



L'AVANT-DERNIÈRE VERSION DE LA RÉALITÉ

BROGNON ROLLIN

VISITOR'S GUIDE

EN

EXHIBITIONS

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MERCI FACTEUR!
MAIL ART #4
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Brognon Rollin

24H Silence (157-282 min / 1440 min), 2020

Servais' Family Collection

© Brognon Rollin

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DE LA RÉALITÉ**

Brognon Rollin

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**MERCI FACTEUR !
MAIL ART #4**

Stephan Barbery & Guy Stuckens

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PRACTICAL INFO

L'AVANT-DERNIÈRE VERSION DE LA RÉALITÉ

(THE PENULTIMATE VERSION OF REALITY)

BROGNON ROLLIN

Coproduced with the MAC VAL, the Val-de-Marne Museum of Contemporary Art, in Vitry-sur-Seine, south of Paris, *The penultimate version of reality* is the first major museum exhibition of the artist duo David Brognon and Stéphanie Rollin. Born in Messancy, Belgium, 1978, and in Luxembourg, 1980 respectively, these two artists have been working together since 2006, producing works with a sober aesthetic infused with great conceptual depth and intense emotional strength.

Together, they have developed a work fed by constant attention to the situations experienced in what our society sheepishly refers to as its “margins”. These are the undefined areas where those who are excluded – one way or another, for one reason or another – are concentrated: detainees, drug addicts, teenagers, laid-off workers, pilots ejected from their planes, etc. Through contact with these people, each artist demonstrates an ability to suspend their judgement, to free themselves from dominant social conventions to change how their situation is perceived. Because with them it is above all about “*trying to reestablish a balance in the other’s eyes*”, as Stéphanie Rollin explains. She goes on: “*We don’t bang our fist on the table, we change the point of view.*”

Brognon Rollin use all media (sculpture, photography, video, painting, etc.) to produce sober works, often in refined forms. There would be no point, however, in seeking to pigeonhole them in an aesthetic, like a formal or technical solution. The particular circumstances of each project give rise to their final chosen form; it establishes itself naturally in the context of the work. It may involve neon lights reproducing life lines, photos of sculptures, filmed scenes, pieces of furniture in cold clinical settings, objects created specially using artisanal techniques, small straw marquetry pictures, etc.

And this is exactly where their amazing feat sets them apart: choosing just the right form for each project while making sure not to drain it of its vitality, so that the object created retains the potential to embody a singular story. Approaching each of their works is an opportunity to delve into unique stories, sensitive events, or personal anecdotes.

The title of this exhibition, *The penultimate version of reality*, is borrowed from a text by Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges (1899-1986) in which he reflects on the peculiar nature of time through a critique of the book *Manhood of Humanity* by scientist Alfred Korzybski (1879-1950). The exhibition gathers forty or so works dealing with peculiar experiences of time, its flow, and the subjective perception thereof.

This willingness to refine forms to focus on the essential is also expressed in the scenography adopted for the exhibition: darkness in which the works and the labels stand out – the latter designed as works in themselves, as evidenced by the last one – to maintain the emotional tension between each stage of the exhibition. The half-light also allows us to approach the works at the right time, when the reality of the day topples over into the reality of the night, summed up by the word “twilight”: the time when things can get confused and even transform.

The exhibition opens with an anecdote attributed to the executioner Sanson recounting how, during the French Revolution, facing death by guillotine, Armand-Louis-François-Edmé de Béthune, count of Chârost, feigned to ignore it and not to see it as the inevitable end awaiting him. Rather, he thought of it as an additional stage of the existence he had led until then, and that he intended to pursue in spite of death.

The first piece in the series ***I lost my Page Again (page 13)***, this small picture shows a waiting room, like the others, one of these places where we are forced to waste time while feeling it passing in a different way. Made of straw marquetry wisp by wisp, this work perfectly embodies the congruence of form and content sought by the artists: a waiting area is reproduced in an ancient technique favoured by prisoners and religious people, i.e. people forced to “kill time”.

Claude Gellée, called *le Lorrain*, was a French painter (+/-1600-1682) known for his picturesque landscapes, wavering between authentic details and imaginary nature, shaped by a subtle play of light. His “mirror” allowed him to rely on an overall structure that he could shade as he pleased. Located at the forefront of the exhibition on a shot table obtained from a drug consumption room, the object invites us all to broaden the field of our perception.

