

# céleste boursier-mougenot : *un cabinet de curiosité*

20 April - 25 May 2019

Opening on Saturday, 20 April, from 3 to 9 pm



*un cabinet de curiosité*

*un cabinet de curiosité*, a curious title. For this new exhibition, Céleste Boursier-Mougenot has taken over the underground space of the Xippas gallery in Paris and transformed it into a dark cave or a phantom night club. The solidvideo works on display were inspired by the urban mythology of Instrumental TransCommunication, a paranormal practice whose followers are convinced that under certain conditions, audio-visual artefacts such as white noise, acoustic feedback and TV static have the power to connect our physical world with the spirit world. The artist invites us to enter into this destabilising zone, similar to a strange parallel world which exists on the other side of the screen or camera lens, or both, at a time when these are put in direct contact, facing each other. Far from being an objective, standardised, familiar space it is peopled with abstract visual and sound forms which follow their own curious logic, very different to our own.

Moreover, the presentation of the work develops the reflection on the relationship between light, space and sound, transforming the exhibition into a particular environment in which to view the paintings. The room is in darkness, which makes the walls disappear. Only the canvases are lit up, like epiphanic icons: they seem to float in the darkened space. To approach them, the visitor walks over a floor that has become limp. This

feeling of unstable balance leads him or her to memorise the experience physically. The spectator hears the monotonous soundwave of the images surrounding him. All that remains to be done is to be aware of one's perception, by following the maxim by which the artist defines his own practice. After all, the latter has not created these forms, he has simply summoned, captured, recorded, and fixed them in order to talk to us about painting. He has organised the conditions which enable the forms to appear and then imagined the environment which will render this perception accessible to others. Remaining attentive to animate things or things becoming animate, since even technological artefacts become almost alive in the universe that is being explored. Might Céleste Boursier-Mougenot be seeking to "hack into the system. Merge with it, deep enough that it, not <him>, begins to talk to us"?

\* William Gibson, *Pattern Recognition*. Ed. Penguin, 2011.

**Céleste Boursier-Mougenot was born in Nice in 1961. He works and lives in Sète, France. Major figure in the landscape of contemporary international art, he was a winner of the International Studio Program (PS1) in New York in 1998-1999. Numerous institutions have organized solo exhibitions of his work: the HAB Galerie in Nantes (2018), the Minsheng Art Museum of Shanghai and the Centre d'art contemporain Yverdon-les-Bains in Switzerland (2017), the Copenhagen Contemporary in Denmark (2016-2017), the Palais de Tokyo in Paris (2015), the Forum of Centre Pompidou-Metz (2015), the Abattoirs de Toulouse (2014), the Peabody Essex Museum in the United-States (2014), the National Gallery Victoria in Melbourne (2013) or among others the Maison Rouge in Paris (2010). In 2015, he represented France at the 56th Venice Biennale. He took part in the 13th and the 14th Biennial of Contemporary Art in Lyon in 2015 and 2017.**

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