR ME THE SCARAB IS ESSENTIALLY ONE OF THE OLDEST COMPUTERS IN THE WORLD. SCARABS CONTAIN THE MEMORY OF OUR CIVILISATION, THEY ARE ALMOST LIKE THE RADARS OF THE HUMANKIND. THEY ARE INSECTS WITH AN EXTERNAL SKELETON. THAT'S THE REASON THEY SURVIVED FOR MILLIONS OF YEARS AND DIDN'T CHANGE. DO YOU KNOW THAT THE SCARABS ARE THE FIRST CHEMICAL WARRIORS IN THE WORLD? IN A LOT OF MY SCULPTURES, DRAWINGS AND INSTALLATIONS THEY ARE THE SYMBOL, LIKE IN CLASSICAL VANITAS PAINTINGS, OF THE BRIDGE BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH. BUT DEATH AS A POSITIVE ENERGY FIELD, NOT AS A NEGATIVE ENERGY FIELD. DEATH KEEPS US AWAKE.'

GC WHY DID YOU SECLUDE YOURSELF IN YOUR PARENTS' GARDEN? WAS IT EXPERIMENTATION OR ISOLATION?

JF ESSENTIALLY MY DRIVE WAS, AND STILL IS TODAY, MY CURIOSITY. I WAS ALWAYS FASCINATED TO DO WHAT MIGHT BE CALLED 'FORBIDDEN EXPERIMENTS'. AS A YOUNG ARTIST, I KNOW IT'S NOW POLITICALLY INCORRECT, I WAS PULLING OUT THE LEGS OF HOUSE-SPIDERS. I PULLED OUT FIRST ONE LEG AND OBSERVED HOW THEY WALKED, THEN A SECOND ONE, A THIRD ONE. I WAS ALWAYS INTERESTED IN THE MECHANICS OF LIFE AND MOVEMENT. MY FIRST CHEMICAL LABORATORY WAS IN THE BASEMENT OF MY PARENTS' HOUSE AND MY SECOND LABORATORY, WHERE I WORKED IN THE YEARS 1978-1979, WAS IN MY PARENTS' GARDEN. IT WAS A TENT IN THE SHAPE OF TWO NOSES. I'VE NAMED THOSE PRIVATE PERFORMANCES PROJECT FOR NOCTURNAL TERRITORY (NO. 15). THE DRAWINGS AND SMALL FANTASY-INSECT-SCULPTURES (1976-1979) THAT I CREATED IN THAT 'NOSE LABORATORY' WERE ALL BASED ON THE IDEA OF SMELL, 'GOOD ART HAS TO STINK'. FOR EXAMPLE I DUG FOR EARTHWORMS, CAUGHT FLIES AND MOSQUITOS AND CUT THEIR WINGS TO PLACE INSIDE THE BODY OF THE EARTHWORMS. I WAS CREATING NEW LIFE, IN THOSE DAYS I BEHAVED A BIT AS A YOUNG DR. FRANKENSTEIN. THE PLEASURE OF THE GAIA SCIENZA. I REMEMBER MY UNCLE JAAK, MY FATHER'S BROTHER, CAME BY AND SAW ME SITTING THERE IN MY 'NOSE LABORATORY', AND HE SAID TO ME: 'BUT JAN, DO YOU KNOW THAT SOMEONE IN THE FAMILY WAS BUSY WITH INSECTS?' THE NEXT TIME HE CAME BY HE BROUGHT ME BOOKS AND MANUSCRIPTS OF THE FAMOUS ENTOMOLOGIST JEAN-HENRI FABRE. THIS IS HOW I DISCOVERED THE WORK OF JEAN-HENRI FABRE AND THIS OPENED A NEW WORLD FOR ME THAT HAS INFLUENCED ME A LOT THROUGHOUT MY OWN ARTISTIC UNIVERSE.'



