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## Avatar

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1 to 10. The same way that it seems unconceivable that such book would pretend to contain all aesthetics of the world, the absurdity of this book assures it a greater criticism of the psychiatric universe.

With the event of the *DSM + V*, Folie/Culture presents a model, which deviates and offers a way out of a system. It is a model that would not give an exact measure of things in the sphere of the spirit, thus of the imagination, insanity, creativity and divergence. Since the planet "psy" covers a large territory and intend to pathologize all living creatures, this event wanted to explore multiple risks zones as much as life itself, even if it is outcasted, illegal and mostly polysemic.

Debates, round tables discussions, conferences have taken place during the five days of the program. The main round table discussion was on the idea that industries and institutions find now their salute with illnesses. The more the pathologies are recognized, the more the healing planet gains capital and the power to manipulate people. All debates – from people that "invent illnesses" according to Jörg Blech's expression to the post psychiatry movement described by Philip Thomas; from the radical refusal of the DSM by Paula Caplan to the act of taking charge of the mad by the State in a horizontal model of integration, as proposed by Patric Coupechoux; and further to the groundbreaking manifesto in favour of a generalized self-medicalization, written by David Cohen – have permitted to raise major questions on the role played by mental illness in our societies, and, above all, on the connections that this particular "market" entertains with the Capital, as soon as we look at the drugstore industry.

In the program, we find *Les fauves du réel*, proposed by *Antitube* and *Tarnation* by American Jonathan Caouette. This event recalls, thanks to the autobiographical mode, a troubled life passed between its schizophrenic mother and his own emerging homosexuality. Daniel Cross will come and present *Homelessnation.org*, a Web project for and by homeless people, bringing the virtual community dispersed in the city to a real site, constructed on the Web as a communal self-service where each people can find traces of their own existence. The *Putain de bal masqué pervers* (a performance evening) with will present (as if they were so many questions) a kind of supplement to the reality. In this event, eight performances – by Nathalie Derome, the Fermières Obsédées, Suzanne Joly, Nahed

Mansour, Christian Messier, Julie Andrée T, Hélène Matte and Roi Vaara. During this event, Claudine Cotton, Christian Barré, Cindy Dumais and Noizefer CWU – will take the public space with few manoeuvres and other street actions. Invited by Avatar's commissionership, Diane Landry with the *Bouclier Magique* and Nicholas Reeves along with *Roméo*, present two installations at the Musée de la civilisation. The lively and resonant beds by Landry, with a lot of sensitivity, give us access into the imprecise world of dreams and indecisive zones... just before one entirely wakes up. In the room next door, Reeves floating cubes teach us how to speak and entertain the audience with a conversation more and more elaborated. Because it is through multiple interferences with humans that machines learn how to speak and can appropriate the human way of thinking.

At the Périscope Theater, the *Labos de la jeune création théâtrale* will present their "théâtre à relais" with a striking creation using the pathology of the living and the DSM, as a point of departure. With a text by Daniel Danis, the group will be able to stage a classical tragedy full of modernity.

The *Dévidoir de syndrome magnifiques* is, in its most concrete, a long paper roll, which includes graffitis of all forgotten illnesses. Every day, debates over lunch at the Café rencontre center-ville<sup>1</sup>. These discussions, monitored by Guy Sioui Durand, would bring together Ariane Emond, Jean-Étienne Poirier, Nicholas Reeves and Luc Vignault. All of them would recall, day after day, the events of the *DSM + V* according to various angles of criticism inspired by a wide range of interventions.

We have to mention here the strong association with two centers for artists in Quebec City. Both centers helped in making the event bigger in their program with exhibitions by Diane Landry and Mathieu Brouillard (VU) and with an original response proposed by the collective exhibition *Code blanc* (at Engramme).

The event *DSM + V* has made possible the expression of distress, ordinary or stigmatized madness, by opposing to the normative system of built, structural and bookish institutions, the infinite modalities of our presence in the world. ■

#### Notes

- 1 It is important not to confuse Labour Day, a statutory holiday in Canada. I am talking here about the international day of workers, which became the Fête du travail (on May 1st), since the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 2 Another space at the margins, which has been the gathering point of the whole event

## AVATAR

### 1994 – Ding Dong Deluxe

The first disc of sound art published by Avatar and OHM Éditions!

