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EXHIBITION

BOJAN ŠARČEVIĆ
L'ELLIPSE D'ELLIPSE

21 SEPTEMBER - 18 NOVEMBER 2012

INSTITUT
D'ART CONTEMPORAIN
Villeurbanne/Rhône-Alpes

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The Institut d'art contemporain, Villeurbanne/Rhône-Alpes presents *L'ellipse d'ellipse*, probably the largest solo exhibition to date artist Bojan Šarčević (b. 1974). The exhibition assembles more than thirty works from every medium the artist has worked in—sculpture, film, photography, collage and architectural intervention—offering an overview of his entire practice.

The exhibition title, *L'ellipse d'ellipse*, with its evocations of a geometric curvilinear figure, is at once a play on words and a way of pointing to the survey exhibition's return to fundamental ideas that were there, he tells us, all along.

From his early architectural interventions like *World Corner* (1999), the corner of a decrepit building extracted and inserted into a corner of the white cube exhibition space, to his architectonic pavilions for 16mm films, *Only After Dark* (2007) and *The Breath-Taker is The Breath-Giver* (2009),

and from his collages made from found pages of architectural magazines, *1954* (2004), to his most recent monumental onyx sculptures, *She and He* (2010 and 2011), Šarčević's work reveals itself to be emphatically concerned with sculpture and space - their perception, as well as their social, political and poetic implications.

Their alternating intense materiality or fragile ephemerality is presented alongside a number of his most recent films and photographic works, which underscore the artist's questioning of representation—the ability for a still or moving image to capture the essence of a thing—as much as his questioning of sculpture itself.

L'ellipse d'ellipse brings together different aspects of Šarčević's diverse body of work, while also pointing to the recurrent questions at its heart: his sensual, elegant forms often evoke the histories of architectural modernism and the early twentieth century aesthetic experiments, while using minimal gestures to substantive critical and conceptual effect. The translation of ideas and forms across cultures and time and the political resonance of certain materials and structures drive his interrogations.

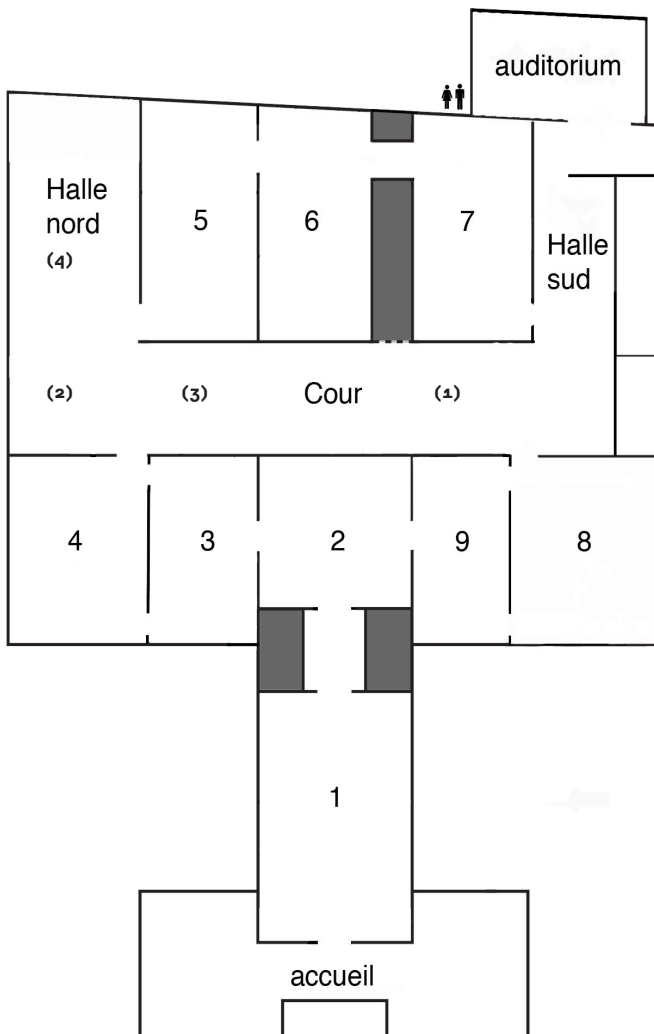
So, too, do the geometries of his forms hold questions of how the personal and social meet in the artwork, how precision and beauty coincide with the political and cultural, and, finally, whether an artist can determine the consequences of his or her actions at all.

