

marc ferrante

I am mainly interested in flexibility and plasticity between different worlds which is why I don't manipulate one technique only. My objective is rather to build bridges between various disciplines.

I have a bias regarding the material or objects I use. I dismantle the mechanisms of what I call "modified presences" which, to my mind, are improvised representations such as images, words or behaviors of our daily lives, or personal experiences (i.e., our emotions or even our body) that we use as filters often to conceal our real self. They stand between us and an overwhelming reality we can't control.

The problem is that the existence of these small ephemeral negotiations, as difficult to grasp as an ice cube, burn your hands while melting in your fingers. They are all encrypted, fragile, wedged between support and projection, according to the importance of the commitment or the distance separating each of them.

Be that as it may, these negotiations always stand between "I" and "us". I need to see how they reflect and distort what makes it "me," or what differentiates "me" from "others." It's my way of calling into play the fire that drives us... in order to discover another distance with what motivates these perceptions.

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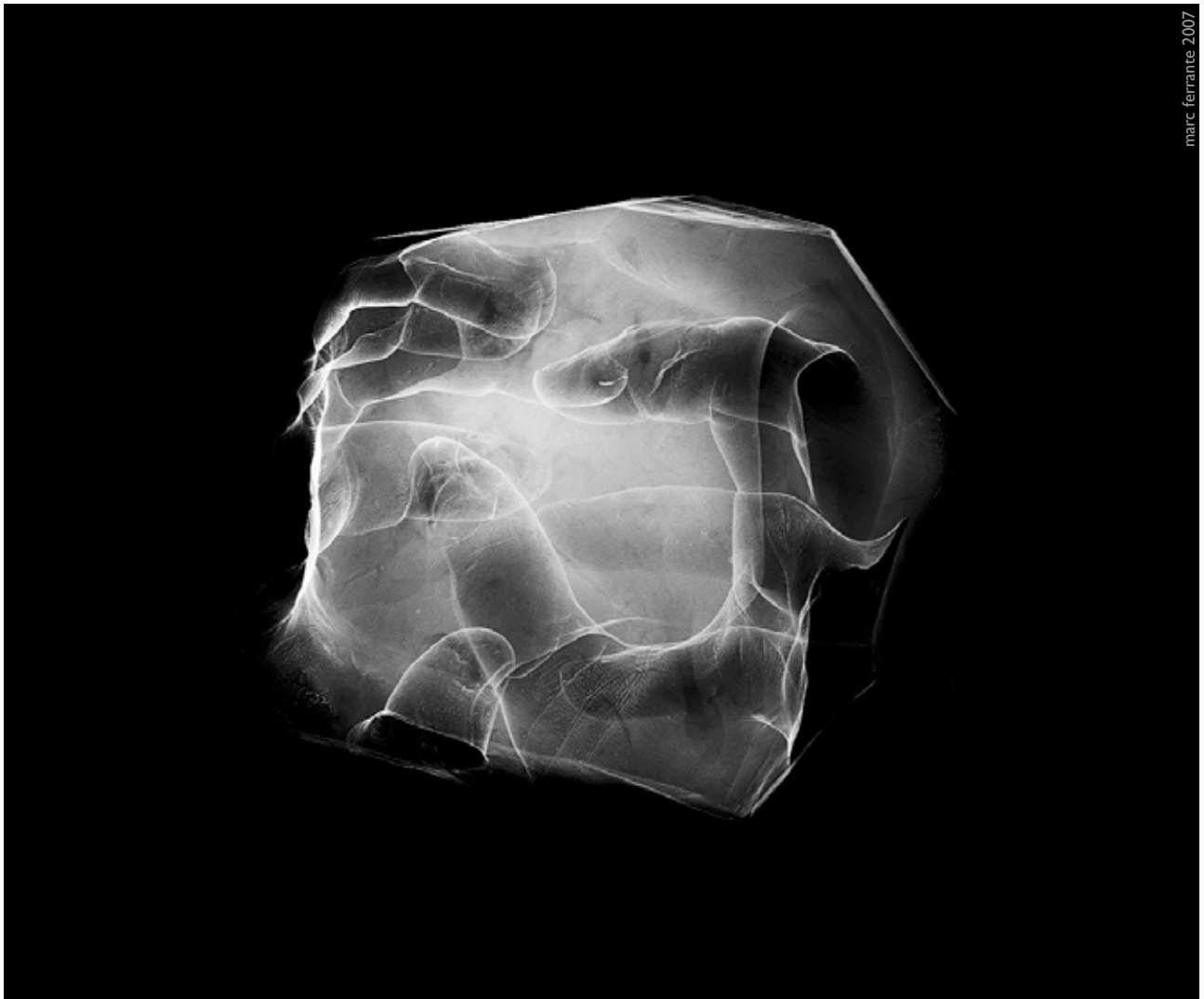