Jan Fabre, *The Creative Hitler Act*, 1980
Collection Maurice & Caroline Verbaet
Photo: Lieven Herreman
Courtesy Maurice Verbaet Art Center et Angelos bvba
© Adagp, Paris 2016



Jan Fabre, *Historical Wounds*
(*Ilad of the Bic-Art*), 1980
Collection Museum zu Allerheiligen,
Schaffhausen (Swiss)
Courtesy Angelos bvba
© Adagp, Paris 2016



JF THE PERFORMANCE I DID IN STICHTING DE APPEL WAS CALLED *ILAD OF THE BIC ART* (1980). FOR SEVERAL PERFORMANCES IN WHICH I USED THE BIC, I CREATED THE CHARACTER CALLED 'ILAD'. IT IS THE REVERSE OF 'DALI'. AND ALSO *BIC ART* WAS A PSEUDO-NAME FOR A UTOPIAN NEW ART MOVEMENT. A LOT OF MY PERFORMANCES ARE ALMOST A KIND OF ACTIONS TO CREATE AN INSTANT EXHIBITION OR AN INSTANT INSTALLATION. IN THIS PERFORMANCE I WAS NAKED AND MY PENIS BECAME THE BIC BALLPOINT PEN AND THE BIC BALLPOINT PEN BECAME MY PENIS. I WAS CUTTING OUT PAGES FROM DIFFERENT BOOKS WITH REPRODUCTIONS OF MY FAVOURITE AND HISTORICAL PAINTINGS AND DURING THE PERFORMANCE I WOULD CREATE A SERIES OF DRAWINGS ENTITLED *HISTORICAL WOUNDS*.'



Jan Fabre, *Sanguis / Mantis*, 2001
Armor used by Jan Fabre for the performance *Sanguis / Mantis*, 22 may 2001, Subsistances, Lyon
Photo: Malou Swinnen
Courtesy Angelos bvba
© Adagp, Paris 2016



Jan Fabre, *Sanguis / Mantis*, 2001
View of the performance *Sanguis / Mantis*.
22 may 2001, Subsistances, Lyon
Photo: Maarten Vanden Abeele
Courtesy Angelos bvba
© Adagp, Paris 2016

GC CAN YOU TELL ME SOMETHING ABOUT THE *SANGUIS / MANTIS* PERFORMANCE?

JF IN 1982 I GOT A CALL FROM A LADY NAMED ORLAN. I DIDN'T KNOW HER IN 1982 BUT I QUICKLY DISCOVERED THAT SHE IS AN IMPORTANT PERFORMANCE ARTIST FROM FRANCE. THIS WAS A LONG TIME BEFORE ALL HER

'ART SURGERIES', SHE WAS STILL A NATURAL BEAUTY. TOGETHER WITH HUBERT BESACIER SHE WAS THE FOUNDER OF ONE OF THE OLDEST PERFORMANCE FESTIVALS IN EUROPE. SHE INVITED ME TO PARTICIPATE IN HER FESTIVAL IN 1982. TWENTY YEARS LATER, IN 2001, I RECEIVED ANOTHER INVITATION FROM SYLVIE FERRÉ, TO DO A PERFORMANCE FOR THE FESTIVAL POLYSONNERIES, A LIVE ARTS INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL. I DID THIS PERFORMANCE BECAUSE I HEARD MYSELF CONSTANTLY TALKING IN THE PAST TENSE TO YOUNG ARTISTS, ACTORS AND DANCERS ABOUT MY PERFORMANCE EXPERIENCES. I FELT IT WAS AGAIN TIME TO PHYSICALLY GO THROUGH A LIVE PERFORMANCE IN FRONT OF A PUBLIC.

JF OF COURSE. I BASED THE SHAPE OF THE LEGS, ARMS AND BREAST PIECES OF THE ARMOUR ON THE BODY OF THE SACRED MANTIS. THE HELMET WITH THE TWO ANTENNAE WAS BASED ON THE HEAD OF THE MANTIS AND YOU KNOW THE MANTIS IS THE ONE WHO FORESEES THINGS WHILST SUCKING BLOOD.'

