

Portrait. François Piron

François Aubart

Translator: Simon Pleasance



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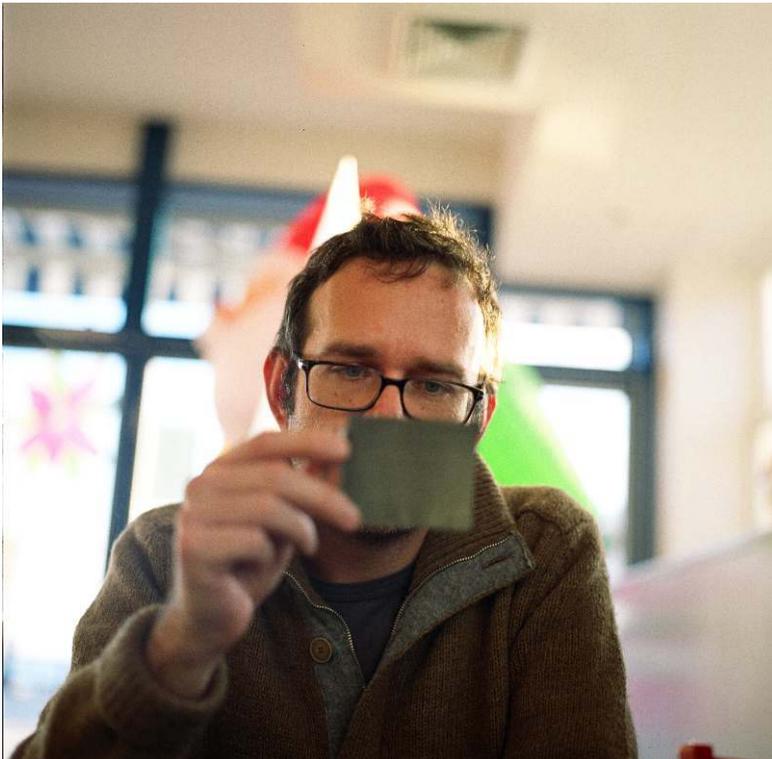
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François Piron © Karolina Krasouli, d.r.



- 1 In tandem with his own activities as an art critic and exhibition curator, François Piron has taken part in several collective adventures. Let us thus mention the magazine *Trouble*, published between 2002 and 2006, which he was one of the founders of, and which, at that time, was one of the forums featuring a generation of artists and critics. Between 2001 and 2006, he co-directed Les Laboratoires d'Aubervilliers, which he helped to set up as a

place where artists are left free to invent the way their works are presented. More recently, he co-founded castillo/corrales, an association of curators, artists and graphic designers gravitating around an exhibition venue, a publishing house and a bookshop. Since 2007, this place has been relying on an alternative economy by financing itself without any public help. It is developing a form of communication well-removed from the standardization of press bulletins, and proposes a demanding and international programme.

