



presse@mudam.lu
www.mudam.lu

Tel + 352 45 37 85 1
Fax + 352 45 37 85 400

3, Park Dräi Eechelen
L-1499 Luxembourg

Mudam Luxembourg
Musée d'Art Moderne
Grand-Duc Jean

PRESS KIT

MONDES INVENTÉS, MONDES HABITÉS
08/10/2011 - 15/01/2012

MONDES INVENTÉS, MONDES HABITÉS PRESS KIT

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Press release

MONDES INVENTÉS, MONDES HABITÉS

Exhibition from 8 October 2011 to 15 January 2012

Curators Marie-Noëlle Farcy, Clément Minighetti (Mudam)

Artists David Altmejd, Chris Burden, Vija Celmins, Björn Dahlem, León Ferrari, Vincent Ganivet, Paul Granjon, Theo Jansen, Bodys Isek Kingelez, Paul Laffoley, Isa Melsheimer, Miguel Palma, Panamarenko, Robert & Shana ParkeHarrison, Nancy Rubins, Conrad Shawcross, Roman Signer, Jan Švankmajer

Press view Friday 7 October 2011 at 11am

Vernissage Friday 7 October 2011 from 6pm to 8.30pm

Conceived by curators Marie-Noëlle Farcy and Clément Minighetti, *Mondes inventés, Mondes habités* ("Invented Worlds, Inhabited Worlds") unveils the singularity of universes developed by artists who are in turn thinkers, engineers and architects investigating the forces and flux that control and make up our universe, as well as the dynamics that animate it. Attentive to the mechanics of the world, sensitive to its potential energy, as well as to the streams of thought that irrigate it and define it, they tackle in their work questions of a scientific and metaphysical nature.

These often complex artworks reveal the beauty of forces in action, as in the case of Conrad Shawcross and Miguel Palma, or are inspired by artworks such as *Mexican Bridge* by Chris Burden. Others, like Isa Melsheimer, are interested in architecture as a means of developing ideas about the space we inhabit, the conception we have of it but also its instability. Some (such as David Altmejd) play on materials, whether mineral or organic, recreating phantasmagorical worlds.

Within the framework of the exhibition and according to the program of commissions for the Grand Hall, Mudam invited the English artist Conrad Shawcross to design an installation specifically for this spectacular space. Entitled *The Nervous Systems (Inverted)*, his work is on show until May 6, 2012.

At the opening of the exhibition on Friday, October 7, Paul Granjon presents his performance "Lo-tech songs et servo moteurs", which is symbolic of his approach to question what he calls the co-evolution of the human being and the machine. Moreover, the artist will give a lecture at Mudam on January 7, 2012, where he talks about his work and his ideas on the development of sophisticated technologies.

Guided tours of the exhibition will take place every Saturday at 4pm in French, every Sunday at 3pm in German and at 4pm in Luxembourgish. Every first Sunday of the month, guided tours in English will take place at 11am.

At last, Mudam is pleased to announce that the exhibition is supported by a new partner, Kurt Salmon.

Lecture within the framework of the exhibition

17.01.2012, 6.30pm, in French

PAUL GRANJON : ROBOTS SEXUÉS, ET APRÈS ?

Paul Granjon's installations and performances raise issues linked to what he calls the co-evolution of the human and the machine. In a way often veering towards the absurd, his machines convey questions about technological dependence and the future of humanity. *The Robots sexués* ("Sexed Robots") were first shown at the 2005 Venice Biennale. Since then, Paul Granjon has diversified his artistic praxis and constructed quite a lot of robots and other machines.

Regular tours

Sa 4pm (FR), Su 3pm (DE) & 4pm (LU), every first Sunday 11am (GB)

Group visits (max. 20 people) only by advance booking: visites@mudam.lu, t +352 45 37 85 531

Opening hours

Wednesday-Friday: 11am-8pm

Saturday-Monday: 11am-6pm

Tuesday closed

Address and information

Mudam Luxembourg

Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean

3, Park Dräi Eechelen, L-1499 Luxembourg

t. +352 45 37 85 1, info@mudam.lu, www.mudam.lu

Presse contact

Valerio D'Alimonte, v.dalimonte@mudam.lu, t. +352 453 785 633

Partner of the exhibition Kurt Salmon 

Mudam remercie

Le Ministère de la Culture, Luxembourg

Monsieur Jacques Santer, Ministre d'État Honoraire et président du conseil d'administration, ainsi que les membres du conseil d'administration de la Fondation Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean.

L'ensemble des donateurs et des mécènes, et en particulier pour leur soutien exceptionnel

The Leir Foundation, Climalux, Japan Tobacco International, Cargolux et également

Kurt Salmon, Arendt & Medernach, PricewaterhouseCoopers, UniCredit Luxembourg, Deutsche Bank Luxembourg S.A., Banque LBLux, EducDesign, A Fleur de Peau, Soludec S.A., Dussmann Service Luxembourg, Vinci Park Services Luxembourg S.A., Les Amis des Musées d'Art et d'Histoire Luxembourg.

MONDES INVENTÉS, MONDES HABITÉS

by Marie-Noëlle Farcy and Clément Minighetti, curators of the exhibition

The technical object cannot be dissociated from human history, but the relationship between the two remains complex. As a synonym of progress, in western eyes, the technical object is at once desired and suspect, arousing by turns hope, wonder, and disillusion.

The exhibition *Mondes inventés, Mondes habités* ("Invented Worlds, Inhabited Worlds") broaches the issue of technology transcended by artistic genius. It highlights the special relationship of creative people, those "technical poets" who, rather than restricting themselves to the utilitarian aspect, base their research on an understanding of existence and the beauty of machines. So through the works of some twenty artists of different generations and with different outlooks, the exhibition offers glimpses of the capacity for invention and wonder, daring and curiosity, hallmarking the human and artistic adventure.