GC DURING THIS PERFORMANCE YOU WROTE A MANIFESTO WITH YOUR OWN BLOOD?

JF THE PERFORMANCE STARTED WHEN A NURSE TAPPED MY BLOOD, AND WITH THIS BLOOD I MADE A SERIES OF DRAWINGS AND MY MANIFESTO 'THERE IS NO GETTING USED TO ART. THE WORLD IS DESPERATE, GIVEN THE FACT THAT WE CAN'T CHANGE THE WORLD. IN A WORLD WHERE EVERYTHING IS DECIDED BY CHANCE, THE ARTIST HAS ALL THE MORE CHANCE TO WIN A VICTORY OVER MERE CHANCE. EVERY ARTIST/ANIMAL, ALONE WITH HIMSELF, LIKE A SHIP-WRECKED SAILOR.'

GC YOU USED A RULER? YOU WROTE VERY SLOWLY WITH YOUR BLOOD?

JF YES! MAYBE THAT'S THE REASON THE PERFORMANCE TOOK MORE THAN FIVE HOURS. (CHUCKLES.) FOR SURE IN THIS PERFORMANCE FOR ME WRITING WAS ALMOST LIKE MAKING DRAWINGS. I MADE THESE DRAWINGS WITH THE PATIENCE OF A MONK. THE TYPOLOGY I USED FOR THESE DRAWINGS WAS BASED ON THE TYPE OF TEXT YOU FIND ON THE PAINTINGS OF THE FLEMISH PRIMITIVES.

I WAS LUCKY, WHEN MY BLOOD TUBES WERE ALMOST FINISHED THE PERFORMANCE STOPPED. ESSENTIALLY THE PERFORMANCE STOPPED BECAUSE I FAINTED.

GC WAS THAT BECAUSE YOU'D TAPPED TOO MUCH BLOOD?

JF NO, WHAT HAPPENED, IT WAS A LITTLE BIT STUPID OF ME NOT TO HAVE FORESEEN IT: BECAUSE OF BREATHING INSIDE THE HELMET FOR HOURS AT A TIME THE METAL GOT RUSTY AND BY INHALING THIS RUST I WAS POISONING MYSELF AND FAINTED.'



Jan Fabre, *On ne s'habitue pas à l'art*, 2001
Drawing with blood on paper made during the performance *Sanguis / Mantis*, 22 may 2001, Subsistances, Lyon
Courtesy Angelos bvba
© Adagp, Paris 2016

JF I CAME BACK FROM AMERICA AND I FELT AN URGE AND NECESSITY TO TRANSLATE MY AMERICAN EXPERIENCES INTO AN EXHIBITION AND PERFORMANCE. THE VICTIM I FOUND WAS A YOUNG GALLERY OWNER WHO RAN THE GALERIE BLANCO IN ANTWERP AND THERE I MADE THE *AMERICAN WORKS AND WINDOW PERFORMANCE* (1980, No. 43). DURING THE OPENING OF THIS EXHIBITION I OFFERED WARM CAMPBELL SOUP INSTEAD OF WINE.

GC WARHOL ?

