

Edith Dekyndt

From Two Thousand and Sixteen
to Two Thousand and Twenty Three



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Éditions Dilecta

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us to slow down and contemplate, a landscape like a collective body pulsating in the light, through which this book, thanks to the selection of images and the graphic design by Esther Le Roy gently endeavors to guide us.

de la biologie cellulaire et le macrocosme cosmique tel un paysage imaginaire mouvant abritant pour un temps la constellation éphémère des œuvres qui l'habitent. Elle constitue avec nous, ou sans nous, un *Umwelt* sensible qui invite au ralentissement et à la contemplation, un paysage comme un corps collectif qui palpète dans la lumière, que cet ouvrage, par le choix des visuels et grâce à la maquette d'Esther Le Roy, tente avec finesse de nous faire traverser.

ON MOVES Léon Kruijswijk

On February 8, 2023, at around 11 a.m., a young man climbed into one of the twenty-four tall historic display cases encircling the large Rotunda of the Bourse de Commerce in Paris—an action that will be repeated every Saturday. The scene is part of Edith Dekyndt's exhibition *L'Origine des choses*. Dressed in pristine beige-and-white clothes and shoes, he first completes his outfit by putting on two white gloves he takes from a jar placed in the vitrine. Subsequently, he takes an eraser from another jar and starts to use it on the vitrine's window from the inside, facing the viewer. His pace is relaxed as his hand slowly makes the movements. He is focused and undisturbed by the viewers and the passersby. His movements are repetitive but alternating, at times thought through and other times arbitrary. The traces left on the window surface make a pattern or drawing that does not repeat. One can only speculate about what he is attempting to erase.

The performance exemplifies a routine job with actions made by a mind in a liminal state oscillating between the conscious and the subconscious, between what he has been instructed to do and what he is inclined to do. In 1998 at Or Gallery in Vancouver, Dekyndt did the performance herself and then had it reenacted by others at Carl Freedman Gallery in 2017. In *L'Origine des choses*, there is only one display case where a human being is sometimes visible; in all the others, only the traces of the human hand are palpable.

Built in 1767 on the edge of the Quartier des Halles in Paris, the circular Bourse de Commerce



EN MOUVEMENT Léon Kruijswijk

Depuis le 8 février 2023, tous les samedis vers 11 heures, un jeune homme escalade l'une des vingt-quatre hautes vitrines historiques qui bordent la grande Rotonde de la Bourse de Commerce à Paris. La scène fait partie de l'exposition *L'Origine des choses* d'Edith Dekyndt. Portant des vêtements et des chaussures d'un blanc et beige immaculés, l'homme commence par compléter sa tenue en enfilant deux gants blancs qui l'attendent dans un bocal placé dans la vitrine, puis, prenant une gomme dans un autre pot, il se met à gommer l'intérieur de la vitre, face au spectateur. Il adopte un rythme détendu, effectuant de lents mouvements de main. Concentré, il ne se laisse pas perturber par les personnes qui le regardent ou passent nonchalamment devant lui. Ses mouvements sont répétitifs mais alternés, tantôt réfléchis, tantôt arbitraires. Les traces laissées sur la surface de la vitre forment un motif qui n'est jamais le même. On ne peut que spéculer sur ce qu'il tente d'effacer.

La performance illustre un travail routinier sous la forme d'actes effectués par un esprit qui, dans un état liminal, oscille entre le conscient et l'inconscient, entre ce qu'on lui a demandé de faire et ce qu'il a envie de faire. En 1998, à la Or Gallery à Vancouver, Edith Dekyndt a elle-même réalisé cette performance, avant de la faire réactiver par d'autres à la Carl Freedman Gallery en 2017.

Dans *L'Origine des choses*, c'est la seule vitrine où un être humain est parfois visible; les autres ne contiennent que des traces de la main humaine.

Le bâtiment circulaire de la Bourse de Commerce, d'un diamètre de 122 mètres, a été

The Eraser 1997
Live action
Cur. by Kitty Scott, Or Gallery, Vancouver (CA)

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case with the materials depicted on the panorama painting that she reconfigured in the vitrines for *L'Origine des choses*. As shifting singular entities, her pieces are often related to theoretical frameworks such as Jane Bennett's political ecology of things or Bruno Latour's *Dingpolitik* and his network-actor theory, in which objects become actors as signifiers in a network.⁵

A further key concept to understanding the work of Dekyndt is the notion of performativity, in particular when considering the pieces unmistakably showcasing human agency. According to Judith Butler, an important aspect of performativity is the repetitiveness of the acts that are being done. An act is performative if it produces a series of effects.⁶ Mieke Bal departs from this notion to identify the difference between performance art and performativity, which lays in the shift from, respectively, intention and singularity to convention and "iterability," or, in other words, the ability to reiterate, to repeat.⁷ However, Bal also argues that performance and performativity should not be treated separately, for which she uses memory as the mediating term, because of its entanglement with time. Memory concerns the past and happens in the present.⁸ It is here that the act of reiteration—of restaging something from the memory—occurs.

The man with the eraser illustrates this notion through the repetitive structure of the performance on multiple levels. Since the exhibition opening, it has taken place every Saturday. During each iteration, he continuously repeats similar, if not the same, actions over and over again—under the unchanged premise of the assignment. Last but not least, by restaging the performance at the

façon intuitive et ludique la matérialité et les possibilités infinies de transformation des choses, elle s'intéresse aussi à leur sémiotique. En changeant le contexte du signifiant – comme elle le fait avec les matériaux représentés sur le panorama, qu'elle a reconfigurés dans les vitrines de *L'Origine des choses* –, elle déconstruit et remet en question le signifié auquel on s'attend. En tant qu'entités singulières changeantes, ses œuvres sont souvent liées à des cadres théoriques – comme l'écologie politique des choses de Jane Bennett ou la *Dingpolitik* de Bruno Latour et sa théorie de l'acteur-réseau – dans lesquels les objets deviennent des acteurs en tant que signifiants dans un réseau⁵.

