

An Interview with David Tomas Concerning his Recent Collaboration with Rosika Desnoyers, Part II

Marc James Léger

Number 102, June–October 2014

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/72283ac>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

Revue d'art contemporain ETC inc.

ISSN

2368-030X (print)

2368-0318 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

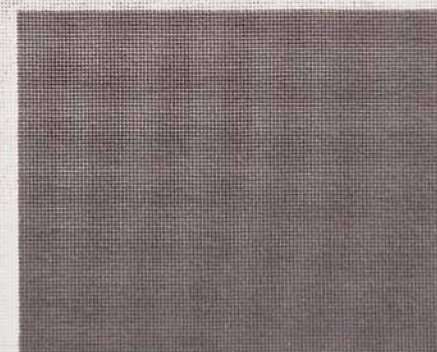
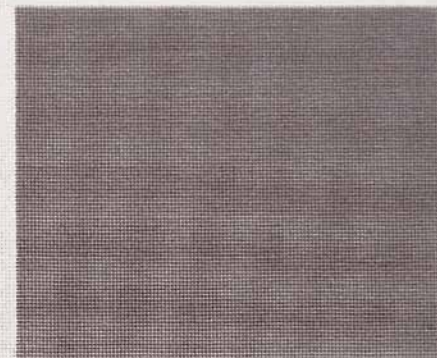
Cite this article

Léger, M. J. (2014). An Interview with David Tomas Concerning his Recent Collaboration with Rosika Desnoyers, Part II. *ETC MEDIA*, (102), 89–96.

Rosika Desnoyers, *Millet Matrix* (detail, left panel),
2010-2012. Needlepoint, wool on canvas,
63.5 x 79 cm. Courtesy of the artist.

In December of 2010, an exhibition titled *Millet Matrix I* was held in the apartment of Montreal-based artist Rosika Desnoyers. The exhibition, curated by David Tomas, revolved around a work by Desnoyers titled *Millet Grid* (2006), which is comprised of two versions of *After Jean-François Millet, Gleaners (1857)*, one from 2002-2003 and one from 2006. *Millet Matrix I* was described as part one of “a two-part curatorial project by David Tomas.” *Millet Matrix I* was accompanied by a text by Tomas titled “Programming and Reprogramming Artworks: A Case of Painting and Practicing Conceptual and Media Art by Other Means,” published in the Spring 2009 issue of the journal *Intermedialités*. A black-and-white reproduction of *Millet Grid*, which appeared in the *Intermedialités* essay, later became the reference point for a new needlepoint work by Desnoyers titled *Millet Matrix*. The commissioned work was begun after the first exhibition and was completed in 2012. At the end of that year, *Millet Matrix II* took place as a private exhibition, deferring the public showing of the work to the apartment exhibition *Millet Matrix III*, which took place in December of 2013. Between the two exhibitions, Tomas produced a short text titled “*Millet Matrix II: Between Commission and Collaboration*,” Desnoyers completed her PhD dissertation in the humanities at Concordia University and began a post-doctoral program under the supervision of Tomas at the Université du Québec à Montréal, and I myself published an essay on their collaboration titled “*Homo Academicus Curatorius: Millet Matrix as Intercultural Paradigm*,” which was published in the June 2013 issue of the journal *On Curating*. It is worth noting in this context that *Millet Matrix III* took place at the same time as the second part of Tomas’ self-curated exhibition *Consigned for Auction*, which was on view at the Montreal artist documentation centre *Artex* from October 31, 2013 to January 11, 2014, and at the same time as an exhibition of his video/film work titled *Projections, 2006-2011*, which was on view at Montreal’s Oboro gallery from November 9 to December 14, 2013. I interviewed David Tomas by email in the Winter of 2014 about his collaboration with Rosika Desnoyers and his experiments with curating.

