

ARTUS DE LAVILLÉON



The Decline of the American Empire
Customised Paintings
Paintings
Happenings, Performances and Installations
Papiers Importants Divers et Variés

Books and Zines
Films and Theatre Plays
The Room Project

Paris New York / 2008 2011



Toute exploitation commerciale
de ce livre est interdite

Le courage de ne rien être
PIDV
2003
Polaroid
6,3 x 11 cm

Le courage de ne rien
être,

personne ne l'a
jamais.

~~IN A FEW YEARS~~
I BECAME THE VERY ~~RIGHT~~
THING I SWORE TO ~~DESTROY~~
DESTROY

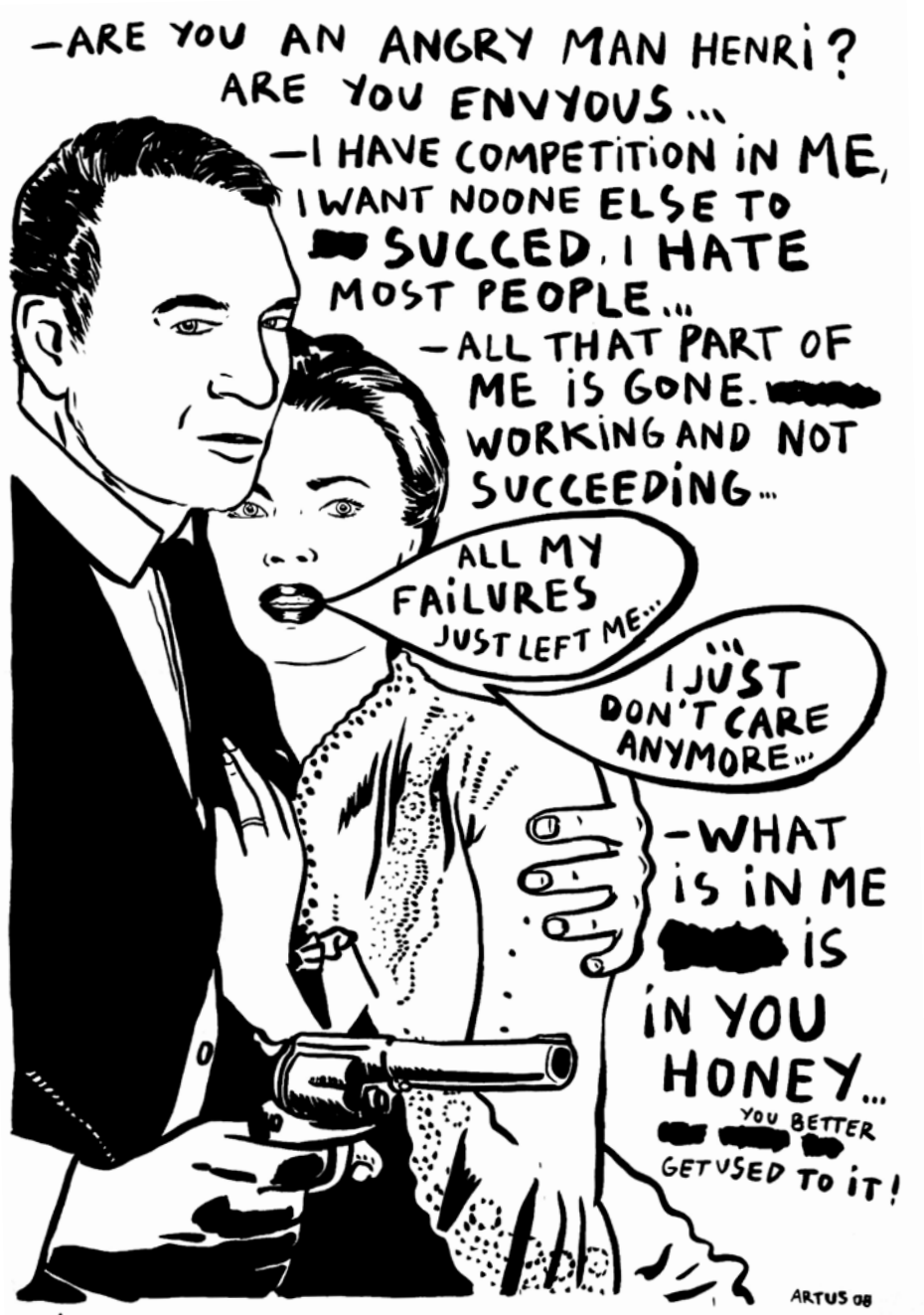
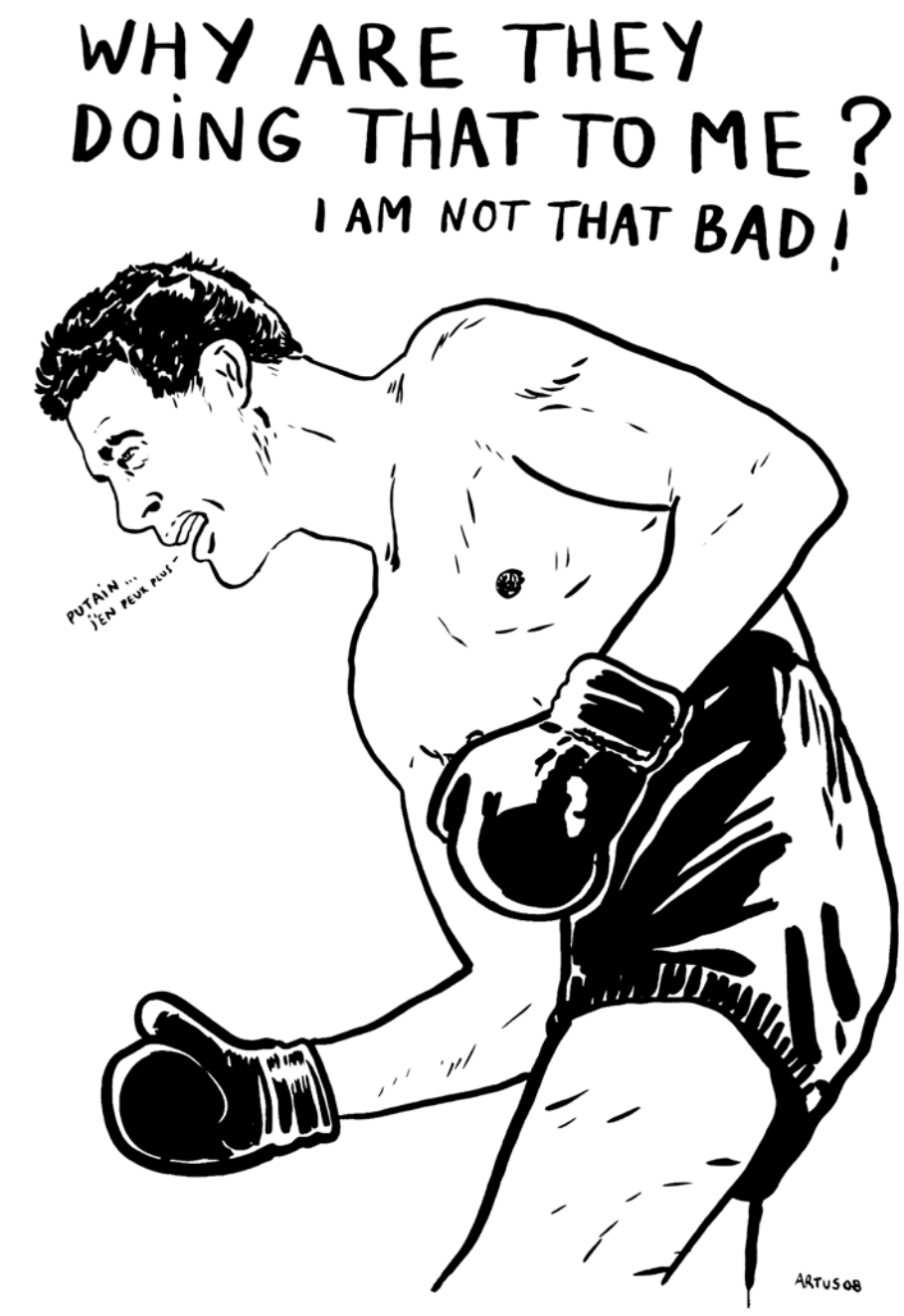
I would soon
become the
very thing
I swore to
destroy

JUSQUE LÀ, MON HISTOIRE
ÉTAIT SIMPLE... C'ÉTAIT ~~MAIS~~
L'HISTOIRE D'UN TYPE PLEIN
D'IDEAUX...



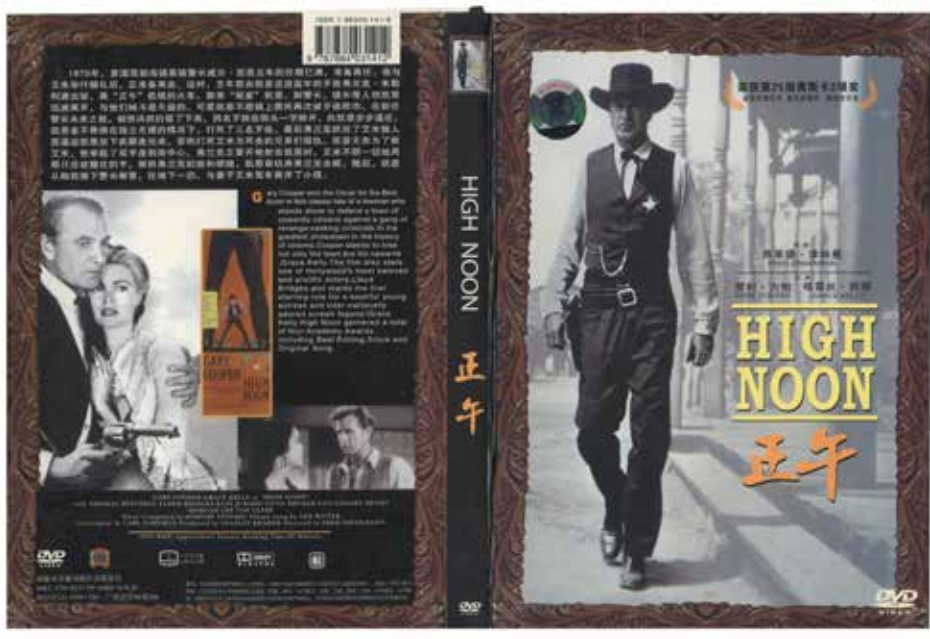
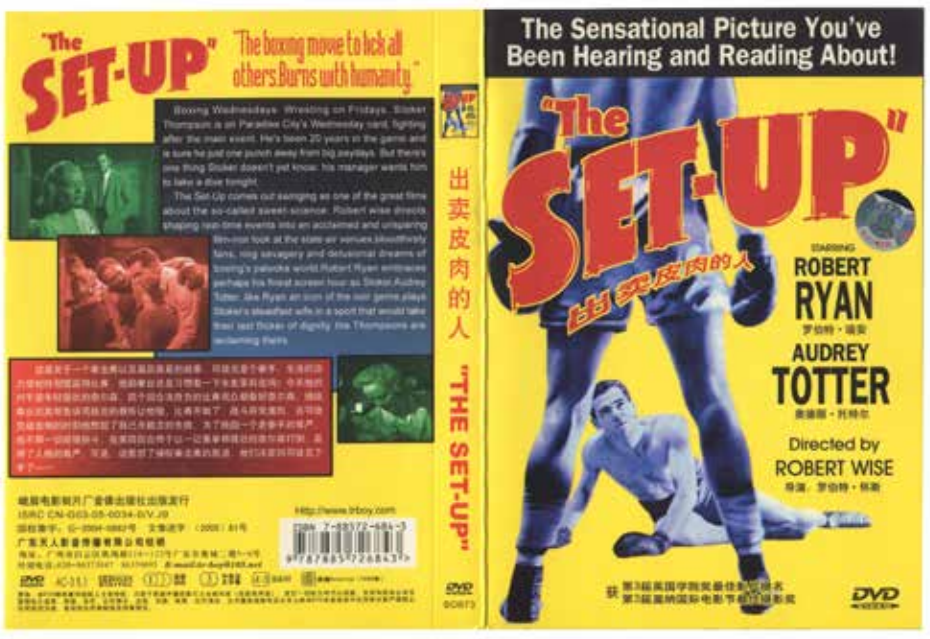
ARTUS08