Une autre notion clé pour comprendre le travail d'Edith Dekyndt est le concept de performativité, notamment pour les pièces qui mettent clairement en évidence l'agentivité humaine. Selon Judith Butler, un aspect important de la performativité est la répétitivité des actes accomplis. Un acte est performatif s'il produit une série d'effets⁶. S'écartant de cette notion, Mieke Bal distingue pour sa part la performance en tant qu'art et la performativité, la différence se situant dans le passage de l'intention et de la singularité à la convention et à l'itérabilité ou, en d'autres termes, à la capacité de réitérer, de répéter⁷. Cependant, convaincue également qu'il ne faut pas traiter séparément performance et performativité, Mieke Bal utilise la mémoire comme terme médiateur en raison de son enchevêtrement avec le temps. La mémoire concerne le passé et se produit dans le présent⁸. C'est là qu'intervient l'acte de réitération, de remise en scène d'une chose issue de la mémoire.

L'homme à la gomme illustre cette notion par la structure répétitive de la performance à plusieurs



Provisory Object 03 (Kinshasa) 2004
Video 4/3, 01'57"

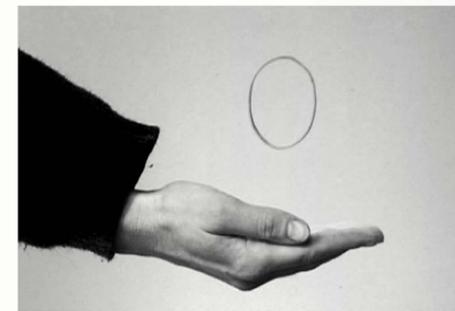
Bourse de Commerce, Dekyndt transfers the memory of it through the assignment and has it reenacted in a different temporality. It is a performance of performativity, and through this reenactment, Dekyndt attests to the defining role of memory as mediator between the two.

In Dekyndt's work, however, the notion of performativity is not always as visible as illustrated above. Central to the work *The Lariat* (2019/2022) was the performance—which repeated multiple times—of a man whipping a large piece of pink silk with a lasso in the eponymous exhibition at VNH Gallery in Paris. In the video documenting the performances, one witnesses the man slowly twirling the lasso, rotating it around its axis and around his body, as if warming up. Once standing in front of the large plane of pink fabric, the man powerfully and gracefully lashes it multiple times to leave behind small tears on the fleshy surface. It is the friction of one natural material damaging another through the repetitive movements that is imprinted on the cowboy's memory. Being able to properly use a lasso is a rare skill that requires precision, physical strength, and practice over time. In 2022 at the St. Matthäus church in Berlin, *The Lariat* was exhibited again, albeit in a different format. The sound of the lasso on the fabric was played loudly at regular intervals in the space, thereby disrupting the silence of the church and making man's ability to intervene in a sphere audible.

When doing research for this piece at a ranch in Texas, USA, Dekyndt was fascinated by the deep respect for nature possessed by the few remaining cowboys. Life on a ranch mainly takes place outdoors and is centered on a vast piece of

niveaux: depuis l'ouverture de l'exposition, en effet, cette performance a lieu tous les samedis, et chaque fois, l'homme répète des actions similaires, voire identiques, sous la prémisse inchangée de la mission qui lui est assignée. Enfin, en réitérant cette performance à la Bourse de Commerce, Dekyndt en transfère le souvenir dans une nouvelle mission, qui s'inscrit dans une temporalité différente. C'est une performance de la performativité et, par cette remise en scène, Dekyndt atteste le rôle déterminant de la mémoire en tant que médiateur entre les deux.

Dans son travail, cependant, la notion de performativité n'est pas toujours aussi visible que dans cet exemple. Au cœur de *The Lariat* (2019/2022), il y a cette performance – réalisée à plusieurs reprises, dans l'exposition éponyme à la galerie VNH à Paris – au cours de laquelle un homme fouette un grand morceau de tissu de soie rose avec un lasso. Dans la vidéo qui documente les performances, l'homme fait lentement tourner le lasso autour de son axe et de son corps, comme s'il s'échauffait. Puis, il fouette avec grâce et puissance le grand pan de tissu rose, provoquant de petites déchirures sur sa surface charnue. Ce qui s'imprime dans la mémoire, c'est le frottement d'une matière naturelle sur une autre par les mouvements répétitifs du cow-boy. Savoir utiliser correctement un lasso est une compétence rare qui exige précision, force physique et longue pratique. En 2022, à l'église St. Matthäus de Berlin, *The Lariat* a été exposée à nouveau, sous une forme différente. Le son du lasso claquant sur le tissu était diffusé à intervalles réguliers, perturbant ainsi le silence de l'église et rendant audible la capacité de l'homme à intervenir dans l'espace.



Slow Object 04 1997
Video 4/3, 04'03"

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that moves continuously around an axis. Once an hour, for approximately ten minutes, an attendant sweeps the particles with a broom, creating a moving cloud of dust as a result. In 2024, in the foyer of Palazzo Grassi's Teatrino, Dekyndt will show a video of a performance done at Venice's public landmark *Monument to the Partisan Woman*, in which a woman partially lays in the water and polishes the bronze statue, charged with meaning, with a cloth. Here, Edith Dekyndt attracts the viewer's attention to mankind's ability to maintain and preserve something. It is us who can keep a cycle, a routine, and a repetition alive, or avert its recurrence. Dekyndt ultimately stresses how every move can make a difference, regardless of its scale.

aux clous du rideau. Avec *They Shoot Horses*, Edith Dekyndt met en scène de manière invisible la performativité et son potentiel d'exploitation extrême – au-delà du format des marathons et de la télévision – et évoque la forme que peut prendre cette exploitation, hier comme aujourd'hui.

Cette sombre dimension n'est pas nécessairement inhérente à l'ensemble des œuvres d'Edith Dekyndt, qui met plutôt l'accent sur le côté positif de la transformation par la performativité. Deux œuvres liées à Venise illustrent bien cet argument. *One Thousand and One Nights* – exposée au Wiels à Bruxelles en 2016 et à la Biennale de Venise en 2017 – se compose de poussière collectée sous un grand projecteur de forme carrée qui se déplace continuellement autour de son axe. Une fois par heure, pendant une dizaine de minutes, un préposé balaie les particules, créant ainsi un nuage de poussière en mouvement. En 2024, dans le foyer du Teatrino du Palazzo Grassi, Edith Dekyndt diffusera la vidéo d'une performance réalisée autour de *La Partisane*, à Venise, dans laquelle une femme, partiellement plongée dans l'eau, polit cette statue de bronze, symboliquement chargée, à l'aide d'un chiffon, attirant l'attention du spectateur sur la capacité de l'humanité à préserver le souvenir de quelque chose, à maintenir en vie un cycle, une routine ou un acte, ou à éviter qu'ils ne se reproduisent. En fin de compte, l'artiste souligne le fait que tout geste, quelle que soit son ampleur, peut faire la différence.