Marc James Léger: In our last interview, you stated that “there is no question here of adopting the position of curator-as-artist or artist-as-curator,” but that instead you were interested in “navigating in the unknown spaces that separate one artist’s practice from someone else’s” and “operating with an alternative transcultural viewpoint on the world, disciplines and knowledge.”¹ You add further that a radical contact situation involves “the ejection of a spectator’s consciousness from the confines and comfort of conventional systems of belief, however unconventional they might appear to be.” I wonder here if psychoa-



An Interview with David Tomas Concerning his Recent Collaboration with Rosika Desnoyers, Part II



Works by curator David Tomas in the exhibition
Millet Matrix III, December 2-18, 2013.
Photo: David Tomas.

analysis might not offer some possible insights. In an essay on the Freudian unconscious, which also makes reference to the importance of Claude Lévi-Strauss's *La Pensée Sauvage*, Jacques Lacan gives the example of the person who explains that he has three brothers, "Paul, Ernest and me," thereby identifying, in terms of the paradox of enunciation, how it is that the "force of language is inscribed" before any individual deduction and before any collective experience.² Perhaps the conventional system of belief here retains some notion of the unconscious as inaccessible rather than as something that speaks. I thus find interesting the way that you have been working with exhibitions in two parts and with visual material as a way to show something that has been missed, in this instance the work *Millet Matrix* and the exhibition *Millet Matrix II*, which now appear in *Millet Matrix III* in separate guises: in the images of two framed works on paper that were previously in the apartment and are now gone, and in the image of *Millet Matrix*, which was seen in a photograph in my essay for *On Curating*, and in photo documentation that was taken in 2012 and which also figures in the works you made for *Millet Matrix III*. Could you say more about the relationship between the exhibitions *I*, *II* and *III*, and also about the works that are on view in part *III*.

David Tomas: The Millet Matrix project was a laboratory devoted to an exploration of the cultural matrix within which Rosika Desnoyers' practice has taken form. For example, instead of simply presenting works and discussing their genesis, historical or contemporary art historical or cultural pertinence (which I had already done in an essay on her work), what I was interested in exploring in this three-part project was the material culture not only within which a practice emerges but also in terms of which it is sustained. As you know, I have known Rosika for over twenty years, so I have a good working knowledge of her practice, its origins and development over this period. Yet there is an important distinction between knowledge's implicit mental form and actually deploying it in an objective three-dimensional space for public display with the objective of exploring and promoting a process of thinking about a complex artistic practice. *Millet Matrix* was an attempt to engage with Desnoyers' practice in a way that not only revealed its complex and rich material-historical/cultural roots, but also attempted to expose them in terms of a materialization of the intersubjective mental processes that animate this engagement. Since the project was presented in Desnoyers' apartment, it also raised questions about the cultural and institutional functions of the 'exhibition' process as currently understood in the contemporary art world. I think we are all aware of the hegemonic nature of the public contemporary art exhibition. The Millet Matrix project was a sustained and systemic attempt to explore a series of alternative exhibition forms—ones that cannot really exist

within the current exhibition economy because of their intimate engagement with a single work, its cultural infrastructure and possibilities—, and the 'exhibition's' semi-private, apartment-based model and extended temporality (three years), all of which breach the boundaries of the public exhibition format as it is currently understood.

When considered in terms of a conventional exhibition format (white cube and its various—almost infinite—geometric derivatives, regimented exhibition cycles, etc.), the Millet Matrix project addressed the question of how the institutional foundation of the contemporary art exhibition process could be challenged and perhaps redefined within the context of an cultural/anthropological frame of reference that prioritizes thought processes over product consumption: first, through the project's presentation in a private location (Desnoyers' apartment); second, in terms of the project's exploration of an exemplary product of an artist's practice (*Millet Grid*, 2006), as opposed to a collection of works. This process of redefinition took place in four distinct ways: through the operations of an implicit 'experimental laboratory' that was situated in a distinct spatial location (a private apartment); through an extended temporal frame (three years) that was divided, in the end, into three articulated phases; through a reflective process that examined what it means to function, not as 'curator' or 'artist,' but as an individual who can, as I suggested in our earlier interview and as you have just noted, navigate "in the unknown spaces that separate one artist's practice from someone else's." Another objective was to expose the possibilities of display strategies that foreground the question of the status and function of different (academic and non-academic) forms of knowledge implicated in an artist's complex practice—I use the word 'complex' here because Desnoyers' practice operates within the tension between different historical models of the amateur and professional artist, as well as navigates between different art historical periods, domestic/institutional spaces and private/public zones of social activity.