JF I HAD BROUGHT A LOT OF CANS OF CAMPBELL SOUP BACK FROM AMERICA IN MY SUITCASE. IN FRONT OF THE GALLERY I CREATED A LITTLE BIT OF THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE FAMOUS STUDIO 54. I PLACED ROPES AT THE ENTRANCE AND POSITIONED FOUR BOUNCERS, NIGHTLIFE FRIENDS, EACH WITH A BASEBALL BAT. ON THE FOUR BASEBALL BATS I HAD ENGRAVED 'IN GOD WE TRUST' AND THESE GUYS WERE SELECTING THE PEOPLE WHO COULD COME INSIDE TO VISIT THE EXHIBITION. WHEN YOU WERE SELECTED YOU RECEIVED A JAWBREAKER, MY 'MAGIC BALL' WITH A WORM INSIDE. SO THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE OPENING WAS SLIGHTLY HALLUCINATORY. (CHUCKLES.) IN THE MEANTIME I WAS SITTING IN THE WINDOW AND EATING A LOT OF PEANUTS, ACTING LIKE A MONKEY AS A REFERENCE TO THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER. AND I WAS ALSO BEHAVING LIKE A PROSTITUTE, WRITING DIRTY PHRASES ON THE WINDOW WITH LIPSTICK, SUCH AS 'ENERGETIC MIMBOS' (NEW YORK SLANG FOR HOT BABES), AND POETIC PHRASES SUCH AS 'THE GREATEST NATION IS IMAGINATION'. DURING THE EVENING I MADE HUNDREDS OF LIPSTICK DRAWINGS ON PAPER. THIS PERFORMANCE WAS AN ANSWER TO THE AMERICAN SUPERFICIAL STATE OF MIND, EVERYTHING IN AMERICA IS ABOUT THE SURFACE.'



Jan Fabre, *American Works and Window Performance*, 1980
Photo: Lieven Herreman
Courtesy Angelos bvba
© Adagp, Paris 2016



Jan Fabre, *Art as a Gamble, Gamble as an Art*, 1981
Courtesy Angelos bvba
© Adagp, Paris 2016

JF THE PHILOSOPHER TIMOTHY BINKLEY—a WITTGENSTEIN SPECIALIST, WHO HAD SEEN MY PERFORMANCES IN MILWAUKEE—INVITED ME TO WORK IN THE SCHOOL OF VISUAL ARTS IN NEW YORK. A COUPLE OF HOURS A WEEK I TAUGHT A COURSE ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERFORMANCE ART AND THE VISUAL ARTS. WHAT WAS VERY STRANGE WAS THAT MY STUDENTS WERE MUCH OLDER THAN MYSELF. BUT I GAVE THEM A LOT OF 'EUROPEAN IMAGINATION'.

THE FIRST PERFORMANCE I DID THERE WAS *ART AS A GAMBLE, GAMBLE AS AN ART* (1981, No. 48). THE BASIC IDEA WAS TO DISCOVER CONSILIENCE BETWEEN THE RULES OF ART AND THE RULES OF GAMBLING. FOR THIS PERFORMANCE I INVITED ART CRITICS WHO HAD TO WRITE A SMALL ESSAY ABOUT MY WORK. I WAS TRYING TO REVERSE THE IDEA THAT IT IS NOT THE ARTISTS WHO HAVE TO FOLLOW THE CRITICS, BUT THAT THE CRITICS HAVE TO FOLLOW THE ARTISTS. I PLAYED A GAME OF CHANCE WITH EACH CRITIC: THE SPINNING KNIFE, RUSSIAN ROULETTE, POKER DICE, AND SO FORTH. EACH TIME A CRITIC LOST TO ME, HE OR SHE HAD TO FOLLOW MY CONDUCTING. AND DURING THE PERFORMANCE I WAS TRYING TO CONDUCT THEM HOW TO READ THEIR TEXT, BUT THEY DIDN'T LISTEN. (CHUCKLES.) BUT THIS WAS OKAY, BECAUSE IT WAS ABOUT THE TENSION OF LOSING AND FAILING, AND FLIRTING WITH LADY LUCK.