Hand Plays... (horseplay) 2005–2017 Project of about 108 X-rays of the hand, This project was carried out with the help of radiologists, surgeons and X-ray technicians, from Fuji Médica System, Vianord, Degraf, The International Institute of Puppetry, the Strasbourg Youth Theatre, pending eclipse non-profit association and about forty marionettists, dancers, magicians, shadow-puppetry artists... There are 5+1 samples of each radiograph; they are displayed in a stainless steel light box (36 x 43 x 9 cm) and in digital print (110 x 132 cm). The images are digital, but the faking used to obtain the radiographs achieved so far has not been done on computer.

The first-ever X-ray photograph was of Mrs. Röntgen's hand. It offers an apparent contradiction; the hand clutches, touches, caresses, expresses, whereas radiography is a screen that separates the subject from his own body, allowing the doctor to taking over. Moreover, X-rays only show a partial image of the self. While it miraculously penetrates the body and reveals its anatomy or constituent parts, it also masks the vibrant complexity of the being. It removes the skin, and everything else that makes up one's personality, life, or feelings... It looks as if this intimate mapping – with which we cannot really identify – were there to reassure us when confronted with a reality we cannot apprehend.

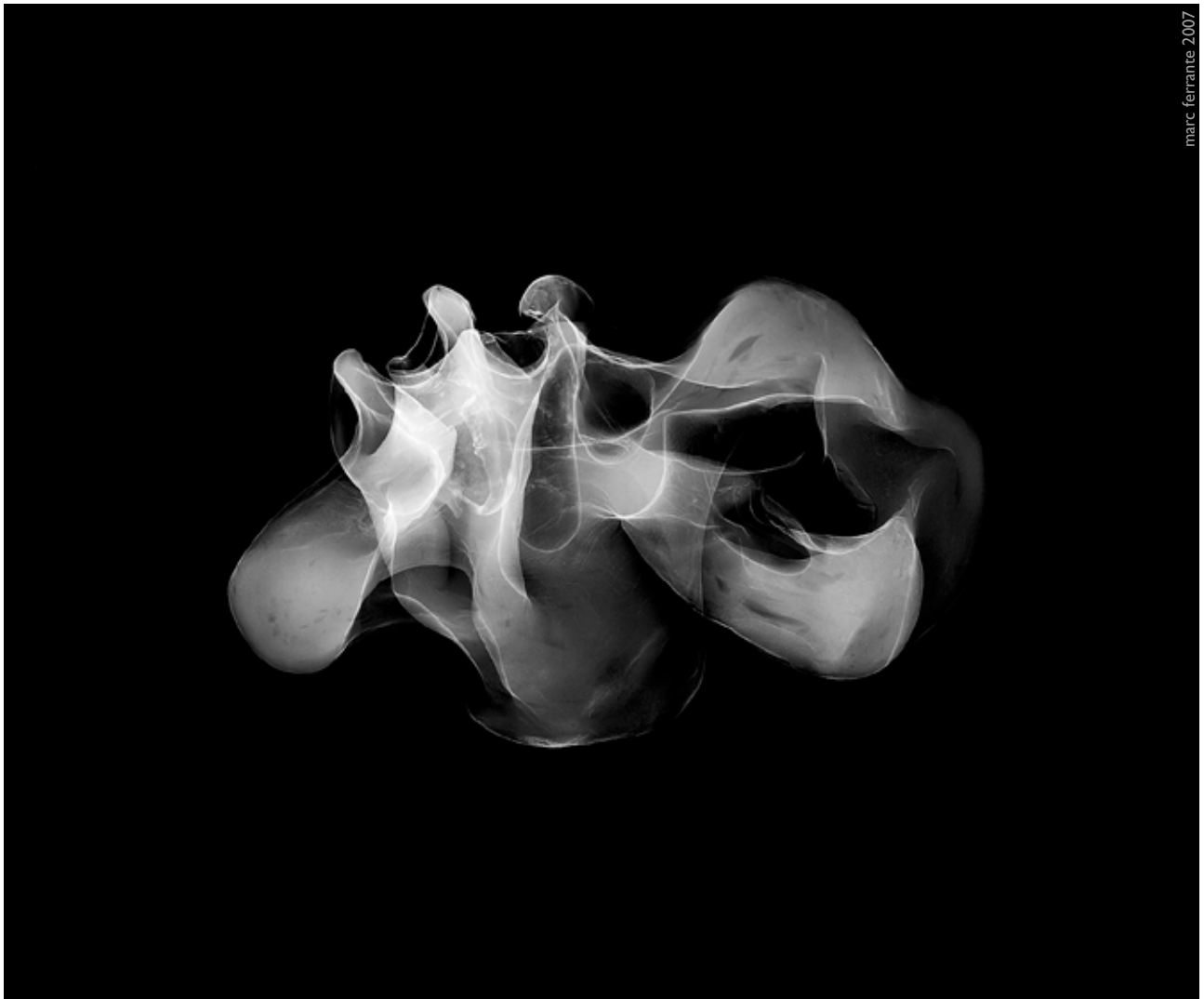
With these 5 “Hand Plays” series, I tried to approach radiography from an entirely different angle, to find out whether life can be breathed into these images. So, aside from its medical aspect, I tried to define radiography by confronting it to the imaginary processes it generates, one way or another, through the devices used to make or show radiography, but also through its history or that of the other arts that led to its invention.