Bojan Šarčević was born in Belgrade in 1974; he lives and works in Berlin and Paris.

Previous solo exhibitions include: A Curious Contortion in the Method of Progress, Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, Vaduz (2012), Only After Dark, Kunstverein Hamburg (2008) and Credac, Ivry-sur-Seine (2007); Already Vanishing, MAMbo, Bologna (2007).

He has participated in a number of international group exhibitions, including the Venice Biennale in 2003.

Exhibition Rooms



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|---|---|
| <p>1 <i>She, He & Presence at Night</i></p> <p>2 <i>Favourite Clothes Worn While She or He Worked</i></p> <p>3 <i>Comme des chiens et des vagues (building series) & Sans titre</i></p> <p>4 <i>Untitled 2 & At Present</i></p> <p>COURTYARD & NORTHERN HALL
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Projections (1), (2), (3), (4)</p> | <p>5 <i>1954 C, D, G, H & Spirit of Inclusiveness</i></p> <p>6 <i>Eventuellement & Dream</i></p> <p>7 <i>World Corner</i></p> <p>SOUTHERN HALL
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room 1

She, 2010

He, 2011

She and *He*, two blocks of onyx, welcome visitors as soon as they enter the exhibition. The two monoliths — each characterised by incisions cut asymmetrically into the volumes and by more or less rough (*She*) or smooth (*He*) surfaces, suggesting an idea of dynamic depth of form and functionality.

Bojan Šarčević acquired these stones, originating from two different quarries, during a journey on the Iranian central plateau, on the Silk Road in Yazd, one of the oldest cities in the world (3000 BC), the birthplace of monotheistic religions¹. Since the Palaeolithic, onyx has been extracted there. Its use by artists dates back to the classical period. It was then used to make jewellery (engraved cameos) and ornamental inlays in architecture. The translucent depth, with its regular lines, the waxy finish, the complexity of the fascicles, as well as the refined and colourful splendour of the stones is formed over an extremely long period of over 35 million years, through freshwater limestone deposits.

The incisions punctuating *She* and *He* — the same geometric cubes in negative — refer to proportions closely linked to the human body. They thus decisively determine the silhouettes. By playing on relationships of scale and proportion, Bojan Šarčević wishes to cause visitors to wander, to incite them to move around the two objects to observe their “flesh”, their cosmic (one side of *He* resembles a celestial landscape), terrestrial (one side of *She* seems to have been extracted from a raw surface) and even pictorial character.

These two sculptures that are both heavy and fragile (onyx can break like glass) also intrigue visitors owing to the ambivalence that they maintain between object and image.

Presence at Night, 2010

A branch of a tree seems to emerge from one of the walls of the room, thus creating an incongruous intrusion of nature within the exhibition space. Barely visible, thin strands of blonde hair are closely imbricated to the branch. This organic presence confers a fantasy or mythical character to the work².

All of the materials used by the artist for the works in this first room are organic. Moreover, the artist specifies: “the molecular structure of hair is very similar to that of onyx.” Therefore these objects evoke structures and processes of growth, such as crystallisation, cellular proliferation or deposits, which refer to the origins of the creation of the world.

1. Yazd was the site of Zoroastrianism, a monotheistic religion founded by Zarathoustra (1st millennium BC).

2. The twisted hair may evoke the tragic fate of the nymph Daphne, pursued by Apollo and transformed into a laurel tree by her father Pe-neus, in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* (43 BC – 18 AD).

room 2

Favourite Clothes Worn While She or He Worked, 2000

Favourite Clothes Worn While She or He Worked assembles twenty-one items of clothing on tables. While these outfits could be better associated with leisure activities, they are used in the manner of “worker’s overalls”, dirtied by their owners as they were undertaking various types of manual tasks.