The figure of the inventor

The exhibition focuses first and foremost on the specific figure of the inventor and the imagination which fuels his research. A whole mythology has in fact developed down the centuries around the artist-cum-inventor, whose guardian figure is indisputably Leonardo da Vinci, an artistic and visionary genius if ever there was, as much an architect and engineer as a painter and musician. With the emergence of modern science and motorization, the 19th century left behind a literature studded with demiurge figures, crazy scholars and other daredevils, with an absolute faith in science and its potential. It is these colourful personalities who seem to inspire the filmmaker Jan Švankmajer in his film *Leonardo's Diary* and his drawings of unlikely erotic machines, as hilarious as they are disquieting, when the machine appears to hold sway over people and dictate their doings and gestures.

Similar mixed feelings come to the fore in the seemingly outdated photographs of Robert and Shana ParkeHarrison. These artists present a character fitted with prostheses and other cobbled together exploratory instruments, who has a close, not to say fusional relationship with the world, anxious about the planet's future challenges. The borderline between the marvellous and the apocalyptic is thin and fragile.

The relationship between the individual and nature is also present in Panamarenko's work, in particular through his *Knikkebeen*, a "bipedal" prosthesis, no less, inspired by the camel's gait. For the artist, the machine can - and must - be the go-between in a harmonious development with our environment.

Paul Granjon, who exercises much fantasy but is determinedly trivial, makes robots with anthropological behaviour. He has devised them as gendered and gives them a playground in the form of an arena. They bump into each other, sniff each other, copulate and rest... and swear. Contrasting with them, Paul Laffoley's complex and fascinating diagrams have an almost mystical character, well removed from anything prosaic. His visions and conceptions of the future world result from a mix of philosophy, esotericism, and technology.

Physical phenomena or natural forces

The second part of the show underscores the beauty of experience and the accomplishment of forms resulting from the observation and understanding of physical phenomena or natural forces. Taking existing phenomena into account is thus part and parcel of Roman Signer's work. Water, earth, fire and air are, in a way, his materials. "I have an almost magical relationship to Nature. [...] The final form of the sculpture emerges of its own accord. This is an aspect that actually runs through all my work - that I do not do everything myself, but give the last word to the natural forces that are involved here", says the artist (Roman Signer in *Roman Signer*, Phaidon, 2006, pp. 47-48).

He shares with Panamarenko this art of nature observation and examination. This latter devises and produces all sorts of things that can be regarded as so many extensions of his own body. They propel him across the ground, as well as in air, water and - the ultimate dream - space. This, obviously enough, is the whole beauty of experience - in no way burdened by failure -, the poetry of danger and the risk inherent in all inventions that we are offered by Panamarenko and Roman Signer.

In this same spirit of transcending and going beyond physical restrictions, Chris Burden's work *The Frictionless Sled* makes it possible to experiment with the elimination of the force of friction at the root of resistance to motion. His *Mexican Bridge*, a veritable construction work, is also a demonstration of confidence in the ingenious mind and man's ability to tame nature. It reflects the artist's fascination with challenges, those consisting in negotiating obstacles, connecting people and increasing possibilities of displacement.

Because understanding them helps us to free ourselves from them, others prefer to juggle with the laws of physics. In this respect, the works of Vincent Ganivet and Nancy Rubins represent actual feats which defy the rules of statics. Made up of heavy, bulky materials like breeze blocks and pieces of aircraft fuselage, they rise up and develop heightwise. Cocking a snook at gravity, but answering to elementary construction principles, they remain balanced, and mind-bogglingly light.

The exploration of worlds

The third part extends the boundaries of our world and the perception we may have of it. Here the artists appropriate that part of the dream intrinsic to the discovery and exploration of worlds, but also to the understanding of the living which scientific and technological advances have made possible by making them visible.

The infinite depth of the cosmos, with the shimmering of stars, comes delicately across in Vija Celmins's hyper-realist and subtle prints. At times, these glittering landscapes rub shoulders with a perspectival drawing by the Italian Quattrocento master Paolo Uccello, whose technical mastery is so amazing that it vies happily with present-day digital tools.

Black holes, cosmic constellations and distant planets also form the essence of Björn Dahlem's sculptures. Fascinated by the latest progress in astrophysics, he comes up with original models imbued with a surrealist poetry. His mysterious sculptures form a dreamlike landscape which he incites us to cross.

The application and spatialization of scientific theories lie precisely at the root of Conrad Shawcross's research, with his light piece *Slow Arc in a Cube IV* playing almost hypnotically with two- and three-dimensional planes, giving us the sensation of an endless space in perpetual motion.

Focusing on the question of the living, the works of David Altmejd and Theo Jansen are concerned with properties of transformation and regeneration. In the former's work titled *The Vessel*, transparency plays a major part. It permits us to enter the heart of a vitalized world, made up of a tangle of changing organic forms. Theo Jansen's film, for its part, presents the research of a demiurge that, for more than twenty years, has been successfully striving to give life to his creatures made in a rough-and-ready way with PVC. Henceforth fitted with an almost autonomous operation, these latter move about on the beaches of the North, fuelling themselves with wind.

Worlds organised by human activity

The fourth and final part of the exhibition mainly includes artistic representations of worlds organised by human activity. All of Miguel Palma's research is underpinned by this "universalist" approach, in contrast with specialization. He thus prefers spontaneity and intuition to a knowledge which he deems at times abstruse. "In my work, I think it's extremely important that people understand the object's construction process, in a basic almost geological manner (Miguel Palma in *Osmosis, MP_PAPERS*, p. 73)". His work *Carbono 14* combines his interest in mechanics and motorized things with a line of thinking about ecosystems. The many geological strata which form them plunge us into the depths of a buried world. As often in his approach, the installation is not without irony and gives glimpses of social criticism.

Isa Melsheimer's remote approach is also distant when she focuses on a given context. Here, her work directly echoes the configuration of the venue. Her project is part of an already existing space, the spiral staircase, a real piece of bravura in Mudam's architecture. She is intrigued by the imperious nature of the architectural gesture, and subtly shifts the outlines and boundaries, deeply transforming it and lending it a new poetic charge.

Human activity pierces the seething mass of connections and mesh of networks which inform León Ferrari's maze-like drawings. The fascination felt when faced with the complexity of urban developments nevertheless quickly gives way to a feeling of suspicion in front of models which leave the individual with not very much freedom. Above all, the graphic tracery work gives glimpses of the beauty and fragility of existence.