So, with the complicity of several “artists of the hand”, I adapted some very old sleights of hand directly onto the radiologist's table. I merged the X-ray imagery with the elements that constitute the opacity of a living being, everything that radiography generally negates – shadow, reflection of light, imprints and fingerprint, or the skin itself, people's mania or research on the hand's ability to grasp the void or time. These X-rays are digital but the pictures aren't. I used traditional special effects, although in that case we can't talk about radiography or image, but rather about painting, sculpture, sewing, cooking, magic... The aim is to have the theory lie, and find out whether radiography can reveal more about us than what it usually shows...



marc ferrante 2007

Hand Plays... (Ergon series). *Ergon 07*. X-ray of hand's imprint and mix media, 32 x 42 cm



marc ferrante 2007

Hand Plays... (Ergon series) *Ergon 03*. X-ray of hand's imprint and mix media, 32 x 42 cm



Hand Plays... (modified presence series). *Transparent skin (without bone) 07*. X-ray of hand and mix media, 32 x 42 cm



Hand Plays... (modified presence series). *Transparent skin (without bone) 05 pos.* X-ray of hand and mix media, 32 x 42 cm



Hand Plays... (modified presence series). *Skin and bones 10 pos*, X-ray of hand and mix media
32 x 42 cm



Hand Plays... (modified presence series). *Skin and bones 03*. X-ray of hand and mix media
32 x 42 cm



Hand Plays... (modified presence series). *shin 01 (sloughing)*. X-ray of hand and mix media
32 x 42 cm



Hand Plays... (modified presence series). *Reflection with skin 04 pos.* X-ray of hand and mix media
32 x 42 cm



marc ferrante 2008

Hand Plays... (modified presence series). *shadow 02*. X-ray of hand and mix media, 32 x 42 cm



Hand Plays... (modified presence series). *Reflect ch03*. X-ray of hand and mix media, 32 x 42 cm



Hand Plays... (modified presence series). *Spirit 01*. X-ray of hand and mix media, 32 x 42 cm



marc ferrante 2008

Hand Plays... (hand dancing series). Play on the dancer warm-up, *Ch01*. X-ray of hand, 32 x 42 cm



marc ferrante 2007

Hand Plays... (hand dancing series). *Movement's fragmentation (with four hands) EY01*. X-ray of hand, 32 x 42 cm



Hand Plays... (hand dancing series). *Draw a sphere with the hand.* X-ray of hand, 32 x 42 cm



