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art & language
ten posters. illustrations for art-language

16th september 2017 – 24th february 2018



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The CCC OD is delighted to announce its exhibition *Art & Language*, 'Ten posters. Illustrations for *Art-Language*' developed in partnership with the Château de Montsoreau – Museum of Contemporary Art. Opening on 16th September to coincide with European Heritage Days, this presentation demonstrates how initiatives of the Art & Language collective are at the root of an important part of the history of 20th century art and have largely contributed to the emergence and the recognition of conceptual art as a major artistic movement of the 1960s-1970s.

Leaving the port at the Château de Montsoreau - Museum of Contemporary Art in a virtual form, the work to be exhibited at the CCC OD - comprising forty panels - will journey on the Loire by boat to Tours, in the form of a digital file recorded on a USB key. Upon its arrival in Tours, it instantly and physically takes shape in the transparent galleries at the CCC OD. This poetic production of the work illustrates one of the key issues related to conceptual art, dedicating as much attention to the concept as to the resulting object. The work of art's adventure on the Loire, the last wild river in Europe and ranked a UNESCO World Heritage Site, will be filmed and broadcast on social networks.

Literally enveloping the first level of the building, this piece is a repetition of the series of ten posters produced in 1977, reproduced in 2017 on a scale worthy of this site.

Visible in the transparent galleries from the public area, these forty panels sum up the beliefs of the Art & Language artists' collective for which art must remain rooted in the social context, centred on the relationship between the viewer and the work.

ten posters. illustrations for *art-language* a work with historical significance

(2017, four series of ten silkscreen prints on paper, each 180 x 140 cm, edition CCC OD – Tours, created from the originals from the Philippe Méaille Collection, kept at the Château de Montsoreau – Museum of Contemporary Art)

The exhibition at the CCC OD resumes the title that Art & Language gave to a set of ten silkscreen posters printed in 1977*. Already at this time, they were re-editions of visuals originally produced for the *Art-Language* magazine.

When the collective printed this set in 1977, it was perceived through looking back on its first ten years of operation. At the same time it was a strong sign enabling certain theoretical and political ideas to be reaffirmed in reaction to prevailing changes in artistic expression.

Historically speaking Art & Language evolved based on a relationship of opposition with respect to the idea of modernism, gradually entrenched into the mainstream aesthetic system, especially under the impetus of the formalist critics Clement Greenberg and Michael Fried.

Most of the early protagonists of conceptual art considered modernism as the spearhead of neo-capitalism and American imperialism. They regarded works of art as a crucial weapon against modern art that wrongly disconnected from the social context.

From the mid-1970s, conflict emerged from within the collective. Conceptual art indeed started to become institutionalised – like modern art before it – losing some of its critical bearing, giving rise to theoretical and ideological discussions between the members of Art & Language. These conflicts were in line furthermore with a context of a revival of modernism and more broadly a socio-political world in total turmoil. The revolutionary upheaval at the end of the 1960s, the backdrop to the collective taking shape, subsided, along with the post-war boom that led to the global economic crisis from 1974.

The edition, in poster form, of illustrations that had previously been intended for the magazine was therefore no coincidence.

It was primarily a way for the remaining members of the collective to reiterate their ideas towards the art world. It was also a reference to the illegal posting of revolutionary drawings and slogans that flourished in the streets of certain western cities at the end of the 1960s.

Clearly inspired by militant aesthetics distorting certain codes of propaganda, the *Ten Posters. Illustrations for Art-Language* series asserts a resilient attitude symbolised by a fighting man shaking his fist.

Updated at the CCC OD in the shape of a single installation taking over the transparent galleries, these illustrations further reassert the persistence of Art & Language discourse. Four copies of each of the ten posters are reproduced in a format almost twice as large as the original (180 x 140 cm). The set of forty panels reinforces the serial principle of the poster medium and indeed accentuates the idea of the misappropriation of political and propagandist slogans by stamping the perimeter of the art centre with the continuous repetition of the *Art-Language* label.

* Art & Language, Ten posters. *Illustrations for Art-Language*, 1977, series of ten silkscreen prints on paper, each 107,8 x 84,5 cm, kept at the Château de Montsoreau – Museum of Contemporary Art

selection of art & language works



Mirror piece
1965

Mirror piece is a mural installation comprising a series of 20 mirrors of various sizes, on which distorting or regular glass has been attached. They are accompanied by a series of typewritten sheets of paper ideal for forming groups of mirrors according to size or reflection.

This work is marked by the minimalist aesthetic that dominated the period.