How is it possible that the length of shorter pieces are rarely inferior to 60 seconds? That a piece of less than 30 seconds is the exception? That 15 seconds and less is for advertizing? Isn't there the occasion for risks, for an audible audacity? Avatar has invited artists to submit their projects of forgotten sound territory explorations, ranging for the instantaneous to the brief sound. *Dind Dong Deluxe* is a compilation of 99 shorts sound propositions.

In January 1996, the Austrian National Radio had a radio program of one hour on Ding Dong Deluxe and OHM Éditions.

The first release by the collective Avatar on its label OHM Éditions, *Ding Dong Deluxe* is a one-of-a-kind project. Jocelyn Robert's idea was to put together a whole disc's worth of very short audio art pieces, around 15 to 20 seconds each. A suggestion was even made that this CD could be used with a programmable doorbell! A host of artists were invited to participate. The ones who submitted the most snippets are Georges Azzaria, Neil Wiernik, Phycüs, Pierre-André Arcand, Christof Migone, Jean Routhier and Frances Dyson. Other notable contributors include Chantal Dumas and Dan Lander. The material ranges from Stéphane Caron's Casio tunes to Neil Wiernik's out-of-context quotes and Phycüs' strange sound constructions. The 99<sup>th</sup> track contains Robert's « Horaire » (the tone of a talking clock) followed, after a short blank, by a 30-minute piece consisting of the 98 previous tracks put in a different order. Ding Dong Deluxe answers the age-old (?) question, "Can you make it short?" This is disconcerting art. (François Couture, *All Music Guide*.)

[...] a brilliant exploration of forgotten sound territory, between the instantaneous and the brief. About thirty sound sculptors, some famous and other unknown, created 99 super ideas "a jewel to the ear", for an agile CD which offer solace to people worried about Steve Reich's health. (*Improjazz*, n° 24, april 1996, p. 10)

The artists: Georges Azzaria, Jocelyn Robert, Neil Wiernik, Phycüs, Bernard Bonnier, Elaine Frigon, Stéphane Caron, Pierre-André Arcand, Dan Lander, Christof Migone, Black Auks, Algojo (Algojo, Jean Routhier, Louis Ouellet, Glêche Lavrille, Chantal Dumas, Émile Morin, Frances Dyson, John Oswald, Fabrice Montal, Doyon/

Demers, France Deslauriers, Insurgent, Martin Meilleur, Nathalie Lord, Julien Blaine.

### La salle des nœuds

*La salle des nœuds* is an installation started in 1996 in the context of the conference *La parallaxe*. We owe the concept supporting the project to Jocelyn Robert and Émile Morin. The installation is a physical and conceptual structure. It responds to the applications of the complex systems theories in art in networks. *La salle des nœuds* is an independent installation using as a motor « l'attracteur étrange », an equation of the mathematician Lorenz. It seeks to reproduce mathematically some dynamics of the nature. This equation is one of the basis of chaos theory. The installation is a variation of dispositive interrelations and of systems which activate themselves by a mathematical equation. *La salle des nœuds* is also an evolutive work presented on many occasions according to different aspects. The project evolves over time, showing the new developments in the fields of audio and computer arts. From 1996 until 2000, *La salle des nœuds* has welcomed more than twelve artists and was presented in Canada and in the United States.

Although the last version of *La salle des nœuds* was presented in the year 2001, many dispositive and concepts developed remained the core of subsequent projects, namely, *La morue*, by Diane Landry, *L'invention des animaux*, by Jocelyn Robert and *Leçon de piano*, by Émile Morin and Jocelyn Robert.

### 1996, Version 1.0

Conference *La parallaxe*. Artists: Doyon/Demers, Diane Landry, Roger Morin, Louis Ouellet, Pierre Racine, Émile Morin and Jocelyn Robert. Lieux: Quebec City, Portneuf and Innsbruck.

### 1999, Version 2.0

*Symposium d'art actuel de Moncton*. Artists: Boris Firquet, David Michaud, Steeve Lebrasseur, Diane Landry, Émile Morin, Jocelyn Robert and more than a hundred participants coming from Moncton, Quebec City and the Côte d'Ivoire.