This tension crops up, too, in the work of Bodys Isek Kingelez, who projects us into futuristic and utopian African cities, and whose ideas may wind up this exhibition: "The pleasures of this terrestrial world depend on the people who live in it. They have an obligation to deploy all their talents to fashion and refashion it in such a way as to make it more wonderful than ever." (Bodys Isek Kingelez in *Bodys Isek Kingelez*, Kunstverein in Hamburg, 2001, p. 101)

CONRAD SHAWCROSS

Born in 1977 in London where he lives and works.

"I am fascinated by ideas of certainty and where science is in terms of string theory and the shape of the universe. It's just speculation but it's under this umbrella of an absolute rational empirical house which is building up on itself. It's growing but it's actually unstable underneath, like these big towers and buildings that are built on stilts." (Conrad Shawcross) The interests of Conrad Shawcross are mainly focussed on scientific and philosophical questions in areas such as mathematics and epistemology. These disciplines combine in his artistic work to create pictures which, like the experimental mathematical models in a science museum, make complicated connections or fundamental theoretical concepts visible so that people can experience them, but without explicitly naming them. The frequent use of wood and the sheer size of the kinetic sculptures by Conrad Shawcross also create an anachronistic effect: like gigantic machines from the early days of industrialisation they jolt and vibrate, go round and round and produce things with a direct usefulness which seems completely intangible – rather like basic scientific research.

The Nervous Systems (Inverted), 2011

Aluminium, steel, oak, multicoloured

anorak cord, mechanical system

Variable dimensions

Courtesy the artist and Victoria Miro Gallery, London

Commission and Production Mudam Luxembourg

In collaboration with the Victoria Miro Gallery, London

Presented until May 6, 2012, ***The Nervous Systems (Inverted)***, an installation designed specifically for the Grand Hall of the Mudam, is similar to a number of other machines created since 2003 by Conrad Shawcross, an enthusiastic sailor, which produce rope, which then usually is separated into its individual strands again. The impressive towering form of this metaphorical machine is reminiscent of both the large-scale technological installations of modern nuclear physics and the Spinning Jenny, the first automatic spinning machine of the industrial age. Its hexagonal structure, the double helix of the spiral staircase and the threads which converge like rays on a single point create visual associations with the latest insights and theories of science, from the analysis of the genetic sequence to string theory in hypothetical physics. The slowness of the movements also clearly articulates the theme of time, which is present in both of its possible basic forms, i.e. in the cyclical repetition of the 162 bobbins and the linear progression of the rope which is produced. Conrad Shawcross's *The Nervous Systems (Inverted)* thus provides an artistic statement on subjects which are on the boundary between physics and metaphysics. His mysterious machine remains enigmatic, paradoxical and fascinating.

***Slow Arc in a Cube IV*, 2009**

Mechanic system, light, steel, aluminium, motors

180 x 90 x 90 cm

Courtesy the artist and Victoria Miro Gallery, London

Slow Arc in a Cube IV (2009) by Conrad Shawcross is another sculptural implementation of a scientific cognitive process. During a research visit to the Science Museum in London, Conrad Shawcross came across a quotation from the biochemist Dorothy Hodgkin in which she said that her studies on the spatial structure of the insulin molecule, which were finally successfully after many years of research, had been "like trying to deduce the structure of a tree from only seeing its shadow." In *Slow Arc in a Cube IV*, Conrad Shawcross then transformed his personal insight that "the idea that visible reality is only a small crumb of what's really out there" into a spatial implementation of a heavily metaphorical shadow structure which is reminiscent of both Hodgkin's statement and Plato's famous Parable of the Cave in which the cave dwellers initially believe that the shadows on the wall are the only true reality. Conrad Shawcross's sophisticated installation makes the complexity of cognitive processes visually comprehensible. The elegantly moving light source, which is itself almost one-dimensional, graphically highlights the two, three or even four-dimensional character of the work.



Slow Arc in a Cube IV, 2009

Mechanic system, light, steel, aluminium,
motors

180 x 90 x 90 cm

Courtesy the artist and Victoria Miro
Gallery, London

© Conrad Shawcross



The Nervous Systems (Inverted), 2010

Oak, steel, cords, mechanical system
Variable dimensions

Courtesy the artist and Victoria Miro
Gallery, London

© Conrad Shawcross

DAVID ALTMEJD

Born in 1974 in Montreal ; lives and works in New York.

***The Vessel*, 2011**

Plexiglas®, chain, plaster, wood, thread, acrylic paint, epoxy resin and clay, acrylic gel, granular medium, quartz, pyrite, assorted minerals, adhesive, wire, pins

260 x 620 x 220 cm

Courtesy the artist and Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York

***Untitled*, 2006**

Plaster, paint, synthetic hair, glitter

16 x 43 x 40 cm

Private collection, Tehran

***Untitled*, 2004**

Plaster, resin, paint, synthetic hair, jewelry, glitter

23,4 x 35,5 x 30,4 cm

Private collection, London

***Untitled*, 2002**

Plaster, acrylic resin, mixed media

Ø 101 cm

Collection Zabłudowicz, London

Like a museum inside a museum, ***The Vessel*** (2011) by the Canadian artist David Altmejd offers an almost unfathomable wealth of objects, settings and impressions. The seemingly symmetrical installation in a large plexiglas display case combines a number of ambiguous organic forms which are in a state of metamorphosis and consist of minerals, wood and a large number of threads which lend structure to the unsettling chaos of the composition. David Altmejd's complex dioramas express the vital force of life, the transformation of the body; they focus on the concepts of inside and outside, and like an ancient cabinet of curiosities they offer plenty of material to look and wonder at. His works illustrate "how growth and transformation is only possible from decay and how a sense of a work being alive is perceived most fully when beauty is contrasted with the abject." (Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York)



***The Vessel*, 2011**

Plexiglas®, chain, plaster, wood, thread, acrylic paint, epoxy resin and clay, acrylic gel, granular medium, quartz, pyrite, assorted minerals, adhesive, wire, pins; 260 x 620 x 220 cm

Courtesy galerie Andrea Rosen, New York; Photo: Jessica Eckert © David Altmejd

CHRIS BURDEN

Born in 1946 in Boston; lives and works in Topanga Canyon, California.