In this reflection on painting, the artists replace the latter by a mirror and invite viewers to identify the mirror, not through its usual function, but like an 'objet d'art' in the museum setting.

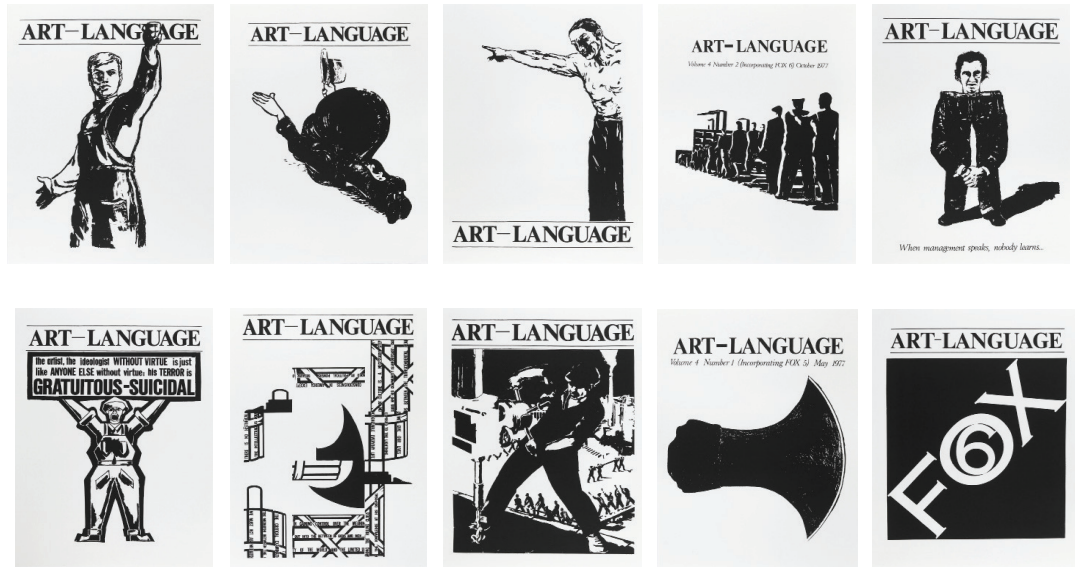


The Air-Conditioning show
1966-1967

One of the founding groups of conceptual art, Art & Language developed a radical artistic practice based on a fundamental reinterpretation of the relationship between art and language. For Art & Language, the work of art is determined neither by its materiality nor by its visibility but by its ability to be considered. Considering the written description of a work and its possible production in space as equivalent, *The Air-Conditioning show*, conceived in 1966, appeared for the first time in 1967 in the shape of an article in the *Arts Magazine* (Michael Baldwin, 'Remarks on Air-Conditioning').

This text takes as its starting point a volume of conditioned air in the gallery space, and specifies that the rooms must be left scrupulously empty and white, dull and neutral. The aim is less about designating a new, more or less unusual object, as a work of art, than to call into question our more or less established certainties about the nature of art and its relationship to its discursive as well as institutional context.

Emphasising the institution's context and environment, namely assembling disparate objects in a given location, *The Air-Conditioning show* exhibits nothing except for the space itself and, in this specific case, the museum's thermal regulation system.



Art & Language, *Ten posters: illustrations for Art-Language, 1977*, silkscreen prints on paper, 107.8 x 84.5 cm each
Philippe Méaille Collection/Château de Montsoreau – Museum of contemporary art
Photos courtesy Lisson Gallery

Why would artists be better at creating posters than a publicist? Artists are therefore concerned with the production of works. In a world where even the media has lost its credibility, how can they make it possible to acquire or recover this credibility amongst the public?

By using the codes of propaganda posters, by distorting these codes, and above all by constructing this series of posters like a sequence of images, as if these images were very simply extracts from a film or an opera. In turn we see revolution, battle, success, obligation, mockery, prevention, joy and also failure. Like the 7 deadly sins, these posters deal with the foundations on which our society is built and above all what makes a success story from the codes of the tragedy within it. The message for the *Art-Language* magazine is subliminal, the logo is not even customised, and yet only one of these posters is dedicated to advertising for one of these magazines.



Art & Language in disguise
1980

This set of works forms one of the few examples of self-portraits produced by the group to this day. This work begins with a photo depicting a Lenin 'disguised', for the needs of the cause, as a worker. A recent theory shows that an actor may also have played this figure of Lenin.

After discussion this photo gave rise to a text, then to a series of photos and drawings that are in part presented in this room. This *Art & Language* discussion was articulated during a performance during which the artists were photographed disguised, wearing wigs, glasses or, very simply a cap. Some of these photos were then produced in the form of drawings.