Jan Fabre, *Virgin / Warrior*, 2004
View of the performance *Virgin / Warrior*,
14 december 2004, Palais
de Tokyo, Paris
Photo: Attilio Maranzano
Courtesy Angelos bvba
© Adagp, Paris 2016

JF [...] AS I SAID, I WAS ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE AT THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM IN LONDON. IN THE BASEMENT OF THE MUSEUM I DISCOVERED A LOT OF THESE OLD DISPLAY CASES FROM THE TURN OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY. IN QUITE A SMART MOVE, WHEN I NEGOTIATED MY SALARY OVER THERE I MADE THEM PAY PART OF MY SALARY IN THESE BEAUTIFUL OLD DISPLAY CASES. (CHUCKLES.) SO THE DISPLAY CASE THAT WE USED IN THE *VIRGIN / WARRIOR* PERFORMANCE WAS BASED ON THE DIMENSIONS AND MATERIALS OF THESE OLD DISPLAY CASES. FOR FIVE HOURS MARINA AND I WERE PERFORMING AS TWO RARE ENTOMOLOGICAL SPECIMENS.

GC I LOVE IT. CAN YOU DESCRIBE ME THE ACTION INVOLVED? WAS IT ABOUT FIGHTING, ABOUT KNIGHTS? I RECOGNIZE ALSO IMAGES FROM THE PAINTINGS OF FEDERICO DA MONTEFELTRO...

JF MARINA AND I WROTE A SCRIPT TOGETHER. THE MAIN IDEA OF THE PERFORMANCE WAS THAT WE ARE TWO KNIGHTS DEFENDING THE VULNERABILITY OF BEAUTY AND ART. WE ARE TWO ARTISTS WHO LIKE BEAUTY, WE LIKE ART, WE RESPECT ART, WE DO NOT WANT TO DESTROY EITHER OF THEM. WE DO NOT FOLLOW THE EXAMPLES BY THE ARTISTS WHO MADE THEIR NAME AND REPUTATION BY DESTROYING ARTWORKS BY OTHER ARTISTS. WE READ AND FOUND TOGETHER MANIFESTOS OF VIRGINKNIGHTS, WHO FOUGHT FOR A GOOD CAUSE. ANOTHER IMPORTANT MOTIF OF THE PERFORMANCE WAS THE IDEA OF FORGIVENESS. A LOT OF ACTIONS AND IMAGES WE CREATED DURING THE PERFORMANCE WERE BASED ON CLASSICAL PAINTINGS OF VIRGIN-KNIGHTS, FOR EXAMPLE SAINT GEORGE. IN THIS PERFORMANCE WE ALSO WOUNDED EACH OTHER AND WE USED EACH OTHER'S BLOOD. MARINA MADE SMALL BLOOD DRAWINGS AND TEXTS IN THE GLASS DISPLAY CASE. AND I LEFT THE GLASS DISPLAY CASE TO MAKE BLOOD DRAWINGS AND TEXTS ON THE WHITE WALLS OF PALAIS DE TOKYO. FOR EXAMPLE I WROTE IN MARINA'S BLOOD THE PHRASES 'IT TAKES A LIFETIME TO BECOME A YOUNG ARTIST' AND 'TO FORGIVE IS A ST GORGE DUTY.'



Jan Fabre, *Virgin / Warrior*, 2004
View of the performance *Virgin / Warrior*, 14
december 2004, Palais de Tokyo, Paris
Photo: Attilio Maranzano
Courtesy Angelos bvba
© Adagp, Paris 2016



Jan Fabre, *Stephen*, 2014
 Photo: Lieven Herreman
 Courtesy Angelos bvba / Jan Fabre
 © Adagp, Paris 2016