The contrasting beauty of the video image ***The Most Beautiful Attempt*** is mirrored by the beauty of a quest lost in advance: patiently following the flow of time at the risk of burning out and disappearing. With great economy of means, the video provokes reflection on how we experience the passage of time. Should we worry about it? Or should we laugh about it?

With the installation ***Le Bracelet de Sophia (Sophia’s Bracelet)***, the structure of the days of a person sentenced to two years of supervised release traces a frustrated space-time. The convolutions that the tracking draws on the walls and floor of the Pierre Dupont room model and make suddenly visible an existence whose structure of time and thus travel are limited. As such, the work shows the concrete consequences of limited freedom.

Palmistry consists of interpreting the signs visible on the palm of the hand to predict a person’s future. With the selection of photos from the series ***Famous People have no Stories***, the artists prompt us to do the opposite: to read the history of famous people from the lines on their hands. Can we trace the progress and the stages of their destinies that History has judged exceptional to the point of deserving a statue?

Over the centuries, human beings have used sunrise and sunset to measure the passage of time, the first announcing the start of a new period, the second announcing its end. Sunset thus takes on a form of nostalgia for that which is disappearing but has not yet disappeared; it can also act as a metaphor for the inevitable end of existence (a “vanity”, to use an art history term). By freezing its passage in 12 photographs, in **Classified Sunset** the artists seek to defer its disappearance by “freezing” that which usually flows.

The length of imprisonment is what governs **Made by Inmates for Inmates (Shirt)**: inmates spend their days making clothes for their fellow inmates. Away from society, time no longer flows in minutes or in hours but in pieces of clothing produced. The clock’s paddles don’t show the time, but rather snippets of clothing patterns.

Like the others, the drug consumption table from *I Love You but I've Chosen Darkness* (Golden Shoot) is made entirely of galvanised metal so as to be completely smooth and easy to disinfect. In this sense, it is close to American minimal art which favoured cold industrial manufacture devoid of affect. Conversely, the addition of a spider’s web woven with golden thread brings it into a subjective story and links it to the brief “golden time” of the trip induced by drugs. A trip the end of which can be fatal (overdose) or painful (return to a reality from which one has fled).

On the other hand, the white neon light of **Fate Will Tear Us Apart (Stefano)** traces the destiny line (or life line) of a young drug addict (right hand). This is the most important line for palmistry; it runs between the thumb and index finger and ends at the base of the hand. It contains the progression of a life. Can we find the breaks and wounds we sense in this kind of existence and that seem to suggest that the white neon light is similar to a crack in the wall?

To the brevity of Felix Baumgartner’s freefall in **Hangover** is contrasted the absolute and eternal nature of the age-old bans hanging over the three holy sites of the three major monotheistic religions in Jerusalem. The brevity of individual time is confronted with time measured in terms of History.

Fool’s Gold evokes another kind of “golden time”: dreams, in this case the dream of gold prospectors that pushes them to confuse the precious metal with pyrite, a material that looks like gold but isn’t. A quest that often leads to madness which, in a sense, is just another way of escaping time.

In the text that gives this exhibition its title, Borges implicitly suggests that stillness is a state outside of time, freed from its flow. An eternal state to which classical statuary aspired, aiming to immortalise the “great” men it represented. But the statues that Brognon Rollin filmed in **The Breath of Statues** (*L’Haleine des statues...*) seem, on the contrary, animated by the breath of life, a life that brings them not into eternity but into the cycle of a time different from our own.

It is not hard to imagine that time is particularly slow in prison (or in any other confined place). After observing the inmates circling clockwise in the courtyard of the Ecrouves detention facility, in France, the artists invited five of them to walk in an anti-clockwise direction. As if taking time in the other direction, going backwards and thus “changing the past” in an attempt at redemption (**Attempt at Redemption**).

Intended to commemorate a tragic event, the minute of silence is a time sequence plucked from the flow of human activities. Time seems suspended during this period of silence. Nevertheless, the minute of silence rarely lasts a minute and the silence is never total (background noises can be heard). This paradox is embodied by the installation **24H Silence (157min/1440min)**: two jukeboxes, machines intended to play music, play only silent vinyl discs.