Hand Plays... (shadow play series). *Hare*. X-ray of hand, 32 x 42 cm



marc ferranté 2006

Hand Plays... (shadow play series). *Panther*. X-ray of hand, 32 x 42 cm

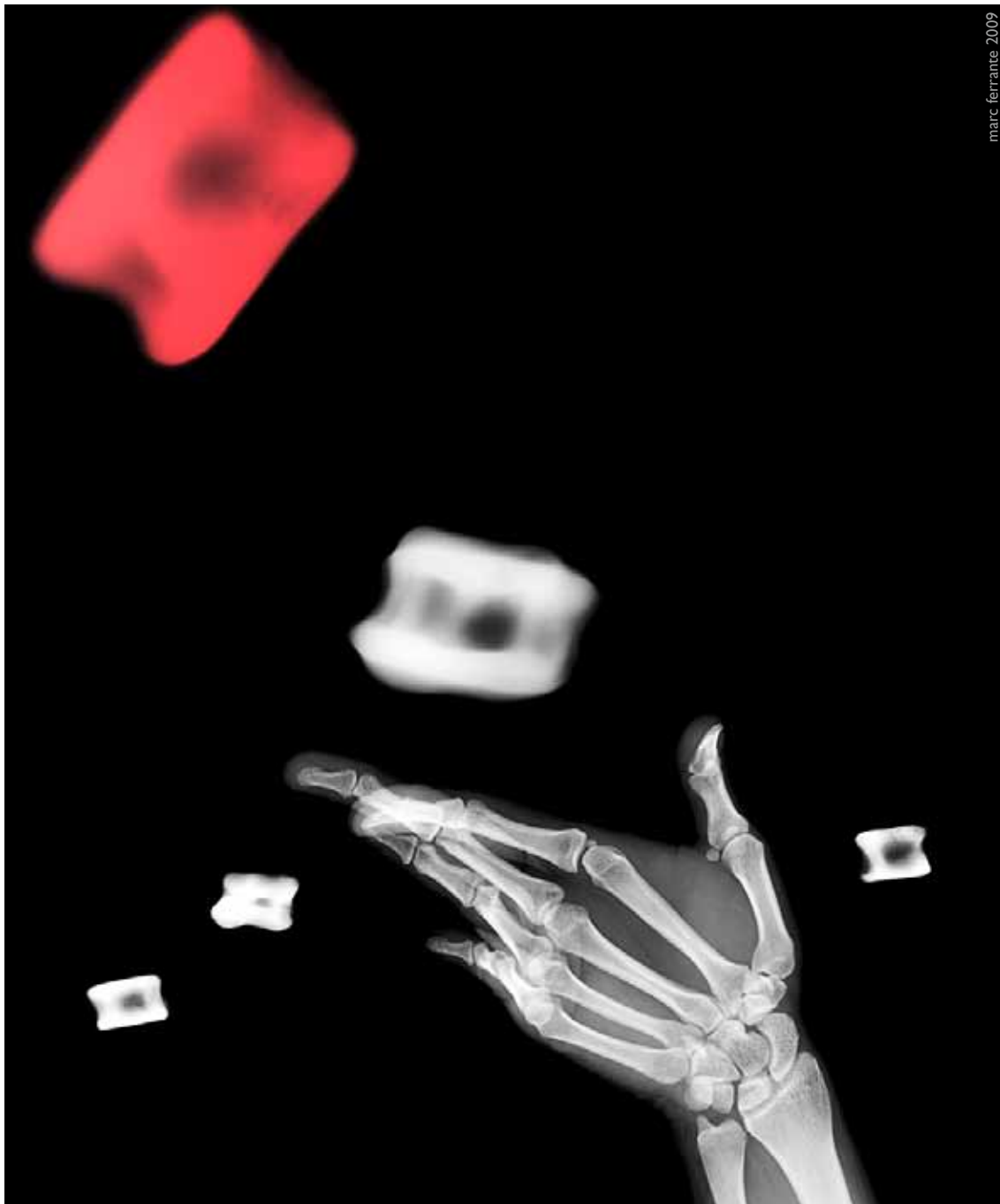


marc ferrante 2087

Hand Plays... (Objects theater series). *Macha brachydactyla*. X-ray of hand and mix media, 32 x 42 cm



Hand Plays... (Objects theater serie). *The poultry star (chicken 04)*. X-ray of hand and mix media, 32 x 42 cm



Hand Plays... (Objects theater series). Ossicles. X-ray of hand, mix media and silkscreen
32 x 42 cm