Devised between 1999 and 2000, this work by Bojan Šarčević was produced through the participation of workers and craftspeople (mechanics, bakers, gardeners, cleaners etc). The artist asked each of them to wear the clothing of their choice during their working hours. Methodically folded and aligned by the artist, the clothes laid out in this way variously recall commercial displays, the inventory of a historical and anthropological museum, or evidence assembled in a forensics laboratory.

In this work, the artist relates the question of traces or markers with that of self-image: what evidence do we wish to leave of a professional activity, of manual labour? What kind of clothing do we most identify with?

With this approach, personal, cultural and social (hi)stories are confronted, in order to question the ideologies of an era (fashion), the notion of representation, and the amount of time taken up by working gestures in the everyday lives of individuals. This poetic ensemble leads us to reflect on the relationships that exist between social conventions and individual choices.

room 3

Comme des chiens et des vagues (building series), 2010 **[Like Dogs and Waves (building series)]**

Comme des chiens et des vagues (building series) presents twenty-nine photographs, as well as a hybrid sculpture that is part design object, part constructivist artwork. In a geometric shape with random variations, the work consists of several hoops in soldered steel. Presented on the floor of the exhibition space, it is shown in the photographs accompanied or manipulated by women in various locations (apartments, gardens, etc).

The models, dressed by designer Michèle Chatenet, activate the sculpture as a multi-functional object or accessory through their presence and actions, thus opposing the history of minimalist sculpture. With this work, Bojan Šarčević appropriates the aesthetic codes of fashion in order to contextualise the object and “use photography as a pretext for making sculpture.”

He proposes a different and immediate experience of this structure, thus affirming the performative dimension of aesthetic activity and the creative process. He provokes a relationship between body and matter or body and sculpture, and encourages the visitor (as in *Favourite Clothes Worn While She or He Worked presented* in Room 2) to perceive the object in ways that extend beyond its representation.

Bojan Šarčević thus reintroduces a dialogue between the autonomy of the aesthetic object and its use value, and seems to formalise the poem that

Ghérasim Luca³ amputated⁴ in response to the famous question from the German poet and philosopher, Friedrich Hölderlin (1770-1843): “What use are poets in times of penury?”⁵

Sans titre, 2007 **[Untitled]**

Three sculptures, in geometric shapes in brass, connected by wires, are flattened against the walls. Like fragments, they seem to stem from the framework of the building, like experimental constructions in progress, or, just the opposite, the structural remains of an object whose upper layer has been removed.

They are discreet ornaments, characterised by a fragile appearance and the balance struck between their constituent materials and the tension between them, as in *Presence at Night* (Room 1).

With their curved and straight lines, which seem to echo the sculpture on the floor in *Comme des chiens et des vagues*, these delicate sculptural “drawings” evoke the pared-down geometric language of the early 20th century modernists that Bojan Šarčević often questions in his work.

They may also recall, to a certain extent, the experimentation of Arte Povera artists, through their tenuous character and the emphasis on a process of construction or deconstruction.

room 4

Untitled 2, 2008

In a shop window, seven white balls of varying diameters occupy a slightly elevated creased aluminium sheet. Small constructions accompany the ensemble, made from coloured Plexiglas or wooden sticks held together with wires. They are based on the asymmetrical combination and subtle equilibrium of light, slender geometric elements.

The work was developed in a workshop, according to a principle of assembly of the materials, through an incremental working process combining research and construction in turn. It evokes a lunar landscape, a utopian building project within a floating, unstable, almost science-fictional environment.

These small spatial constructions thus bring some of the great modernist architectural research into focus, which come to inhabit a fictional space in Bojan Šarčević’s work. Bearers of utopias, they seem to be presented “as a reminder”, as they await their potential deployment in an environment that is more suitable and extensive.

This indeterminate landscape thus remains in the state of a material project, as an open-ended vision of a territory.

3. Ghérasim Luca (1913-1994): a poet of Romanian origins whose work was written and published in the French language. He was close to the Surrealists and was considered in 1973 by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari as “the greatest French language poet alive” (*L’Abécédaire* (C. Parnet/P.-A. Boutang)).

4. G. Luca, *La question*, published in the collection *Paralipomènes* in 1976 (Le Soleil Noir).

5. Collective, *WOZU - A QUOI BON - WHY*.

Des poètes en un temps de manque - Dichter in dürftiger Zeit - Poets in a hollow age. Près de 150 réponses écrites et plastiques à l’interrogation de Hölderlin, Le Soleil Noir, 1978.