- 1 Christophe Van Gerwey, "Edith Dekyndt. L'Origine des choses," *De Witte Raaf*, no. 222 (March–April 2023): www.dewitteraaf.be/artikel/edith-dekyndt-lorigine-des-choses.
- 2 Alix Laveau, "Restoration of the 'Panorama du Commerce,'" interview by Guillaume Picon, Bourse de Commerce, January 11, 2020, www.pinaultcollection.com/en/bourse-decommerce/restoration-panorama-du-commerce.
- 3 Van Gerwey, "Edith Dekyndt."
- 4 Between March and May 2023, I conducted multiple interviews with Edith Dekyndt in preparation for this essay. Many of the details that I include here are drawn from these interviews.
- 5 See Jane Bennett's and Gretchen Wagner's contributions to the Wiels catalogue, *Edith Dekyndt: Ombre indigène* (Dijon: Les Presses du réel, 2016), 95–105, as well as the Bourse de Commerce exhibition text.
- 6 Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge Classics, 2011), xii.
- 7 Mieke Bal, *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities: A Rough Guide* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 180.
- 8 Bal, *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities*, 183.
- 9 Katja Schroeder, "Edith Dekyndt—*The White, The Black, The Blue*. Kunstpreis Finkenwerder," Kunsthaus Hamburg, exhibition brochure, 2019.
- 10 Schroeder, "Edith Dekyndt."
- 11 Lyndsey Winship, "Bop till You Drop: The Staggering True Stories behind America's Dance Marathons," *The Guardian*, August 4, 2017, www.theguardian.com/stage/2017/aug/04/bop-till-you-drop-americas-dance-marathons-no-miracles-here-edinburgh-festival.
- 12 Winship, "Bop till You Drop."
- 13 The TV show was called *De Dansmarathon*. It was produced by Talpa Entertainment Productions and was broadcast live on the Dutch SBS 6 station from October 14 to 16, 2021.

- 1 Christophe van Gerwey, «Edith Dekyndt. L'Origine des choses», *De Witte Raaf*, mars-avril 2023: www.dewitteraaf.be/artikel/edith-dekyndt-lorigine-des-choses/
- 2 Voir l'entretien d'Alix Laveau et Guillaume Picon, «Restauration du *Panorama du commerce*», interview, Bourse de Commerce, 11 janvier 2021.
- 3 Christophe van Gerwey, «Edith Dekyndt. L'Origine des choses», art. cit.
- 4 Note générale: entre mars et mai 2023, en préparation de cet essai, j'ai eu de multiples conversations avec Edith Dekyndt, dont j'ai tiré de nombreux détails inclus ici.
- 5 Voir Jane Bennett, «La force des choses» et Gretchen Wagner, «Edith Dekyndt: Rien ne sort du néant», Bruxelles, Wiels/Dijon, Le Consortium/Les Presses du réel, 2016, p. 107-111 et 165-172; et le texte de l'exposition de la Bourse de Commerce.
- 6 Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of «Sex»*, New York, Routledge Classics, 1993/2011, p. xii.
- 7 Mieke Bal, *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities. A Rough Guide*, Toronto, Buffalo, Londres, University of Toronto Press, 2002, p. 180.
- 8 *Ibid.*, p. 183.
- 9 Katja Schroeder, «Edith Dekyndt – *The White, The Black, The Blue*», Kunstpreis Finkenwerder», Kunsthaus Hamburg, brochure d'exposition, 2019.
- 10 *Ibid.*
- 11 Lyndsey Winship, «Bop till You Drop: The Staggering True Stories Behind America's Dance Marathons», *The Guardian*, 4 août 2017.
- 12 *Ibid.*
- 13 L'émission de télévision, intitulée *De Dansmarathon*, a été produite par Talpa Entertainment Productions et diffusée en direct du 14 au 16 octobre 2021 sur la chaîne néerlandaise SBS 6.