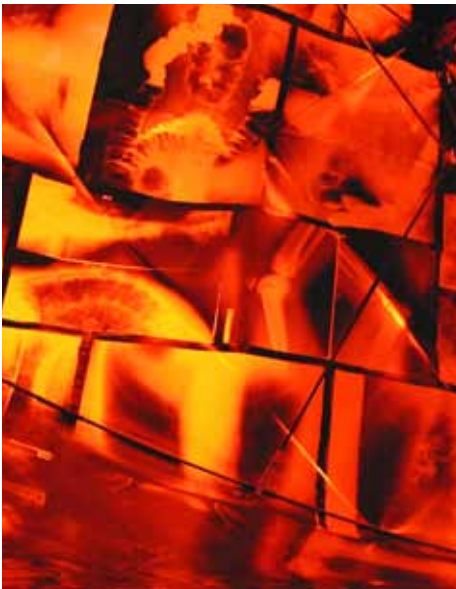
other works



Jacks (temporary), 1999-2003. Consists of 5 volumes of similar shape, arranged on the ground, each on a different side. Individually each piece of art measures 290x220x180 cm and occupies a total ground surface of 300 to 500 m². The whole construction forms a network of folded patchworks composed of X-ray photographs (50 m² each), of mastic, carbon, aluminum, stainless steel, PVC, adhesive film. Indoors-takedown device only. The project is endowed by: the FRAC and the DRAC Alsace, Degraf, Illbruck, Photomec, Colomag, University Marc Bloch, Arts Department .Video: 3'20".

X-ray photography poses several problems. The fact is that it is not so easy to see your skeleton on an X-ray. If you light the plastic sheet from behind it appears transparent, somewhat lackluster, and so does your skeleton. Flooded with natural light on its top surface, it becomes opaque and shiny, so much so that the skeleton on the X-ray acquires flattering highlights. From a psychological point of view, an X-ray delivers a reductive image which may be difficult to accept. It clearly refutes any embodiment, and even if your name is mentioned, somebody else could certainly identify with this image. If you add the iridescence of the medical device to the sword of the diagnosis, topped off by a touch of anxiety, an X-ray could well be an icon that stands for everything you have ever concealed from others. It soothes away reality, a reality that slips from your hands while you feel your existence is a little different each time, because this blue shape floating in a transparent bubble tells you so...

This work is composed of five volumes, and therefore enables repeating the experience of the "modified presence" of the human being at different levels leaving the usual context of the X-ray aside to confront it with the third dimension again. Everyone can sense the ambiguity conveyed by X-ray imagery, as well as the detachment it involves to analyze them, if only moving between small bones, with which we can't really play anymore, could make it real.



inside view



Lark Circus, 2004. A circle made of 100 mirrors hanging horizontally in the trees, 6 meters above the ground. Dia.: 60 meters; each mirror: 10x10 cm; viewpoint about 6m high. Wood panel on a lookout with printed ONF-type text, stainless steel and misc. Endowed by the DRAC Alsace and Technotol SA. Video: 3'26".

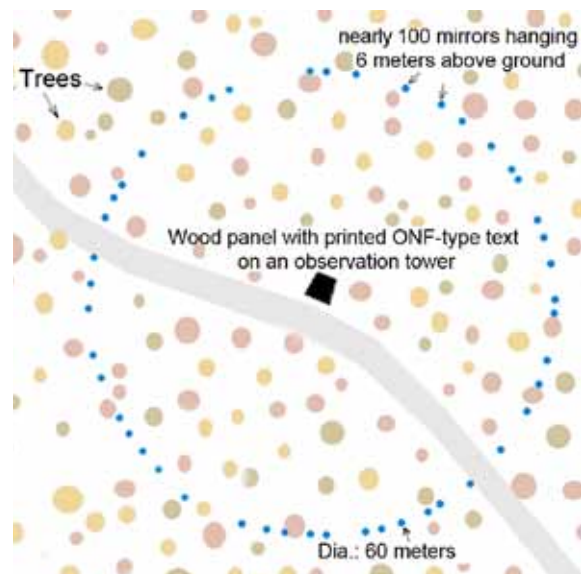


When you enter a forest filled with sounds, lights and movements —too numerous to be fully identified— it usually feels like there is an awkward presence.

This setting plays a fairly unassuming role in the awakening and the progression of this feeling, magnifying it thanks to pivoting mirrors moving in the wind. No matter what the weather is, these mirrors sparkle like leaves in the trees, and their reflection on the ground creates small suns whirling around the trunks.

A path crosses the place I chose to install them. When strollers discover the setup, they are faced with a sign that reads: “This site is called The Lark Circus. Some people have told us that flocks of birds gather here, a fact of which we were unaware.” The aim is not to fool the stroller, but rather to give him the means to challenge his relation to the setting. He plays the role of the bird watcher being watched.

NB: the lark, flying at high altitude, never lands in the undergrowth.