JF I MADE THE FIRST BRAIN MARBLE IN 2007. YOU SEE AN ANATOMICAL FIGURE DIGGING INSIDE OF THE HUMAN BRAIN WITH A GOLDEN SPADE. THE NAME OF THE SCULPTURE IS *ANTHROPOLOGY OF A PLANET*, WHICH WAS ALSO THE TITLE OF MY EXHIBITION IN THE *PALAZZO BENZON* AT THE VENICE BIENNALE. BESIDES A SERIES OF BRAIN DRAWINGS I ALSO PRESENTED FOUR GLASS JARS EACH ONE CONTAINING A CORAL STONE THAT LOOKED LIKE A HUMAN BRAIN. THE TITLE OF THE WORK IS *EINSTEIN, GERTRUDE STEIN, WITTGENSTEIN AND FRANKENSTEIN* (2007). THE FOUR CORNERSTONES OF OUR MODERN THINKING: SCIENCE, ARTS, PHILOSOPHY AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE. ON THE OCCASION OF THIS EXHIBITION I GAVE THE WORLD PREMIERE OF *IS THE BRAIN THE MOST SEXY PART OF THE BODY?* (2007, No. 86), THE FILM I MADE TOGETHER WITH EDWARD O. WILSON.

GC IS THE BRAIN THE SEXIEST PART OF THE BODY?

JF FOR THIRTY YEARS THE OBJECT AND THE SUBJECT OF MY EXPLORATIONS HAS BEEN THE HUMAN BODY, AND OF COURSE IN RECENT YEARS MY EXPLORATION OF THE HUMAN BRAIN HAS GROWN OUT OF THAT. YES, FOR ME THE BRAIN IS THE SEXIEST PART OF THE BODY.'



Jan Fabre, *ART KEPT ME OUT OF JAIL*
 (HOMAGE TO JACQUES MESRINE), 2008
 Photo: Attilio Maranzano
 Courtesy Angelos bvba
 © Adagp, Paris 2016



GC THE THEME OF THE GANGSTER MAKES ANOTHER RETURN FROM THE LATE 1970S IN YOUR PERFORMANCE *ART KEPT ME OUT OF JAIL* (2008, No. 87), DONE IN THE LOUVRE?

JF JF IN MY LIFE THERE WERE ALWAYS TWO CHOICES: TO BECOME A GOOD ARTIST OR TO BECOME A GOOD GANGSTER. MAYBE I BECAME BOTH? (CHUCKLES.) IN THE EARLY 1980S, DURING MY EXHIBITION *FRIENDS* (1984) IN THE PROVINCIAL MUSEUM IN HASSELT, THERE WAS ONE LARGE DRAWING AS HOMAGE TO JACQUES MESRINE, PUBLIC ENEMY NUMBER ONE IN FRANCE. IN THOSE DAYS I ALSO DID UN-ANNOUNCED STREET-ACTIONS ABOUT HIM. I MUST SAY THAT THE TITLE *ART KEPT ME OUT OF JAIL* WAS A TITLE FROM A PERFORMANCE OF THE 1980S. BECAUSE THE LEADING STAFF OF THE LOUVRE DIDN'T ALLOW ME TO USE THE NAME OF JACQUES MESRINE IN THE TITLE OF MY PERFORMANCE AND ON THE OFFICIAL INVITATION CARD. STILL TODAY JACQUES MESRINE IS REGARDED AS *PERSONA NON GRATA* BY THE FRENCH OFFICIAL INSTITUTIONS. (JF LIGHTS A CIGARETTE.)

I THINK IN FRANCE THERE IS STILL A KIND OF FEELING OF GUILT ABOUT THE FACT THAT THE FRENCH POLITICIANS AND POLICE KILLED HIM IN AN AMBUSH LIKE A WILD ANIMAL. IN FRANCE HE WAS THE EMBODIMENT OF LEFTIST THINKING AND SURELY HE WAS ATTACKING THE SYSTEM OF THE RIGHT-WING POLITICIANS.'