Art & Language, represented by its three mediators at that time (Charles Harrison, Michael Baldwin and Mel Ramsden), questions the status of artists, their role and also the prospect that they are themselves actors playing artists.

art & language the birth of a fluctuating collective

Currently comprising Michael Baldwin (1945) and Mel Ramsden (1944), Art & Language originated in Great Britain in 1967 at the initiative of four individuals. Terry Atkinson, David Bainbridge, Michael Baldwin and Harold Hurrell met in 1966 teaching art at Coventry University. From the outset they began to produce joint works and to work on an initiative towards creating a magazine, *Art-Language*, the first issue of which was published in 1969 and gave its name to the collective. Charles Harrison (1942-2009) and Mel Ramsden joined the group in 1970, taking their place among the fifty or so British and American artists and critics associated with Art & Language between the end of the 1960s and the start of the 1980s*.

Art & Language is a fluctuating collective of conceptual artists promoting theoretical discussions within the same group. From 1969, when the first *Art-Language* magazine was published – the writers and editors of which were based in both England and New York –, it was designed as a vehicle for international discussion.

This first issue (vol.1, n°1, May 1969), sub-headed 'The Journal of Conceptual Art', represents the first collective assertion of the expression 'conceptual art'. Several isolated artists already used it from 1967, but it was thanks to the Art & Language collective that it began to be regarded as a group dynamic on its way to receiving public recognition. However after the second issue (vol.1, n°2, February 1970), the subheading 'The Journal of Conceptual Art' was abandoned. It was immediately apparent that not all of the artists who endorsed conceptual art supported the ideas articulated by the collective and its magazine.

The beliefs of the editors and most of the initial contributors nevertheless shared similar and deep-seated foundations: conceptual art is a criticism of modernism as a historicist system, as well as minimalism for its philosophical conservatism. The practice of conceptual art is heralded as largely theoretical and uses text as a prominent form. As distribution of the magazine and the teaching practice of the editors and other artists developed, dialogue expanded and multiplied.

In 1972, Art & Language exhibited an installation titled *Index 01* at Documenta in Kassel consisting of a system of filing and archiving for material published and circulated by members of the group. Terry Atkinson, David Bainbridge, Michael Baldwin, Harold Hurrell, Joseph Kosuth (American editor of *Art-Language*), Philip Pilkington and David Rushton contributed to this piece.

From 1974, the New York branch published its review *The Fox* (1974-1976); some artists engaged in musical projects; others continued to contribute to the original magazine.

From 1976, this confusion, dialectically prolific to begin with, led to chaos: competition kicked off to defend individual interests, revealing in particular opposition between the American and the English on political and theoretical issues.

In 1977, following many conflicts and considerable fluctuations within the collective, Michael Baldwin and Mel Ramsden remained the only representatives of Art & Language, with Harrison involved with written productions.

* members of the collective based in England: Terry Atkinson, David Bainbridge, Michael Baldwin, Charles Harrison, Sandra Harrison, Graham Howard, Harold Hurrell, Lynn Lemaster, Philip Pilkington, Mel Ramsden, David Rushton, Paul Wood, etc.

* members of the collective based in New York: Kathryn Bigelow, Ian Burn, Michael Corris, Preston Heller, Graham Howard, Joseph Kosuth, Christine Kozlov, Sol LeWitt, Andrew Menard, Paula Ramsden, Terry Smith, Mayo Thompson, etc.

solo exhibitions (selection)

