

DAEDALUS' CHOICE

Darren Almond, Vik Muniz, Philippe Ramette, Michael Scott,
James Siena, Joël Stein, Dan Walsh, Hannah Whitaker

23 February - 30 March 2019

Opening on Saturday, 23 February, from 3 to 8 pm



James Siena, *Closed Heliopolis*, 2007.
Ink on paper sur, 161 x 110 cm.
©James Siena. Courtesy of the Artist, Pace Gallery and Xippas

"Daedalus' Choice", the new collective exhibition at Xippas Paris, brings together the work of eight artists relating to the theme of the labyrinth and its various dimensions. It invites the visitor into a scenographic maze and imagines the fantasised insurrection of a legendary figure, turned curator.

At the entrance, *Closed Heliopolis* (2007) by James Siena introduces the subject in the form of a labyrinthine city, seen from above. By definition, these representations are devoid of perspective but James Siena draws the city using an algorithm and in this way, creates the illusion of an impasse.

The visitor moves past this by going down the stairs to discover the exhibition route in an underground room. In this staged space, the visitor is confronted with physical or

temporal labyrinths. The first piece is *Perfect Time* (2013), the mechanical clock by Darren Almond. Erected as a totem standing in the way of the entrance to the room, the work is reminiscent of a Borgesian fantasy in which stretches of time do not succeed each other but instead exist simultaneously.

Further on, the photo *Winter Landscapes* (2014) by Hannah Whitaker questions the restitution of our memories, by showing how a lived experience can shatter into pieces in the corridors of the unconscious to re-emerge in a fragmented form, like a puzzle. Recomposition is also apparent with Philippe Ramette's contribution, designed for this exhibition, consisting of walls suspended from the ceiling as if they were inverted. On these are hung a series of drawings which humorously introduce the human figure and its existential doubts. As a counterweight, Michael Scott's work draws our gaze from this suspended architecture and reveals underground labyrinths, made up of tubes, piping and stop valves.

For their part, two pieces by Dan Walsh explore the abstract dimension of the subject. Their titles echo each other phonetically - *Treat* (2013) and *Retreat* (2009), and their ornamental composition isolates or multiplies the areas of confinement. This idea of an abstract labyrinth is also found in the work by Joël Stein, who explored this subject since the end of the 1950s and here recalls the Greek iconography of a unicursal labyrinth, and again in the works of James Siena, whose concept uses an algorithm and transforms his work into fluid, moving, or geometric compositions.

Finally, there are mazes in the literal sense of the term, reinterpreted by Vik Muniz, such as *Carcere XIV, The Gothic Arch, after Piranesi Prison* (2002), a prison imagined by Piranesi at the end of the 18th century or *Dog, After Francesco Segala* (2001), the dog drawn by the 16th century Italian architect. With the latter it becomes possible to play with one's gaze, following an imaginary path to find an exit, in the manner of Daedalus.

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Darren Almond

Born in 1971 in Wigan (UK), Darren Almond lives and works in London.

An explorer, fascinated by the question of time and its representation, Darren Almond has developed a body of work over the last twenty years which combines photographs, film, sketches, installations, paintings and sculptures. This diversity of media has enabled him to experiment with the sensation of time passing, individual and collective memory, movement and space. In 1997, he was the youngest YBA to take part in the Charles Saatchi's *Sensation* exhibition, with two large-scale works including *A Bigger Clock* (1997). In 2005, he was nominated for the Turner Prize.

Public collections (selection): MoMA (New York), Tate Gallery (London), Museum of Contemporary Art (Chicago), Elgiz Museum of Contemporary Art (Istanbul), Fonds National d'Art Contemporain (Paris), Fondation Beyeler (Basel), Museum Folkwang (Essen). He is represented by White Cube, Matthew Marks Gallery, Max Hetzler Gallery and Xippas Geneva.

Vik Muniz

Born in 1961 in São Paulo (Brazil), Vik Muniz lives and works between Rio de Janeiro and New York.

Known for his reconstitutions of images drawn from the history of art or collective memory using unusual materials such as chocolate, wire or cut-up magazines, Vik Muniz draws attention to our ways of seeing. Through astonishing visual play, his work transcends the two dimensions of photographic imagery and plays on the discrepancies between one's gaze and one's knowledge.

In 2001, Vik Muniz represented Brazil at the 49th Venice Biennale. His work is the subject of the film *Waste Land* (2010), which won an award at the 2010 Sundance Festival and was nominated for Best Documentary at the Oscars in 2011. In 2011, Vik Muniz was named Goodwill Ambassador for UNESCO. In 2015, he founded Morro do Vidigal, a school for the visual arts for children from the Vidigal favela in Rio de Janeiro.

Public collections (selection): MoMA (New York), Guggenheim Museum (New York), Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), Tate Gallery (London), Centre Georges Pompidou (Paris), Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia (Madrid).

Philippe Ramette

Born in 1961 in Auxerre (France), Philippe Ramette lives and works in Paris.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, Philippe Ramette has pursued his research by way of what he calls "reflexive sculptures", putting himself or the spectator in fantastical and often absurd situations. Defining himself as a sculptor, the artist also works with photography and drawing, the latter resembling sketches of mental visions, often linked to preparatory work.