### 2000, Version 2.1

*Mois Multi*. Artists: Boris Firquet, David Michaud, Émile Morin and Jocelyn Robert. Location: Quebec City.

### 2000, Version 2.2

Series of events *A Set of Suspicions*. Revised title: *Pedestrian Movements/ Ground Station*. Artists: Daniel Jolliffe and Jocelyn Robert. Location: Artspeak Gallery, Vancouver.



### 2000, Version 2.3

*Festival international du nouveau cinéma et des nouveaux médias de Montréal (FCMM)*. Artists: Émile Morin and Jocelyn Robert. Location: SAT, Montreal.

### 2000, Version 2.4

*Outer Ear Festival*. Artists: Émile Morin, Daniel Joliffe and Jocelyn Robert. Location: Chicago.

### 2001, Version 3.0

The event *Computer Voices/Speaking Machines*. Artists: Pascale Landry, Émile Morin and Jocelyn Robert. Location: Walter Phillips Gallery at the Banff Center for the Arts.

[...] La salle des nœuds 3 becomes in essence an environment for detached contemplation. It's immersive but not interactive. [...] Moreover these works seem to be trying to say something about the one-to-one of the old telephone system and the many-to-many of the new digital but no less human network. (Sarah Cook, *Metamute*, August 2001.)

### 2006, Avatar @ Vooruit

In May 2005, following an initiative by artist Amy Franceschini from San Francisco, Eva de Groote and Jocelyn Robert are meeting to elaborate the basis for the collaboration between Avatar and Vooruit, a center from Gand, in Belgium. The result of this meeting is the presentation in Vooruit, in 2006, of a program orchestrated by curator Eva de Groote which includes a series of propositions created by artists from the collective Avatar: George Azzaria, Diane Landry, Mériel Lehmann, Louis Ouellet, Émile Morin, Philippe Pasquier and Jocelyn Robert.

The event Avatar @ Vooruit includes conferences, performances, installations and computer pieces diffused on location of in "balladodiffusion".

First international visit of importance for collective of Avatar, the event in Belgium will bring positive offsprings since it will be followed by: artists from Avatar (namely, Diane Landry, Émile Morin, Jocelyn Robert) participating at the event *Québec Numéric* at the Théâtre Le Châtelet in Paris, the following fall, under the direction of Richard Castelli; the participation of Philippe Pasquier at the creation of a sound event in Cologne (Germany); the diffusion of a work by Louis Ouellet, at the *Festival of sound creation* in Belgium; and the participation of Avatar at the *Festival de poésie de Berlin*, in June 2007, where artists from Avatar (Pierre-André Arcand, Christof Mignone, Émile Morin, Jocelyn Robert, Sabica Senez) were offered the best places for their

performances and installations in the section titled « Avatar Digitale Poésie ».

### 2007-2008 lenomdelachose.org

In the fall of 2007, Avatar redefines its Web space. Since the various aspects of diffusion of our audio and electronic activities are taking advantage of an important Web presence, it has become imperative to reconsider the public platform, rethink its usage and form. This reflection has brought us to improve the whole site, that one can now visit at [www.lenomdelachose.org](http://www.lenomdelachose.org). This new frame in progress gives as good a visibility to Avatar – audio and electronic creation and diffusion – as to OHM Éditions – the editor – and VacuOhm Distribution – a space of audio art distribution and electronics.

This reconsideration of our Web presence is done in conjunction with the reflections that we have pursued in the last two years, notably the conferences *Métamédia* (2007) and *Supervittess* and *Wikimémoire* (2008) which have incited us to reflect on new forms of interventions, forms that we will be able to see in action the winter of 2009. ■

## VU, A CENTER FOR PHOTOGRAPHY PRODUCTION AND DIFFUSION

Since 1981, VU is a center for artists dedicated to the promotion and development of contemporary photography. The center proposes a diverse program of activities in diffusion in order to develop public interests in today's visual arts. Each year, VU presents a dozen of exhibitions by artists from Quebec, Canada and other countries. The center has organized many events of diffusion and helped in the circulation of certain exhibitions on the international scene, only to mention *Mirabile Visu* (1989), *Le réel et ses simulacres* (1991-1995), *La traversée des mirages* (1992), *Trois fois trois paysages* (1997-1999), *La disparition* (2002-2004) and *Habiter* (2006). VU and the Éditions J'ai VU also published over 40 books on the art of photography as well as over 200 texts about the artists involved in the various exhibitions mentioned in the programs of the organization.