- 2 What is involved for him with this place is re-thinking the role and operation of spaces for art, as well as questioning possible forms for exhibitions. We find this kind of thinking in his contribution to the catalogue for the 10th Lyon Biennale¹, previously shed light on by the exhibition *Société anonyme*² which he organized in 2007 with Thomas Boutoux and Nataša Petrešin at Le Plateau. Several artists' collectives were invited to intervene on the spot and highlight the way they work from an at once economic and organizational viewpoint. The art centre had been turned into a centre of activities.
- 3 If each one of these experiences is seen as a quest for alternatives to the by now standardized operations of institutions, the exhibition projects devised by François Piron grapple more precisely with the method of rationalization and thematization which often gnaw away at art history.
- 4 From *Invisible Script* in 2005 at W139 in Amsterdam, which makes reference to Adolfo Boiy Casares's novel *L'Invention de Morel*, by way of *Intouchable (L'idéal Transparence)* organized with Guillaume Désanges in 2006 at the Villa Arson in Nice, whose point of departure was Paul Scheerbart's text *L'Architecture de verre*, to his recent projects about Raymond Roussel³, we find one and the same principle, that of taking as the point of departure a literary text or author. This distance in relation to the thematic principle puts his exhibition in a reverse posture to that of regroupment. It is a matter of observing the distillation, diffusion and alteration of influences, ideas, and approaches.
- 5 The idea does not involve material for study. It is based much more on the way in which these authors have been read and interpreted throughout the 20th century. François Piron's successive projects about Raymond Roussel can be partly explained by the recurrence with which this author is called upon by artists with different backgrounds. Raymond Roussel is summoned more as a tool for thinking about art, and not as a thread. In tandem, with his numerous re-appearances, the image of an unambiguous modernity is crumbling. In fact, if he can be regarded as one of its harbingers, the multitude of meanings behind the interpretations that Raymond Roussel gives rise to produces the portrait of a modernity littered with dissension. Broken up, it cannot be read as an entirety. On the other hand, this fragmentation offers a more tortuous circulation. It is made by digression. Applied to the field of art history and art's display, this way of going about things does not regard an object of study as a block, but rather weaves an arrangement of connections to be made in leaps and bounds rather than by following straight lines. There is thus formed an unusual world, a constellation, where interpretation is preferred to the universal. By veering away from the affirmative methodology of the specialist, François Piron⁴ draws close to artists whom he has worked with and written about, people like Koenraad Dedobbeleer, Ryan Gander, Dora Garcia, Joe Scanlan, Francisco Tropa and Raphaël Zarka.

NOTES

1. Piron, François. "XS-XL : quelques relations entre biennales et espaces indépendants", in *Le Spectacle du quotidien / The Spectacle and the Everyday* (16 September 2009-3 January 2010), Lyon : Xe Biennale de Lyon ; Dijon : Les Presses du réel, 2009, p. 111-123
2. *Société Anonyme* (14 March-13 May 2007), Paris : Le Plateau. Edited by Thomas Boutoux, Nataša Petrešin, and François Piron. With : 16Beaver / *Un groupe comme les autres* (New York), b_books (Berlin), Erick Beltrán (Mexico), Chto delat? / *What is to be done?* (Saint Petersburg / Moscow), *Curating the Library / Moritz Küng* (Antwerp), Nico Dockx & friends (Antwerp), Tere Recarens (Barcelona / Berlin), tranzit.cz / *Vítek Havránek* (Prague), tv-tv (Copenhagen), WHW / *What, How & for Whom* (Zagreb)
3. Let us mention for example: *Nouvelles impressions de Raymond Roussel* (27 February-20 May 2013), Paris : Palais de Tokyo. Avec : Mathieu K. Abonnenc, Jean-Michel Alberola, Jean-Christophe Averty, Zbynek Baladrán, Thomas Bayrle, Jacques Carelman, Guy de Cointet, Collège de Pataphysique, Joseph Cornell, Salvador Dalí, Gabriele Di Matteo, Thea Djordjadze, Marcel Duchamp, Giuseppe Gabellone, Rodney Graham, João Maria Gusmão & Pedro Paiva, Mike Kelley, Revue Locus Solus, Pierre Loti, Sabine Macher, Man Ray, Mark Manders, André Maranhã, Pedro Morais, Jorge Queiroz et Francisco Tropa, Jean-Michel Othoniel, Victorien Sardou, Joe Scanlan, Jean Tinguely, Jules Verne.
See also the book: *Locus Solus - Impressions de Raymond Roussel*, Dijon : Les Presses du réel, 2013, (Littérature). Edited by François Piron. The book follows the exhibitions *Locus Solus : Impresiones de Raymond Roussel* (25 October 2011-27 February 2012 and 24 March-1 July 2012), Madrid : Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia ; Porto : Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Serralves (curators: Manuel J. Borja-Villel, João Fernandes and François Piron).
4. His current work can be viewed until 31 March 2014 at the City Gallery in Prague with *Jiri Kovanda Vs Rest of the World* ; until 27 April 2014 in Oslo at the Kunstnernes Hus with *In These Great Times* ; and until 11 May 2014 at the Temporäre Galerie in Cologne with *Unitasking (Tentatively)*.