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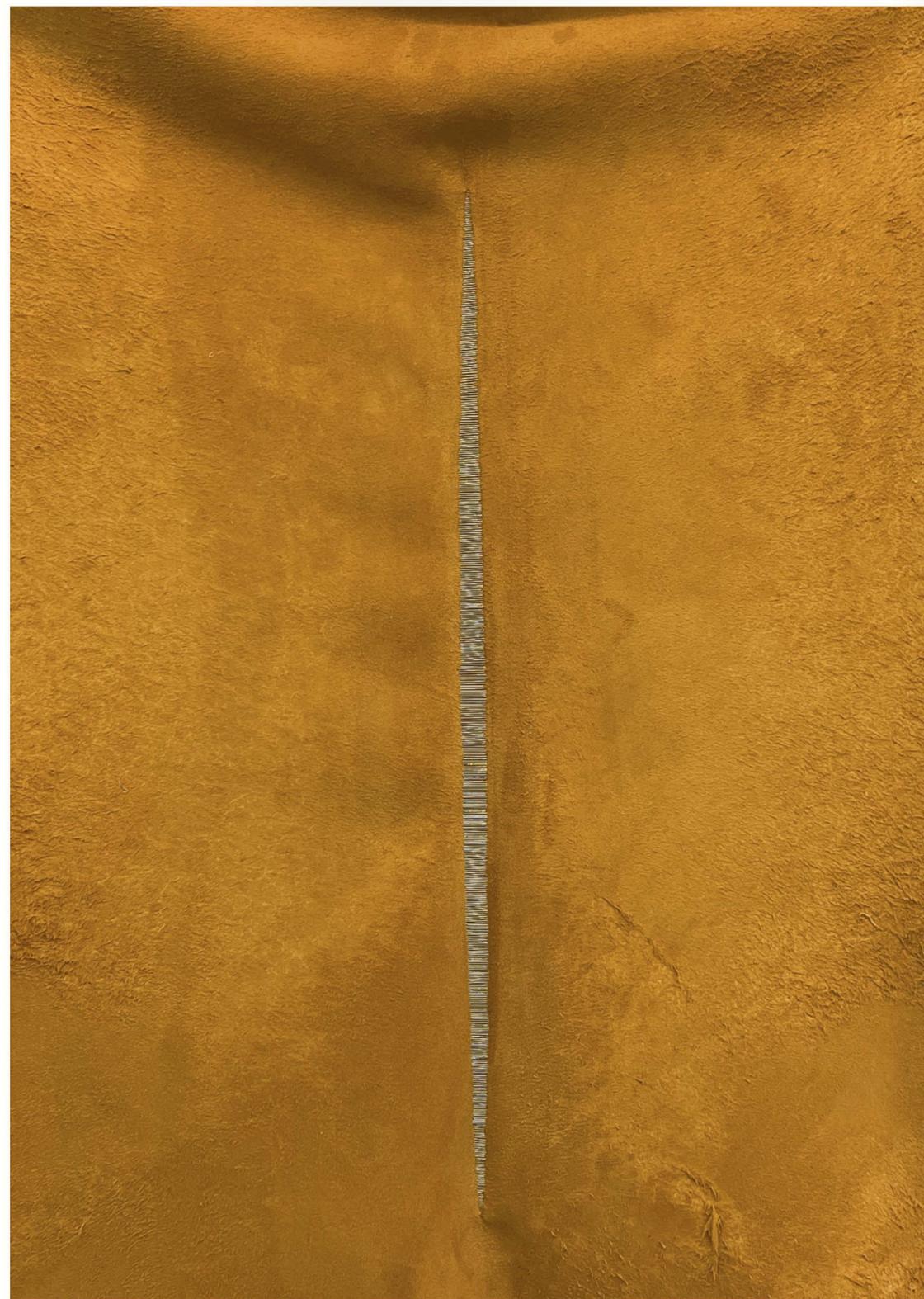
NE PAS LAVER LE SABLE JAUNE
Galerie Greta Meert, Brussels (BE)
2023

ORLANDO (SOIGNES FOREST ROOT) 2023
Silk thread/Fil de soie
3 x 210 cm

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PRIVATE ZOO (ORANGE LAMB) 2023
Lambskin pierced with steel pins/Cuir d'agneau
transpercé d'épingles en acier 70 x 50 cm

UNDERGROUND (RUE DE BESMES) 2023
Stretched canvas on frame, earth sediment/Toile tendue
sur châssis, sédiments de terre 40 x 30 cm

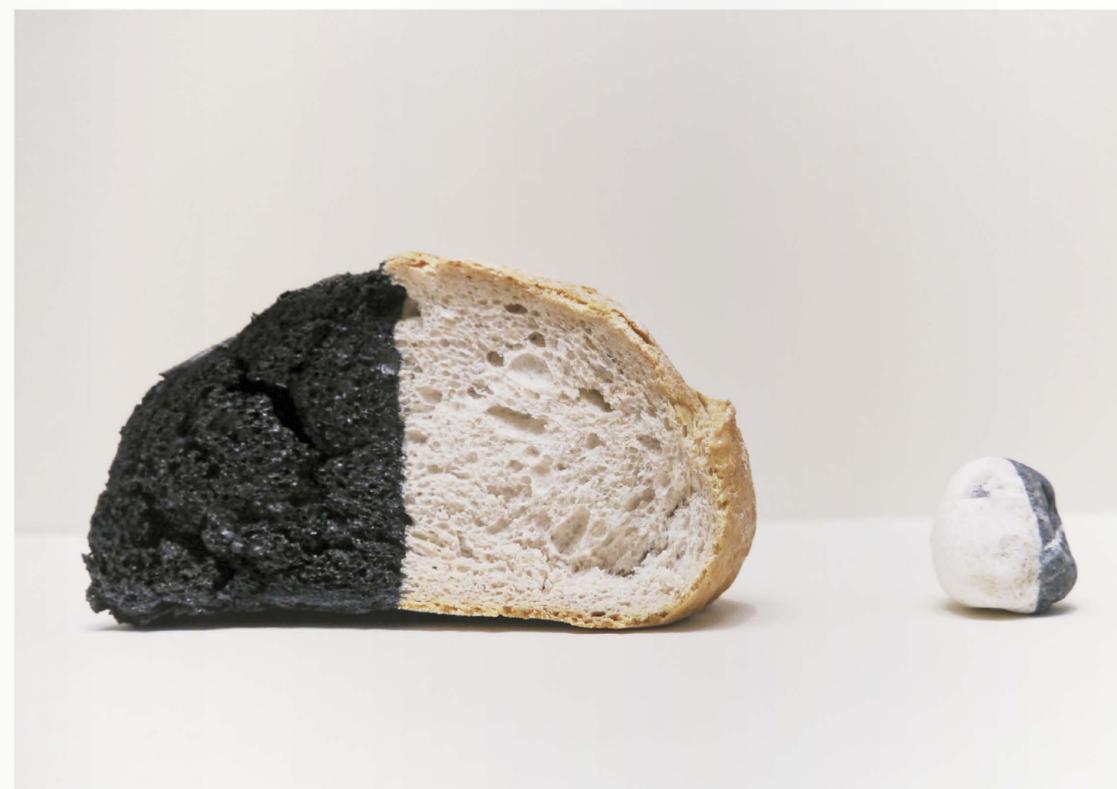
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L'ORIGINE DES CHOSES
Bourse de Commerce – Pinault Collection, Paris (FR)
2023 (See/Voir pp. 141/157)

OMBRE INDIGÈNE (detail/détail) 2023
Flag made using real hair/Drapeau de cheveux naturels



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MUD (detail/détail) 2014
Raw white soil on jute canvas/
Terre blanche crue sur toile de jute

LABORATORY 01 1995
Industrial white bread half soaked in ink/Pain blanc
industriel trempé à moitié dans de l'encre
Stone, Libyan Sea/Galet, mer de Libye 2022

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← OMBRE INDIGÈNE (detail/détail) 2014
 Flag made using real hair/Drapeau de cheveux naturels
 (pp. 26-27)