At Present, 2011

For the artist, this work is another way of approaching the question of territory.

At Present is made up of heterogeneous elements: half of an emptied-out watermelon, containing a piece of fresh meat and presented on a slab; a photograph of a car; a set of eighteen invitation cards; and a text in English signed by Bojan Šarčević.

The word “Palestine”, inscribed like a manifesto on the rear window of a car without a licence plate inspired the work *At Present*. Bojan Šarčević saw it in a street in Berlin and wondered, “what a simple word written on the rear window of a car spontaneously provokes in us.” The framed photograph reflects this unexpected vision.

Another chance association resides in the emptied half melon, which has become a receptacle for a piece of meat: this seemingly incongruous relationship actually corresponds to a custom observed in Iran for feeding cats. Associating fruit and flesh, it resembles an organ endowed with life and energy.

Partially produced in Palestine, the work also presents eighteen invitation cards for the artist’s *At Present* exhibition held in Berlin, which were posted on 20 August 2011 from Ramallah, and since they never reached their addressees, they were returned to the artist’s gallery. These invitations sent from Palestine are a concrete and material reminder of the existence of a real place. It is this ‘reality shock’ that interests the artist. The reality of the trajectory of the invitation card and the abstraction of a word in a photograph testify to the complex and contradictory relationship of our capacity or incapacity to imagine the reality of a conflict.

The questions posed by Bojan Šarčević and listed on a sheet of paper seem to cement the disparate elements of *At Present* and incite the visitor to question the social and political evolution of the contemporary world.

The overall work constitutes an enigmatic visual poem to the present.

courtyard & northern hall

Only After Dark, 2007

The spaces of the courtyard and the northern hall are punctuated by the presence of four “pavilions” belonging to the same series.

Only After Dark is the generic title of these hybrid works: the films of a sculptor concerned with architecture.

Using plywood painted white, similar to modernist architectural forms with their assemblage of horizontal and vertical planes, these penetrable sculptures were designed to hold projectors that screen enigmatic images onto a wall. These 16 mm films, lasting between 2’17” and 2’47”, present sculptural, angular or curved geometric compositions, in paper, Plexiglas, wood, concrete or copper, accompanied by mono-instrumental acoustic music.

However, its size and the shape of its pavilion distinguish each element in the series, and each contains a specific musical composition and projects different images.

[Projection (1)]

Only After Dark (Film 2), 2007

Like the first film of the series (which is not presented here), *Only After Dark (Film 2)* shows several elements in transparent Plexiglas that have been folded and cut, in order to obtain triangular planes. Shot from different points of view, against a dark, well-focused monochrome background, these objects are of indeterminate scale.

Music by Carlo Peters⁶ accompanies the materials’ play of transparency and reflection, with a cymbal set to a snare drum in an experimental jazz style.

6. Carlo Peters was born in 1974 and lives in Cologne. He is a composer and sound designer.

[Projection (2)]

Only After Dark (Film 3), 2007

Once again using transparent Plexiglas for his constructions, Bojan Šarčević adds fine copper leaves with luminous reflections to these, and a tree branch containing several buds. Ulaş Özdemir⁷ contributes a piece played on a fretless guitar, in the Maqam⁸ musical mode .

[Projection (3)]

Only After Dark (Film 5), 2007

Here, sheets of cardboard folded into complex geometric shapes create shadow plays. Small concrete blocks, standing upright or lying horizontally, along with a surprising piece of red meat, complete the composition. For the final installation of the series, Bojan Šarčević briefly breathes life into these still lifes: the animal fragment is animated at one point during the film, as though it were breathing. A feeling of “uncanniness” takes hold of the visitor, whose experience is punctuated by the bowed strings of the kamancheh, an instrument played from the Balkans to the Middle East and Central Asia.

[Projection (4)]

Only After Dark (Film 4), 2007

Only After Dark (Film 4) is inhabited by a landscape that is slightly more complex than the previous pavilions. Structures in brass stems accompany thin sheets of dark plywood with irregular edges. Fragments of floor coverings and black tissue paper are also used. The whole work is wreathed in an oriental atmosphere, to the strains of the Iranian santur, a hammered string instrument.