Moonette n°5. The Twist, 1994

Wire netting, clinker, tinted concrete, collage of plastic and wooden objects, maquettes
170 x 90 x 270 cm
Collection MAC – musée d'art contemporain, Marseille

Mexican Bridge, 1998-1999

35.000 Meccano® pieces, wood
283 x 457 x 94 cm
Collection Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall

The Frictionless Sled, 1983

Aluminium, metal, Plexiglas®, air compressor
94 x 645 x 11,5 cm
Courtesy the artist
With the participation of Maison Breger, Gasperich

After working for a long time in body art and conceptual art, Chris Burden turned his attention to more specific investigations and representations of reality in the course of his further artistic career. Whereas in the early 1980s he focussed mainly on scientific experimental arrangements such as the reconstruction of a device to measure the speed of light or ***The Frictionless Sled*** (1983), an installation which is limited to the most necessary elements and which experimentally demonstrates the surprising friction loss of a sled floating on an air cushion. Later he produced dioramas and distorted and distorting "world images" which appear both ironic and threatening, such as ***The Twist*** (1994). A series of bridge models began with ***Mexican Bridge***, for which Chris Burden and his team screwed together over 35.000 parts from a children's metal construction kit to create an exact reproduction of a bridge over a Mexican gorge which was planned in the 1860s but never built. The elegance and immaculate functionality of this bridge, which looks like an unusual sculpture in this artistic context, do not overshadow the playful ease with which Chris Burden gives free expression to his inner child in this and many other works.



Mexican Bridge, 1998-1999
35.000 Meccano® pieces, wood
283 x 457 x 94 cm
Collection Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall
© Photo: Neil Goldstein

VIJA CELMINS

Born in 1938 in Riga; lives and works in New York.

Concentric Bearings B, 1984

Two-colour aquatint, drypoint, mezzotint
44 x 36,8 cm
Courtesy McKee Gallery, New York

Starfield, 2010

Mezzotint
66,7 x 90,8 cm
Courtesy McKee Gallery, New York

Double Reverse Galaxy - The Stars, 2005

Aquatint, drypoint, etching
66,7 x 90,8 cm
Courtesy McKee Gallery, New York

Alliance, 1982

Three-colour aquatint, mezzotint, drypoint
61 x 49,2 cm
Courtesy McKee Gallery, New York

Constellation - Uccello, 1983

Four-colour aquatint, etching
69,2 x 58,7 cm
Courtesy McKee Gallery, New York

Concentric Bearings A, 1984

Two-colour aquatint, photoengraving, drypoint
60,6 x 47 cm
Courtesy McKee Gallery, New York

Vija Celmins, an American artist of Latvian origin, has achieved prominence as a major representative of hyper-realism, at the same time preserving her artistic independence. For over four decades her interest has been exclusively focused on the colour range between black and white. She uses sea and desert surfaces and excerpts from the night sky with a wide variety of artistic techniques in painting, drawing and graphic design. But her painstakingly composed works are not only self-referential independent images which fluctuate between representation and abstraction, underlining their own character and betraying their material production process to the discerning beholder. Vija Celmins' works, especially in combination with other equally finely crafted reproductions of "foreign" images, bring up questions of form and content, for example the question of structural similarities as in **Constellation - Uccello** (1983) and questions about the limits of what can be investigated, as in **Alliance** (1982).



Constellation - Uccello, 1983
Four-colour aquatint, etching
69,2 x 58,7 cm
Courtesy galerie McKee, New York

BJÖRN DAHLEM

Born in 1974 in Munich; he lives and works in Berlin.

Schwarzes Loch (M-Sphären), 2007

Wood, lamps, light bulbs, neon lamps
360 x 730 x 540 cm
Saatchi Collection, London

Himmelsglobus (Das All), 2010

Wood, steel, copper, bottle, bauble, light bulb,
cocktail cherries, lacquer
180 x 80 x 80 cm
Courtesy Fons Welters Gallery, Amsterdam

Kathedrale, 2009

Wood, aluminium, steel, light bulbs, glass,
red wine, truffles, gold varnish
190 x 60 x 60 cm
Courtesy Guido W. Baudach Gallery, Berlin

Milchstraße, 2009

Wood, steel, glass, pebbles, gold varnish
175 x 40 x 40 cm
Courtesy Guido W. Baudach Gallery, Berlin

M-Zeit, 2010

Wood, clocks, bauble, Indian Ink
280 x 70 x 70 cm
Courtesy Guido W. Baudach Gallery, Berlin

The recent works of Björn Dahlem deal with questions of cosmology and the foundations of physics, for example the "M-theory" which is still being sought as a single super-theory to explain all physical phenomena. Simple materials and the technique of bricolage were used to create elegant structures with which Björn Dahlem "tests and questions the borders between truth and faith, science and art, thought and form" (Anne Ellgood). But Björn Dahlem regards works such as **Schwarzes Loch (M-Sphären)** ("Black Hole (M spheres)", 2007), **Milchstraße** ("Milky Way", 2009) and **Himmelsglobus (Das All)** ("Sky Globe (The Universe)", 2010) not as illustrations of scientific ideas, but rather as "fantastic landscapes" and "mental habitats" with metaphorical materials and a visual and conceptual poetic character which can stimulate feelings of awe and wonder in the beholder, propelling him to a level of knowledge which is only accessible through art.



Milchstraße, 2009

Wood, steel, glass, pebbles, gold varnish
175 x 40 x 40 cm
Courtesy Guido W. Baudach Gallery, Berlin
© Photo: Roman März

LEÓN FERRARI

Born in 1920 in Buenos Aires where he lives and works.

