

ZONES DE PRODUCTIVITÉS CONCERTÉES

JÉROME SAINT-LOUBERT BIÉ



MAC/VAL
MUSÉE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN
DU VAL-DE-MARNE

Jérôme Saint-Loubert Bié, 'Zones de Productivités Concertées'

'What the painting is is *where* it is.' Richard Hamilton, 1965-66

Jérôme Saint-Loubert Bié indexes, rephotographs, transfers and exhibits peripheral traces of artworks: invitation cards, visuals, labels and catalogues, supports used to record and promote artistic activity. In 1996, he photographed then made life-sized reproductions of the slide sheets that were stored and archived in his gallery's files (Galerie Claire Burrus, Paris). In 2004, with the Atelier Cardenas Bellanger (Paris), he presented a 500% enlargement of the exhibition invitation card that he himself had designed, reversing the hierarchical relationship between an artwork and the publicity that surrounds it.

For his 'Zones de Productivités Concertées' project, Jérôme Saint-Loubert Bié again uses the principle of *mise en abyme* of the exhibition space that he used in 1998 in the exhibition *Loot* at Übermain Gallery in Los Angeles. Thinking about the exhibition and its catalogue as tools for the legitimisation of art and its transmission, he exhibits what is usually not exhibited: the related documentation.

20 photographs by the photographer Marc Domage, taken at the request of the MAC/VAL in order to document the series of exhibitions entitled 'Zones de Productivités Concertées' ('ZPC'), have been printed in a 50 x 67 cm format and hung on the walls. A page from each of the monographic catalogues, designed by the graphic designer Marie Auvity and published by the museum, has been reused in this project in exactly the same format. Following the same subtractive logic, Jérôme Saint-Loubert Bié has answered the curator's questions by drawing on the corpus constituted by the interviews with artists from the 'ZPC' series.

But what does Jérôme Saint-Loubert Bié do? What more does he do? What does he show us? Documentation or commentary, an objective trace or a distanced reading of the exhibition? By insinuating himself into the discourse of others, is he guilty of usurpation or is he inserting himself in the negative space of the history of art as it has been told in the three parts of 'ZPC'? Jérôme Saint-Loubert Bié literally takes possession of these documentary, photographic and written forms and goes beyond historical appropriationist practices, that is to say, the reproduction by an artist of a work by another artist in order to empty it of the meaning it authoritatively asserted. He is concerned with a more fundamental practice of appropriation: the ready-made, the transposition of an object that has no status as art. Marc Domage's images thus framed, reified, are *in fine* charged by the artist with a discursive, even allegorical potential.¹ By showing us installations from the exhibitions of parts 1 and 2 that have now been taken down, the images retain the functionality of archives and reveal the ghostly power of the absent artwork that is active *after the event*. At the same time, they offer the visitor a unique opportunity of comparing the original works, conceived for this third part of the series of exhibitions, with their copies, their media evolution.

The use of the photographic document and the appropriation procedures employed in the exhibition and catalogue are various forms of retreat, distance or resistance in response to the order to produce, to 'make'. Reversing the principle of the telephone paintings by Moholy-Nagy, who, in 1922, commissioned by telephone five paintings on enamelled porcelain from a sign-maker, Jérôme Saint-Loubert Bié, in 1996, made 68 drawings on a computer that attempt to map out an exhibition space on the basis of a one-minute long description left on his answering machine.² Not content to examine mimetic representation and its model, the artist also questions the status of

the demiurgic artist and the autograph work. In short, he proposes a mode of production where laziness – the withdrawal and capitalisation of the image that has already been seen – becomes a generator of activity. All in all, it is a malediction that inevitably sends the artist back to the studio! 'Laziness is the principal stimulus for work, since it is only through work that one may achieve it.'³ (Kasimir Malevich)

For the archaeologist, context is a fact, an *event* in time preserved in archaeological records. The documents Jérôme Saint-Loubert Bié works with fix this 'context' (the exhibition or catalogue), presenting and reviving its memory. The artist pursues the issues and forms of Conceptual art. He shifts the author's authority and, through the use of documents, questions the system of reproduction and legitimisation of art. Above all, he examines its context. Entirely *in situ*, this non-autonomous project can only be shown within the context that feeds it, being so organically linked to it that it bears its name: Zones de Productivités Concertées.

Stéphanie Airaud

¹ See Craig Owens, 'The Allegorical Impulse: Toward a Theory of Postmodernism (part I; part II)' in *October* no. 12 (spring 1980); no. 13 (summer 1980); republished in *Art after Modernism: Rethinking Representation*, New York, The New Museum of Contemporary Art and Boston, David R. Godine, 1984.

² *Une minute*, 1996, 'Marc Quer, Jérôme Saint-Loubert Bié' exhibition, galerie Interface/MMM, Marseilles, August 1996.

³ Kasimir Malevich, *La paresse comme vérité effective de l'homme*, 1921; republished Paris, éditions Allia, 1995.

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