From the BPS22 mezzanine, the gaze is drawn to an immense 27-metre neon light reproducing the heart line of a woman forced into marriage **My Heart Stood Still (Yamina)**. (*La Peur me pétrifiait (Yamina)*). In palmistry, which posits that existence follows a pre-written timeline, the heart line extends between the index and ring fingers and is more horizontal than the destiny line. It shows the individual's love life and signifies a failed love affair where it is broken. But what place can a trauma like a forced marriage occupy? A tension is generated between the potential meaning of the line and the airy and slender nature of the luminous line cutting through the museum space.

During their collaboration with the laid-off workers from the Caterpillar factory in Gosselies, the artists gathered fifty or so clocks, all stopped at the time when the factory closure was announced. The life of the company, which had for over fifty years authoritatively set the pace of life for thousands of workers through a succession of breaks, ended suddenly at 8.50 am (**Our Hour of Glory**)

In Christian tradition, Saint Peter was tasked with opening the gates of Heaven (or not) and artists now finally have the key with the work **Pietro and the Locksmith (Via di Città, Siena, Italy)**. In Christian eschatology, which encompasses all the doctrines and beliefs about the ultimate fate of man after his death, the beyond is the last stage of a linear temporal cycle beginning with birth and whose resurrection should lead to eternity, or the elimination of time.

The cell opens onto a stopping clock to highlight the possibility of a subjective perception of time. In their 8 m² cell, the inmate is master of their own time, and even has the leisure to eliminate it given the requisite psychological resources. Because time can also be torture when its passage seems too slow. Writer Edouard Limonov (1943-2020) explains how he used meditation to withstand long periods of isolation in prison. And Turkish essayist Ahmet Altan (1950) wrote during his imprisonment: "*You can imprison me but you can't keep me here. Like all writers, I'm a magician. I can pass your walls without difficulty.*"

The nine marquetrys from the series **I lost my Page Again (page 1, 3, 6, 7, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23)** also portray waiting areas. The direction of the crushed wisps of straw, intended to fill in colour ranges, creates a dynamic of lines mimicking light. These contrast with the stasis of the flat colours and contribute to the enigmatic and mesmerizing nature of these places devoid of all human presence.

Statu Quo Nunc rests on the (illusory) human desire to freeze things, to pluck them from the inevitable flow of time. It is this desire in particular that is at the origin of the museum as the institution intended to preserve what a given society deems must be preserved. But this situation is just an attempt, an all too human wager, unlikely to resist the ravages of time. It is on this wager that the artists designed this unique project.

By replicating the spines of prickly pears, like in **Subbar, Sabra**, the artists offer a new confrontation between two temporalities: that of human beings and their societies, and that of nature. Tearing down the cactuses to erase the limits of the plots that they bordered made them disappear only for a time. Time then did its job by enabling them to grow again and trace phantom territories, like revenants from a past that continuously haunts the present and overshadows the future.

Christian pilgrims who rent a cross redefine the duration of the passion of the Christ according to the intensity of their faith and their physical fitness, allowing them to accomplish the length of the Stations of the Cross. In **There's Somebody Carrying a Cross Down**, Mazen Kenan gives it a more prosaic depth: returning as quickly as possible to the Church of the Flagellation by paths he knows in order to rent the cross again.

Each video sequence in **Ejection Tie Club (#2412, #3966, #4394, #5431, #7306, #7441)** lasts the amount of time that it took its protagonist to decide to activate their ejection seat. A time period during which the pilots were confronted with their impending death and had to make a crucial decision.

Under the neon light of **My Heart Stood Still (Yamina)** rests the **Until Then Armchair**, a trace of and tool necessary for the performance **Until Then**, during which the New York *line sitter* waits for / waited for the death of a person by euthanasia. In a capitalist society where everyone has to be profitable, even time to lose is for sale. This poignant performance condenses the artists' preoccupations about death and the passage of time into a single sequence.

57 seconds is a rare instance where reading time and real time coincide.

The executioner Sanson relates that the Comte de Charost was reading a book in the tumbril that carried him to the scaffold. Before ascending the steps, he turned down the corner of his page.

***Le Miroir de Claude*, 2019-2020**

Table for taking hard drugs, stainless steel, black mirror (circa 1870)

136 x 90 x 50 cm

Production MAC VAL – Musée d'art contemporain du Val-de-Marne, Vitry-sur-Seine

The 'black mirror', also known as a 'Claude glass', was a small portable mirror with a slightly convex surface, tinted with lampblack. It was a vital accessory for naturalist painters in the 18th century, as its contrasting reflection simplified landscapes and facilitated composition. To use it, painters had to take up a position that was new for the time: looking at nature by turning their back on it.

