

# SPOLIA

## GUILLAUME DÉSANGES & MOUNTAINCUTTERS

**Exhibition from 13<sup>th</sup> October 2018 to 6<sup>th</sup> January 2019**

Opening Friday October, 12<sup>th</sup> at 6pm30

With: mountaintcutters, Etel Adnan, CADA (Colectivo Acciones de Arte), Danièle Allemand et Stéphane Gérard (initiateurs de l'atelier Phénomènes), Manuel Joseph, l'art du Kintsugi (Catherine Algoet/mountaintcutters), Moondog, Pier Paolo Pasolini, W.G. Sebald, Richard Serran Christophe Tarkos



Photo : mountaintcutters, Saint-Nazaire, 2018

**First exhibition of the cycle "Fictional Genealogies" proposed by the curator Guillaume Désanges at the invitation of Le Grand Café - contemporary art centre, Saint-Nazaire**

« *Under construction, everything is only half complete. In ruins, all is complete.* »

The Prince, Béla Tarr, Werckmeister Harmonies, 2000

Young duo mountaintcutters is a hybrid, practising *in situ* sculpture that radically contaminates the space of the sites where he/she exhibits. The vagaries of identity are echoed in a corresponding aesthetic incertitude that emphasises transitory situations and unfinished forms in apparently fortuitous compositions of a savage beauty. Corrupted materials and dirty objects, dust, earth and rust invading surfaces and floors, broken concrete slabs, rough and ready ceramic, continuously circulating water: mountaintcutters installations are traces of improbable activities, caught between construction and destruction, between architecture and archaeology, and looking at times like an abandoned building site. A raw, not to say brutal, character where the 'misshapen' arouses a degree of doubt or unease and also a particular fascination for the ruined. This obvious aridity can't hide the rigour or the precision of some discreetly theatrical, even spectacular, compositions that always suggest an activity 'by implication'. In fact, everything here resonates with an absent body for which these sculptures would be artificial limbs and organs, rudimentary and insufficient appendages locked into a functional logic whose finality escapes us. And if it were a scene from theatre, it would be from tragedy, or more precisely from the resurgence of tragedy in the industrial era. There is in fact a literary side to mountaintcutters' sculptural practice. The written work that accompanies it, raw poetry written in the first person, organically mirrors the material structures. Photographs sometimes appear to offer the beginnings of a narrative; from there on, an unfathomable mystery emanates from the *œuvre*, taken in the two etymological senses of work and of *opera*, i.e. related to difficulty and bodies being modified, but also to the enigma of creation.

of mountaintcutters across a vast installation that includes new productions (with sculptures, drawings, videos) yet is also a receptacle for other forms – films, objects, texts, documents, works, etc. – chosen by the curator and the artists to echo their work. From Etel Adnan's paintings to artefacts produced for the replica of the Chauvet Cave, from Pasolini's politico-poetic approach to the experimental music of Moondog, by way of poetry by Christophe Tarkos or Manuel Joseph, these heteroclit elements form a kind of 'fictional genealogy' laid out in space. A zone of muted tension pierced at the surface, as if by capillary action, with remnants of the repressed.

The title of this simultaneously collective and individual exhibition, *Spolia*, comes from a Latin word that designates the architectural use of a fragment of an existing construction by integrating it into a new whole. The obscure origins of this practice – at different times and places out of necessity, homage or displays of dominance through 'despoiled' property – sits perfectly with the fundamentally archaeological character of mountaintcutters' work and with the hybrid nature of this particular project. The artists carried out research in Saint-Nazaire and the surrounding area ahead of the exhibition, drawing on the industrial, historical and sensual resources of places. The whole therefore makes up a kind of 'meta exhibition' or total artwork giving an enlarged understanding of both their work and the ghosts that haunt it. It is notably concerned with destruction, fusion, fossils, tragedy, reparation, poetry and politics, but captured in a non-discursive system arising instead from the ineffable, or even from the literally 'unnameable', i.e.: that which refuses to be named.