Philippe Ramette's work is visible in various public spaces: his sculpture *Eloge du pas de côté*, installed on the Place du Bouffay in Nantes in 2018 for the *Voyage à Nantes* festival, has become permanent. A large-scale installation, *Eloge du déplacement*, was inaugurated in Nice in the summer of 2018 and can now be seen along the new tram line.

Public and private collections (selection): Fonds National d'Art Contemporain (Paris), Centre Georges Pompidou (Paris), MAC/VAL (Vitry-sur-Seine), MAMCO (Geneva), Maison Européenne de la Photographie (Paris), SMAK, Museum Van Hedendaage Kunst (Gand), Israel Museum (Jerusalem), Fondation Neufchâteau (Paris), Société Générale (La Défense, France). Philippe Ramette is represented by Xippas.

Michael Scott

Born in 1958 in Paoli (Pennsylvania, US), Michael Scott lives and works in New York.

An established painter on the contemporary New York art scene, his work is part of a major recent current in American art (namely represented by Peter Halley and Steven Parrino), at the intersection between radical abstraction and forms inherited from pop art and conceptual art. Since 1989, he has been making paintings which push the visual experience to its limits. However, his career has been marked by breaks, forms of letting go, where the artist returned to figurative work and adopted approaches relating to expressionism and comic books.

Public collections: LACMA (Los Angeles), Le Consortium (Dijon), MAMCO (Geneva), MACBA (Buenos Aires), Fonds National d'Art Contemporain (Paris).

James Siena

Born in 1957 in Oceanside (California, US), James Siena lives and works in New York.

James Siena is a seminal artist on the New York art scene. His work, by turns lithographs, engravings, drawings and paintings, involves complex geometrical abstractions established on the basis of a set of rules which he imposes on himself, basic units which he repeats obsessively and refers to as "visual algorithms". The mathematical rigour of the process does not, however, exclude the presence of the artist's hand and the fragility of a gesture which is constantly repeated.

Public collections (selection): Museum of Fine Arts (Boston), Museum of Modern Art (San Francisco), Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), MoMA (New York), Miami Art Museum (Florida), Whitney Museum of American Art (New York). He is represented by the Pace Gallery.

Joël Stein

Born in 1926 in Saint-Martin-Boulogne, Joël Stein passed away in 2012 in Foucarville (France).

Joël Stein is a major figure in kinetic art and was one of the founding members, in 1960, of the Groupe de Recherche d'Art Visuel (GRAV), with François Morellet, Jean-Pierre Yvaral, Julio Le Parc, Francisco Sobrino and Horacio Garcia-Rossi. At the heart of the artistic experimentation of the time, he explored visual phenomena involving mathematical algorithms and created labyrinths and manipulable objects, where the spectator participated in the activation of the work. Part of his work on grids and frames is collected in the album *Jeu de trames* (1962), with a preface by Pierre Schaeffer. Alongside Yvaral, Joël Stein worked with the film maker Henri-Georges Clouzot and designed the special effects for the films *L'Enfer* (1964, unfinished) and *La Prisonnière* (1968). These cinematographic collaborations led to an exhibition, *Devil in the Flesh: When Op Art electrifies the cinema* organised by the MAMAC in Nice, where several of Joël Stein's pieces will be visible from May 2019.

Public collections: Centre Georges Pompidou (Paris), MoMA (New York), Musée d'Art Moderne (Paris), Centre National des Arts Plastiques (Paris).

Dan Walsh

Born in 1960 in Philadelphia (Pennsylvania, US), Dan Walsh lives and works in New York.

Since the early 90s, Dan Walsh has built up a body of paintings which inscribe the fragility of gestures in a minimalist, geometrical vein. Painted freehand, his compositions are made up of modernist grids, generic patterns which are repeated according to a system or algorithm. The colours are also progressively nuanced according to mathematical logic. Oscillating between systemic rigidity and mastered freedom, their structure evolves like a mandala, occasionally defying the laws of optics by creating the illusion of movement.

Public and private collections (selection): MoMA (New York), Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University (Ithaca, NY), Jumex Collection (Mexico), Fonds National d'Art Contemporain (Paris), Collezione Maramotti (Reggio Emilia, Italy), Centre for Contemporary Non-Objective Art (Brussels). He is represented by Xippas and the Paula Cooper Gallery.

Hannah Whitaker

Born in 1980 in Washington D.C. (US), Hannah Whitaker lives and works in New York.

A Yale University and ICP/Bard graduate, she composes her images according to organisational principles (visual patterns, repetitions, digital systems). While her work is digital in its conceptual scope, it is analog in its construction. Hannah Whitaker uses a 4x5 inch photographic chamber, literally manipulating her images using paper screens, directly on the film, by repeatedly exposing the same negative. The images obtained in this way are made up of successive layers which combine technique and craftsmanship. Her subjects range from landscapes to anonymous bodies, prompting questions about the subjectivity of looking in the digital age.

Hannah Whitaker's work was nominated for the Prix Découverte at the Rencontres d'Arles and was selected for the prestigious photography exhibition FOAM Talent (2014). Private collections (selection): Crédit Suisse Collection, UBS Art Collection.

Hannah Whitaker is represented by Marinaro (New York), M+B Gallery (Los Angeles), and Galerie Christophe Gaillard (Paris).