Rua, 1980

Heliographic print
107 x 272 cm

Collection 49 Nord 6 Est - Frac Lorraine, Metz

Cruzamento, 1982

Heliographic print
103,5 x 101 cm

Collection 49 Nord 6 Est - Frac Lorraine, Metz

Rond Point II, 1981

Heliographic print
93 x 90 cm

Collection 49 Nord 6 Est - Frac Lorraine, Metz

Destino, 1982

Heliographic print
70 x 100,4 cm

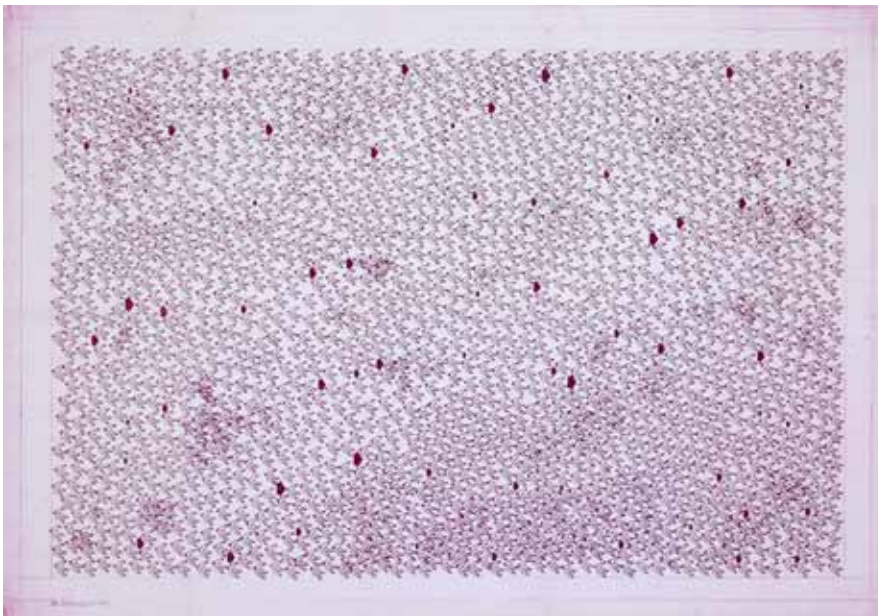
Collection 49 Nord 6 Est - Frac Lorraine, Metz

Passarela, 1981

Heliographic print
78 x 100 cm

Collection 49 Nord 6 Est - Frac Lorraine, Metz

León Ferrari is one of the most important South American artists. His highly varied work confronts political commitment with surrealist and conceptual influences. His works in the series **Heliographs** (1980-1982) arose during the years when the ruling military dictatorship of his native Argentina forced him into exile in São Paulo, Brazil. These multiples could be reproduced as easily as architectural blueprints and even sent by post, and they represented an anti-auratic and democratic art form. As León Ferrari himself said, they reflect the "architecture of madness" and show the absurdity of modern societies "in which a kind of daily madness is necessary to make everything seem normal." León Ferrari's Heliographs are wound around themselves or take the form of hypnotic mandalas or strict military geometry, and they not only reflect his perception of his situation at that time in the big city, they are also ironically reduced symbols of the modern mass society itself.



Passarelas, 1981
Heliographic print
78 x 100 cm
Collection 49 Nord 6 Est –
Frac Lorraine, Metz
Photo : Rémi Villaggi
© León Ferrari

VINCENT GANIVET

Born in 1976 in Suresnes; lives and works in L'Île-Saint-Denis.

Caténaïres, 2009

Cellular block, wood, metal, straps
Courtesy the artist and gallery West, La Haye
Production Mudam Luxembourg

The arches of simple cavity blocks created by Vincent Ganivet come as close as possible to the limits of structural stability. They trace the shape of an inverted catenary curve which draws its maximum stability from its own weight without any lateral force. Vincent Ganivet's arches are reminiscent of old architectural forms such as the buttresses of Gothic churches, and also similar to modern forms such as the famous Gateway Arch in St. Louis, Missouri. The humble materials used, i.e. simple building blocks, contrast with the elegance of the pure form. Without actually bearing any weight, the arches lose their architectural function and become an aesthetic event which direct the focus to their appearance, the production process and their meaning, and which constantly gamble on the risk of their own destruction.



Caténaïres vrillées, 2010
Cellular block, wood, metal
Courtesy Yvon Lambert, Paris and gallery West, La Haye
© Vincent Ganivet

PAUL GRANJON

Born in 1965 in Lyon; lives and works in Cardiff.

Robots sexués, 2005

Aluminium, nylon, electric motors
50 x 50 x 50 cm each
Courtesy the artist

Smartbot, 2005

Plexiglas®, electric motors
35 x 35 x 20 cm
Courtesy the artist

Machine à battement de cœur, 2006

Polypropylene, electric motor, wood, electric system
40 x 35 x 30 cm and 10 x 10 x 10 cm
Courtesy the artist

Paul Granjon is an artist who works on engineering topics in the field of robotics. His main interest is the development of hybrid machines with a minimum of artificial intelligence which he uses to investigate the increasingly interwoven relationship between human beings and the machine. With the aid of elementary analogue and digital equipment, Paul Granjon not only created works such as a cybernetic sausage and a life-like Tamagotchi, he also created ***Robots sexués*** ("Sexed Robots", 2005) in which he examined the sex life of machines and analysed their social and mating behaviour in a near-natural environment which he called a "Robotarium". A far more primitive robot called a ***Smartbot*** (2005), which utters a few strong curse words, was every bit as tongue-in-cheek as the artist himself.



Robots sexués, 2005
Aluminium, nylon, electric motors
50 x 50 x 50 cm each
Courtesy the artist
© Paul Granjon

THEO JANSEN

Born in 1948 in Scheveningen, The Netherlands; lives and works in Delft.

The Great Pretender – Works of art by Theo Jansen, 2007

Documentary film

17 min

Courtesy the artist

The physicist and artist Theo Jansen creates strange “beach beasts” which he makes walk on the wide expanse of the beach in Scheveningen. With the self-ironic generosity of a creator who is mighty enough to set in motion the evolution of a new life form, Theo Jansen sees himself as the “Great Pretender” who has spent the last 20 years processing the yellow plastic tubes which are commonly used as cable conduits in the Netherlands. Using simple technical means and methods, he created his moving insect-like beach animals which became “independent” in the course of their development and, propelled only by the wind, started to move about, change direction or even fix themselves to the ground during a storm. These creatures, which look like a cross between machine monsters of science fiction and prehistoric dinosaur skeletons, are both touching and disturbing in their poetic fragility.