Millet Matrix I set the stage for the project's development over the next two years. It also set the stage for the unique collaboration between the three of us. It focused on the question of different forms of academic and artistic knowledge as they co-exist within a domestic space. *Millet Matrix II* was based on a commission to produce a work founded on a black-and-white illustration of *Millet Grid* (2006), reproduced in my 2009 essay on Desnoyers' work. This commission took approximately two years to complete. During this time, the elements that composed *Millet Matrix I* were left in their original positions in the apartment, which meant that for these two years Rosika lived within the context of the *Millet Matrix I* exhibition. *Millet Matrix II* was defined by the hanging of the commissioned work, simply titled *Millet Matrix* (2012), in Desnoyers' living



Works by curator David Tomas in the exhibition *Millet Matrix III*, December 2-18, 2013. Photo: David Tomas.

room, but it was collectively decided that *Millet Matrix II* should not be opened to the public. In November 2013, I produced a five-part canvas work that responded to *Millet Matrix I & II* under the title of *Millet Matrix III*. This work was exhibited in Desnoyers' apartment in the first week of December 2013, and it was opened to the public between December 8 and 18, 2013. It is still hanging in the apartment as of this date (January 4, 2014). From my viewpoint, *Millet Matrix III* is a testimony to the complex and shifting dynamic between my various roles of artist, friend, visual worker, 'exhibition' organizer, and designer in this project. It is also a testimony to the complex socio-political and cultural questions that are raised when one tries to produce an 'exhibition' that is *transculturally* situated between artistic practices, disciplines (such as anthropology, art history and feminism), as well as theoretical and practical forms of knowledge.

In reference to your comments about the inaccessible and the unconscious, it is also entirely possible that it could serve as witness to what has not been acknowledged directly in the project, to what exists beyond the exhibition, its components and its principle work, *Millet Grid*: its network of anonymous authors, which serve as the project's collective historical and critical unconscious in relation to its network of named authors (Rosika, myself, and yourself, for example). Could the 1966 *Society for Exhibition Organizing* flier and the 1986 *Chambres d'Amis* exhibition poster point to this 'inaccessible' historical network? What you note as present but absent, since there was no public exhibition in the case of *Millet Matrix II*, which included, most notably, *spectators*, and what is now representationally present but physically absent in *Millet Matrix III*, most notably *Millet Grid*, the *Society for Exhibition Organizing* flier and the *Chambres d'Amis* exhibition poster, transforms the *Millet Matrix II*'s cultural matrix and its authorial network into a doubly absent one: not only are key works physically absent in *Millet Matrix III*, but the second exhibition itself is now completely inaccessible to everybody. A new exhibition has been built on the ruins of a previous one. But the transformation simultaneously *resurrects* a basic authorial question that exists in spite of the collaboration upon which the project as a whole exists, and it presents it in a different ethereal/representational register: the presence that hovers around all three exhibitions, and which is both foregrounded and eclipsed (or deferred in a Derridean sense), is *my presence*, *my voice*. Rosika welcomed and talked to *Millet Matrix I*'s visitors; she lived with *Millet Matrix I* and *II* just like she is living with *Millet Matrix III* and has welcomed its visitors. She has *lived* the *Millet Matrix* project in all its complexity and collaborative potential. You have written about it and discussed it with us in a way that openly acknowledges your position, which is based on

maintaining a certain critical distance, however close that might be. The socio-political problem and critical paradox, if one can describe it as such, has to do with my multiple positions within this project and my attempts to *defer* those positions through various display strategies *since I have not lived up to the experiential conditions that I have created in someone else's apartment*. In other words, I live *elsewhere*. I think that *Millet Matrix III*'s relationship to *Millet Matrix II* can be defined as a final attempt to render that *process* of deferral *resonantly* 'visible,' if you see what I mean: not only to render it *palpable* and *present* from all major viewpoints, but also to acknowledge the impossibility—the inaccessibility—that is built into my *collaborative position* in this project.

