

Julien Prévieux

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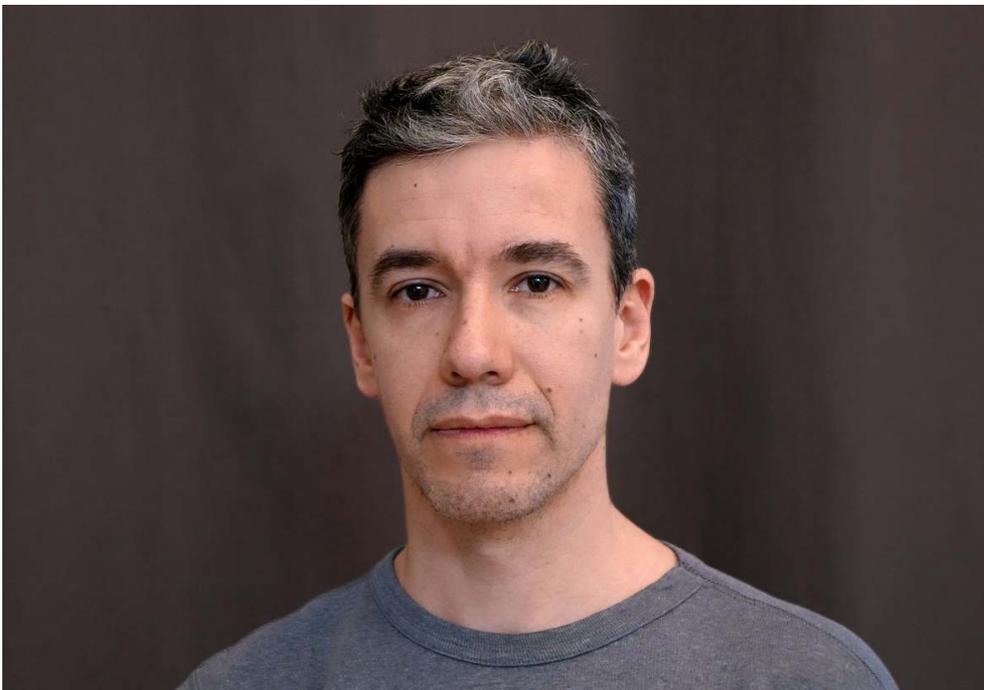
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- 1 As Elie During suggests in *Gestion des stocks*,¹ a monograph devoted to the artist Julien Prévieux in 2009, this latter is a pastmaster in the art of “playing against type” [*contre-emploi*]. He makes use of forms, tools, data and narratives offered him by an inexhaustible reality, and then works his way into their ambivalence and the logical systems of their subjection: starting with his closest instrument, his own body, which he quite literally measures, in his first videos (*Crash Test* and *Roulades*, 1998), by the harshness of his immediate surroundings using gestures that have survived boyhood, from which he derives a carefree and rough-and-ready boldness. Subsequently, this attitude of

resistance to “the natural” broaches more abstract worlds, like economics, security policies, and the digitization of the world. Be it arbitrary decipherment of economic writings (*A la recherche du miracle économique*, 2006), turning covers of scientific books into modernist pictures (*FAQ*, 2007), appropriation of the design of a surveillance super-computer for a rest area (*Have a Rest*, 2007), or “hand” knitting of sweaters by professional women based on computer simulations of aberrant social situations (*D’octobre à février*, 2010), Julien Prévieux plays subtly with the alienating mechanisms which produce meanings and forms, emptying them out, removing their structure, over-enacting them, and reincarnating them in manual practices. What results is a merrily subversive tone, against the backdrop of an uncompromising analysis of mechanisms which quantify and control our existences.

- 2 In his latest works, he explores the instruments which capture and shape the bodily gesture at the service of the economy and control techniques, which become enmeshed in the infinitesimal movements of the body and the psyche. Like a faraway echo of the earliest influences on him, the performances of Vito Acconci, Barry Le Va and Chris Burden, he draws closer to the choreographic field to get these arrangements to dance and, in a hypnotizing serial way, inform body languages patented for digital technologies (*What Shall We Do Next?*, 2011), or reinstate a living corporality with virtuoso performers (*Patterns of Life*, 2015).
- 3 If you ask Julien Prévieux about what has influenced him, he will tend to mention sociology, economics and philosophy rather than art, and, primarily, authors with whom he collaborates, such as Grégoire Chamayou (*Théorie du drone*, 2013) and Emmanuel Didier (*Statactivismes*, 2014)², along with others like Frédéric Lordon, Luc Boltanski, and Saskia Sassen. Yet certain art historians also inspire his work: let us mention Hans Belting, proposing an anthropology of images beyond the historical approach, and Peter Osborne, redefining the very notion of contemporary art. Lastly, let us be mindful of the fact that, despite its inclusion in an economic circuit (galleries, publishers), Julien Prévieux’s work remains accessible at no charge on his website³: it is thus possible to download his monograph and view the complete versions of his videos. This liberal stance goes hand in hand with the plentiful use the artist makes of the resources available on the Internet, and attests to the coherence of his approach.

NOTES

1. During, Elie. “Contre-emplois”, *Julien Prévieux : gestion des stocks/ back up*, Lyon : Adera, 2009, p. 7-16
2. See the review published in this issue of *Critique d’art*.
3. www.previeux.net