- 1967
« Hardware show », London, Architectural Association
- 1968
« Dematerialisation show », Birmingham, Ikon Gallery
- 1971
« Tape show : exhibition of Lectures », New York, Dain Gallery
- 1972
« Questionnaire », Milan, Galleria Daniel Templon
« The Air-conditioning show visual », New York, Arts Gallery
« The Art & Language institute », Paris, galerie Daniel Templon
« Documenta memorendum (Indexing) », Cologne, galerie Paul Maenz
« Analytical art », Paris, galerie Daniel Templon
- 1973
« Annotations », Paris, galerie Daniel Templon
« Index III », New York, John Weber Gallery
- 1975
« Art & Language 1966-1975 », Oxford, Museum of Modern Art
- 1976
« Dialectical materialism », Florence, galleria Schema
« Music-Language », Paris, galerie Eric Fabre
« Piggy-cur-perfect », Auckland, Auckland City Art Gallery
« Music-Language », New York, John Weber Gallery
- 1977
« Illustrations for Art-Language », London, Robert Self Gallery
« Music-Language », Roma / Naples, galleria Lia Ruma
- 1978
« Art-Language », Nice, galerie Association
« Flags for organisations », London, Lisson Gallery
- 1979
« Ils donnent leur sang : donnez votre travail », Paris, galerie Eric Fabre
- 1980
« Portraits of VI Lenin in the style of Jackson Pollock », London, Lisson Gallery
- 1981
« Gustave Courbet's Burial at Ornans expressing », Paris, galerie Eric Fabre
- 1982
« Art & Language », retrospective, Toulon, Musée d'Art Moderne
- 1983
« Index : studio at 3 Wesley Place (illuminated by an explosion nearby) V, VI », London, Lisson Gallery
- 1986
« Index : an incident in a museum », Paris, galerie de Paris
- 1987
« Art & Language : the paintings », Brussels, Palais des Beaux-Arts
- 1988
« Hostages », London, Lisson Gallery
- 1989
« Art & Language : early works 1967-1974 », Paris, galerie Sylvana Lorenz
- 1994
« Early works, 1965-1976 ; recent works, 1991-1994 », London, Lisson Gallery
- 1996
« Sighs trapped by liars », Paris, galerie de Paris
- 1997
« Conceptual art from 1966 to 1996 », Knokke-le-Zoute, Mulier Mulier Gallery
- 1999
« The Artist out of work : Art & Language 1972-1981 », New York, PSI Contemporary Art Center
- 2002
« Too dark to read : motifs rétrospectifs », Ville-neuve-d'Ascq, Musée d'art moderne, d'art contemporain et d'art brut
- 2003
« What work does the artwork do ? », London, London Metropolitan University
- 2005
« Now they are surrounded », London, Guildhall Art Gallery
- 2008
« Brouillages/blurrings : works on paper », Paris, galerie Thaddaeus Ropac
- 2010
« Portraits and a dream », London, Lisson Gallery
- 2014
« Nobody spoke », London, Lisson Gallery
- 2015
« Art & Language uncompleted – the Philippe Méaille Collection », Barcelona, MACBA
- 2016
« Not that is is needed now », Knokke-le-Zoute, Mulier Mulier Gallery

the philippe méaille collection, château de montsoreau – museum of contemporary art



Château de Montsoreau was the only Loire château to be built in the riverbed. Jean II de Chambes, private advisor to King Charles VII, constructed it in 1450. This château, resembling a Venetian palace on the water's edge, was completely renovated and transformed into the Museum of Contemporary Art in 2016. Its avant-garde architecture has always inspired artists (Rodin, Turner, Flaubert, Dumas).

The Château de Montsoreau - Museum of Contemporary Art is now a vibrant, radical and alternative place. It has the largest collection in the world of works by the Art & Language collective and a temporary exhibition space devoted to today's artists. Its collection and pioneering architecture, paving the way, make it a committed place, reflecting the present and constituting a new reality.

The layout presents works produced by the Art & Language collective, from the mid-1960s to today.

Information boards and themed itineraries adapted to different audiences are designed to explain the context in which the works were produced, to situate them in the chronology of the history of art and to present the artists. The hanging and the interactive dimension of the collection facilitate the immersion of visitors in the museum and engagement with the works of art.



partners and patrons

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fifteen companies are our patrons and partners for the reopening of the CCC OD in 2017 included :



artistic and cultural partnership

international and national



regional



ccc od - jeu de paume partnership

Since 2010, the ccc od has developed a partnership with the Jeu de Paume – Château de Tours, to achieve its education initiatives. Since 2010, the Jeu de Paume has presented exhibitions with a patrimonial character at the Château de Tours, promoting the historic collections and archives of 20th century photographers, donations but also public as well as private collections.

In the framework of this partnership between the ccc od and the Jeu de Paume, three missions were defined:

To blend audiences: an « images and visual arts » programme is proposed by the ccc od and the Jeu de Paume - Château de Tours in connection with educational and sociocultural partners, to share and compare points of view on exhibitions proposed by the two art centres, and therefore support the public in their discovery.

To teach young audiences about image: in cooperation with the Directorate of the Departmental National Education Services of Indre-et-Loire, ccc od public services and the Jeu de Paume educational services provide several actions for school groups and teachers: academic discussions for teachers, historical records, partnerships and class projects, tours and activities for pupils. Extracurricular activities are also included in these proposals.