Velvet edge for a wool blanket, ozonated water, Altuglas
 acrylic bowl/Bord en velours de couverture de laine,
 eau ozonée, vasque en Altuglas 1995-2023

Canvas imbibed through capillary action with coffee,
 earth, vivarium/Tissu imprégné de café par capillarité,
 vivarium et terre 2023



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Fragment of an iridescent blue crystal. Lambskin covered with blue clay. Fabric edge in sugar, jar/Morceau de cristal bleu irisé. Peau d'agneau recouverte d'argile bleue. Bord de tissu posé dans du sucre, bocal de verre

Cotton canvases containing bread dough. White wool felt skullcap. Wooden stick wrapped with cotton/Toiles coton renfermant de la pâte à pain. Coiffe de laine feutrée. Bâton de bois entouré de fil de coton

→ Velvet on canvas, coffee. Feather ribbons. Roll of natural latex. Paper ammunition. Fabrics covered with silver and gold leaf. Lemon suspended in a quartz gel/Velours sur châssis, café. Rubans en plumes. Rouleau de latex naturel. Papier d'emballage de munitions. Tissus recouverts de feuilles d'argent et d'or. Citron en suspension dans un gel de quartz (p. 32)

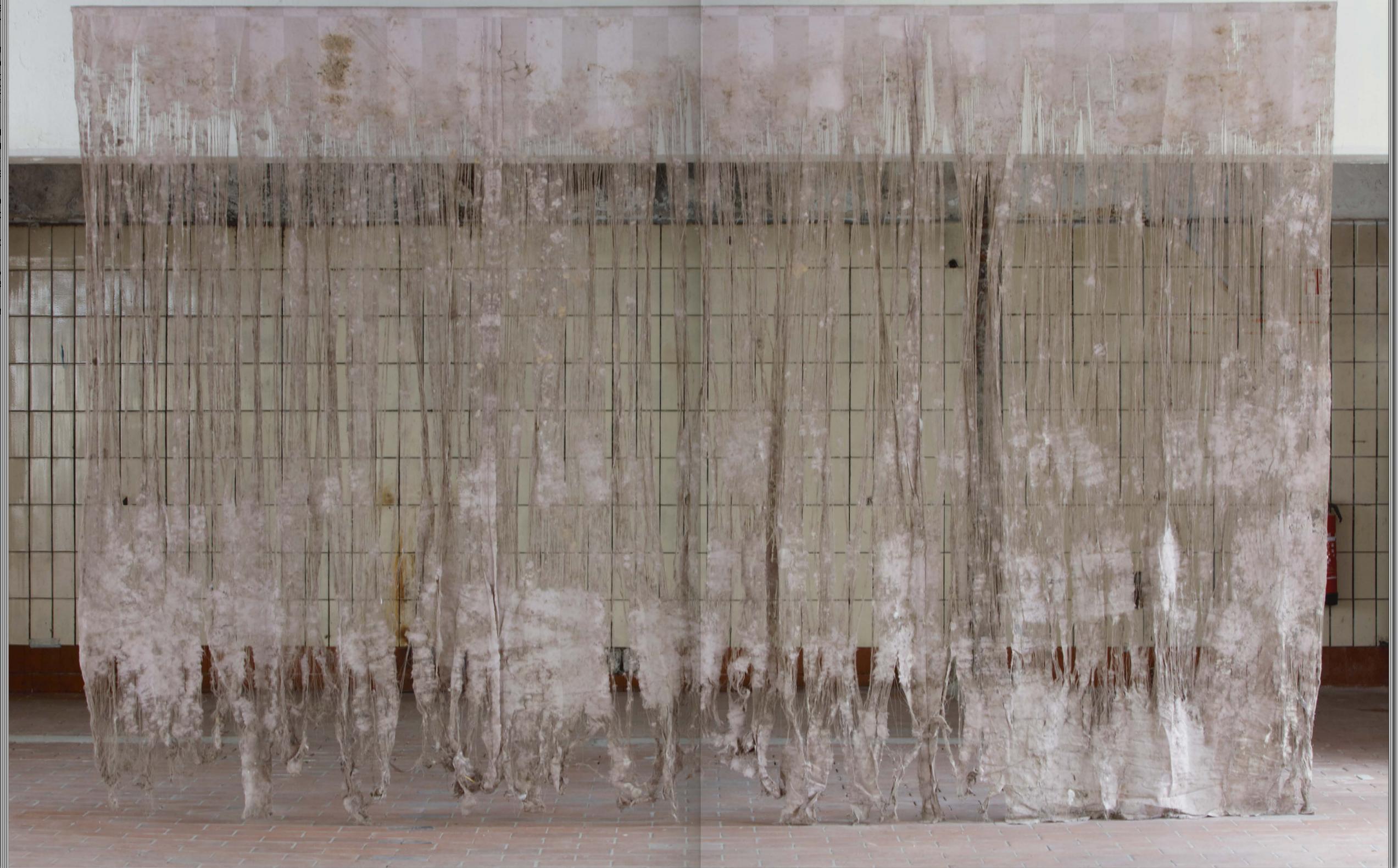
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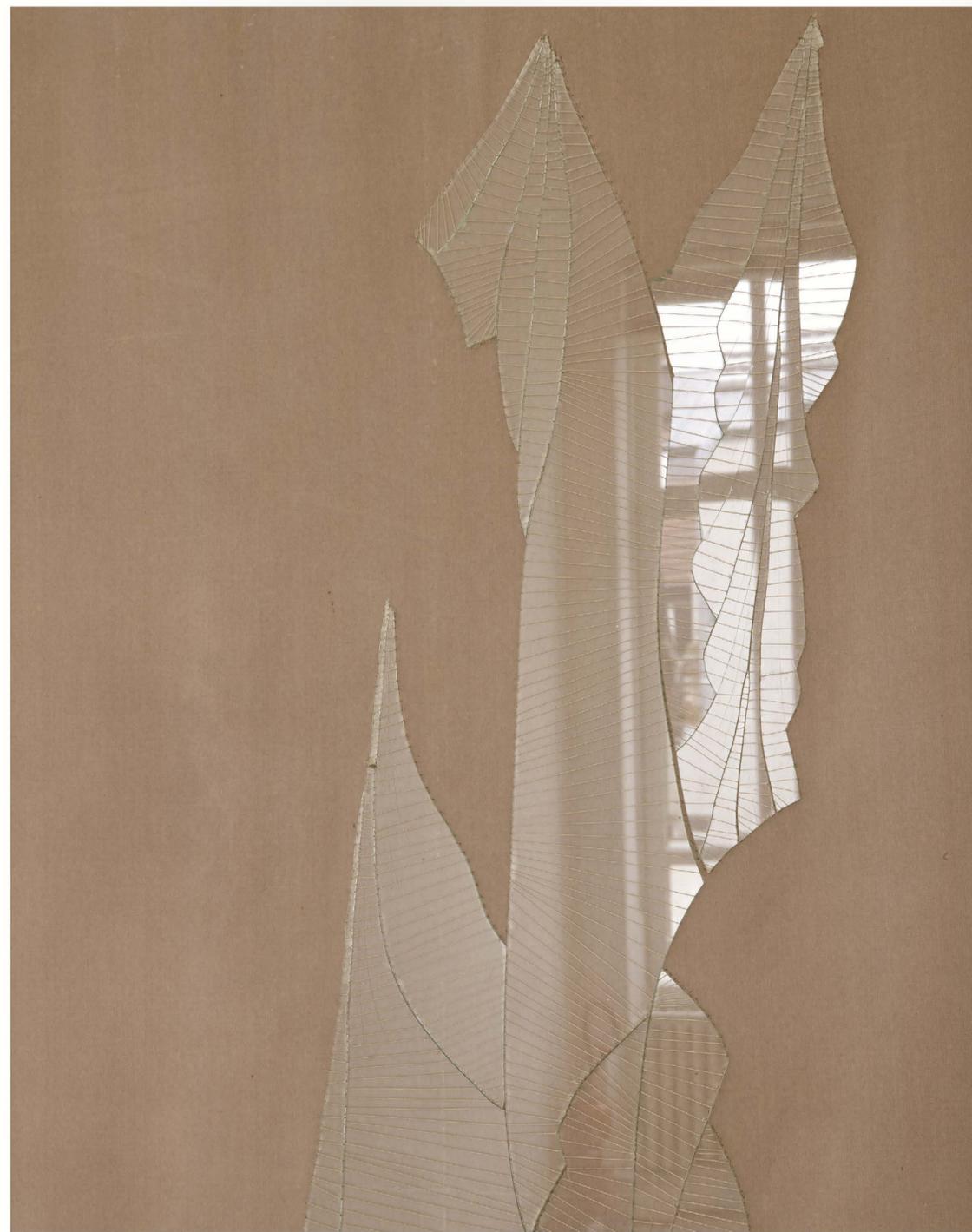
REALITY IS THERE ANYWAY
(group show/expo. collective)
Weltkunstzimmer, Düsseldorf (DE)
2022