Using the remains of experimentations (recalling the work *Mies's Leftovers* from 2002, in which Bojan Šarčević placed pieces of tracing paper found on the floor of an architectural agency in display cases), projections and representation, the series *Only After Dark* leads the visitor from one pavilion to the next, without going so far as to provide a narrative purpose. While the artist does specify that he “sees these works as actors”, he also highlights the fact that “the films are not stories about these objects”.

Relying on various cinematographic devices — sophisticated lighting, wide shots followed by close-ups, crossfades and so on — the films offer ghostly, fleeting visions to visitors, which are linked in a series and provide a rhythm for their visit.

7. Ulaş Özdemir was born in 1976. He is an instrumentalist, ethno-musicologist and record producer. His work is recognised within the Turkish music scene.

8. Maqam refers to both an oriental melodic system and its specific applications within Arabic/Turkish music.

1954 C, D, G, H, 2004

After leaving the pavilions of *Only After Dark*, visitors are invited to delve into images of architecture.

Bojan Šarčević created a series entitled *1954*, featuring seventy-six collages (divided into ten sets from A to J) thirty-one of which are presented here on the wall. They were produced after the artist purchased issues of the West German architectural magazine *Baumeister* from a bookstore in Berlin, all of which were published in 1954.

Fragments have been cut out of the black and white photographs with a pocketknife, based on variable geometric shapes (diamonds, circles, triangles, stars, squares etc).

The samples thus obtained are then stuck back onto the images that they came from, generating a kaleidoscopic effect of objects in space.

A notion of the post-war era underpins the overall work and it is this that interests Bojan Šarčević: the reconstructive “flight forwards” inherent to this period, in its denial of ruins and traumatism. Struck by the contrast between the old yellowing paper and the immaculate photographs of interiors, by the already outmoded character of the images and the new objects that they represent, here, the artist creates illusionists’ images in order to materialise this dichotomy of a future that is already in the past: “a former future”.

Bojan Šarčević calls these motifs “blockages” (in the sense of the obstruction of a pipe or cavity), in relation to the thoughts of German author W.G. Sebald (1944-2001)⁹, who dealt with the apathy of Germanic writers in the post-war period, their incapacity to write about the violent and traumatic impact of the bombings of German cities by the allied forces.

9. Cf. The book *Luftkrieg und Literatur* (1999), a collection of three texts (derived from a conference and an essay) published in English under the title: *On the Natural History of Destruction*.

Spirit of Inclusiveness, 2002

Adaptable to its location and installed in the corner of a room, the work *Spirit of Inclusiveness* may echo *World Corner* (Room 7). But while the latter performs the substitution of materials followed by their incrustation, Bojan Šarčević here practices a different act of modification of the original architecture, by way of symbolic sampling, repetition and reappropriation. *Spirit of Inclusiveness* is characterised by its monumental dimensions and its composition, full of ledges and recesses. It is flattened against the wall and emerges as a kind of “foreign body” comprising various materials.

Spirit of Inclusiveness is a replica to scale of a fragment of the foundations of an external wall of the Cathedral of Cologne (1248-1863), an edifice characterised by its Gothic architectural style¹⁰.

Furthermore, it draws together different metals within a geometricised volume — steel, copper, brass and zinc — in the manner of minimalist artists, who use industrial materials to produce objects in pared-down forms.

Bojan Šarčević thus allies various cultural referents, derived from both the history of Christian architecture and minimalist sculpture.

The variety of metals used by the artist produces a simplified inlay effect and ‘rhythmic’ surfaces. The sculpture consists of an ornamental cladding that interrelates two contrasting artistic and cultural conceptions, in a “spirit of inclusiveness” from one to the other.

10. Gothic architecture is characterised by a construction concept that is based on monumentality, light, colour, and even (for flamboyant gothic) an exuberant ornamentation that aims to impress the faithful.

room 6

Éventuellement, 2010 [Possibly]

The work entitled *Éventuellement* consists of six steel structures and copper plates and initially evokes a set of shelves that rhythmically punctuate the space.