Training in mediation: the city of Tours, François Rabelais University, Jeu de Paume - Château de Tours and the ccc od are working in tandem to implement a team of speakers dedicated to the ccc od and the Château de Tours exhibitions. This partnership enables the delivery of a programme dedicated to passing down the history of photography and visual arts in Tours. Each year, several students from the François Rabelais University participate in this professional training covered by the ccc od, the Jeu de Paume and a teacher from the university.

at the jeu de paume - château de tours : lucien hervé, 'the geometry of light', 18.11.2017 - 27.05.2018



Lucien Hervé, *Observatoire, Delhi, Inde, 1955*
© Lucien Hervé, Paris

Part of Lucien Hervé's work remains unknown to the wider public. Despite his passion for architecture, this was never his sole subject or exclusive focus, Lucien Hervé also sought to represent in his work humanity and traces of humanity on the world, all the while avoiding the anecdotal.

Curator: Imola Gebauer

further information : www.jeudepaume.org

the CCC OD

Olivier Debré: the endowment



The CCC OD is now the custodian of an endowment granted by the painter, Olivier Debré. For a contemporary art centre, receiving a historic bequest is a special, rich opportunity, enabling it to create a gateway between the artistic endeavour of the past and present.

Olivier Debré (1920-1999) had a special relationship with the CCC, for which he made his largest paintings in 1991. The endowment made in 2008 is made up of ve large-scale oil paintings created in 1991 on canvasses measuring 4 x 9 m; these were designed for the gallery walls of the CCC, which at the time was located in rue Racine. The bequest also includes 150 drawings, and is further supplemented by the permanent loan of 140 paintings.

an architectural signature: the Aires Mateus brothers



In an international competition in 2012, Aires Mateus e Associados is the architects' practice which was selected from among 80 other agencies to design and build the CCC OD building.

The practice based in Lisbon is made up of Francisco and Manuel Aires Mateus, born in 1964 and 1963 respectively. They are currently major players in Portuguese architecture and are developing timeless, refined, minimalist architecture which has the potential to transform existing sites. Their work is o en based on the seeking out of oppositions and interactions, paying special attention to the balance of lled and empty spaces, working with subtle plays and relationships between negative and positive.

The Centre de Création Contemporaine of Tours is the first project to be carried out by them in France, and as such paves the way for other major European museum projects, particularly the Mudac – the Elysée Museum of Lausanne, Switzerland.

a special "1% artistique": a free hand with typography



As part of the "1% artistique" scheme which provides state funding for artistic endeavour, the CCC OD has chosen to focus on typographical design as an extension of the building, the institution and its philosophy.

André Baldinger and Toan Vu-Huu have been chosen to provide the CCC OD's graphic content, reaching out even as far as the interior and exterior. They began with a deliberation of the architectural project. There are several elements making this building a unique architectural expression:

- its geometric nature based on cubic spaces
- its openings created by the movement of spatial volumes
- how light works within it and how it presents itself

On the basis of these elements, they literally hollowed out their characters from materials, adjusted their vertical proportions to those found in the architecture, lending a unique aspect to the typography.

practical informations



free access

café contemporain

Julie and Thomas welcome you throughout the day to enjoy their cuisine which is healthy and tasty. come and discover our simple, creative menu taking its inspiration from the CCC OD's spirit.

the bookshop

'la Boîte à livres' bookstore has set up at the CCC OD in a space devoted to contemporary art, architecture and photography. apart from the Art and Games section for young people, the bookshop which is an annex to the main branch in rue Nationale dances to the same beat as the exhibitions at the CCC OD.

the CCC OD app

use the FlashCodes to discover contemporary art and gain access to extra information (both in French and English) during your visit... available at Apple Store, Google Play (Multimedia MobileGuide for hire at the reception when you show your 'billet Plus' ticket).

The CCC OD is a cultural equipment of Tours Métropole Val de Loire.

His achievement was made possible thanks to the State and territorial collectivities support.



getting here

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contact@cccod.fr

train station 70 minutes from Paris by TGV train
by motorway A10, exit Tours Centre

facilities

bike park

car parking spaces Porte de Loire, Place de la Résistance and rue du Commerce
on-site amenities available: lifts, magnetic induction loop, disabled toilets, pushchair parking, baby change area

opening hours

summer season

monday 2:00 pm to 7:00 pm
tuesday- sunday from 11:30 am to 7:00 pm
late night thursday until 9:00 pm

winter season

wednesday - sunday from 11:30 am to 6:00 pm
late night thursday until 8:00 pm

entry fees

€3 (reduced price)
€6 (full price)
€9 (with multimedia guide)
free access under 18

CCC OD lepass

unlimited access to exhibitions and events valid for 1 year

€ 25 single pass
€ 40 duo pass
€ 12 for students