UNDERGROUND (91530 LE MARAIS) 2021
Cotton canvas, soil, and vegetation sediments, installation
view and detail/Toile de coton, sédiments de terre et
de végétation, vue d'installation et détail 300 x 450 cm

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BROKEN GLASSES
Galerie Greta Meert (Viewing Room), Brussels (BE)
2021

WRECK 2021
Broken glass embroidered on velvet, detail and installation view/
Vitre brisée brodée sur velours, détail et vue d'installation 180 x 122 cm 56



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SLOW OBJECT 17 2020
 Silver leaf on pleated fabric/Feuilles d'argent
 sur tissu plissé 143 x 110 cm

ML 31 (SPRING) 2020
 Stocking stitch stretched over a frame covered with sugar/
 Sucre blanc sur maille de bas tendue sur châssis 40 x 30 cm

PAVILOSTA 2020
 Video/Vidéo, 16/9, 02'06"
 On a loop/En boucle

→ SLOW OBJECT 17 (detail/détail) 2020
 Silver leaf on pleated fabric/Feuilles d'argent
 sur tissu plissé (p. 68)

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THE BLACK, THE WHITE, THE BLUE
(PART I) Kunsthaus Hamburg (DE) 2019
(PART II) Konrad Fischer Galerie, Düsseldorf (DE) 2019
(PART III) Le Grand Café, Saint-Nazaire (FR) 2020
(See/Voir pp. 145/161)

THE BLACK, THE WHITE, THE BLUE 2019
Fridges, broken fridge glass, hologram, installation view/
Réfrigérateurs, vitres de réfrigérateur brisées, hologramme,
vue d'installation

→ **THE BLACK, THE WHITE, THE BLUE** 2019
Leather sofa, water-soaked linen, installation view/
Sofa en cuir, linge imprégné d'eau, vue d'installation
(pp. 73–75)