BODYS ISEK KINGELEZ

Born in 1948 in Kimbembele Ihunga, Democrat Republic of the Congo; lives and works in Kinshasa.

***Maman Isek Mabo Bendele*, 2000**

Mixed media

154 x 121 x 108 cm

Collection Fondation Cartier pour l'Art Contemporain, Paris

***New Manhattan (Manhattan City 3021)*, 2002**

Mixed media

205 x 300 x 280 cm

Courtesy C.A.A.C. - Pigozzi Collection, Geneva

The artist Bodys Isek Kingelez originally comes from Congo and is known for the models which he has made of paper, cardboard, plywood, paint and other materials since the early 1980s. These fantasy buildings, designed in a variety of styles, have grown into veritable mega-cities over the years, utopian visions of ideal conurbations which often created an orderly chaos which cheerfully challenged the laws of gravity and the possibilities of real architecture. The works ***Maman Isek Mabo Bendele*** (2000) and ***New Manhattan (Manhattan City 3021)*** (2002) reflect the artist's hope "that his art will benefit science and contribute to a better life". While the latter work is obviously a reaction to the attacks which happened in the previous year, the former work can be seen as a positive dream image in response to the reality of the increasing urban and social dissolution of the capital city of the artist's home country.



New Manhattan (Manhattan City 3021), 2002
Mixed media
205 x 300 x 280 cm
Courtesy C.A.A.C. - Pigozzi Collection, Geneva

PAUL LAFFOLEY

Born in 1940 in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He lives and works in Boston.

***Geochronmechane: The Time Machine from the Earth*, 1990**

Serigraph, corrections in coloured pencils

81,4 x 81,4 cm

Courtesy Kent Fine Arts, New York

***Tesseract House*, 1978**

Ink and Letraset on board

129,5 x 83,8 cm

Courtesy Kent Fine Arts, New York

***Das Urpflanzehaus, 1, 2, 3, 4 + 5, 6, 7, 8*, 1983-1995**

India ink, letters, acrylic paint on board

72 x 94 cm each

The Cartin Collection, Hartford

Paul Laffoley usually formulates his ideas about the future of humanity in highly complex drawings and paintings in which he condenses his vast esoteric and scientific knowledge into visionary utopias which are “500 years ahead of their time, just like Leonardo” (Paul Laffoley). As the grandson of an architect and son of a medium who was a member of a Spiritualist Church in Boston and “did not believe in gravity” (Linda Henderson). Paul Laffoley himself became an advocate of a mystical science which saw a partial solution to the problems of humanity in the 21st century in the creation of vegetal chimeras to facilitate a biomorphic design of residential complexes. Inspired by Goethe's writings on the potential of the Primal Plant, the drawings of ***Das Urpflanzehaus*** (1983-1995) are a graphic expression of Paul Laffoley's ideas. Moreover, he believes that the invention or discovery of a truly functional time machine is urgently necessary, and this belief is reflected in ***Geochronmechane: The Time Machine from the Earth*** (1990) and its architectural application in ***Tesseract House*** (1978), shown on Level -1.



***Geochronmechane: The Time Machine from the Earth*, 1990**
Serigraph, corrections in coloured pencils
81,4 x 81,4 cm
Courtesy Kent Fine Arts,
New York
© Peter Laffoley

ISA MELSHEIMER

Born in 1968 in Neuss; lives and works in Berlin.

Garten für einen glücklosen Schatten, 2011

Scaffolding, Acrystal®, concrete, wood, gouache on paper, plants, glass

Courtesy the artist

Commission and Production Mudam Luxembourg

Isa Melsheimer's subtle and poetic work always makes reference to the architecture in which it is located. But the German artist is more interested in the non-architectural spaces, the interstices which often give an insight into what is behind the perfection and concept design of even the most outstanding buildings. Even though she "opposes the vanities of the heroes of architectural history to her own often narrative but never massive works", she "does not make fun of anyone or anything, and she is not being didactic when she challenges us to look again, to look differently. This attitude is liberating because it aims to encourage us to form and express our own opinion – even about so-called great architecture, and also in our treatment of supposedly insignificant everyday architecture" (Fanny Fetzter). The actual work is designed specifically for Mudam in the suspended staircase, which can almost be seen as a signature work of leoh Ming Pei, it combines the artist's freely implemented associations with the space, the architect's work and the theme of the garden, and as so often it is made up of apparently solid and extremely delicate parts.



Garten für einen glücklosen Schatten, 2011
Preparatory model
© Isa Melsheimer

MIGUEL PALMA

Born in 1964 in Lisbon where he lives and works.

Carbono 14, 1998

Iron, aluminium, glass, earth, wood, motor, PVC
300 x 300 x 220 cm
Ministry of Culture / Department of Arts, Portugal

Satellite, 2010

Tripod, rotation device, miniature observation tower
70 x 50 x 50 cm
Private collection, Portugal

Gravity, 2006

Wood, earth globe, steel cables, mirrors, combined materials
60 x 60 x 60 cm
Private collection, Portugal

One of the main themes in the artistic and scientific work of the Portuguese artist Miguel Palma is the ecosystem, and he shows and investigates its often precarious balance in detailed views. But he does not lose his metaphorical view of the whole, as is demonstrated by his frequent use of a satellite perspective. The name of this work in the exhibition (**Satellite**, 2010) is an ironic demonstration of the loss of perspective – it shows a watchtower (of a surveillance state?) floating alone and adrift on a tiny island of soil, and evidently turning around in circles. On the other hand, **Gravity** (2006) reveals multiple perspectives of a globe that is fixed in position, and thus relativises the beholder's direct and unadulterated view of "reality".