***I Lost my Page Again (page 13)*, 2018**

Coloured straw marquetry glued on wood

18 x 18 cm

Collection Faber Family Foundation

The series 'I Lost My Page Again' captures waiting in its construction. Empty waiting rooms are photographed and then transposed using the craft technique of straw marquetry, wisp by wisp. Each strand was dyed, split and crushed before being assembled by the craftswoman Lucie Richard.

Practised in Europe from the 17th to the 19th century by people with a lot of time on their hands (convicts, nuns), straw marquetry was used to decorate boxes, chests, furniture and other practical objects.

***The Most Beautiful Attempt*, 2012**

Colour video, silent

17 min 55 sec

Collection FRAC Poitou-Charentes

Caught up in a race, chasing the sun, a boy pushes salt crystals along in an attempt to keep them in the light.

***Le Bracelet de Sophia*, 2019 - 2020**

Tracking light coordinated with the electronic bracelet of a person placed under surveillance

Variable dimensions

Production MAC VAL – Musée d'art contemporain du Val-de-Marne, Vitry-sur-Seine et CWB - Centre Wallonie-Bruxelles, Paris

Sophia was released on curfew with an electronic tag to monitor her movements at home, at the office and to her children's school. She lives within an invisibly closed perimeter. Between 23 and 30 December 2019, her restrained movements were recorded, then reproduced in real time by a tracking light installed in the exhibition space.

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Mariangelo Accursio, Alexandre II, Alexandre III, Dante Alighieri, Adolphe Alphand, Marguerite d'Angoulême, Jacques d'Arc, Jeanne d'Arc, Jeanne d'Arc (IV), Ferdinando III d'Asburgo-Lorena, Jean Sylvain Bailly, Valentine Balbiani, Giovanni Battista, Sainte Barbe, Elgin Baylor, Anne de Beaujeu, Joseph Bech, Saint Bernard, Saint Blaise, François de Blanche de Crequy, Léon Blum, Nicolas Boileau

Napoléon Bonaparte, Mike Bongiorno, Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet, Pieter Brueghel, Carol Burnett, Philip Burton, George Gordon Byron, Pierre Cardin, Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux, Armand Carrel, Angelica Catalani, Sainte Catherine Labouré, Marcel Cerdan, Grande-Duchesse Charlotte, Bartholomaei Chesii, Sainte Christine, Cicéron, Cléopâtre, Sainte Constance, Joseph Crocè-Spinelli, Vivant Denon, Maria Deraismes, Paul Déroulède

Denis Diderot, Claudine Sophie Dubois, Dick van Dyke, Paul Eluard, Mihai Eminescu, Charlie Farrell, Benjamin Franklin, Saint François d'Assise, Nicolas Frantz, Emmanuel Frémiet, Charles de Gaulle, Charles de Gaulle (II), Alcide De Gasperi, Théodore Géricault, Christophe Willibald Gluck, Saint Grégoire le Grand, André Grétry, Wayne Gretzky, Eduardo "Lalo" Guerrero, Georg Friedrich Haendel, Harry Houdini, Victor Hugo, Jean Jaures

Jean-Paul II, Saint Jérôme, Magic Johnson, Al Jolston, Jules II, Anne de Kiev, Henri Kraus, Mario Kreutzberger, Fiorello LaGuardia, Jean-Joseph Languet de Gergy, Antoine Lavoisier, Alexandre Ledru-Rollin, Bruce Lee, Frédéric Le Play, Charles Lindbergh (II), Louis XIV, Mesrop Machtots, Nicolaus Mameranus, Marc Aurèle, Pape Marcellus (II), Charles Martel, Paolo Mascagni, François Mauriac

Cosimo I de Medicis (II), Marie de Medicis, Michel-Ange, Louise Michel, Bob Miller, Joseph de Miribel, George Montgomery, Jean Monnet, Biagio di Montluc (II), Marie de Nazareth, Carroll O'Connor, Harrison Gray Otis, Ian Ignacy Padorowski, Denis Papin, Saint Vincent de Paul, Paul V, Francesco Petrarca, Anastasia Petri-Schouvaloff, Philétas, Edith Piaf, Pie II, Pie III, Philippe Pinel