VU offers a privileged access to a vast range of equipment for creation in argentic and numeric photography to artists of all disciplines. Each year, the center welcomes many artists in residence and gives them the

means to develop new expertise and interrogate their photography projects. VU supports innovating practices and encourage critical reflection around the relevant issues of today's photography.

### Mirabile Visu

From November 1<sup>st</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> 1989, Quebec City was enthralled by the rhythms of *Mirabile Visu*, an event initiated by the center VU with the help of six other center for artists in Quebec City – L'Atelier de réalisations graphiques, La chambre blanche, Le Lieu, Obscure, L'Œil de poisson and VU – to celebrate the 150 years of photography.

This major event gathered ninety artists, among which twenty young people from Europe. There was a range of fifteen collective exhibitions and other manifestations presented in the various spaces of diffusion in the city, including most of the exhibition centers and museums.

The event wanted to show the proliferation of practices in the art of photography in Quebec and elsewhere at the end of the eighties. It has contributed to diffuse and promote the medium of photography, stimulate discourses and exchange on the discipline. It also valorized the particular imagination of photography while confirming the essential role that the medium continues to play on the art actual scene.

*Mirabile Visu* corresponded otherwise to an important opening for the artistic community in Quebec City. It was the first time that centers for artists were getting together to realize a manifestation of such range, in the respect of their own artistic endeavors and commitments. Since then, the milieu has developed a solid dynamic of exchange, an fruitful collaborations between organisations in the region are since more common. We only have to mention the most spectacular of it all: the opening of Méduse in the year 1995.

### Opening of Méduse

Since 1995, ten organizations operating in the visual, media and multidisciplinary arts created a cooperative and share a building of 4000 m<sup>2</sup> in Saint-Roch: the cooperative Méduse. These organisations – Antitube, L'Atelier de la mézannine, Avatar, La Bande Vidéo, Engramme, L'Œil de Poisson, Productions Recto-Verso, CKIA-FM, Spirafilm and VU – count today more than 1000 members and reach, with more and than 200 events, an estimated public of 30 000 people, each year.

Méduse represents a major center of production and diffusion of live art.

It allows exchange of experimental research, creation, education and presentation of activities of all kinds. Two ideas have been important in the founding of the cooperative: to facilitate access to the equipment for creation and the encounter between the public and the artists. It is important to improve the conditions of artists, the conditions of diffusion of their works and to maximize the available resources while integrating new technologies.

Méduse offers outstanding working tools and services to the artistic communities of the Quebec City region. The center also gives a privileged access to a large range of equipment helpful to all disciplines in the visual and media arts: audio, video, photo, film, etching, sculpture, computers and electronic, radio and the scene. Twenty expert technicians supply the best services to artists of all disciplines, creating a unique context for creation in Canada, especially because of its program of artists in residence.

As an essential component of the cultural and artistic life of Quebec City, Méduse is also one of the symbols of Saint-Roch's revitalization. Pioneer in its domain, it has become, over the years, one of its kind. It is now recognized as a privilege space of creation and exchange in Canada and all over the world.

In 2007, Méduse acquired new equipments (for a value of 1,6 millions) in order to serve better its clientele and the members of the cooperative.

### Trois fois trois paysages 1997

From October 1997 to May 1998, the center VU associated itself with Quebec City's cultural community to welcome 33 artists from Quebec, Canada and other countries. They were asked to complete a series of actions, installations *in situ* and photography exhibitions on the topic of landscape and contemporary urban planning. They were invited to be in residence in Quebec City and to produce works in an urban contexts. The artists participating came here to explore the territory and to formulate audacious and new opinions about it. The event encouraged the free explorations of a potential city, and most people involved were eager to confront the notion of "ordering" in projects around the documentary usage of photography. Each artist thus explored an original aspect of the physical and human geography on the mode of a geographical narrative ranging from the fiction of territory to the invention of landscapes.