Why are they doing that to me
Le déclin de l'empire américain
2008
Black and white ink on paper
160 x 110 cm

My Failures
Le déclin de l'empire américain
2008
Black and white ink on paper
160 x 110 cm



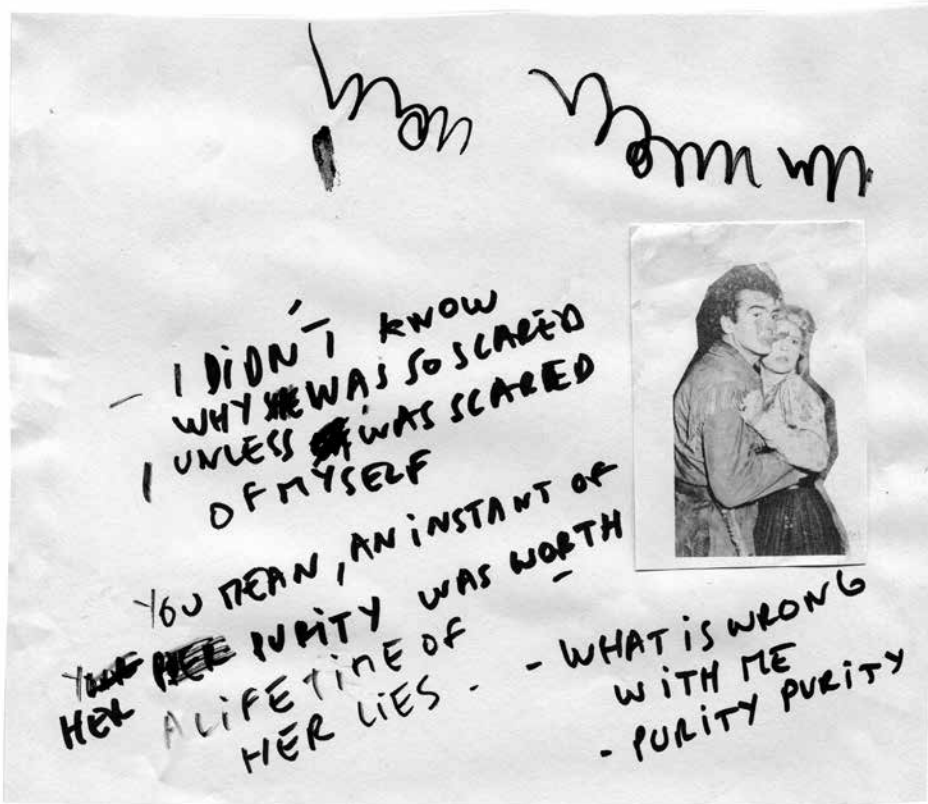
The Set Up & High Noon
PIDV
2010
Chinese DVD covers
27.5 x 18.3 cm each

Lying
Ripped Drawings
2008
Black and white ink on paper
180 x 120 cm

-MAYBE YOU ARE
LYING TO YOURSELF,
DID YOU EVER
THOUGHT OF THAT?

-EVERYDAY!





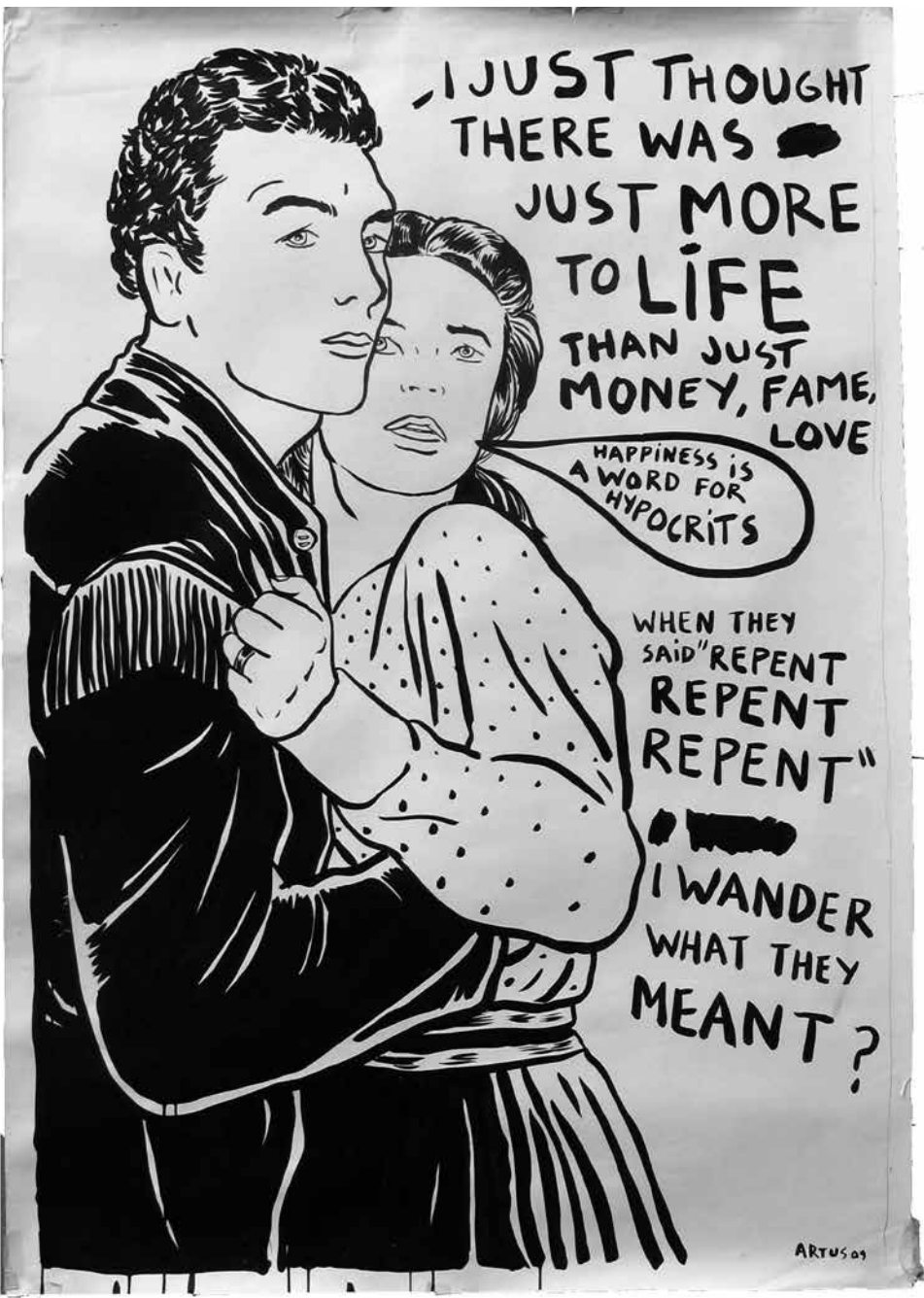
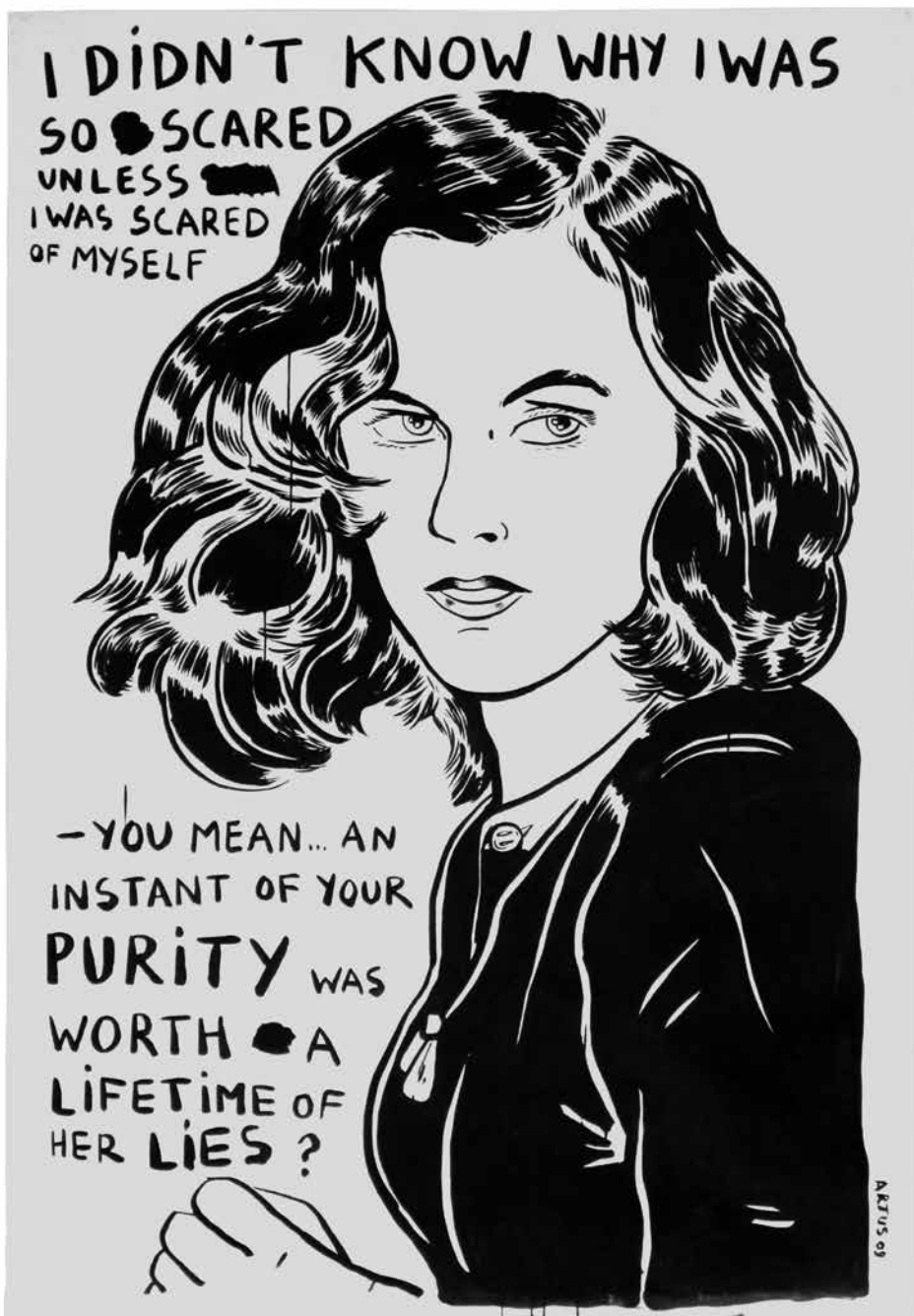
Movie Quotes