Jan Fabre, *Self-portrait as Surgeon*, 1978
 Series: *My Body, My Blood, My Landscape*
 Collection Angelos bvba / Jan Fabre
 Courtesy Angelos bvba
 © Adagp, Paris 2016



Jan Fabre, *Telling the Passion of Art and Christ*, 1978
 Series: *My Body, My Blood, My Landscape*
 Collection Angelos bvba / Jan Fabre
 Courtesy Angelos bvba
 © Adagp, Paris 2016

Jan Fabre, *The Interdiction of the Death's Head Moth*, 1978
 Series: *My Body, My Blood, My Landscape*
 Collection Angelos bvba / Jan Fabre
 Photo: Attilio Maranzano
 Courtesy Angelos bvba
 © Adagp, Paris 2016

GC YOU PUT YOUR OWN BLOOD, SPERM, URINE ON PAPER...THAT'S WHAT I THINK WAS AN IMPORTANT SHIFT IN ART HISTORY. THERE IS ALWAYS THIS CONNECTION BETWEEN DRAWING AND PERFORMANCE. THEY REPRESENT TRACES, THEY REPRESENT SPITTING UP, THROWING OUT THINGS, FROM OUT OF YOUR BODY, YOU KNOW IT'S TOTALLY DIFFERENT, IT'S NOT SOMETHING THAT WILL BE REALISED IN THE FUTURE BUT THAT ARISES ON STAGE.

JF THROWING OUT THINGS FROM OUT OF YOUR BODY. I LIKE THIS METAPHOR. STILL TODAY I BELIEVE THAT YOU CANNOT CREATE OR MAKE ART: I WOULD ALMOST SAY THAT ART COMES OUT OF THE PORES OF MY SKIN.

GC FLUID THINGS.

JF WE HAVE A BEAUTIFUL WORD IN FLEMISH, AFSCHIEDEN, WHICH MEANS 'TO SECRETE'. YOU DO NOT MAKE IT, IT COMES OUT OF YOU. A LOT OF MY SOLO PERFORMANCES ESSENTIALLY FLOWED OUT OF MY BODY LIKE A STREAM. OVER THE YEARS I DEVELOPED DIFFERENT ON-GOING PERFORMANCE-DRAWING PROJECTS WITH MY OWN BODILY FLUIDS. MY BODY FLUIDS AS A SOURCE OF CREATION.

EVERY YEAR SINCE THE 1970s I HAVE MADE A COUPLE OF DRAWINGS WITH MY OWN BLOOD. I LIKE THE IDEA THAT DRAWINGS LIKE THIS HAVE A NATURAL DISCOLORATION, COAGULATION, SALINIZATION AND CALCIFICATION. IT'S AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THE PROCESS OF ORIGIN AND THE PROCESS OF AGEING OF THESE BLOOD DRAWINGS.

THE POSSIBILITY OF TRANSFUSION GOES FROM BLOOD DRAWING TO TEXT WRITTEN WITH MY OWN BLOOD. FOR EXAMPLE THE CONCEPT 'YOU WILL NEVER GET USED TO ART' THAT I WROTE DURING THE PERFORMANCE *SANGUIS / MANTIS* (2001, No. 80). IT'S ABOUT THE ETERNAL BEING PRESENT IN THE EPHEMERAL.'



FOR THE DURATION OF THE EXHIBITION : *DOCTOR FABRE WILL CURE YOU* BY PIERRE COULIBEIF

With Jan Fabre, Ivana Jozic
Loop screening in the Auditorium

Experimental fiction by visual artist and film-maker Pierre Coulibeuf, based on Jan Fabre's performances and diary (*Journal de nuit*).

The film, a modern fairy tale, projects Jan Fabre into his own imaginative universe and composes a character who changes ceaselessly identity, plays numerous roles under the most varied disguises; behind a mask, still another mask... The female character, like a 'demon of passage' using different faces, haunts the male character and inspires his metamorphoses, *ad infinitum*.