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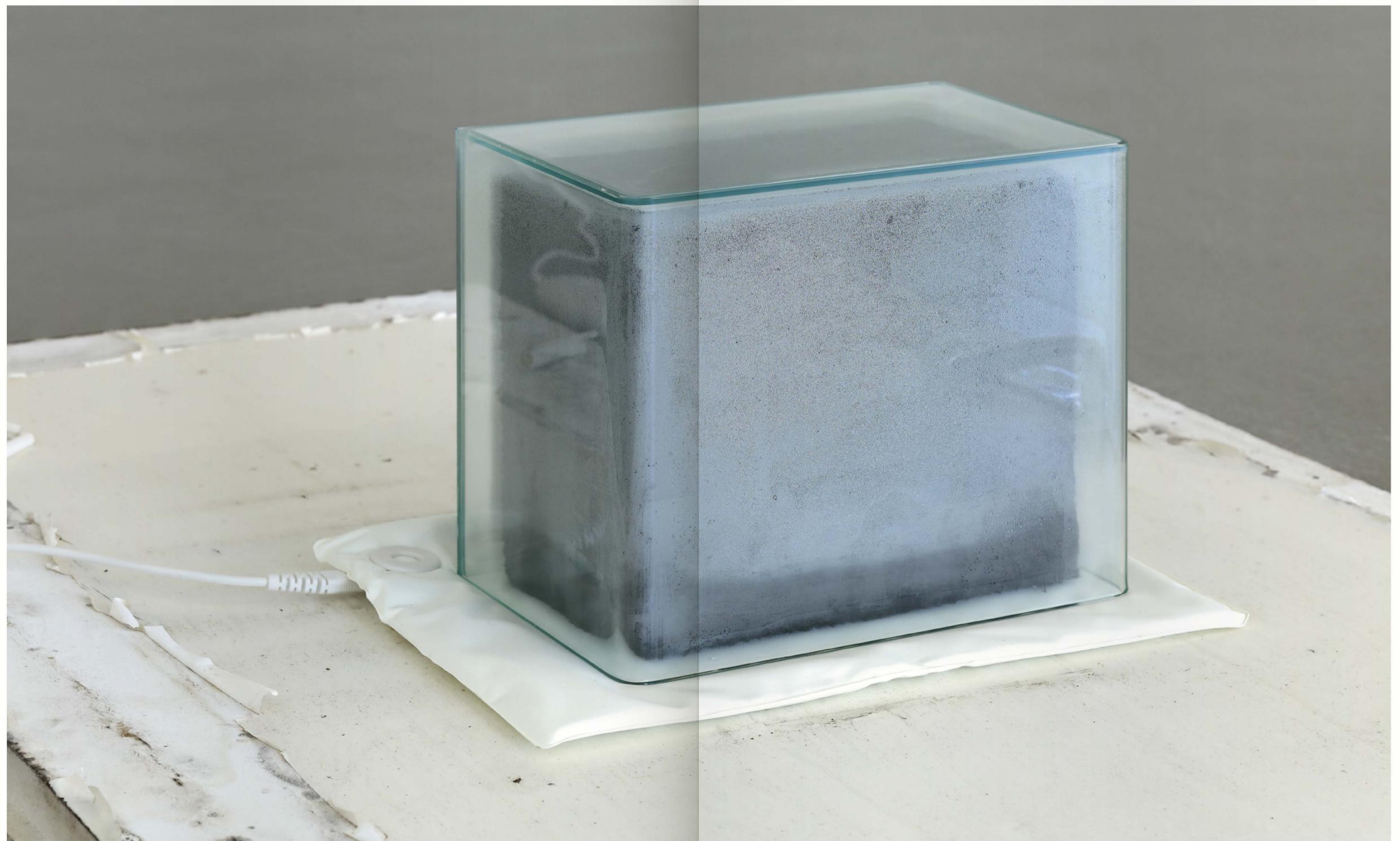


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THE BLACK, THE WHITE, THE BLUE 2019
Installation and soundscape, installation view/
Installation et paysage sonore, vue d'installation

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DIE SÜDLICHE NATUR IN IHRER ÜPPIGEN UND
MAJESTÄTISCHEN PRACHT (SOUTHERN NATURE IN
HER ABUNDANT AND MAJESTIC SPLENDOR) 2019

Aquarium, fabric in the shape of a rectangular parallelepiped,
humidity/Aquarium, tissu en forme de parallélépipède
rectangle, humidité

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THE LARIAT
VNH Gallery, Paris (FR)
2019

UNDERGROUND 17 (LENS) 2017
Cotton canvas, soil, and vegetation sediments/Toile de coton,
sédiments de terre et de végétation 250 x 160 cm

→ **THE LARIAT** 2019
Installation views/Vues d'installation
(pp. 86-87)



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THE KINGDOM (MORSUM 07) 2017
Lambskin stapled to wood/Peau d'agneau agrafée
sur bois 40 x 30 cm

THE KINGDOM (MORSUM 08) (detail/détail) 2017
Lambskin stapled to wood/Peau d'agneau agrafée
sur bois 50 x 40 cm

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ASIAN DRAWING 01 2015
Pencil on silk/Crayon sur soie 102 x 80 cm

OMBRE INDIGÈNE
Wiels, Brussels (BE)
2016 (See/Voir pp. 147/163)

LABORATORY 01 (replica/réplique) 1995–2015
Cotton curtain impregnated with coffee through capillary action/
Rideau de coton imprégné de café par capillarité 650 x 1500 cm 126



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← THE BIOGRAPHY OF OBJECTS 2015
Ethnic-inspired carpet, ferments, installation view/Tapis d'inspiration
ethnique, ferments, vue d'installation 170 x 240 cm (p. 128)

← THE BIOGRAPHY OF OBJECTS 2015
Ethnic-inspired carpet, salts, installation view/Tapis d'inspiration
ethnique, sels, vue d'installation 250 x 350 cm (p. 129)

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A PORTRAIT OF THINGS (replica/réplique) 2016
Black fur in vivariums, humidity, installation view/Fourrure noire
dans des vivariums, humidité, vue d'installation

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OMBRE INDIGÈNE (PART 2, MARTINIQUE) 2014
Video projection/Projection vidéo, 16/9, 34'17"
On a loop/En boucle

Notices et textes critiques

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Illusie of is het gewoon anders
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EASY COME, EASY GO 2020
(In *Chronique de l'invisible*) Le Grand Café,
Centre d'art contemporain, Saint-Nazaire (FR)
Cur. Guillaume Désanges

Developed by curator Guillaume Désanges on the invitation of Le Grand Café, *Chroniques de l'invisible* plays with the connections between visibility and invisibility, proximity and distance, here and elsewhere. *Easy Come, Easy Go* is an audio and light installation that forms part of this project. It evokes the history of Le Grand Café, from the time of its romantic splendour during the interwar period, when couples danced on the first-floor ballroom, perhaps while waiting for a trans-Atlantic ocean liner. On the parquet floor of the room, the circle of light from a projector follows the rhythm of the slow American foxtrot *Easy Come, Easy Go* (Lew Stone & His Monseigneur Band, sung by Al Bowlly, 1934).

To create the piece, Sandrine Fragneau and Thierry Josse, dancers from Saint-Nazaire, performed a slow foxtrot in Le Grand Café ballroom; their movements were recorded using sensors and then reproduced on the ground with a projector. The dancing couple is absent, invisible, and yet their ghosts can be made out thanks to the circle of light that slips across the wooden slats. A similar installation was set up in the Saint-Nazaire port, not far from the water's edge, and was only visible at night.