PIDV

2010

Collage and marker on paper

29,7 x 21 cm



Scared

Repent

2009

Black and white ink on paper

180 x 120 cm

Kill Yourself and Die

Peinture Customisée

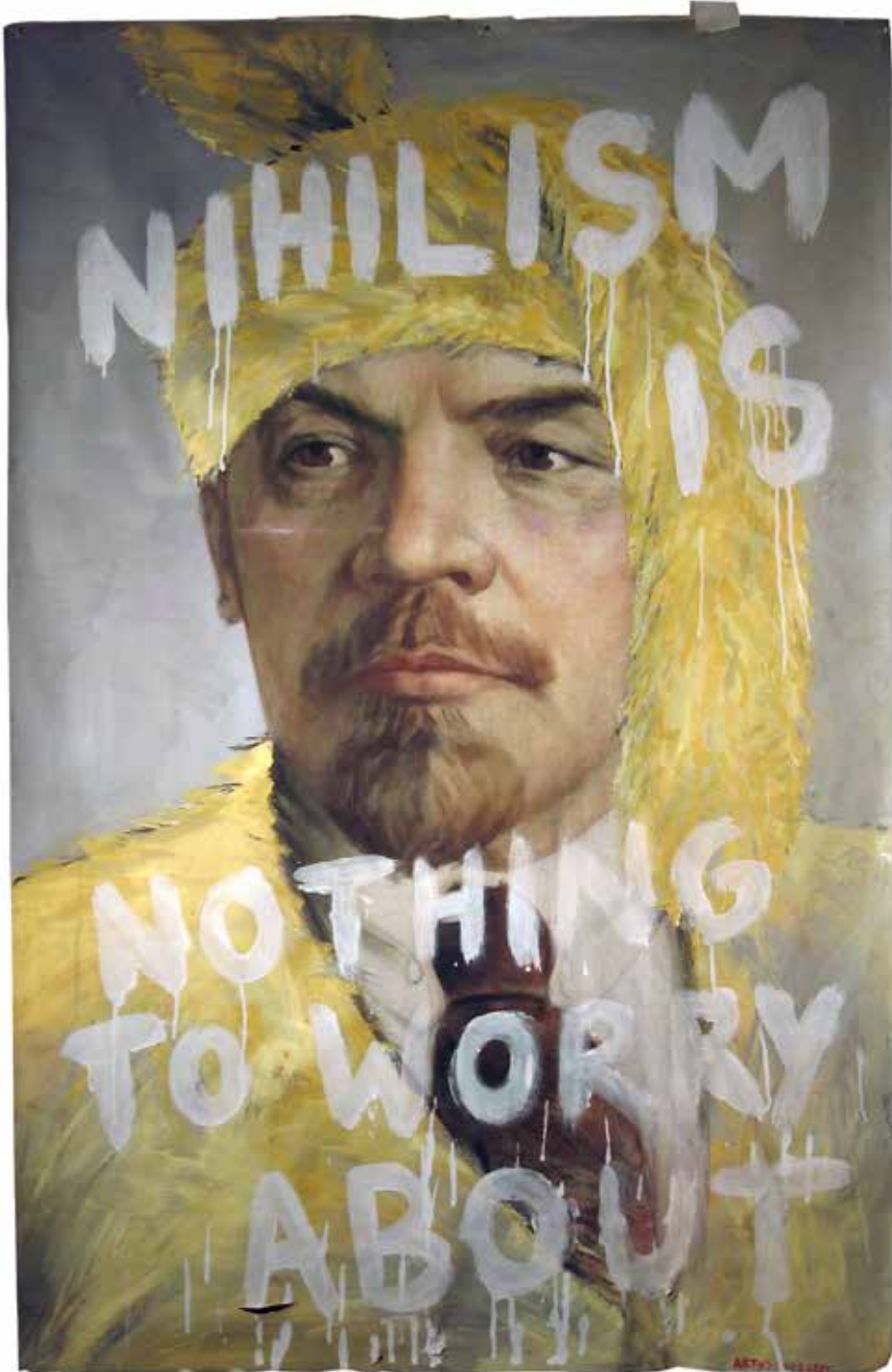
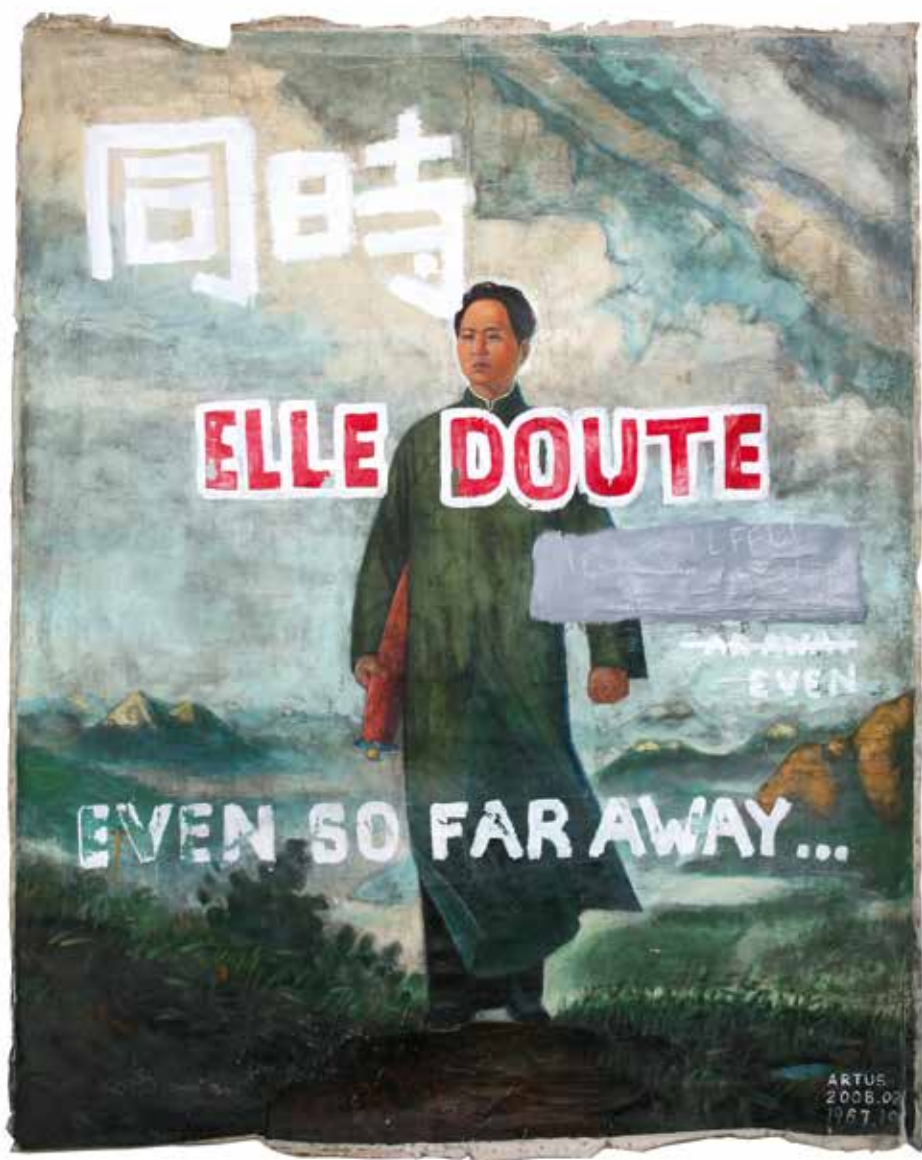
Marie Bracquemond 1896 / Artus 2004

Gouache and oil on canvas

Artist's collection



2. Customised Paintings



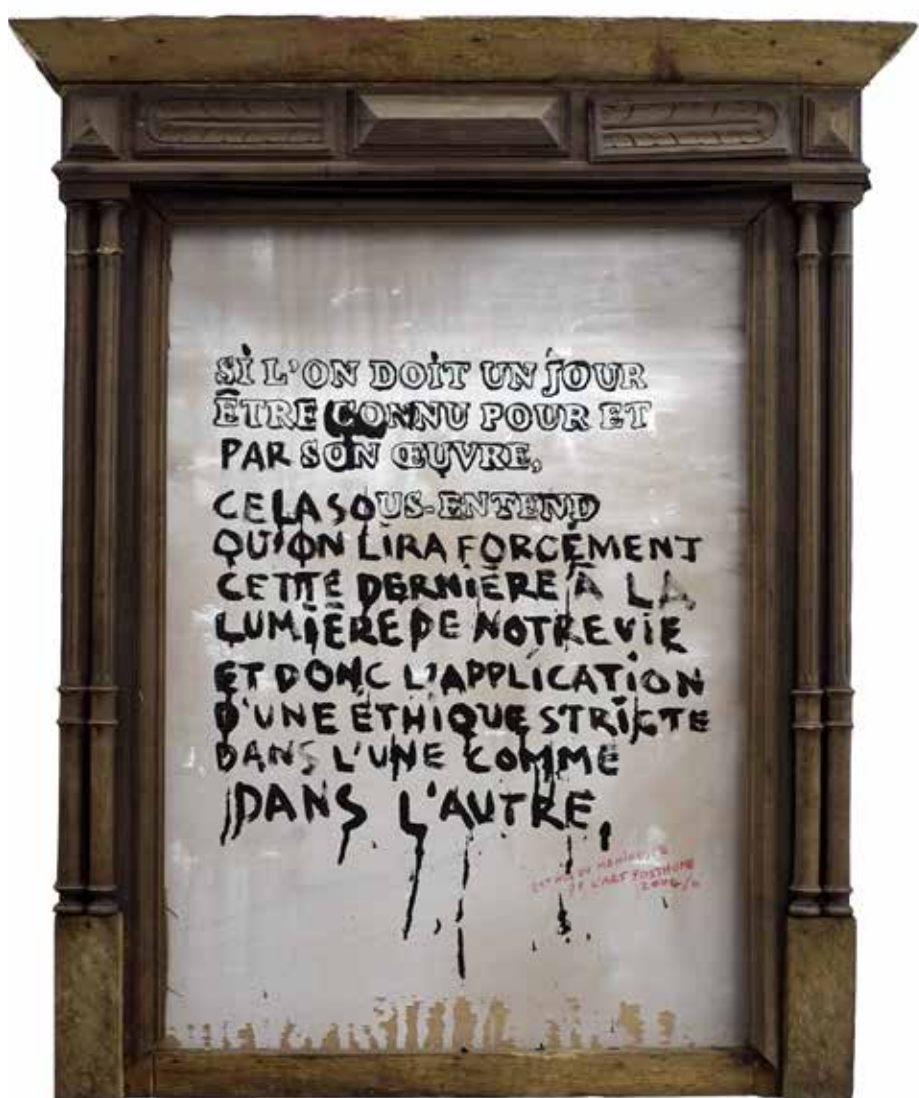
Elle doute
Peintures customisées
1967 / 2008
Acrylic chalk and oil on canvas
225 x 180 cm

How Many Losers Asks for Forgiveness
Peintures customisées
2008
Acrylic chalk and oil on canvas
194 x 124 cm

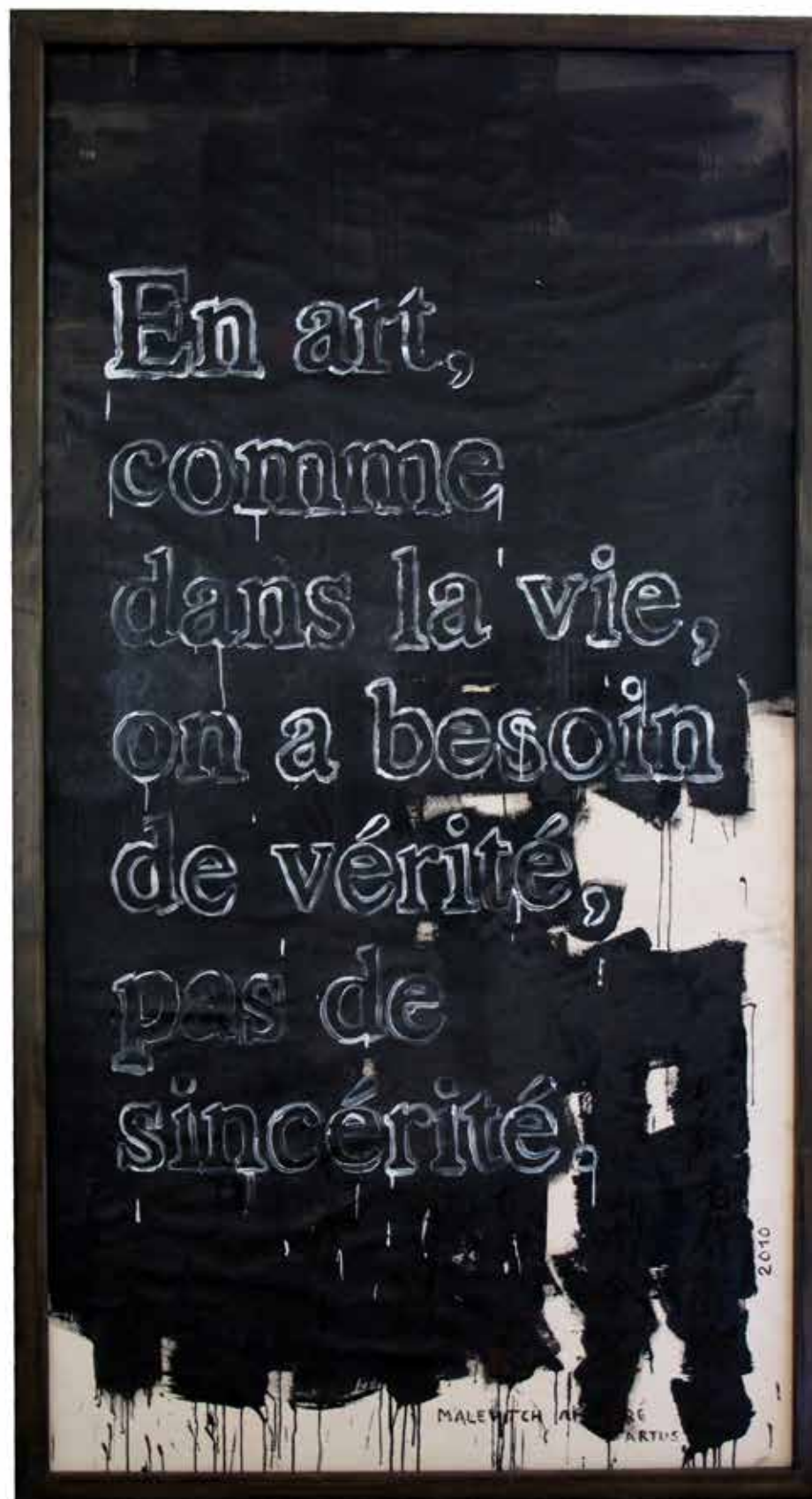
Nihilism is Nothing to Worry About
Peintures customisées
1970 / 2005
Gesso acrylic and oil on canvas
150 x 100 cm