Padre Pio, Guy Pitchal, Elvis Presley (II), François Rabelais, Francesco Redi, Buddy Rogers, Edmond Rostand, George Sand, Robert Schuman, Alfred E. Smith, Ernest Solvay, Theis L'Aveugle, Adolphe Thiers, Maurice Utrillo, Amerigo Vespucci, Dina Vierny (II), Leonard de Vinci, Giuliano Viviani Antonucci, Georges Washington, Jacques de Wissant (I), Jacques de Wissant (II), Marc'Antonio Zondadari, Juan de Zumárraga

Famous People Have no Stories, 2013 - ...

Black-and-white photograph, inkjet print

44 x 34 cm / frame

Collection MNHA – Musée national d'histoire et d'art, Luxembourg

Production MAC VAL – Musée d'art contemporain du Val-de-Marne, Vitry-sur-Seine

Production BPS22 – Musée d'art de la Province de Hainaut, Charleroi

Courtesy mfc-michèle didier

Frozen by glory, smoothed by time, the palm of each statue's hand offers an exercise in backwards chiromancy.

***Classified Sunset*, 2017**

Newspaper clippings

40 x 30 cm (each) / frame

Private collection, Paris

A Tuscan sunset is photographed, capturing twelve phases of the descent. Each image is published in the classified ads in various international newspapers.

A fleeting moment, stretched out, that can be grasped in its entirety only by a press review.

***Made by Inmates for Inmates (Shirt)*, 2021**

Stainless steel, flip clock, shirt

29 x 42 x 16 cm

In collaboration with couturier Ezri Kahn

BPS22 Production – Hainaut Art Museum, Charleroi

In Phoenix prison, Arizona, clothes are made by inmates for inmates. The pattern of the regulation shirt is redrawn at a 1 to 1 scale, fragment by fragment, on the paddles of a mechanical clock, in place of the digits ticking off the passage of time.

***I Love You but I've Chosen Darkness (Golden Shoot)*, 2011**

Table for taking hard drugs, stainless steel, gilt chains

134 x 90 x 50 cm

Made in the context of a voluntary mission at Abrigado (Luxembourg), drug consumption room

Collection Mudam Luxembourg – Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean

A gold spider's web, a symbol of addiction used by junkies, bides its time under a table for taking hard drugs sampled from a pioneering injection centre in Luxembourg. 'Golden shot' is a slang expression for a fatal overdose.

***Fate will Tear Us Apart (Stefano)*, 2011**

Fate line on a junkie's right hand

White neon light

199 x 80 cm

Made in the context of a voluntary mission at Abrigado (Luxembourg), drug consumption room

Collection of the artists, Luxembourg

Hangover, 2016

Colour video, sound

4 min 19 sec

Collection The Israel Museum, Jerusalem

Gift of Nathalie and Jean-Daniel Cohen

On 14 October 2012, Felix Baumgartner was contemplating the earth. The extreme jumper would soon leap into the void from the atmosphere. His freefall, lasting four minutes and nineteen seconds, is captioned by the bans controlling access to Jerusalem's three holy sites: the Temple Mount, the Wailing Wall, and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Stone Clock, Sailing Time, 2016

Colour video, sound

5 min 18 sec

In the heart of Death Valley (California), stones move across the surface of a dry lake, leaving traces of their movement over the sand in the form of furrows. Here, the legend of Racetrack Playa is converted into a clock. The artists count the seconds, minutes and hours by walking in the opposite direction to the stones' movement. Step by step, their bodies invest the landscape and measure time against another dimension. Long considered a supernatural phenomenon, the movement has been explained by the combined action of freezing nocturnal temperatures and wind.

Fool's Gold, 2016-2020

Table for taking hard drugs, stainless steel, pyrite

135 x 90 x 50 cm

EA

Collection Dorith et Serge Galuz, Paris

During the Gold Rush, blinded by impatience and greed, many miners mistook pyrite for the precious metal. Displaying a similar brilliance but of no value, it has since been called 'fool's gold'.