Similar to a public space, like a library with aisles as opposed to a domestic interior, in which shelves tend to line the walls, this spatial arrangement is likened by the artist to a “musical composition”, a kind of score within the space, featuring the repetition of almost stylised structured forms.

Yet this supposed functionality of the “shelf” object cancels itself out once visitors circulate among the structures, which seem to capture the slightest movement of air, the merest vibration, to the point of verging on collapse.

The structures play on their kinship with furniture, or architectural constructions, and are characterised by their fragile verticality and the tension maintained between their constituent materials, with the copper plates balancing on the black steel frames.

The shimmering colour of the copper surfaces and the openness of the structures, which can be traversed by the eye from any angle, reinforce the mirrored, reflective and symmetrical effects.

Part construction and part deconstruction, these sculptures were devised as “ornamental structures”: “For me, ornamentation is a question that is inherently posed, exactly like that of structure. It is a surface. In painting, there is a relationship to the surface, particularly in terms of blocks of colour. There may be a pictorial way to approach structures in two dimensions, through ornamentation. That’s what interests me. I am trying to differentiate less and less between ornament and structure.”

Dream, 2002

The lines of *Dream* draw the outlines of a man’s posterior that is grappling with a serpentine form that seems to be attempting to explore it or escape from it. The lines encircling the two protagonists show the artist’s sketches to achieve the final drawing, which itself appears to be in progress or incomplete.

Like *Leftovers* (Southern hall), *Dream* belongs to the various objects assembled by Bojan Šarčević for an exhibition at the Pinksummer gallery (Genoa) in 2002. It presented the “remains” of his research and projects (leftover materials, photographs, texts, sketches) conserved at his studio.

A humorous sketch, bearing witness to a dream or simple wanderings of the mind, the curves of *Dream* echo the definition that the artist has given of the notion of “traces”: “I think that there are two types of traces: firstly, there is the trace that is a gesture [...]. It’s a trace that can be brandished as though it were a sign, to declare our presence in this world. Through it, we celebrate our surroundings. Then there’s the trace that we are subjected to, that marks us and determines us in spite of ourselves [...].“

room 7

World Corner, 1999/2012

The oldest work by the artist among those presented in this exhibition, *World Corner* is one of the “borrowed” architectural sculptures by Bojan Šarčević, in which the artist focuses on a corner of the wall, installing works there that demonstrate their adaptability to the reception area, while affirming another, displaced, autonomous space within that space. *World Corner* is thus followed by *Spirit of Versatility* (2002), *Spirit of Inclusiveness* (2002) [Room 5], *Where the Hand doesn't Enter*, *Heat Infuses* (2003); the latter belongs to the Institute's collection.

World Corner is a simple and radical gesture: the work consists of a sampling of materials in the corner of another space, which are then built into the lower corner of a wall of the exhibition space. Once the “transplantation” process has been completed, only the plaster around the corner and the difference between the materials allows us to determine the limits of the graft.

Proceeding by subtraction and potentially nomadic, the work *World Corner* reflects the question of an architectural memory and by extension, that of its origins. It was inspired by the story of a film by Jean Eustache¹¹.

11. *Une sale histoire* (1977) by Jean Eustache (1938-1981). The first chapter of this cinematographic diptych consists of a documentary recording in which a man hosts three women in a living room to tell them the story of how he became a voyeur.

Inspired by real events, experienced by the lead actor (Jean-Noël Picq), Eustache presents the fantasies aroused by a hole in the bottom of a door to the ladies' toilets in a Parisian café at Motte-Picquet Grenelle. Following this discovery, the actor imagines various scenarios based on this hole, ranging from the possibilities offered by such an opening for a voyeur, through to the whimsical idea of a primary core around which the city has purportedly been built.