Une conception particulière de l'art
Lieux communs
2008
Acrylic chalk and oil on canvas
200 x 130 cm

UNE
CONCEPTION
PARTICULIÈRE
DE L'ART QUE LE
FORÇAIT À NE
PAS CRÉER
QUE POUSSÉ PAR
L'INSPIRATION



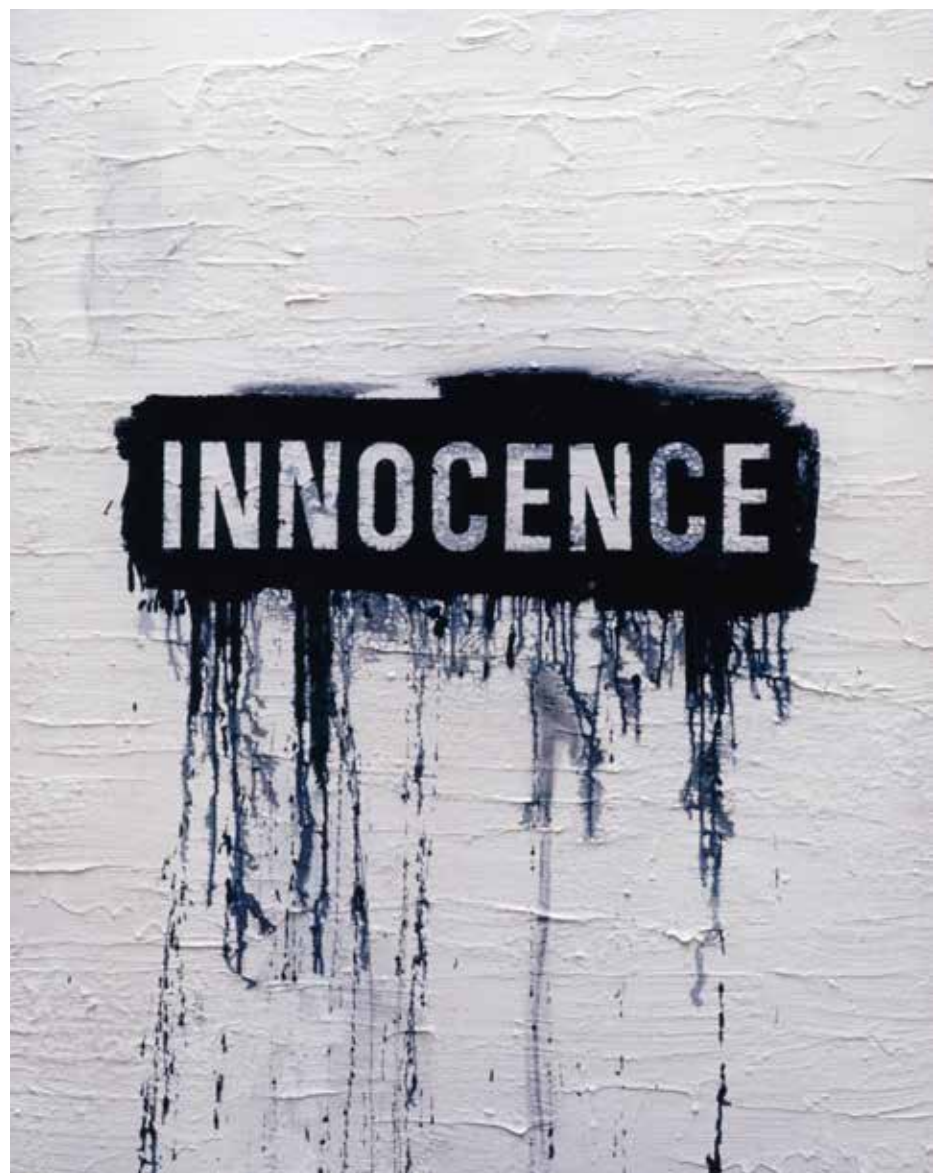
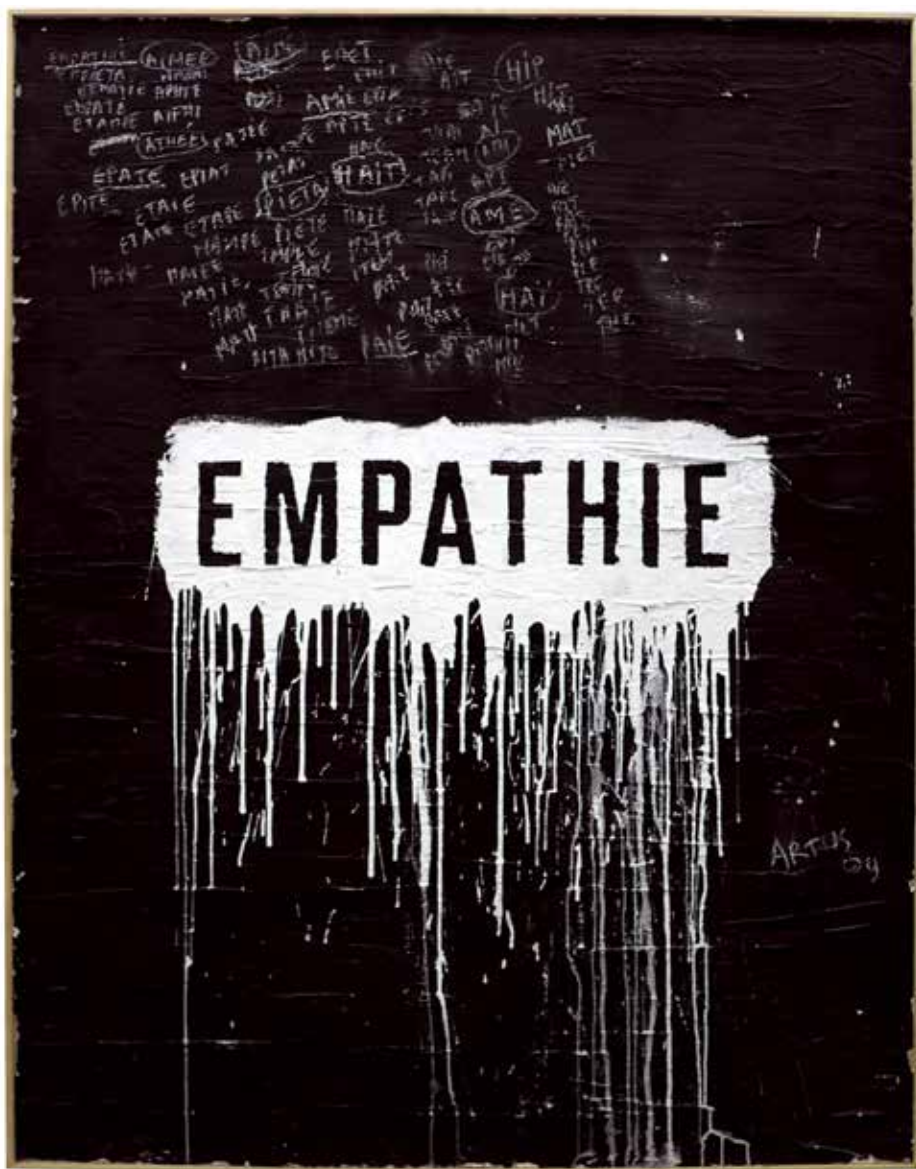
Éthique
Extrait du manifeste de l'Art Posthume
2010
Black ink and Gesso on wood
110 x 99 cm



Être pour être
Lieux communs
2010
Black table paint and Gesso on canvas
255 x 141 cm



3. Paintings

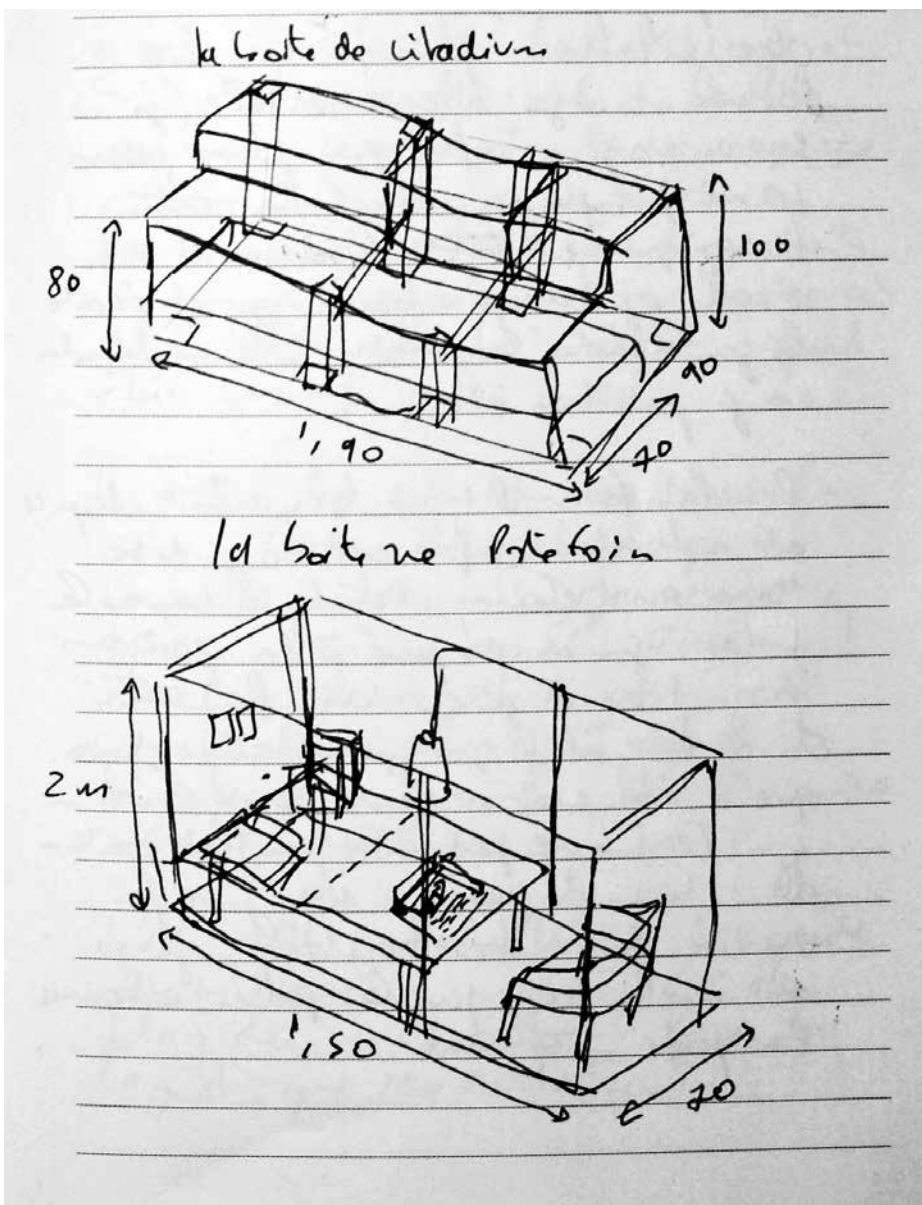


Empathie
 Innocence
 2009 / 2004
 Black table paint and Gesso on wood / canvas
 164 x 132 cm

View of the exhibition Tout ou rien
 The gallery will be closed during the show 2009
Consumérisme
 Two weeks worn jacket 2010



4. Installations Performances and Happenings



Consumérisme

2009

Performance

190 x 90 x 90 cm

150 x 70 x 200 cm

For two weeks, a man dressed in a white suit lives in a minimum vital space hidden in a department store.