Guillaume Désanges

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Special thanks to: Amaury Cornut, Philippe Durand, Stéphane Gérard, Wolfgang Gnida, Jean-Marc Prévost

The Spolia exhibition project unfolds the work

# FICTIONAL GENEALOGIES"

A CYCLE OF EXHIBITIONS DESIGNED BY GUILLAUME DÉSANGES

## SPOLIA

Guillaume Désanges & mountaintcutters

13<sup>th</sup> October 2018 - 6<sup>th</sup> January 2019

## OUEST FRANCE (working title)

Collective exhibition

Curators Guillaume Désanges and François Piron

25<sup>th</sup> May – 15<sup>th</sup> September 2019 (dates to be confirmed)

## RECORD OF THE INVISIBLE (working title)

Collective exhibition

Spring 2020

The 'Fictional Genealogies' cycle proposes three forms of constructing, or rather extracting, connections in time and in space; each exhibition is thought of as drawing a new map based on observing the terrain, on intuition and on deduction. At the risk of being partial or sensualist, it is about taking an empirical, horizontal and embodied view of the relationships between forms, objects and ideas, rather than holding a totalising or teleological position. These three fairly disparate projects are therefore ultimately linked by method more than theme: a 'genealogy' conceptualised from, and made out of, a critical reflection on history, truth and the construction of stories. The hypotheses that are being tested are not dictated by the logic of culture or by historical knowledge, but neither are they scientifically unjustified. In other words, the exhibition is not being thought of as a way of seeking out, revealing and transmitting threads of pre-existing meaning, nor on the other hand is it a virtuoso compositional exercise disconnected from all reason; it is instead an autonomous form producing and justifying its own necessity, drawing as much from theory and intellect as from poetry and feeling, while always being ready to defend its own validity.

As a curator, for a long time I favoured group exhibitions and themes, placing works into ephemeral scenarios and counting on their polysemy and their capacity for infinite renewal. More recently, I have been working on solo projects, where a particular practice unfolds across long-term cycles. What interests me right now in curating is the midway point between group exhibition and solo exhibition, thinking about how the work as a whole plugs into the outside world and accepting that while the singularity of a process can't be reduced to a theme, it arouses a multiplicity of conscious and unconscious connections. It is a matter of imagining the exhibition as being unfolded rather than stacked up: showing the work and its sources, forms as well as referents, to the point of inventing them or conjuring them up and gambling on a consciously self-generating practice that could perhaps relate to art history as a whole. My work has

been marked of late by experiments that might be described as 'cultural' rather than strictly artistic, developed in collaboration with artists or curators\*. They mix works, objects, documents, texts, stories, facts, reproductions, etc. – while retaining contemporary art as their system and the public as their destination. The work that I want to do at Le Grand Café begins with this kind of trans-disciplinary, non-hierarchical and decentred base associating art with popular cultures or more or less minor forms of social and political history. These genealogies are qualified here as 'fictional' in the sense that, instead of teaching about 'natural' relationships, the process sheds light on what they owe to contingency, imagination and speculation without giving up on the desire to create meanings.

Guillaume Désanges

### Notes

\**Une exposition universelle (with Michel François at the Biennale de Louvain la Neuve, 2013). Curated session 1: The Dora Garcia Files (with Dora Garcia, at the Perez Art Museum, Miami, 2014), or L'ennemi de mon ennemi (with Neil Beloufa, at the Palais de Tokyo, 2018)*

**Guillaume Désanges** is curator and art critic. He leads Work Method, an independent production organization, which develops internationally. exhibition and conference projects

Last projects: *Ma'aminim / Les Croyants* (2015, Musée d'art et d'histoire, Saint-Denis & Tranzitdisplay, Prague, Rep. Tchèque), *Poésie Balistique* (2016, La Verrière, Fondation d'entreprise Hermès, Bruxelles), *L'esprit français, contre-cultures, 1969-1989* (2017, La maison rouge - Fondation Antoine de Galbert, Paris), *L'ennemi de mon ennemi* (2018, Palais de Tokyo, Paris)

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## EXHIBITIONS AT LE GRAND CAFÉ

### UPCOMING

#### Anne Le Troter

Solo exhibition from 2<sup>nd</sup> February to 28<sup>th</sup> April 2019  
At Le Grand Café - contemporary art centre,  
Saint-Nazaire

**Free Entrance**

### PRACTICAL INFORMATION

#### Opening hours

From Tuesday to Sunday from 14.00 to  
19.00  
and Wednesdays from 11.00 to 19.00  
Free Entrance

#### Le Grand Café - centre d'art contemporain

Place des 4 Z'horloges  
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haut parleur  
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