In the Garden (trap walker), 2001. A game of hopscotch across a public park, as cuttings molehills. Variable dimensions. Land and public open spaces.

Texts available on the site:

“Mole, mammal, carnivore, previously known as Hopscotch Rat. Almost entirely deprived of sight, difficult to track down, the mole much enjoys French gardens. Everyone knows its fills, but nobody knows what it is like in these underground. Gifted with a keen sense of smell, the variety called “blue blood” mole (*Tapinae Mascalzone*) has an amazing sense of direction, as opposed to other species of its kind.” Buffon

“That’s why the Prince should first and foremost persuade his neighbor state, who always knows more on the situation.” Machiavelli

The greenway is open to walkers. Everyone can walk or even trample the area and the setup. The hopscotch drawing is square, so as not to emphasize but rather disrupt the geometric display of the park: it is sought that the walker can’t see right away that these molehills draw squares, so as to instill and raise doubts about the origin of this material.

The setup can include trees or clumps, provided that you keep one or several viewpoints to discover the majority of the 24 cuttings along at least one axis of symmetry.

Any building nearby may be used as a viewpoint. That way, a real hopscotch game will be played live with human beings as tokens. Video footage will be shot from the position of the two “masters of the game.”



The Widows' Tree, Tape, acid forest paintings. Video: 3'00". Residence in Madagascar as part of a program between Molsheim and Mananjary high-schools. Endowed by the Strasbourg Board of Education, the Conseil Général du Bas-Rhin (council at the department level), the Région Alsace, and Fihavanana, a non-profit association.

A tree, in France as well as in Madagascar, stands for Man's verticality, his ambitions or his relations to his environment. It is a token of present-day environmental concerns.



In Madagascar, the tree marks the various rites of passage throughout life: during Sambatra (the circumcision celebration), the tree is supposed to assist the young boy's soul and help him move on to adult life. In France, a rather different tradition has a similar purpose: on a boy's birthday, his parents used to carve a notch just above his head so he could see how much he had grown and gradually observe his evolution toward adulthood when he would be a full-fledged member of the community.

For this project, I materialized the various stages of development of an old eucalyptus in the Mananjary school playground. I painted several marks at different heights on its trunk. Each mark corresponds to the average size this species reaches every 4 or 5 years; a similar device was used for a boy. This is a way to visualize the slow, often imperceptible growth of the tree which represents a priceless treasure in the case of an endemic rainforest.

NB: desertification is a constant threat to the Big Island. Indeed, the Malagasy rainforest is being bulldozed for economic and customary purposes: due to intensive farming 200,000 to 300,000 hectares of endemic forest disappear each year.