L'Haleine des Statues, 2018 -

Videos, black-and-white, silent

Running times variable

L'Haleine des Statues (I), 2018

Ed. 1 / 2 : Boghossian Foundation, Bruxelles

***Attempt of Redemption*, 2012-2013**

Colour video, silent

11 min 10 sec

Made at the prison of Écrouves (France) during a residency at the FRAC Lorraine
Collection Jean-Michel Attal, Paris

Five inmates, positioned on an imaginary dial, exchange places at regular intervals, moving anticlockwise.

***24H Silence (157 min/1440 min)*, 2020**

Jukebox Seeburg AY 160 (1961)

80 vinyl records, 160 minutes of silence

Production MAC VAL – Musée d'art contemporain du Val-de-Marne, Vitry-sur-Seine

***24H Silence (157-282 min/1440 min)*, 2020**

Jukebox Seeburg ESTD160 (1974)

80 vinyl records, 160 minutes of silence

Collection Servais' Family

This jukebox contains eighty 45rpm records. Each side is a pressing of a minute of silence, observed somewhere in the world after a tragedy, be it a terrorist attack, the death of a famous person, a natural disaster or a mass shooting. Men commune in silence, in a park, in a stadium, a street, on a square or in a hemicycle, often thousands of kilometres from the scene of the tragedy.

***My Heart Stood Still (Yamina)*, 2021**

Heart line from the right hand of a young woman forced to marry by her parents

White neon light

700 x 2100 cm

Production BPS22 – Musée d'art de la Province de Hainaut, Charleroi

***Our Hour of Glory*, 2017**

59 clocks

In collaboration with Sergio Bruno, Emmanuel Di Mattia, Alain Durieux, Jean-Pierre Henin, Pascal Martens

BPS22 Collection – Hainaut Art Museum, Charleroi

Caterpillar set up in Charleroi in 1965 to manufacture its construction machines at the Gosselies site, which would quickly become the American group's second industrial centre.

51 years later, at 8.50 am on 2 September 2016, Caterpillar management announced the closure of the Belgian factory with the loss of its 2,500 employees.

After the shock, the anger, and the sadness came the time for resilience. A group of workers approached the BPS22 and Brognon Rollin in January 2017 to begin a process of catharsis. Three collective works will take shape, including the installation *Our Hour of Glory*, made up of 59 clocks taken from the factory site, all of them frozen at the exact same time: 8.50 am

***Pietro and the Locksmith (Via di Città, Siena, Italy)*, 2021**

Polished steel and brass

20 x 8 x 5 cm

In collaboration with Jacky Keiff – Best Craftsman in France – Serrurerie d'Art

With the support of the Ministry of Culture, Luxembourg

According to the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus said unto Peter, "And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." [Matthew, 16, 18-19]

As tradition would have it, in 1458 Vecchietta left two keys in the hands of his marble Saint Peter, erected in Siena on the facade of the Loggia della Mercanzia. Using the imprint of the keys, a French master locksmith has created the missing lock.

***8m² Loneliness (B135)*, 2012 – 2013**

Aluminium clock, movement sensor

190 x 40 x 8 cm

Made at the prison of Écrouves (France) during a residency at the FRAC Lorraine Collection MJS, Paris

'When I go into my cell, my time begins.' The testimony of this inmate conveys a strange experience of personal time. The interactive clock of *8 m² Loneliness (B135)* displays the time when no one is looking. Its hand stops when visitors enter. It waits for us to leave. It will catch up with time once it has regained its solitude.

I Lost my Page Again (page 1, 3, 6, 7, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23), 2018 -

Coloured straw marquetry glued on wood

Variable dimensions

(Page 6) Collection privée, Luxembourg

(Page 19, 20) Production MAC VAL – Musée d'art contemporain du Val-de-Marne, Vitry-sur-Seine.

(Page 22, 23) Production BPS22 – Musée d'art de la Province de Hainaut, Charleroi

The series 'I Lost My Page Again' captures waiting in its construction. Empty waiting rooms are photographed and then transposed using the craft technique of straw marquetry, wisp by wisp. Each strand was dyed, split and crushed before being assembled by the craftswoman Lucie Richard.

Practised in Europe from the 17th to the 19th century by people with a lot of time on their hands (convicts, nuns), straw marquetry was used to decorate boxes, chests, furniture and other practical objects.