Everyday the texts he has written at night, in another box built in his home, are being published on the website of a national newspaper.

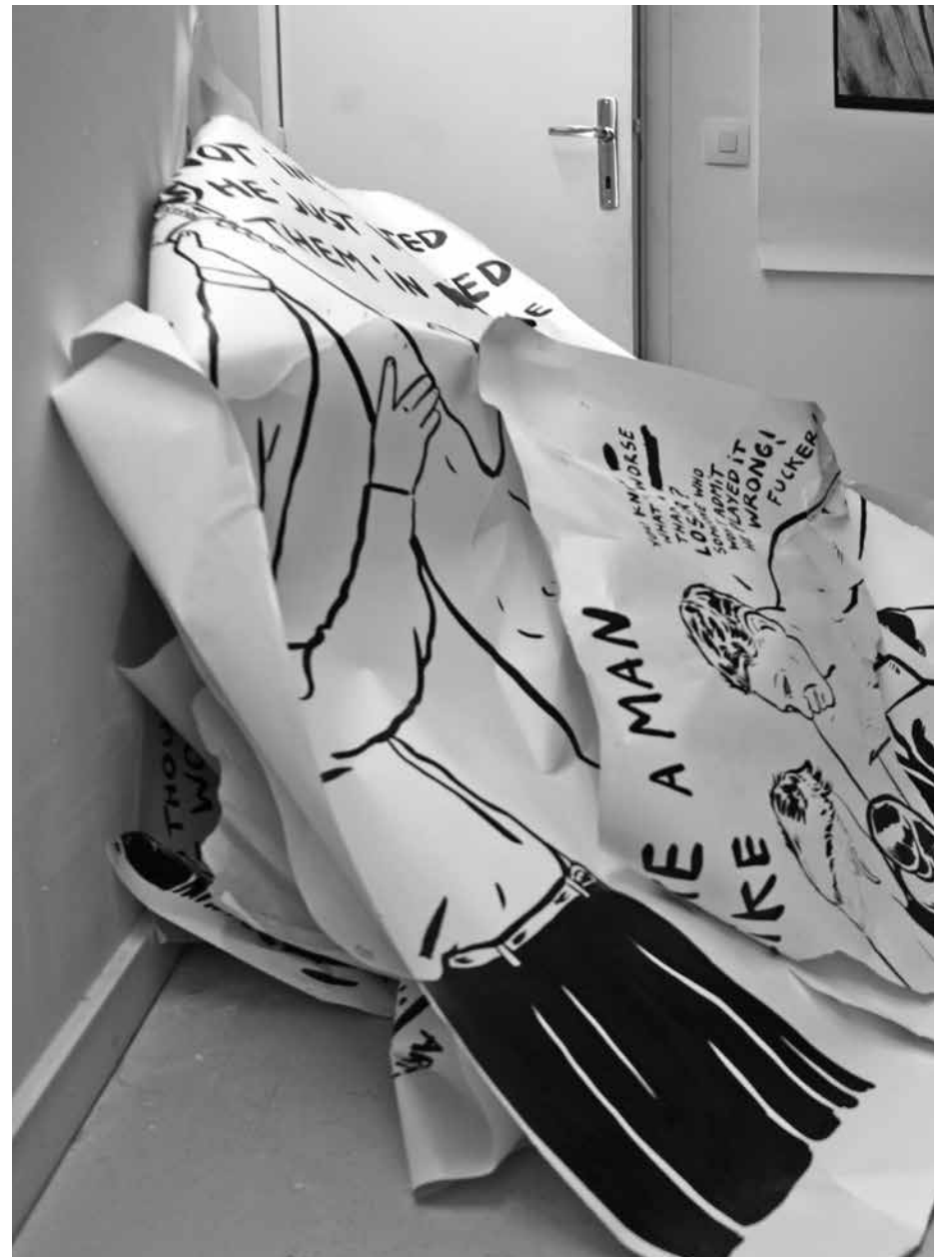
Posters en vente à la boutique

Ripped Drawings

2009

Black ink on paper

180 x 120 cm each



Chacun pour soi
Destroyed Drawings

2009

Black ink on paper

1300 x 270 cm

Papiers Importants Divers et Variés

Installation

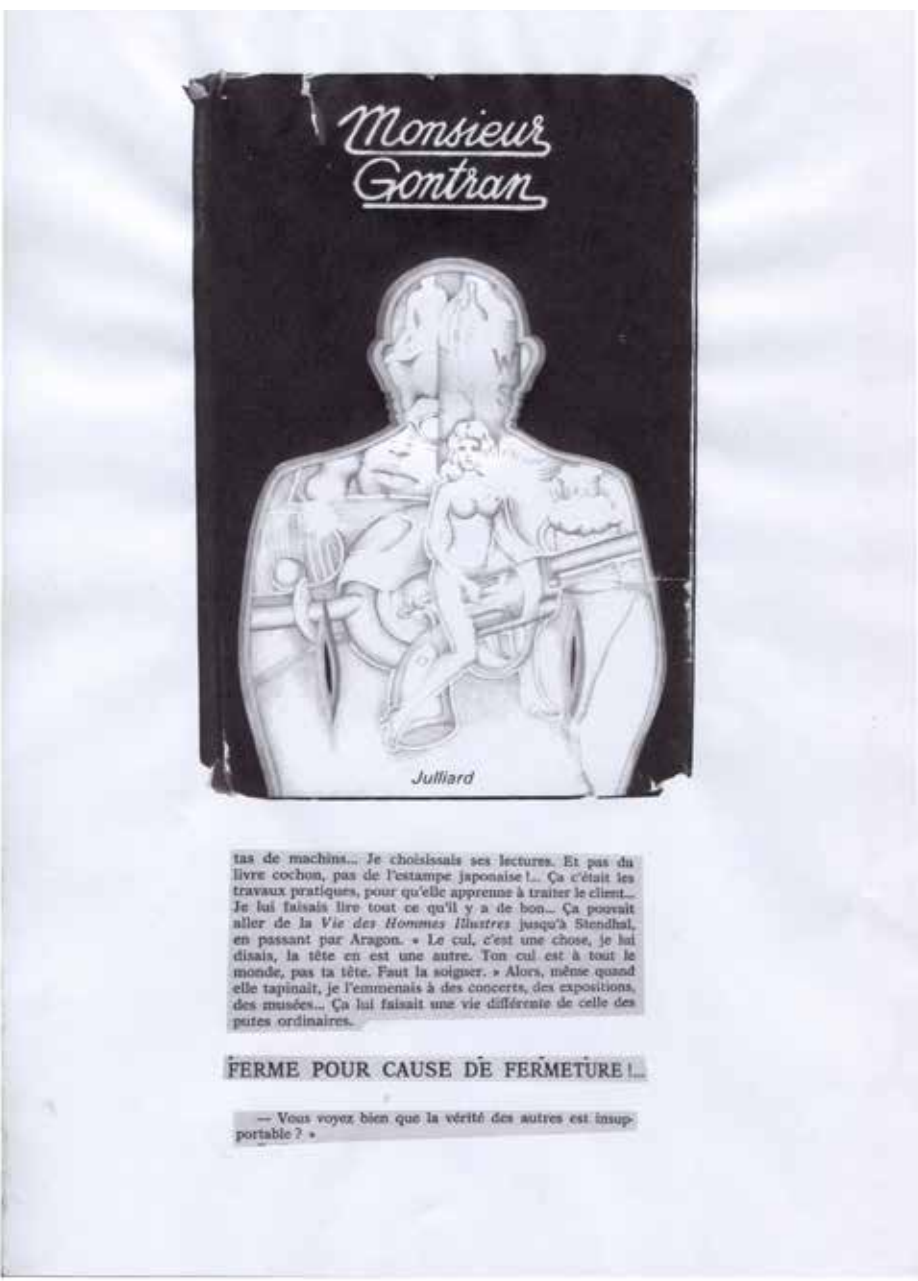
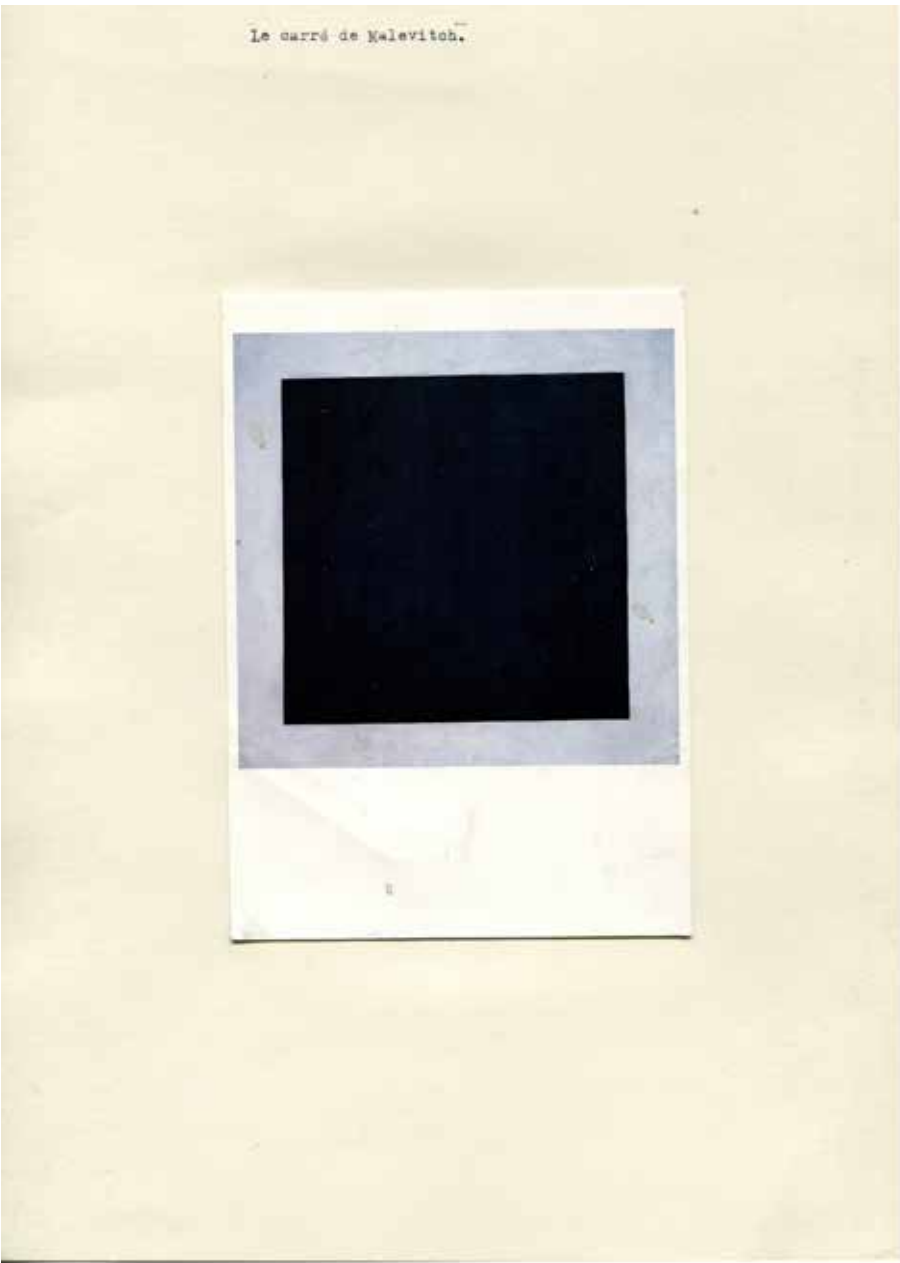
2010