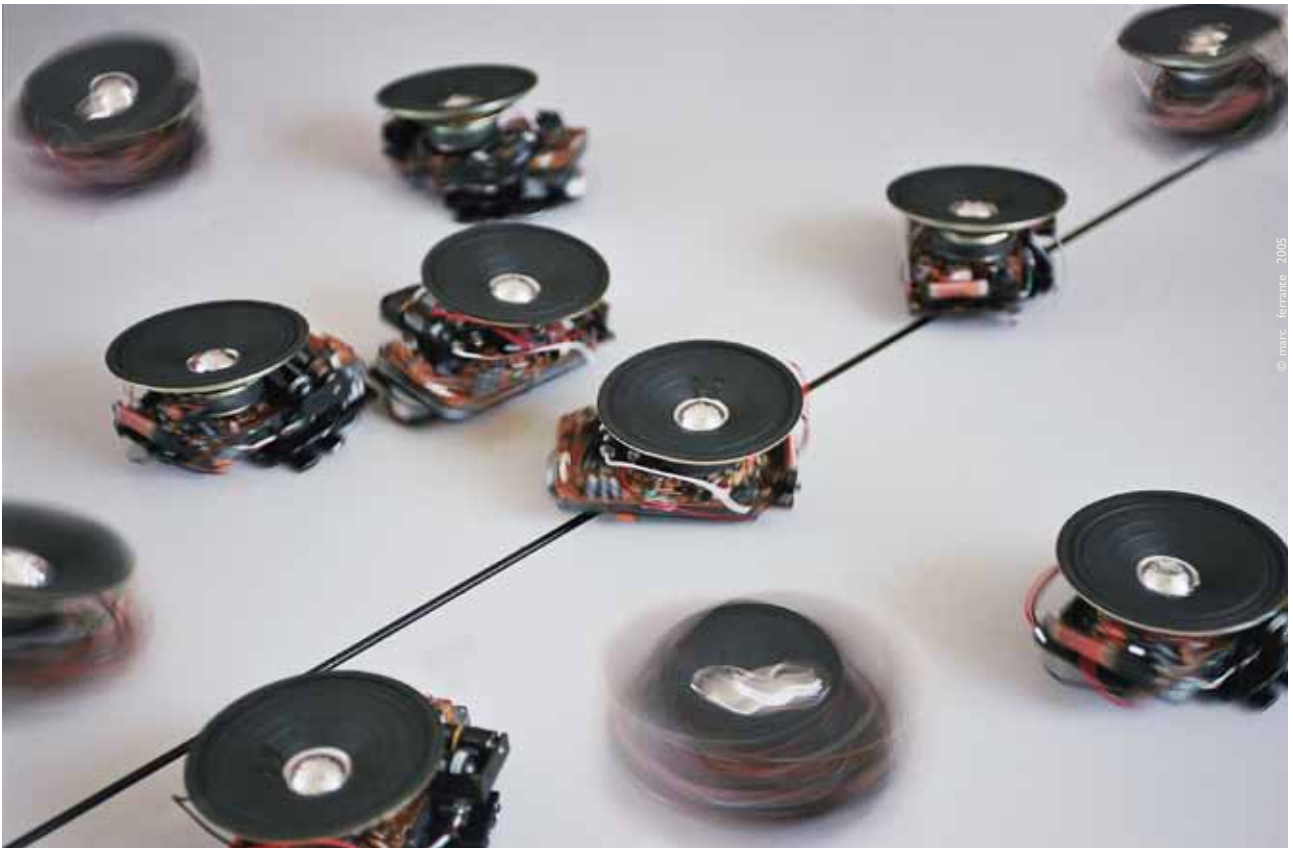
Caps, 2004-2007. A series of 8 caps distributed in a public place for the vox populi. Printed caps, front and visor. Strasbourg and Sélestat in 2006. Endowed by UFCV and Région Alsace. Video: 6'06".

We are so bombarded with words and slogans that they have lost much of their impact today. We are less inclined to confront words when they are put in context. Writings may indeed take on a different meaning on the top of a visor, over your eyes, or on your forehead.

Besides, a cap is an equivocal accessory: it protects us from the cold until the return of warm weather, shades us from the sun and yet limits our sight to the horizon of the visor.

Coiffed with a cap and visor, a passer-by is invited to play a game of limited perspective in which he stands up to another speaker and a camera while squinting up at the message printed on the visor of his cap. Contrary to the aims of advertising, this project is devised to incite John Doe to hold his ground in a face-to-face meeting with another speaker and a camera. And since it's all about the vox populi, it's important to be a bit mad, but this time about what you have a mind to say.

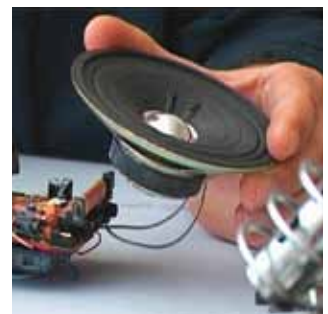




The Dance of St.Vitus (or how to dismantle the mechanisms of fear). Mutzig 2005 and Monflanquin 2007. Plastic and sound devices for 13 ready-made Walkman, for 30 hands 15 voices. Endowed by the Région Alsace, UFCV and la DRAC Aquitaine, French Ministry of Culture, school of Monsempron and Pollen. Vidéo 3'54

Initially, the objective was to record all the rehearsals for a festival of contemporary music to make a recording representing a concert of all the concerts. It turned into a plastic and sound creation on fear, thanks to the participation of 13 young people seeking to reinsert themselves in the community. On that occasion, each of them recorded personal fears about their future to attempt to dismantle the various sound engines. The sole purpose was to have it dance along other frantic players.

This concert addressed an audience and at the same time offered the possibility of overriding one's personal problems and changing one's perception one's environment and oneself. In fact, these experiments helped to overcome the feeling that one had failed by leaving the door open to curiosity and spontaneity. The only objective was to rediscover the feeling of what it is like to do and to be...





The More, the Merrier (romance on the verge of cacophony). The Staircase Gallery in Brumath, 2002; in the streets of Strasbourg, 2005; on stage at the TJP, 2006. An impromptu for 100 virtuosos: distribution of 100 rearranged music boxes. Endowed by the DRAC Alsace, the Ville de Strasbourg and an anonymous sponsor. Video: 3'47".