Gravity, 2006
Wood, earth globe, steel cables,
mirrors, combined materials
60 x 60 x 60 cm
Private collection, Portugal
© Photo: Miguel Palma Studio

PANAMARENKO

Born in 1940 in Antwerp where he lives and works.

***Raven's Variable Matrix*, 2000**

Motor 8 PK, polycarbonate, aluminium, felt
165 x 510 x 364 cm
Collection Mianko, Belgium

***Flying Wing (Propellerless Pedal Driven Pure Jet Aircraft, Type Anti-Induction)*, 1977**

Polystyrene, plastic, Japanese paper, wood, metal
109 x 325 x 282 cm
Collection SMAK, Stedelijk Museum voor
Aktuele Kunst, Ghent

***Japanese Flying Pak 3*, 2001**

Motor, leather, metal, plastic, rubber, elastic
thread
53,3 x 157,5 x 91,4 cm
Courtesy Jamar Gallery, Antwerp

***Knikkebeen*, 1994**

Aluminium, leather, worm-wheel motor, batteries
170 x 110 x 210 cm
Private collection, Belgium
Colour photograph
100 x 135 cm
Courtesy Mulier Mulier, Knokke-Le-Zoute

***Rugzakvlucht*, 1985**

Plastic, wood
187 x 110 x 110 cm
Collection PMMK – Museum voor Moderne Kunst,
Ostende

The interest of the Belgian artist Panamarenko is mainly devoted to the old human dream of flying. Like an artistic mixture of the visionary flying machines of Leonardo da Vinci, the daring exploits of Otto Lilienthal and the poetic exaggerations of Karlsson-on-the-roof, his works express the graphic and dramatic language of a poetically scientific utopia. Although the old dream has long turned into a reality for the masses, which has made the world alarmingly small, the works of Panamarenko all the more clearly express the longing to explore unknown worlds in an individual and pioneering manner. Whereas his ***Flying Wing (Propellerless Pedal Driven Pure Jet Aircraft, Type Anti-Induction)*** (1977) expresses the utopian character of the flying machine in its ironically mock-technical title, his ***Rugzakvlucht*** (1985) and ***Knikkebeen*** (1994), shown in the gallery next to the Mudam Café, seem to have been overtaken by reality. But the black feathered plane ***Raven's Variable Matrix*** (2000) was tested personally by Panamarenko to make sure that it could fly.



Knikkebeen, 2011
Colour photograph
100 x 135 cm
Courtesy Mulier Mulier, Knokke-Le-Zoute
© Panamarenko

ROBERT & SHANA PARKEHARRISON

Robert ParkeHarrison was born in 1968 in Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, and Shana ParkeHarrison was born in 1964 in Tulsa, Oklahoma. They live and work in Great Barrington, Massachusetts.

***Marks We Make*, 2005**

Photoengraving
68,5 x 78,7 cm
Courtesy Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

***Passage*, 2002**

Photoengraving
48,5 x 57,4 cm
Courtesy Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

***Second Harvest*, 1997**

Print on fabric, encaustic
59 x 70 cm
Courtesy Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

***Breathing Machine*, 1998**

Digital print on panel, acrylic, varnish
100 x 78 cm
Courtesy Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

***Cloudburst*, 1998**

Digital print on panel, acrylic, varnish
75,5 x 97,4 cm
Courtesy Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

***Edison's Light*, 1998**

Digital print on panel, acrylic, varnish
102 x 119,3 cm
Courtesy Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

***Kingdom*, 2000**

Digital print on panel, acrylic, varnish
120,6 x 104,4 cm
Courtesy Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

***Making Rain*, 1997**

Print on fabric, encaustic
66,3 x 56,8 cm
Courtesy Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

***Suspended Field*, 2000**

Digital print on panel, acrylic, varnish
104,4 x 135,5 cm
Courtesy Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

***Tethered Sky*, 2005**

Photoengraving
68,5 x 78,7 cm
Courtesy Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

***The Navigator*, 2001**

Photoengraving

66 x 76 cm

Courtesy Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

***Windmaker*, 1997**

Print on fabric, encaustic

54,6 x 66,3 cm

Courtesy Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

***Windwriting*, 1998**

Gelatin silver print, acrylic, varnish

94 x 115,5 cm

Courtesy Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

Robert and Shana ParkeHarrison produce deliberately artificial photographs with a great narrative density in a sepia tone which is reminiscent of the early days of photography. Viewing the works from different series with titles such as ***Promisedland*** or ***Kingdom*** may spontaneously remind us of the almost 100 years older film by Georges Méliès, *Le Voyage dans la lune*, although Robert and Shana ParkeHarrison have transformed its visionary optimism into apocalyptic metaphors. Their photographs always portray one man (representing "mankind") taming the forces of nature in the midst of a wide, lifeless, dust-dry expanse. The beautifully amusing and overly detailed scenes show the ecological scepticism of the post-industrial era which derisively looks at the fantasies of omnipotence in the human belief in progress and exposes them as helpless foolishness.



***Kingdom*, 2000**

Digital print on panel, acrylic, varnish
120,6 x 104,4 cm

Courtesy Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

NANCY RUBINS

Born in 1952 in Naples, Texas; lives and works in Topanga Canyon, California.

***Table and Airplane Parts*, 1990**

Wood, aluminium, cables

300 x 500 x 700 cm

Collection Frac Bourgogne, Dijon

Since the late 1970s, the American sculptor Nancy Rubins has worked with objects and leftovers of the consumer society. After visiting a scrap yard for decommissioned aircraft in the Californian desert, she began to use the parts that she had found to fashion sculptures which combine explosive dynamism with a perilous sense of balance and which have a strong effect on the beholder simply by their physical presence. But Nancy Rubin's intention is not so much to highlight critical questions of consumerism, but to focus on sculptural and aesthetic issues which she places in the tradition of American sculpture of the 1960s and 1970s. "The chaotic impression created by the work ***Table and Airplane Parts*** (1990) shows an almost baroque artistic style, referring less to a plane crash than to the entropic diversity of life. So the disorder represents a state of change in a system that is in a process of growth although it does not enable any order to exist." (Claire Legrand)



***Table and Airplane Parts*, 1990**

Wood, aluminium, cables

300 x 500 x 700 cm

Collection Frac Bourgogne, Dijon

© Photo: André Morin

ROMAN SIGNER

Born in 1938 in Appenzell; lives and works in St. Gallen.