Echoing the idea of a chimney, that is, a space that is totally integrated within a house, this “corner of the world” may effectively appear to be both a foundation and an empty or obstructed core. Through a reversal in perspective, it is even possible to consider this “graft” not as an addition, but as the cornerstone around which each element of the architecture of the site has been built. This idea naturally infers the title “World Corner”, and this corner of the wall winds up delocalising the space in which it has been inserted, metaphorically becoming the point of departure of all architecture.

southern hall

Replace the Irreplaceable, 2006

The sculpture *Replace the Irreplaceable*, fashioned in the form of a “J” to the scale of the human body, emerges as a rampart or, just the opposite, an open and enveloping space, depending on the visitor’s point of view. Its precious yet constructed character likens it to other works presented in the exhibition such as *Éventuellement* (Room 6): a sculptural object evoking an architectural structure or an ornamental element, on the border between functional and decorative.

The curves of the work are inspired by Grand Magasin *Petersdorff*, which was designed between 1927 and 1928 in Breslau (or Wrocław in Poland) by the architect Erich Mendelsohn¹² (1887-1953). Bojan Šarčević only conserves here the main lines of the original building, which are characterised by strips of travertine walls, bronze cornice mouldings and high, rounded, corbelled window brackets. The artist made his sculpture with the aid of interior decoration materials: pearwood and brass, very popular in the Art Deco of the immediate post-war period. He proceeds from an inversion, running counter to modernist architecture, which gradually replaced ornamentation by refined forms, instead causing the building (irreplaceable) to disappear and substituting it with ornamentation only. As in the work *Spirit of Inclusiveness* (Room 5), an amplified architectural detail thus becomes an autonomous structure.

12. Erich Mendelsohn was a student of Théodore Fisher (1862-1938) – who combined Neo Classicism and Art Nouveau in his work – before becoming, in 1926, one of the members of the Der Ring group (of which Ludwig Mies Van der Rohe (1886-1969) was also a member).

The architects of Der Ring were interested in dynamic functionalism and devoted themselves to promoting Modernity, some based on an organic functionalism, others in relation to the possibilities offered by the industry.

Leftovers, 2002/2012

Leftovers consists of piled up boards accompanied by wood chips, which constituted the remains of the production of a sculpture, during an exhibition by Bojan Šarčević in 2001 (Kunstverein, Bonn).

These leftover scraps of wood, carefully cleared away by the museum team, interested the artist for the new sculpture that they thus naturally formed.

Leftovers would then be presented in 2002 in an exhibition at the Pinksummer gallery in Genoa, in which Bojan Šarčević chose to show only the traces of his work in the studio.

The leftovers may be drawings, photographs, installations or sculptures (scraps of materials, tracing paper representing plans, etc). He specifies that he wished: “to show instantaneous images of the objects or things that I keep [...] without ever having thought of considering them as art objects. These scraps only exist as results of the process.”

In spite of the attention paid to the assemblage of the elements, the rough aspect of the material contrasts with the crafted and polished appearance of the other objects presented by Bojan Šarčević in the exhibition. The work renders his creative process visible in a more assertive way.

The visitor is encouraged to mentally reconstitute the original sculpture through its remains.

The approach taken in *Leftovers* also materialises the artist’s interest in recycling, displacement and transformation, that is, the question of point of view with respect to an object, which can modify its status and presence.

rooms 8 & 9

The Breath-Taker is the Breath-Giver, 2009

The series *The Breath-Taker is the Breath-Giver* created by Bojan Šarčević in 2009 comprises three pieces and is governed by the same principle as the series *Only After Dark* of 2007 (presented in the northern hall and the courtyard): a short film is screened, offering the images of a sculpture in various forms, from a small construction that the artist calls a “pavilion”. This time, he chooses the transparency of the Plexiglas as the production principle for these penetrable, functional and refined objects, based on an interplay of vertical and horizontal lines. In the artist’s view, these architectural sculptures evoke the transparency of celluloid (1856), the first artificial plastic material that was very often used in the cinematographic industry in particular, to produce film. Furthermore, in each pavilion, a 16 mm projector screens a film in colour that shows sculptural compositions from different angles, with musical accompaniment.

The work evokes matter and light: those of film as well as those of the pavilion that produce identical dematerialisation effects. Thus, both on screen and within the space, the objects appear to become evanescent.

Highly diversified, the objects filmed are nonetheless alike, due to their ephemeral and fragile character, or even a certain preciousness: tissue paper in pastel colours, cardboard and locks of hair, metal balls, sand, wire... The framing of the camera, the lighting and staging confuse the ratios of scale, thus preventing the visitor from determining the actual size of the sculptures.