Galerie Patricia Dorfmann

29, 7 x 21 cm each



5. Papiers Importants Divers et Variés

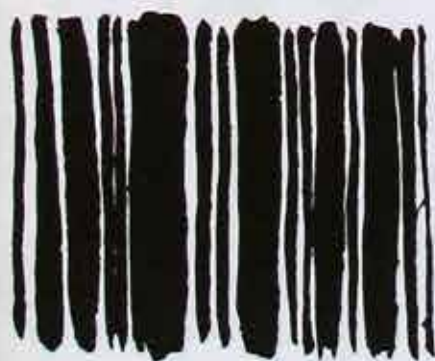
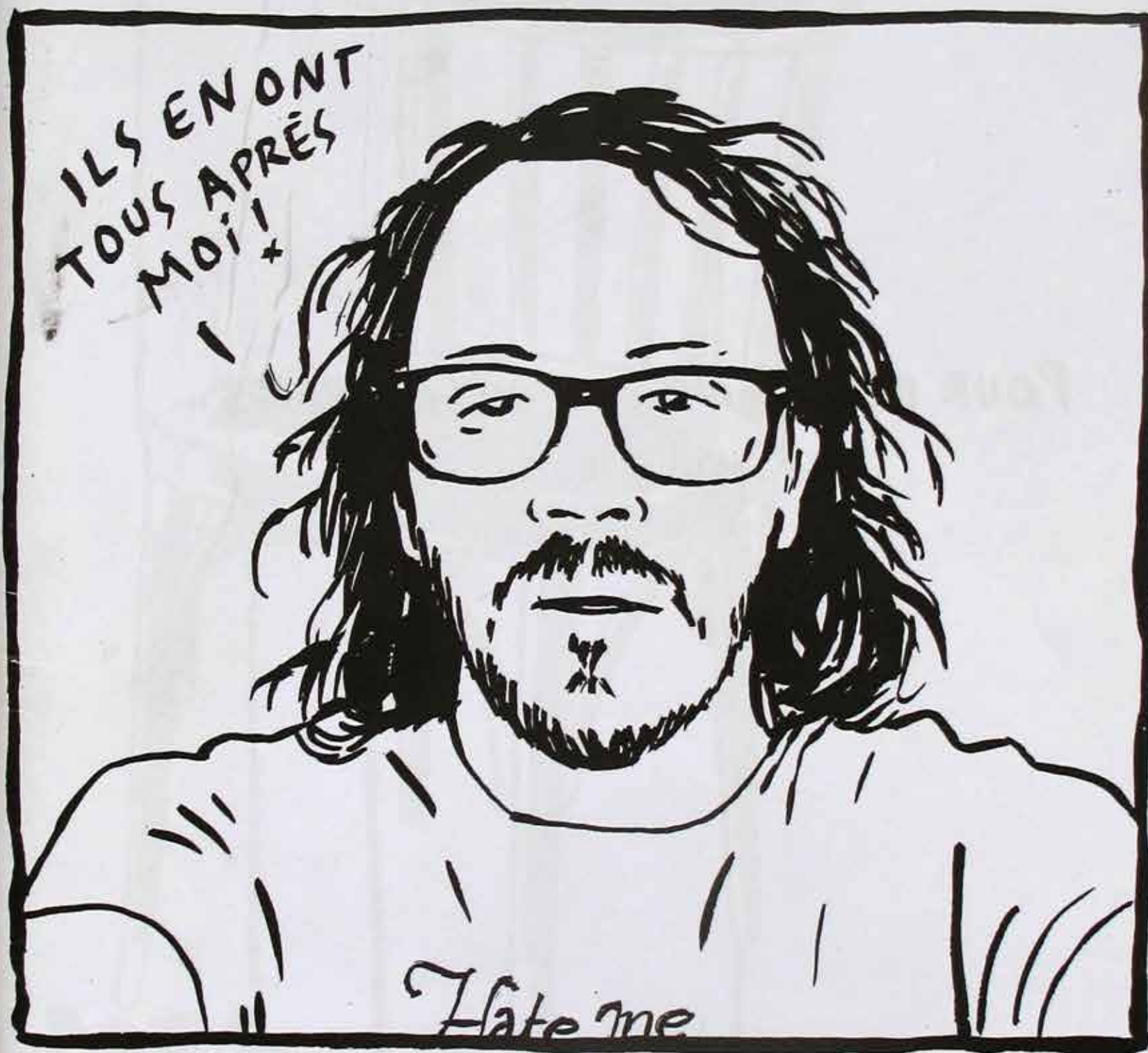


Papiers Importants Divers et Variés
Images, Notes, Documents, Livres
2010
Documents
29,7 x 21 cm

Deadpan 1
Fanzine 72 pages
2006
Self printed book 4/12
29,7 x 21 cm

DEADPAN #1

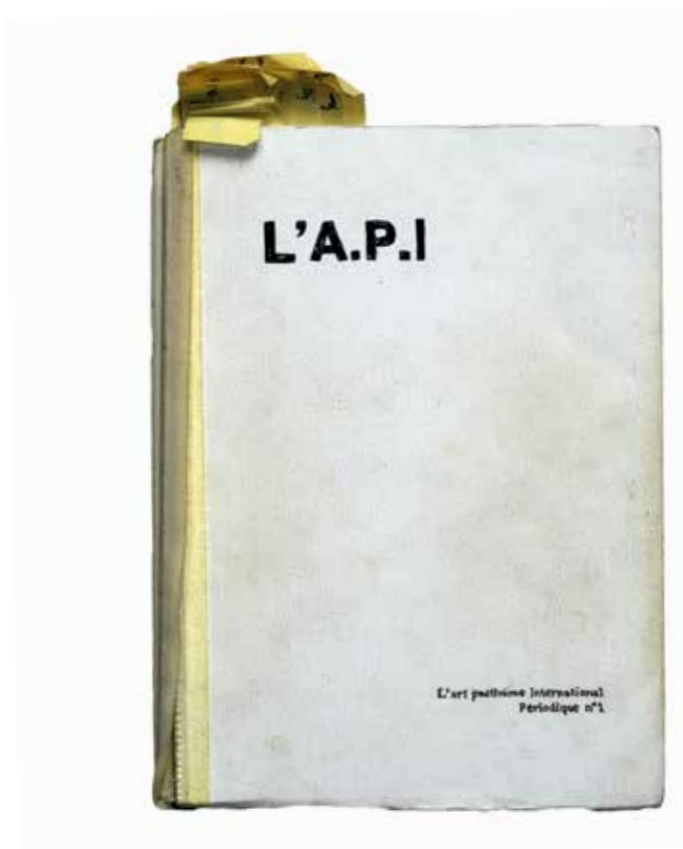
TALES FROM THE MODERN WORLD



IT IS NOT A QUESTION OF MONEY FAME OR ROCK N' ROLL. IT IS JUST ABOUT LOVE. LOVIN EACH OTHER I MEAN. AFTER ALL WHY NOT? POLITICS, THE POWER GAME, RECOGNITION. WHO CARES IF THERE IS NO LOVE. FAITH IS A GRANDMOTHER DOG - AND I AM HERE TO FEED THE DOG. WHO IS TALKING ABOUT SUB OR UNDERGROUND CULTURE NOWADAYS ANYWAYS? SUBVERSIF - TU PARLES! BLIND MAN SEES ALL - "DIE!"



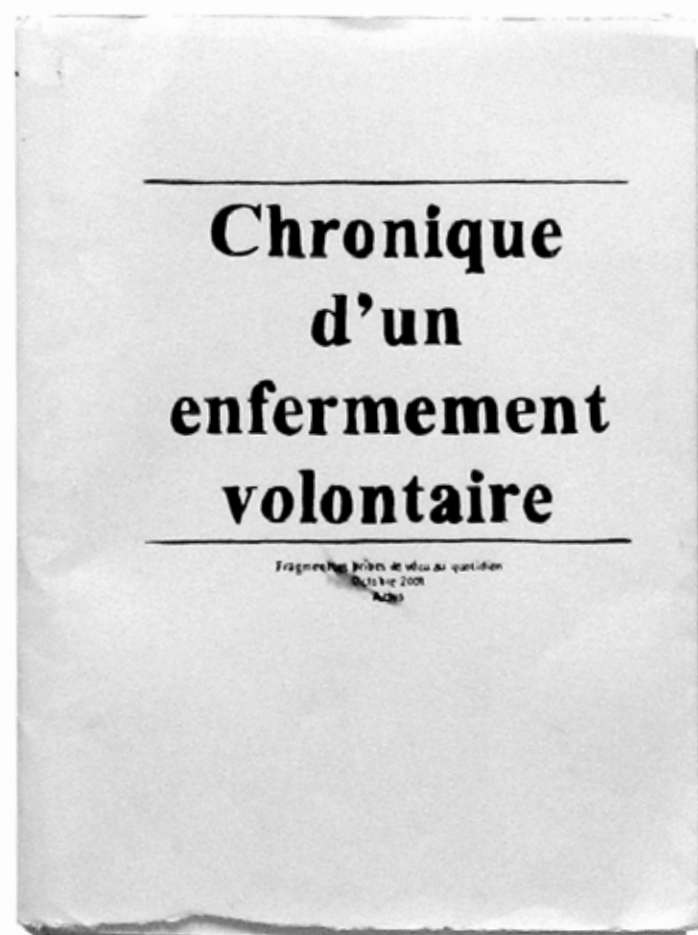
Artus
Notes pour des mémoires
2005
Self printed book 1/1
14,8 x 10,5 cm