***Action in Sedrun*, 2010**

Colour photograph

122 x 122 cm

© Photo: Michael Bodenman

Courtesy art concept Gallery, Paris

***Bed*, 1996**

Video projection, colour, sound

4 min 8 s

Pilot: Armin Caspari

Video: Aleksandra Signer

Courtesy the artist

***Piaggio on Ski Jump*, 2003**

4 C-Prints

40 x 60 cm

Private collection, France

***Rocket*, 1988**

Super-8 film transferred to video, colour, silent

54 s

Camera: Roman Signer

Courtesy the artist

***Smoke Ring*, 1984**

Super-8 film transferred to video, colour, silent

2 min 20 s

Camera: Peter Liechti

Courtesy the artist

***Smoke Ring*, 1984**

Super-8 film transferred to video, colour, silent

1 min 24 s

Camera: Peter Liechti

Courtesy the artist

***Smoke Ring*, 1983**

Super-8 film transferred to video, colour, silent

1 min 5 s

Camera: Roman Signer

Courtesy the artist

***Stromboli*, 1992**

Super-8 film transferred to video, colour, silent

11 min 45 s

Film: Stefan Rohner

Courtesy the artist

***Flight across the Rhine*, 2001**

Super-8 film transferred to video, colour, silent

1 min 25 s

Camera: Tomasz Rogowiec

Film: Roman Signer

Montage: Aleksandra Signer

© Photo: Michael Bodenmann and B. Signer

Courtesy the artist

***Experiment in the Garage*, 2004**

Video, colour, sound

1 min 40 s

Video: Aleksandra Signer

Courtesy the artist

The Swiss artist Roman Signer regards himself as a sculptor. His “time sculptures” are only preserved in the form of photography and film. Roman Signer works with elemental forces such as water, wind, fire and sand, which are put together in precise experimental arrangements, sometimes in an absurdly humorous manner, to produce results for which the artist sees himself merely as the “trigger”. Supported by technical devices which appear again and again, such as model helicopters or Piaggio three-wheelers, Roman Signer explores the physical laws of gravitation, expansion, acceleration etc. and works on the transformation of space and time. As a true “shotfirer of art” he also uses the poetic power of gunpowder, like in his ***Action in Sedrun*** (2010) where he fired 100 protective helmets into the air in honour of the workers at the breakthrough of the Gotthard base tunnel, in the Swiss Alps.



Action in Sedrun, 2010
Colour photograph
122 x 122 cm
© Photo: Michael Bodenman
Courtesy art concept Gallery, Paris

JAN ŠVANKMAJER

Born in 1934 in Prague where he lives and works.

Leonardo's Diary, 1972

Film, colour, sound, 11 min
Courtesy Kratky Film, Prague

Cycle Masturbation Machines, 1972-73

Collage
66 x 51 cm
Courtesy the artist
With the support of Athanor Ltd, Film production
company Jaromir Kallista & Jan Švankmajer

Cycle Masturbation Machines :

**The Mobile Ipsation Machine « DANA » (Ipsator
- ER-M)**, 1972-73

**The Mobile Ipsation Machine « Roman » (Ipsator
- ER-M)**, 1972-73

Collages, 66 x 44 cm
Courtesy the artist
With the support of Athanor Ltd, Film production
company Jaromir Kallista & Jan Švankmajer

Jan Švankmajer is a self-confessed militant Czech surrealist who has greatly influenced many filmmakers and artists. His work in the theatre *Laterna Magica* in Prague immersed him in a world of surrealist images and familiarised him with film as a medium. His short film **Leonardo's Diary** (1972) combines an animated permanent metamorphosis of famous sketches by the Renaissance artist Leonardo da Vinci with real film scenes, which led to Jan Švankmajer being banned from making films for seven years by the Communist censors. The bitterly ironic series **The Mobile Ipsation Machine** (1972-1973), in which Jan Švankmajer highlights the absurdity of the regimentation of private life as propagated by Communist ideology by portraying a mechanistic and scientific automation of all areas of life, seems to be a cross between the collages of Max Ernst and the ideas of the Marquis de Sade.



*Cycle Masturbation Machines - The
Mobile Ipsation Machine « Roman »
(Ipsator - ER-F), 1972-73*

Collage, 66 x 51 cm
Courtesy the artist
With the support of Athanor Ltd,
Film production company Jaromir
Kallista & Jan Švankmaje

STATEMENT BY KURT SALMON, PARTNER OF THE EXHIBITION

Kurt Salmon, formed by the merger between Ineum Consulting and Kurt Salmon Associates in January 2011, has been able to stand out by its local and now global expertise as a unique company of its kind. The new Kurt Salmon entity's areas of expertise are strategy advisory, accompanying measures for mergers or corporate sales, operational performance optimisation and management of large-scale business transformation programmes.

We have built our history by painting an unrivalled picture marked with excellence, boldness and cultural diversity. Our corporate culture is shaped around our people and our profound modern heritage, ensuring our dynamism. Thus, our commitment towards Mudam Luxembourg – Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean – has presented itself like an obvious choice.

For our debut with regard to cultural patronage, we wish to commit to an exhibition going hand in hand with our daily business and conveying shared values. Mondes inventés, Mondes habités ("Invented Worlds, Inhabited Worlds") is a skilful combination of singularity and complexity. It is a reflection based on the space we inhabit and its imperfections on which in particular engineers, thinkers and architects have worked. We expect the exhibition to be surprising and innovative in the tradition of the previous exhibitions put forward by Mudam.

The enthusiasm generated by the exhibition will reflect a successful collaboration. We sincerely hope that this initiative, starting in 2011, will be strengthened during the coming years.

We are proud to engage with Mudam Luxembourg and are looking forward to share a year full of creativity and know-how in arts.as born in 1934 in Prague where he lives and works.

Eric Crabie
Partenaire

Kurt Salmon 