Pierre Coulibeuf
Doctor Fabre Will Cure You (2013)
35mm film transferred onto digital
file, sound
60 min 10 sec, loop
Courtesy : Pierre Coulibeuf and
Regards Productions

Artist's statement

The concepts of the work are repetition, simulacrum and metamorphosis, in essential relation as much with Jan Fabre's œuvre as with my own. Metamorphosis means the transition from one form to another, from one intensive state to another, from one identity to another, or from one universe to another. The work as 'transposition' — the 'performance' form turns into a cinema form — new creation. The film work *Doctor Fabre Will Cure You* is based on diverse material: the city of Antwerp (where Jan Fabre has always lived and worked), his diary (published in Belgium and in France), his visual works and, above all, his historic performances. But the film does not provide a mere copy of these performances; rather, it proposes an imaginary, mental approach — a reinterpretation of performances that here become 'actions', in the cinematic sense. What is implemented in the film is the fictional potential of Jan Fabre's artistic performances and his diary.

In the context of this film, the concept of 're-enactment' (reconstruction, reproduction), currently used by certain performance artists, is not pertinent. That concept belongs to the artistic context in which the performance is usually carried out. In *Doctor Fabre Will Cure You*, the performance frees itself from its historical, social and artistic determinations. It enters another (hi)story: that of cinema, inspiring the character's acting — a strange, enigmatic apparition that haunts the film. This performance is thereby transformed and metamorphosed by the audiovisual writing and by the space-time peculiar to cinema. A film is a shooting with shots, takes, durations, sounds, a music (here, a jingle); then it is the editing that constructs a particular universe with all this material. It is the vision of a creator (the filmmaker), in the sense of a mental projection. In fact, the project of the film was less to create a character — a word too pregnant with psychology —, than to create a singular relation between a body — a body that remembers its earlier states — and places in the city of Antwerp, chosen in keeping with Jan Fabre's personal history as well as my own visions or imaginations. In that, the film was for me an experimentation. (Pierre Coulibeuf).

Visual artist and film-maker, Pierre Coulibeuf develops a cross-disciplinary project: he makes experimental fictions that skilfully invest the sphere of art and in which changes of identity affect the universes and artists inspiring his works. His films are shown in cinemas as well as, recomposed, in the form of installations (video-photo) in the contemporary art network. Coulibeuf's works are part of major public collections. Solo exhibitions all over the world: Deichtorhallen, Hamburg, (DE) 2006; Museu Coleção Berardo, Lisbonne (PT) 2010; Musée d'Art Moderne de Saint-Etienne (FR) 2009; Iberê Camargo Foundation, Porto Alegre (BR) 2009; Museum of Contemporary Art, Perm (RU) 2011; MOCA/Museum of Contemporary Art, Chengdu (CN) 2012; Yuan Space, Beijing (CN) 2013; New Media Art Center of Sichuan Fine Arts Institute, Chongqing (CN) 2014; Verksmidjan Art Center, Hjalteyri (IS) 2016; and group exhibitions: 5th Mercosul Visual Arts Biennial, Porto Alegre (BR) 2005; 1st Ural Contemporary Art Biennial, Yekaterinburg (RU) 2010; Haus der Kunst, München (DE) 2012...

MAC

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Elliot Tipton, *Equilibrio*, Balneario Huancho, Trujillo (Perou), 2012 © Photo: Victor Zou

Mel Ramos, *Five Flavor Fanny*, 2006, Courtesy Galerie Ernst Hilger © Adagp, Paris 2016

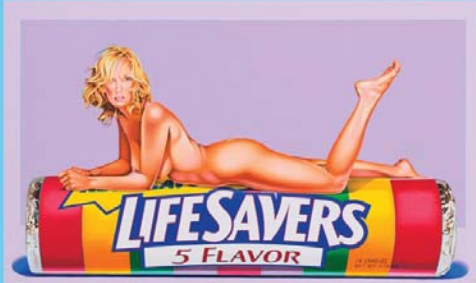
JAN FABRE



Jan Fabre, *Kangas/Mantz*, 2001, Photo: Maarten Vinkels, Abock, Courtesy Angewandte Kunst, © Adagp, Paris 2016

WALL DRAWINGS

30.09.16 –
15.01.17



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View of the Musée d'art contemporain de Lyon
 Photo: Blaise Adilon

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