The music box is an intermediary (an object that lies) between day and night, between fear of the dark and a land of dreams. One day or another each and every one of us has listened to this delicate mechanism.

And yet, although we gladly acknowledge the virtues of its essence, we generally listen to it alone.

This impromptu concert was a way to play these tunes and this little music again, to start off on a journey together. Maybe to avoid dwelling upon things so familiar that we may be rocked to sleep.



Version pour miro



Version fou du roi



Version informaticien



Version pour mains propres



Hiccup on Rattle, 1996-2005. Performed by the audience, on a series of 8 rattles, 10 copies printed in variable size, serigraphy on building and decoration material.

2 videos: 3'45" and 4'23".

The main source of inspiration was a series of engravings of Vesalius whose body is being undressed (even though there is not a piece of cloth left to be removed) and whose being is melting in the body on display under the influence of a magical hand that will strip it off like a banana peel.

In fact, there is nothing particularly original in this sequence of events: a child, thrilled by the sound of the rattle in his hand, reproduces this pattern very easily without looking for an explanation. He eventually discovers that his body ends at the tip of his fingers and that the sound originates from the rattle. Yet, he keeps playing with that object. One could think that the hand, which connects the body to the object, is endowed with the power of rearranging what is put on display. My landlord sprained his wrist before painting the shutters once, just like a computer scientist believes in a virtual world manipulated by successive actions on a keyboard. It's all connected... Each rattle represents a possible compromise, the negotiations of our social or intimate experience. On that purpose, I have replaced all the possible physical contacts a user's hand can have with any other object.

Each rattle is to be handled differently according to its shape, the material from which it is made or its personality. You can read it like an open book; you can feel it, you can hold it. It can be a musical instrument, a horn, or an antique object that can stoke the inner fire that drives us or devours us. And since the rattle is primarily a way to handle your voice, a means of individual expression, what you do with it depends on you.



Star Wars. 22 x 9 x 15cm, zinc or brass tacks, silkscreen on wood paneling and baseboards, halyard.



QuickList. 22x9x7cm, silkscreen printing in black and white, on magnetized black and white plates, halyard.



Allergic. 6x9x7cm, elastic silkscreen on paper mounted on glass flooring and paneling.



For computer scientist. : 21x 29,7x2cm, silkscreen on beech and cedar-scented stickers "made in China".



For Blind. 34 x 9 x 7cm, silkscreen on poly-mirror, stainless steel and aluminum.



For Jester. variable size, max. 140x8,5x9cm, silkscreen on wood paneling, bells and halyard.



Pickup. 22x9x7cm, halyard, silkscreen on rusty metal (farmed rust).



Coward. 22x9x15 cm, silkscreen, halyard on wood covered with roofing felt.



[dirapa]. (wontsay) 1997-2000. Electrical and mechanical mobile slowly crawling back at a regular pace, whirling around a swivel axis, embedded in a stone base. Dia.: 5 to 6 meters. Endowed by Technotol S.A.

Ground under nails. 2001. Sculpture and dance performance. Duo with Valérie Lamielle, 35'. Performance presented by Engrenages Coprod. Lamielle / Centre dramatique national d'Alsace / Pôle Sud. Video: 4'36".

The insect on its back, a prisoner of its shell under the influence of gravity, struggling to turn over to resume its journey, is the basis for this work. The figure of the insect is the image of a primary fear, that of the swarm, the disturbing influence of an invisible world, ultimately small, unfolding in untimely proportions.

Once set up, this sculpture creates a last-minute change, as if this machine was to question our submission to the environment, to a context. It is therefore not a noisy or infernal machine, the purpose being to evoke those little twists of life that will make it inevitably taste somehow different. The purpose is also to adapt the sculpture for a dance duet with Valérie Lamielle, which turned out to be the logical extension of this proposal.





A Taste of Ephemeral (folder No. FERR_2), 1999. Folder, naphthalene, silicone. 32x29x7cm. Photographs taken every four weeks. Fragrance created on the occasion of the exhibition entitled "Artist Folders," following a proposal to put each folder on display on the shelves.



L'art à 20 balles (I say what I say....). 2002. Stamp and permanent ink on a banknote. Proposition by Esox Lucius, inviting artists to work on a 20 franc note when France adopted the Euro.



Morning After, 2004. Badge and balloon. 2,5cm. An answer to the proposal inviting artists to create a badge.