Statu Quo Nunc, 2016

Agreement concerning the stability of the ladder of the Holy Sepulchre, drawn up by Jean-Michel Attal, notary (Paris)

Photographs of the ladder of the Holy Sepulchre (1915-2015)

Private collection, Paris

Private collection, Paris

Private collection, Luxembourg

Collection Frédéric de Goldschmidt

Private collection / Nathalie et Christophe Fournis, Paris

Statu Quo Nunc is a wager on the future between artists and collectors.

In 1852, the Ottoman authority promulgated an edict in order to put an end to the incessant quarrelling between the Christian communities who shared the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. This *Statu Quo Nunc* froze practices and the position of each object, including a ladder that had been left up on the outside wall. This now unmoveable ladder of the Holy Sepulchre became a symbol of permanence.

Statu Quo Nunc is an agreement for 15,000 euros which to date has been signed by five collectors in the presence of a notary. The sum is blocked by the artists for a period of thirty years. The transaction is symbolised by a photograph of the ladder under a plaque in frosted glass. If the ladder were to disappear from the wall of the Holy Sepulchre, the artists would pay the sum back to the collectors, who would return the work for destruction.

Subbar, Sabra, 2015

Two-channel projection, colour video, sound

6 min 47 sec

In collaboration with D. Almasy

Collection The Israel Museum, Jérusalem

Gift of Nathalie and Jean-Daniel Cohen

The prickly pear is a schizophrenic symbol, shared by two antagonistic peoples. A plant synonymous with the appropriation of land. In Palestine, the prickly pear was used to mark out the edges of neighbouring plots. The impassable barriers of thorn had a cadastral function. Their roots survived in the villages razed by the Israeli army and, over the years, the *subbar* started growing again, delimiting empty gardens and becoming the phantom imprint of the Arab presence in the territory.

In Arabic, the cactus is called *subbar*; the associated term *sabr* (سَبْرٌ) can also mean 'patience' or 'tenacity'. It occupies an important place in the movement of non-violent resistance to the Israeli military occupation. In Palestinian oral history and literature, the prickly pear embodies the struggle for freedom. The famous Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish often used the prickly pear as a symbol of his people. The author Nadia Taysir Dabbagh compares the resilience of this cactus to that of the Palestinian people: 'Even in an arid or harsh climate or environment, the Palestinians manage to go on living and surviving against all odds.'

Sabra (hébreu : סבר) is a slang term that has become part of official Hebrew and is used to describe a Jew of Israeli origin. The word first appeared in the 1930s. It referred to a Jew born in Ottoman Palestine under the British mandate. Since the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, Israelis have used it to refer to a Jew born in Israel. The word was derived from the Hebrew name for a Mexican cactus that is common in Israel, *tzabar matzui* (*Opuntia ficus-indica*), and alludes to the contrast between the thorny, prickly skin of the plant and its soft, sweet flesh, suggesting that if the Israeli *sabra* are rough on the outside, they are also sweet on the inside.

Translation of the text read in Arab and Hebrew (source: Wikipedia, October 2015)

***There's Somebody Carrying a Cross Down*, 2019**

Colour video, sound

6 min 25 sec

Wooden cross, gold paint

175 x 100 cm

Collection Servais' Family

Every day, Mazen Kenan hires out wooden crosses to pilgrims in Jerusalem. Like his father and grandfather before him, he is a vital cog in the Sisyphean mechanism of penitence. For 50 dollars, he places a cross outside the Church of the Flagellation, the first station on the Via Dolorosa that leads to the Holy Sepulchre.

He then waits for its arrival and takes it back down to the starting point, following a personal route through the Old City.

***Ejection Tie Club (#2412, #3966, #4394, #5431, #5931, #7306, #7441)*, 2021**

Set of 7 videos, colour, silent

Varying lengths

BPS22 Production – Hainaut Art Museum, Charleroi

For a fighter pilot, the ejection seat is the last resort before impending death. Ejecting oneself from one's plane is a rare and sometimes traumatic event.

Martin-Baker, the oldest English manufacturer of ejection seats, founded the Tie Club in 1929 to bring the community of ejected pilots together. Every year, during an induction ceremony, new members are given a unique tie symbolising their second life after ejection and their permanent membership of the Tie Club.

The Martin-Baker Ejection Tie Club has 7,656 members to date.

The varying lengths of the videos match the ejection lengths experienced by each pilot. Some appear as many times as they have escaped death.

Until Then Armchair (MAC VAL / BPS22), 2019 - ...