Šarčević’s structures truly provoke a spatial experience. Rather than being screened in a loop, the films are set off gradually, in succession, thus generating a specific rhythm for the visitor’s

wanderings and gaze. An immersive and hypnotic dimension is added to this suggested course, provoked by the mirror effects and the projection of these strange films, presenting indeterminate objects and shapes, whose unreality is accentuated by the repetitive oriental music. Ulaş Özdemir composed the three pieces of music, each using a string instrument traditionally used in Turkish music (the *cura*, the *kamancheh* and the *baglama*).

As often in the works of Bojan Šarčević, the title of the series is eloquent, while preserving an element of mystery. For him, titles constitute a material in their own right, an additional element that adds to the sound, image and sculpture, in order to “further open up” the work.

The Breath-Taker is the Breath-Giver (Film A), 2009

Far from any kind of geometry, *The Breath-Taker is the Breath-Giver (Film A)* presents crumpled sheets of tissue paper in different colours (white, blue, yellow, orange, pink, green) attached to fragments of cardboard.

The close-ups alternate with slow tracking shots, producing a kind of choreography of light structures. A lock of blonde hair is inserted into these surprising configurations and accentuates their sensuality.

The Breath-Taker is the Breath-Giver (Film B), 2009

Unlike the chromatic variations of Film A, *The Breath-Taker Is The Breath-Giver (Film B)* presents improbable forms in black and white, using mineral and organic material: white plasticine mixed with black felt fibres sculpt hairy concretions, decorated with steel balls.

These irregular forms that resemble oyster shells have a matt surface that is set off by the sheen of the balls, which resemble eyes.

***The Breath-Taker is the Breath-Giver* (Film C), 2009**

The Breath-Taker is the Breath-Giver (Film C) shows a wooden structure in a constructivist style, placed on a little mound of sand. It comprises three quadrangular frames encased one within the other and held by eight wires whose point of origin cannot be discerned. The artist films the wooden frames stuck in the sand in close-up, or the wires that hold them up, or he turns about the sculpture that resembles a model, favouring wider shots that are sometimes architectonic and sometimes include the landscape.

The fact that the origins of the wires are situated in the off-screen space contributes to the ambivalence of this sculptural object, and to the unreal sense of balance of this representation.

“For me, it is a question of different characteristics of materials and forms and their interactions, which are translated by a structure that has meaning. I insist on expressing myself through masses, to detect tonalities. They are based on the expression of the moment, where, in a certain context, the basic mechanism points to the pure materials and the possibility of a coherent language. So, we can no longer say if it is the impression given by the outcome of these organic encounters or if it is the origins of our emotional understanding that creates this reverberation.”

At the margins of experimental cinema and a sculptural experience, the films reveal images that are not bound by any form of narrative, in which the sculptural objects become the protagonists of an autonomous language, a poetics of space.

PRATICAL INFORMATIONS

Bojan Šarčević *L'ellipse d'ellipse*

Exhibition from 21 september to 18 november 2012

OPENING HOURS

Wednesday to Sunday from 1 pm to 7 pm
Free guided visits (in French)
on Saturdays and Sundays at 3 pm and by appointment

ACCESS

Bus C3 (stop : Institut d'art contemporain)
Bus C9 (stop : Ferrandière)
Bus C16 (stop : Alsace)
Métro ligne A (stop : République)
Station vélo'v (bicycles) 1 minute on foot
The Institut d'art contemporain is 10 minutes from Lyon Part-Dieu railway station.

PRICES

• full price : 4€ • reduced price : 2,50€

DOCUMENTATION CENTER

by appointment

BOOKSHOP

specialised in contemporary art
open during exhibition opening hours

The Institut d'art contemporain receives aid from the Ministry of Culture and Communication (DRAC Rhône-Alpes), Rhône-Alpes Regional Council and the city of Villeurbanne.

INSTITUT D'ART CONTEMPORAIN

Villeurbanne/Rhône-Alpes

11 rue docteur Dolard
69100 Villeurbanne
France

tél. +33 (0)4 78 03 47 00
fax +33 (0)4 78 03 47 09
www.i-ac.eu