Prod. Sophie Legrandjacques for Le Grand Café,
Centre d'art contemporain, Saint-Nazaire (FR)

VISITATION ZONE 2020
Riga International Biennial of Contemporary Art,
RIBOCA2 (LV)
Cur. Rebecca Lamarche-Vadel

Visitation Zone is an installation that draws connections between the Andrejsala neighbourhood, the Riga covered market, the Riga Zoo, Nora Ikstena's book *Soviet Milk*, and the film *Stalker* by Andrei Tarkovsky.

Before the Biennial was held in Andrejsala, the site was a busy industrial area used to store grain, biofuel, and cotton. The stored materials left behind an accumulation of sediment which today has been mostly transformed into dust. Rather than removing the traces, smells, and dirt from the space, Edith Dekyndt has chosen to work with this material from the Biennial site.

Cleaning is a banal domestic activity, a never-ending and hidden form of work. During the exhibition, a young woman cleans various fruit, moving them from one vivarium to another, thus transforming the motions of cleaning into a visible, almost sacred act.

The fruit that the young woman slowly shifts comes from the Riga market, which has been in continual operation since 1571. The traditional process of lacto-fermentation, which preserves fruit and vegetables in a fermenting brine, has been passed down from generation to generation in Latvia, and has proven to be particularly important in times of famine and war. The production process introduces another relationship to time: here, fresh produce from the present is carefully preserved for future needs. Like the act of cleaning, it both accelerates and decelerates time, marking an encounter between different temporalities through the slowness imposed by the process of fabrication.

The aquariums and vivariums, in which the traces left by animals can still be seen, were gifted by the Riga Zoo.

THE BLACK, THE WHITE, THE BLUE 2019
Konrad Fischer Galerie, Düsseldorf/Berlin (DE),
Kunsthhaus Hamburg (DE)
Cur. Katja Schroeder

In the context of Edith Dekyndt's installation, the painting *Das Eismeer* (*The Sea of Ice*, 1823–1824) by Caspar David Friedrich is an essential historical reference. The artist names a component of her ensemble, a freezer filled with black water, with the very title with which the collector Johann Gottlob von Quandt commissioned the painter Caspar David Friedrich in the early nineteenth century to create an ideal landscape of the North: *Die Natur des Nordens in der ganzen Schönheit ihrer Schrecken* (Northern Nature in the Whole of Her Terrifying Beauty). In the course of this commission, Friedrich produced his now famous *Eismeer* a few years later. Dekyndt's landscape of dysfunctional refrigerators, around which a carpet of shards of glass extends, can indeed be interpreted as a contemporary response to Friedrich's painting. The shattered hope in the nineteenth century that nature might be dominated is transposed in the installation *The Black, The White, The Blue* to the question of where the supposedly successful progress of the twenty-first century has taken us.

In her ensemble, Dekyndt strikes a further socio-critical chord with a sculpture consisting of a glass case filled with condensation that is placed on an old door lying on the floor. Like the used refrigerator, this discarded object was designated for transport to the Global South. In the given context, the aesthetic of the work poses a stark contrast to its poetic title, which Dekyndt once again borrowed from the same historical source; the commission to Friedrich was preceded in 1820 by a commission to the artist Johann Martin von Rohden, who was assigned to paint an ideal landscape of the South: *Die südliche Natur in ihrer üppigen und majestätischen Pracht* (Southern Nature in Her Abundant and Majestic Splendor).

— Katja Schroeder

Excerpt first published in *The Black, the White, the Blue*, exhibition booklet, Konrad Fischer Galerie, Düsseldorf/Berlin, September 6–October 19, 2019; Kunsthhaus Hamburg, June 8–August 18, 2019.

THE NINTH WAVE 2018
Nieuwpoort (BE)
Cur. Heidi Ballet

The Ninth Wave is a site-specific work at the Westfront monument that commemorates the fallen soldiers in World War I. The monument is located at the sluice gate complex De Ganzepoot, since the Belgian army halted the German army's advance by opening the sluice gates. As a consequence, France was spared while Nieuwpoort, part of the frontline, was nearly completely destroyed. The work consists of a subtle live performance in which a woman regularly comes to clean the virile statue of Albert I, the king who fought in the war. The action refers to the impact that World War I had on the lives of women, a hardship that is hardly ever commemorated. Though they did not fight at the front, women replaced men in the factories and farms. After the war, and the realization that they could perform men's jobs as well, many women no longer wanted to fulfil the expectation to be a stay-at-home mother. They were also reluctant to bear a lot of children, partly out of fear that these children could die as soldiers in a war. The title of the work comes from the B-side of a 1985 album by Kate Bush. The suite of songs on *The Ninth Wave* tells the story of a woman floating on her own on the sea, waiting to be saved. According to certain seafarer traditions, large waves always come in threes, and in three sets of three waves, the ninth and final wave being the most devastating one. The title additionally refers to the different waves of feminism and the succession of waves by which the flooding of the region in 1914 was executed.

Prod. Beaufort, 2018

Edith Dekyndt

From Two Thousand and Sixteen
to Two Thousand and Twenty Three

Bringing together a large collection of artworks by Edith Dekyndt (born in 1960 in Ypres, Belgium; lives and works in Brussels and Berlin), this book presents a new course in her artistic practice, from her major exhibition at Wiels in Brussels in 2016 to the display cases surrounding the Rotunda at the Bourse de Commerce in Paris. It also contains a selection of essays and presentations of her works, with texts by Alexandra Bordes, Vinciane Despret, Tim Goossens, Léon Kruijswijk, Emma Lavigne, Dirk Snauwaert and Katja Schroeder.

Cet ouvrage consacré à Edith Dekyndt (née en 1960 à Ypres, en Belgique, vit et travaille à Bruxelles et Berlin) rassemble un large corpus d'œuvres, correspondant à un nouveau cycle dans son travail, depuis la grande exposition du Wiels à Bruxelles en 2016 jusqu'aux vitrines entourant la Rotonde de la Bourse de Commerce à Paris. Il contient également un ensemble d'essais et de présentations d'œuvres avec notamment des contributions d'Alexandra Bordes, Vinciane Despret, Tim Goossens, Léon Kruijswijk, Emma Lavigne, Dirk Snauwaert et Katja Schroeder.