Stainless steel, fabric

105 x 84,5 x 80 cm

In collaboration with François Bauchet

Production MAC VAL – Musée d'art contemporain du Val-de-Marne, Vitry-sur-Seine

Until Then Armchair is a waiting chair. With its straight back, metal armrests and padded structure, it offers the comfort needed for long sitting while imposing a vigilant posture.

Until Then (BPS22), 2021

Performance, durée variable

Line sitter : Elvin Williams (Same Ole Line Dudes)

En collaboration avec un médecin généraliste (Bruxelles)

Production BPS22 – Musée d'art de la Province de Hainaut, Charleroi

In 2012, the Same Old Line Dudes invented a new profession: that of line sitter. They would wait on New York sidewalks on behalf of impatient consumers intent on having one of the first iPhones or a front-row seat at a play – but without the chore of having to wait in line.

In spring 2021, in Belgium, a person notified the doctors several times of her desire to cease living in order to cut short her suffering.

At the exact time of her death, Elvin Williams will leave the BPS22.

On , at , Elvin Williams left the museum.

He will have waited days.

57 seconds, 2017

3 black-and-white photographs

19,5 x 25,5 cm (each) / frame

Collection MJS, Paris

A label is a short text accompanying a work of art, like the one you are reading at this moment.

57 Seconds is a label/work.

It announces, drop by drop, its programmed end; the *57 seconds* needed for it to be erased, when the steam drowns out the text.

I'm All Tomorrow's Broken Hearts, 2019 - 2021

Helvetica Neue font, bold and regular, vinyl

Varying dimensions

Textes Anthony van den Bossche

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The exhibition labels use the lettering of PROPRANOLOL®, a betablocker prescribed for anxiety, panic attacks, and heartbreak.

MERCI FACTEUR! MAIL ART #4 STEPHAN BARBERY & GUY STUCKENS

Still under the auspices of the *Boîte Alerte (Missives Lascives)* by artists Mimi Parent and Marcel Duchamp, this fourth component devoted to Mail art in Francophone Belgium is dedicated to the collections of Stephan Barbery and Guy Stuckens.

A multi-disciplinary artist, or more accurately a rejecter of disciplines, Stephan Barbery (Brussels, 1961) subscribed to the DIY spirit of punk, of which he was one of Belgium's first practitioners, especially with his group Digital Dance. He was also one of the Belgian artists in the *Europunk* exhibition. *Punk visual culture in Europe*, shown at the BPS22 in 2011. He is still active today in the bands Babilis and INK.

Barbery was notably involved in producing punk fanzines in the 1980s. His publications reveal a working method based on the decomposition of the image by all possible means. This aesthetic became his brand as much in the area of painting as in Mail art – to which he is one of the main Belgian contributors – and even graphic design. He was in fact responsible for creating many vinyl disc covers, notably for the PIAS (Play It Again Sam) music label. He made several record sleeves for the Anglo-Dutch group The Legendary Pink Dots.

A painter by training and a musician, Guy Stuckens (Brussels, 1955) predominantly practised Mail art, of which he is another central figure in Belgium, as much through his letter-writing contribution as through his organisational and theoretical inputs. He was one of the initiators of the Belgian components of the Decentralized Mail Art Congress, held in the 1980s, while also offering his theoretical contributions.

One of the unique features of his Mail art work was to extend its practice to the exchange of sound bites. Active within the sociocultural Radio Air Libre in Brussels, his correspondence gradually came to be built around what was then called “Radio art”, or the exchange of sound bites between independent radio stations all over the world. This interest also led him to underground, marginal, or sometimes downright experimental musical productions, as well as to sound poetry and field recording. As such, rare vinyl discs and dozens of cassettes shared by correspondents from all over the world make up this exhibition. A complete soundscape (B side) from 33T *Mail Music project* by multidisciplinary artist Nicola Frangione (1953) is broadcast in this exhibition.

Museum open Tuesday - Sunday, 10:00 am - 6:00 pm
Closed on Mondays, 24, 25, and 31 December, and 1 January

PRICES:

€6 / seniors: €4 / Students and job seekers: €3 / under 12 years of age: free
Groups of 10 persons minimum: €4 / Guides: 50 € or 60 € (weekend) per 15-persons groups

Free entrance for school and associations (visits and workshop) upon booking

Web application available: <http://guide.bps22.be>

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Graphic design : heureux studio

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