L'A.P. I
Périodique de l'art posthume
2005
Self printed book 1/500
21 x 14,8 cm



Catalogue Artus
Galerie Patricia Dorfmann
2008
Printed book /500
42 x 29,7 cm

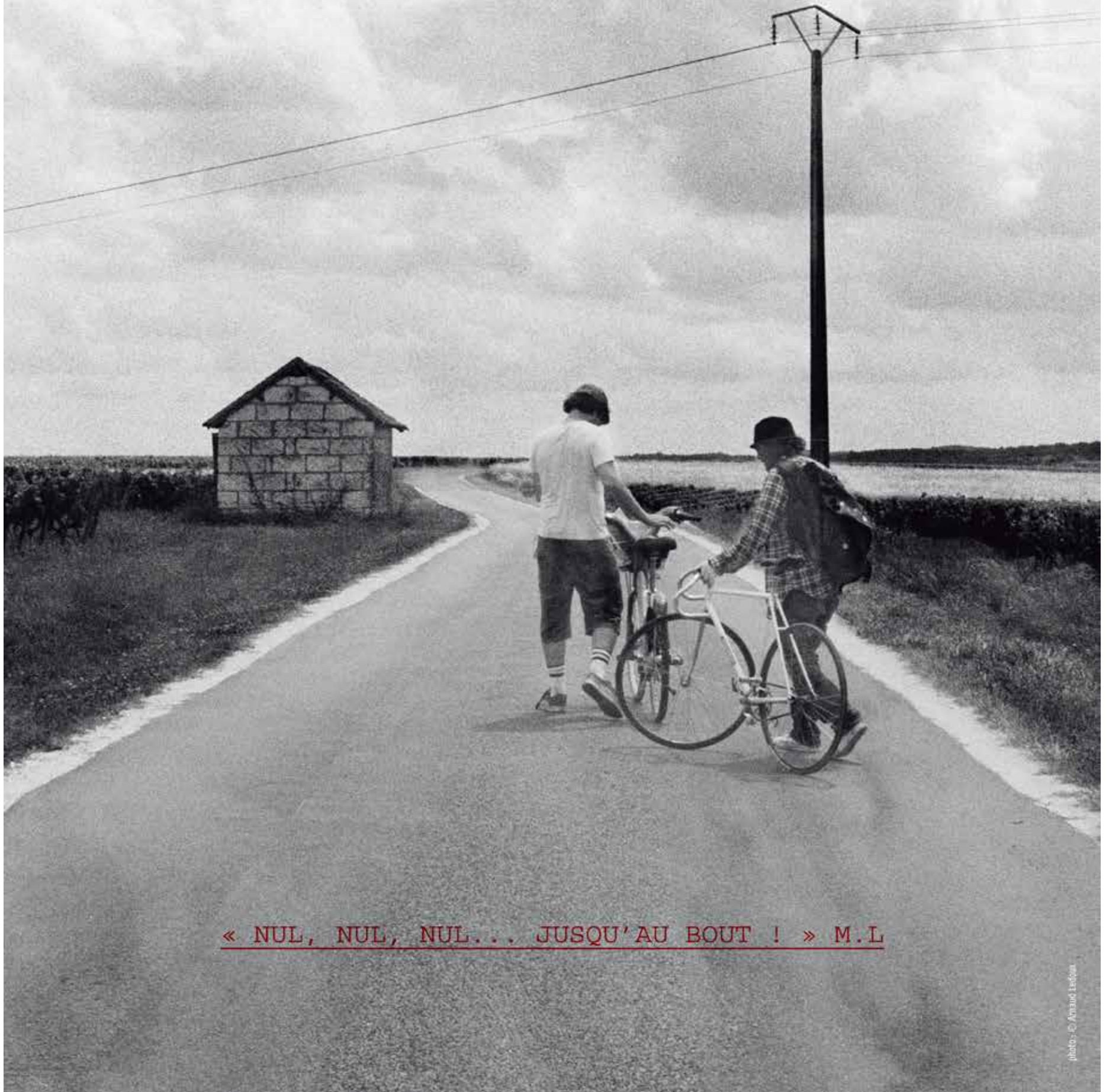


Chronique d'un enfermement volontaire
Consumérisme
2009
Self printed book 1/1
29,7 x 21 cm

LE JOKER & LES FILMS VELVET PRESENTENT

UN BICYCLE ROAD MOVIE DE DAVID LEDOUX ET ARTUS DE LAVILLÉON

LE DERNIER VOYAGE DE MARYSE LUCAS



« NUL, NUL, NUL... JUSQU'AU BOUT ! » M.L

photo: © Arnaud Lavieau

photo : © Arnaud Ledoux

Maryse Lucas meurt le 11 mars 2007. Elle est incinérée et souhaite que ces cendres soient dispersées dans la rivière de son village natal. Un an plus tard son fils, Artus de Lavilléon, artiste passionné de fixed gear (vélo de piste à pignon fixe), décide d'exécuter les dernières volontés de sa mère, de rejoindre le village en vélo, l'urne funéraire dans le sac à dos, de recueillir le témoignage des habitants qui l'ont côtoyé de son vivant, et d'en faire un film.

Conscient de la charge émotionnelle d'une telle mission, il en parle à son ami David Ledoux, photographe et voyageur cosmopolite, qui se porte volontaire pour l'épauler dans ce voyage initiatique. Avec humour, David décide de faire le voyage en Vélip[®]. **Le dernier voyage de Maryse Lucas, c'est lorsque deux parisiens partent à la rencontre de la France rurale, un masque de futilité cachant le trouble entre les rayons.**

Maryse avait un dernier souhait, Artus et David ont pédalé jusqu'au bout pour lui donner vie, nous offrant **un film vérité dérangeant, poignant, et finalement très pur**, à l'image de l'urne funéraire voguant vers l'éternité, au grés des courants.

LE JOKER*

(production)

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LES FILMS VELVET

(production)

FREDERIC JOUVE

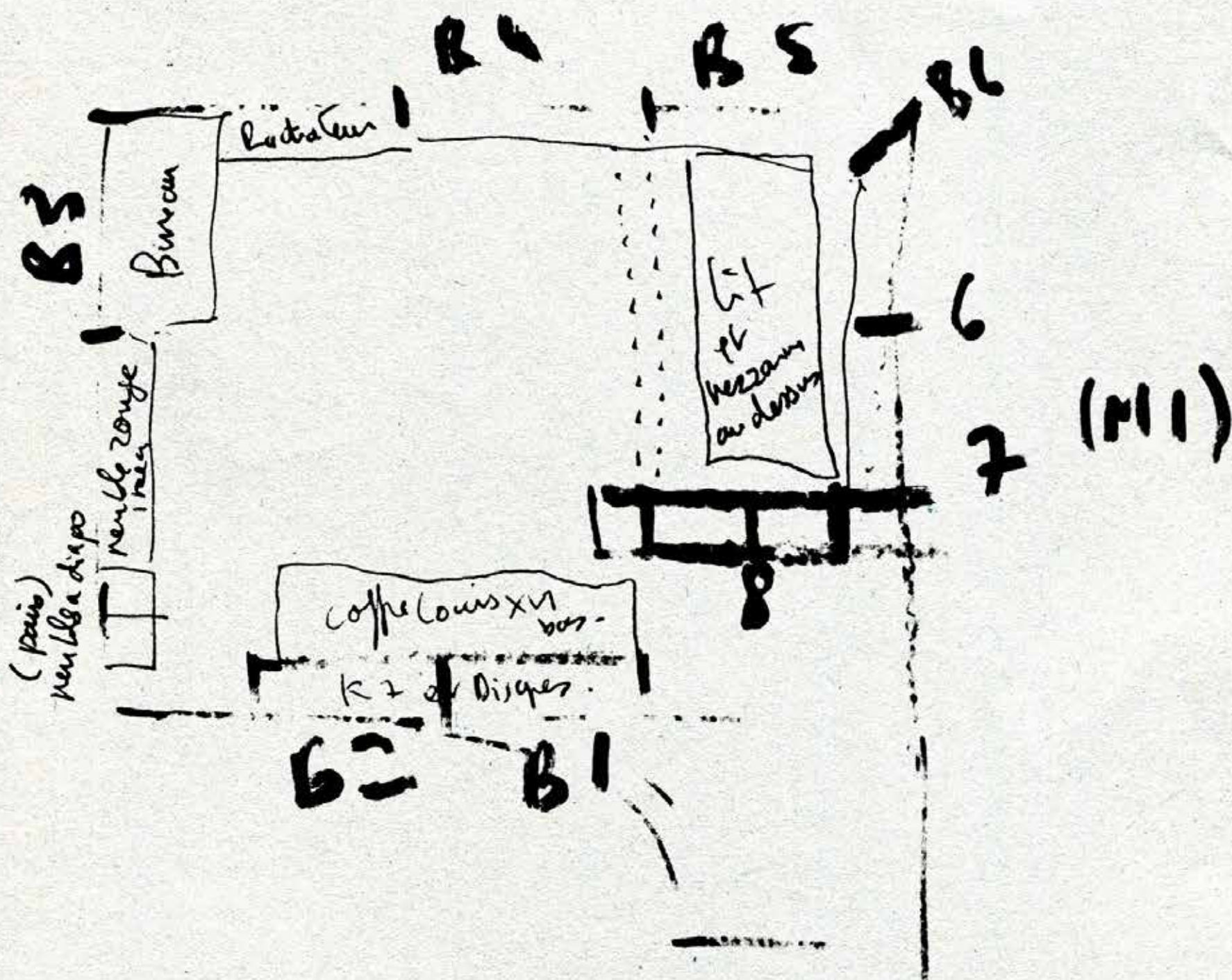
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29,7 x 21 cm

la chambre du 14
ne parton.



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en bas dans le
coin -

Artus' Room Project

Does the artist make the room, or does the room make the artist?

The story of how a living space became a piece of art.

When I first met with French artist Artus de Lavilléon, I think that I was just about to turn twenty. My best friend Sophie had dragged me through to a bar to hangout with the “coolest guys on the planet,” she had said. So I certainly had no expectations that we would end up discussing the relevance of contemporary art in the world today. But that, in fact, was what happened.

Although I was already interested in the arts at the time, I only had a vague understanding of what Artus was recounting. He told me about the origins of Art Posthume, an art movement he had founded with a couple of artists friends based on the idea that contemporary art was just a rip-off. Explaining his definition, he told me “if art is dead, it cannot

be contemporary, it can only be posthumous”. I didn’t question whether it was right or wrong, but Artus handed me a piece of paper on which he had written the manifesto for Art Posthume.

I put the paper in my bag and would not meet with Artus again until a few years later. In the meantime, I moved to the United States and followed Artus’ work through his website. He put up a few slideshows online called Chronology I, II and III, a weird mix not only of pictures of his friends, girlfriends and mother, but also his paintings, skateboard life etc. One place seemed to reoccur frequently in his work: his bedroom.

Every inch of wall was covered in old paintings, drawings and pictures. The actual space,

a tiny fifteen square meters, was invaded by as many bookshelves as it could hold, full of books, tapes, vinyls, cds and boxes. In fact, it was not only a bedroom but an entire tiny studio apartment that he had inherited from his father, where Artus spent 15 years of his life.

“These years from 1995 to 2010, contain a really important moment of my life and career,” he later told me. Maybe it was because he had this apartment at his disposal that he was able to get rid of the anxiety of making money and gain the courage to become an artist. For a long time, he lived without a fridge or any comfort at all. He simply didn’t care as long as he could write and produce art.

He could survive from one day to the next, working on different projects, some becoming big successes - like the opening of the well-known concept store l’Épicerie - or when he endured more difficult times with a scarcity of jobs. In any case, he always had a roof above his head; advantageously

located in the heart of Paris, in le Marais, at 14 rue Portefoin. The year I moved away from Paris, I received an invitation from Artus to the opening of his first solo exhibition at Gallery Patricia Dorfmann.

The flyer represented a picture of the room with the title “I learned it from a talk show.” As I was out if the country I could not attend, but soon learned from a friend that Artus had brought his entire apartment to the gallery: not only the contents of the room, but the room itself. In fact, he recreated the exact same space, with the bookshelves, the desk, the bed, in a space with the accurate dimensions.

When finally I came back to live in Paris, I met with Artus completely randomly as I was then working at a press office on the same street where he was living. After some missed appointments, he invited me to his apartment; very excited to show me the latest 2x3 meters drawing he had just finished. I was of course really curious to discover his little niche.

I must say I had imagined a garret under the roof, but the room was actually on the third floor, well lit by two large French windows with a view of the courtyard. That was the first time I saw his apartment in the flesh, and before leaving I remember saying, “I feel really good in your environment.”

I have always been fascinated by people’s interiors and very sensitive to the energy of places. Not the stylish interior design spaces of magazines, but the ones that actually possess real stories. I liked every single thing that emanated from Artus’ room. The fact that cleaning was clearly not a priority, the fact that he was living a simple life with nothing more than two chairs and a bed he must climb into because of the lack of space. The kitchen was non-existent and he could barely cook; the shower was shared with Georges, his (female) cat who had her plate in the tub; and the toilet was on the other side of the hallway on the common floor.

I spent a long time looking at the books on the bookshelves

above the two small desks. There were as many classical novels as political essays, of mostly communism and revolution topics, such as the complete work of Albert Camus, the famous “The Society of the Spectacle” by French Marxist theorist Guy Debord, “God is not cast down” by Russian abstract painter Malevitch; and also a good stack of science fiction, including all Philip K. Dick and Chuck Palanuk... In the midst of it all, I realized that Artus’ writing was prolific: he had bound together a bunch of his texts and correspondences in small books that took a good third of a shelf. There was also many pictures disseminated everywhere, and adding to that, paintings, drawings and stickers that were covering the now existing fridge...

The place looked kind of messy but in an organized way, as if it had been set for viewers to come have a look. Artus showed me an incredible number of slides that were all named and classified in a chronological order. He told me, for many years, he used to spend nights

showing them to friends in slide shows. As the afternoon went by, he started telling me pretty much everything about the different epochs he went through. From spending a lot of time with his street friends skateboarding and accommodating anyone in need of a bed for the night, to the time he lived here with his first wife Veronica and of course the long period when he shared the room with his mother whom he tried to rescue from alcoholism after not hearing from for about twenty years.

Artus loves to speak about his life; actually his life is the base of his art. He is a great storyteller, and as my attention - not to say curiosity - brought me to a stack of boxes with the name “Papiers Importants Divers et Variés” (various and miscellaneous important papers) written on them, I didn’t feel shy asking him what it actually meant with a bit of laughter.

He told me how more than ten years ago he somehow imposed on himself a strict “archivage du quotidien” (archiving of the everyday).

“I was telling myself: nothing that comes in the room should ever get out,” he explained. “I kept everything as far as everything could go without making me nuts: letters, notes, post-its, copies of art pieces, pictures, pencils, paintings, comic books, magazines, cds, clothes, skateboards, and tons of shoes.”

“Where is everything then? What did you do with it?” I asked. “After ten years, it became truly unlivable. The space was covered with eight bookshelves. There was also a Louis XVI safe that belonged to my father, a coffee table, a cot, an Ikea closet... that’s when I decided I needed to take a breather from this past and wanted to sell the room. I wanted to show my life, the base of my art. So I brought all my belongings to Patricia Dorfmann’s gallery to show it to the public in an exhibition.” And you sold everything? “Well, there was nothing to sell except for the entire room – I mean what could I sell, pieces of my room?”

He not only wanted to sell the contents of the room, but

he also wanted to sell its four walls. In other words, he wanted to sell his apartment with everything inside reinstalled at 14 rue Portefoin, the way it was for the past ten years.

It sounded crazy and unrealizable, and the fact that it didn't sell at the gallery comforts me in my idea. I asked him, "Who on earth would want to buy a 40 year-old teenager's bedroom filled with the former owner's old stuff? And who would bother to empty it entirely in order to turn it into a more livable space?" "It's not a question of turning it back into a more livable space; it's about keeping the room intact through time."

Artus had faith in his eyes and was quietly optimistic. "It didn't work this time, but I am not giving away that idea. I know it is going to work," and he went on, "you know the room is an art piece now, it was shown in an art gallery, and basically if someone buys it, the whole point is that he can't change the way everything is arranged. It's forbidden to actually alter the art piece."

I found this tour de force a little pretentious, but then he added: "You know I really would like people to come visit this room as if it were a small museum or some famous dead writer's or painter's place. Don't you think it would be fantastic to visit the room of someone who is not famous? Instead of visiting Marie-Antoinette's apartment or Louis XIV's, we could visit their maid's place!" And as we were arguing, I realized I was suddenly very absorbed in the idea.

I looked around and asked where all the past contents went. After the show at the gallery, Artus had meticulously wrapped the whole room in cardboard boxes and moved everything to his countryside house, and then of course started from scratch with a new empty room. He agreed to one day show me the numbered boxes that contained ten years worth of his daily life, and all the very precise drawings he had done with measurements of the room the way it used to be.

It took me a long time before I actually went to visit Artus in the countryside. In the meantime,

we met regularly for coffee at the corner of rue Portefoin and rue de Bretagne. We had many more discussions about the room. "It's such a good preview of what the nineties represented for me, between fashion, art, and skateboarding." But I guessed the whole point could not only be a fantasy about freezing time, and there was still something about the whole idea that niggled at me. Artus told me: "The biggest artists in history are the ones who knew how to appropriate for themselves the obvious."

Was it the obvious or simply narcissism? Despite my doubts, he went on and spoke of the rest of his work: the tall black and white drawings that sort of made him successful, the way he dropped painting at one point to concentrate on performances, the importance of writing and how life was the major and only guide through his work.

"My art is a testimony of what I went through, what I have lived. My best friend used to tell me that the only reason I do stuff is to add to my experiences.

It's a great description of how I work," and then he added, "For me, the most interesting parts of an artist's career are the reasons that pushed him to make the decision to become an artist. That is why this room is so important to me. Does the artist make the room, or does the room make the artist?"

On my way home, I thought of the German Dadaist Kurt Schwitters. The artwork he built in his home, the Merzbau, became an integral part of the movement he created, Merz. I started to realize that Artus' home was indeed the heart of Art Posthume. Artus' home was not unlike Schwitters' Gesamtkunstwerk, a universal, ever-evolving artwork that used many forms. It was not either the realization of an abstract concept defined in advance, but derived much of the architecture design and was in a state of perpetual becoming.

Both of their pieces were guided only by daily work - both in and on the workshop - and it was difficult to determine when it began and when it would end. And when over the summer I

read Hannah Arendt's "Condition of modern man", I found this sentence: "There is an ontological relationship between humans and the space they occupy." I sent Artus an email with the quote. He replied instantly with an invitation to his country home in Mayenne, saying he had something to show me.

A week later, I rented a car and was driving to Ernée, the little village in a region south of French Brittany. Artus had also inherited this house, not from his father this time but from his stepmother, with whom he had a tumultuous relationship. From the living room to the kitchen, from his workshop to his bedroom, I could really feel in this house the same energy he had put in the apartment rue Portefoin: a warm messiness.

After he had showed me around, he finally got to the point: "You know I saw a lawyer about selling my apartment in Paris and we started to study how to make it happen and if I could sell it as art. He asked me to make an inventory of its contents." He took me up to the attic. There

was his entire apartment room reconstituted in the countryside. That had been his main reason to come to Ernée that summer. He had just spent one week unwrapping all the boxes that had remained closed since the exhibition and had invested the space of the house attic.

When we climbed up there, I was suddenly plunged into Artus' old life. The eight bookshelves were there, filled with more books and tapes and CDs than I could have imagined. There on the cot was Georges the cat, laying comfortably. It was as if she had traveled back in time and refound her old habits. We sat down next to her, facing shelves and drawers, and looked at each other amused. Artus grabbed an old tape and turned on an old boom box. "Of course at that time, tapes were very popular and the CD was just about to break in."

As we were listening to some old grunge songs, the noisy church bells interrupted. He opened up the small window, releasing a bunch of cobwebs and showed me the view. The

house was on the central place of the village, right behind the 17th century church. Over lunch the following day, I asked Artus if it was really worth visiting the place of another artist? I told him my fascination for the space of artistic creation, the environment that inspired the artists, but still found his proposition ambiguous.

For all the painters' houses I visited - which included those of Léonard de Vinci, Paul Cézanne, Auguste Renoir, or Claude Monet to name only a few - there seemed to be a simple rule that kept the curiosity alive: the houses were all visited posthumously, after the artist had been recognized by history, and this was going in exact opposition of Artus' concept of art posthume.

As part of his long, sometimes contradictory answer, he quoted himself: "If we must one day be known for and by our work posthumously, this implies that we will necessarily read it in the light of our lives, and therefore must apply strict ethic in one as in the other." He had written this line in his manifesto,

and couldn't help bringing in as well: "Our contradictions make us who we are." This is the sentence I heard the most when listening to Artus' sometimes long and complicated explanation. This is also how he brought along the notion of ethics within the concept of the room.

"If I know that today we dissect the life of great artists posthumously, then as an artist my life has to be ethical. Since I think life is art, I must conform to a certain ethic, as I impose on myself certain codes in my work." I replied that I thought it was sanctimonious. "I am directed by something way higher than moral, this is what I call ethic" he said. For him moral was only based on the rules of society, whereas ethics represented the rules someone imposes himself. And of course that applies to the room too.

He took as an example André Breton's workshop as shown at Beaubourg Museum in Paris, under glass. "You can find his art in his life. For instance, we find artifacts of his inspirations for cubism and

surrealism, such as the African masks. Whereas for me, it's the inverse, you can find my life in my art. Documenting my life is the justification of my art." I imagined the interior of André Breton's apartment at 42 rue Fontaine in Paris, where between the two world wars he had started a collection of over 5,300 items: modern paintings, drawings, sculptures, photographs, books, art catalogs, journals, manuscripts, and works of popular and Oceanic art. In a way, he had kept every proof of his way of thinking, and had appropriated for himself "the obvious" of his time through the evidence of his life.

What was the evidence Artus was capturing and appropriating with this project? Could the 90's and the beginning of the 21st century be well represented through skateboard magazines, friends and naked ex-girlfriend pictures, unpaid bills, family memories, drawings on restaurant tablecloths, death certificates, letters, plane and metro tickets? That was part of his proposition, as well as the winning of materialism over ideas.

If they were never sold, they became accessible to curators, scholars, and the general public in a dedicated museum, providing a unique view into Warhol's private world and life, expanding the public's understanding of his work and practice. That is precisely where Artus wanted to get. He wanted to write down in the contract that the buyer could look at the contents of the boxes and drawers and eventually take out some materials in order to understand his practice, but he could not alter the visual appearance of the room.

He also wanted to stipulate that this would only be possible while he remained alive, and that nothing could leave the room once he died. Jean-Philippe took note of everything but couldn't help asking: "and would you give the opportunity for visitors to come in the room and look at everything?" And the answer followed instantly. Artus had of course thought of an possible arrangement: "a wall of glass could be installed if the buyer wanted to make his art piece public" Jean-Philippe looked at me

Inevitably, a lot more questions came to the table: How much do you want to sell the room for? How are you going to sell it? Who is the target? In a willy-nilly explanation, he said he wanted to sell it double the price of the real estate market, or maybe triple. He also mentioned selling it to an auction house or to a real estate agency, to a Chinese art collector or a rich person who would like to invest in exceptional property... And the more we got into details, the more the project sounded unrealistic. But Artus was still faithful: "I know it is going to work."

Back in fall, he invited me over for lunch with his lawyer in Paris, who he said was going to draft the contract for the sale of the apartment. We meet the following week at Joe Allen, a low-key American restaurant in the center of the city. Jean-Philippe, a lawyer of intellectual property, told me he had been collecting Artus for years and somehow along the way they became friends.

Over lunch, he started to methodically question Artus about

the details of the room. Of course, one of the first things that came up was his previous suggestion that Artus make an inventory of the apartment. "I have taken photographs of everything," Artus said, "but I decided I don't need to actually make a list of things. I want to keep a part of the mystery."

Jean-Philippe insisted, "You know it's a little bit complex... In legal terms, there are three different elements: the contents of the room, the walls, and the artworks." "No, no, no, you don't get it, the artwork is the room in its totality," shouted Artus, while showing him a list of what was in the bookcases. Jean Philippe took a quick glance and asked back, "And what about the drawers, the boxes and most importantly, where is the list of the artworks?"

Artus explained that the artworks have been out of the room for years, that they were shown at the exhibition and that consequently they are no longer part of the room. Jean-Philippe seemed doubtful "so then what artworks are still in

the room?" The only answer Artus would give remained: "The room is the artwork." He wanted to give the right to the buyer to not only be the owner of the room but also give him the opportunity to take whatever he wanted in the room and have Artus sign it in order to make it a piece of art. "That bring us back to the list! How would you know what the owner is taking out of the room if you don't have a precise list of what is in there? And how could you prevent over time that some of the elements disappear in the market if you get super famous?"

"That's another story!" Artus said. He asked both of us if we knew the Andy Warhol Times Capsules. Warhol spent years filling cardboard boxes with collected source material for his work and an enormous record of his own daily life, from correspondence, magazines, newspapers, gifts, to photographs, business records, etc. He wrapped up 612 Time Capsules over the years and they had remained surprisingly unknown until his death in 1987.

Had he been an architect, then perhaps the outline of his plan would suffice for it to be recognized as an art piece and become public. Unfortunately in the field of fine arts, unrealized projects seldom appear in official résumés. The room project is currently a utopian project. But who knows, maybe we will soon be reading on a plate on the front of the building of 14 rue Portefoin: "Here lived Artus de Lavilléon from 1994 to 2004."

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amused and said, "We have to be practical!" and Artus to say, "That's exactly it! You are in the practical, and I am in the idea!" On our way back to the subway station, Artus confessed, "The truth is that the room is more important than my art, because logically everything should be played after, posthumously." What interested him in the end is that the buyer could become an artist in return, since the room makes the artist.

Time has passed since the contract was written. The room remains for sale with the same will, that it must be sold without going through a museum, a gallery, or any art institution. Even if the room remains without a buyer, a yet unrealized project, the will of its creator is still alive. Still today, Artus doesn't seem pressed by time. I remember him saying one of the last times I saw him: "This room is a lifelong project. If it is not sold, it doesn't make it a failure." From my point of view, all the art projects cannot correspond to official expectations, in terms of social representation and monumentality.