MJL: I would like to ask you a question about your essay "Programming and Reprogramming Artworks: A Case of Painting and Practicing Conceptual and Media Art by Other Means."³ In it you discuss the concept of programming as a set of instructions communicated to a computer so that it can execute a well-defined task—"into and out of a machine world."⁴ I wonder if this *elsewhere* that you refer to also has something to do with this notion of a machine interface and with the commission of *Millet Matrix* in these terms, or in the machine's terms, and not only with regard to Sol LeWitt's idea of conceptual art. What you seem to be focused on with regard to the history of Berlin work is the way the grid system of the canvas allows for the "exact reproduction" of a picture, the pattern being understood as a "de facto program of work," that *automates* the embroiderer's creative decision-making.⁵ Insofar as Berlin work resembles other creative automated forms, like weaving and photography, there are implications here for the recoding of human intelligence into machine intelligence. Unlike the loom, however, you say there is no machine to communicate with, just a human agent who undertakes a task "in the capacity of a self-regulating machine," a "human computer" or "individual who performs calculations."⁶ *Millet Matrix* copies the black and white reproduction of Desnoyers' *Millet Grid* (2006) found in David Tomas' essay on Desnoyers' work in the journal *Intermedialités*. The work is accompanied by a grey monochrome of the same dimension as the left panel of the work shown here. *Millet Grid* is a combination of two 'needlegraph' works, in which the artist makes a map of the errors and anomalies in an anonymously purchased needlepoint, in both cases a needlepoint of Jean-François Millet's *The Gleaners* (1857). The errors are marked as holes in the grid structure of the right hand monochrome. In Tomas' estimation, the commissioned work *Millet Matrix* is freed from the error-based logic of Desnoyers' needlegraph works.

When discussing Desnoyers' needlegraph projects, which register errors and anomalies from a purchased needlepoint onto a separate mono-

chromatic grid, you argue that there are two aspects to her work that impact the notion of programming as applied to traditional Berlin work: 1) the potential for a successful reproduction of a program, and 2) a *meta-creative* viewpoint on the presence of errors. In your essay, you write: "For [the errors] provide the excuse or the reason for the production of a second and *unique* canvas work, which only becomes a possibility insofar as errors exist."⁷ You also add: "There is always the possibility that Desnoyers will purchase a perfect needlepoint, in which case it cannot be processed under the artist's criteria of analysis and system of reproduction."⁸ First, as you correctly point out, there is nothing that would prevent a needlegraph work from being made without errors. However, as I argue in my essay for *On Curating*, since Desnoyers takes a genealogical view of error, as understood in terms of Foucauldian effective history—especially given its nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century trajectory—and in ways that are discussed in her thesis, for her the production of any needlepoint work, with or without errors, falls within an effective history of needlepoint as a history of errors—otherwise known as a genealogy, not an archaeology—and this because it is always simultaneously entirely aware of its contemporary contexts of investigation, production, dissemination, and reception.⁹ Regardless, what seems to be important for you in the commissioning of *Millet Matrix* is the potential for a programmed Berlin work project to resemble the idea of a human computer as much as possible, across time and space. And so, as you emphasize, Desnoyers' needlegraphs "highlight" and then "negate" the principle of automation; they invert Berlin work's logic, associating error with failure within a system of mass production.¹⁰ Where the needlegraphs would, in your estimation, *fail* to follow the "correct and authorized" path of Berlin work's automation principle, *Millet Matrix* would *succeed* in negating the work's status as artwork, which would require you to locate yourself elsewhere, for instance, not as an artist-curator, that is if you were to avoid as much as possible any guarantee of the work's identity as an artwork, which, as far as I know, is signed Rosika Desnoyers and not David Tomas or Tomas/Desnoyers.

As you discuss later in your essay, Desnoyers' work is firmly rooted in the world of contemporary art, as it interfaces with women's history, art history, and even conceptual art—a "web of references" that nevertheless reaches out to the history of programming languages and which destabilizes the categories of media art. In this regard, I found it interesting that you mentioned the grid system that was used in Renaissance painting as an instance of programming and translation of visual information.¹¹ However, I wonder if the way you focus on technicity doesn't risk masking important aspects of human culture,

and I would love to hear more from you on this question. As far as I understand it, Leon Batista Alberti's discussion of perspective, in 1435, in *On Painting* was concerned with spiritual and humanistic meaning as much as with a pictorial system, and was closely connected to the development of urban milieus and a new middle class of merchants and bankers who, in terms of political philosophy, supported scholarship as a form of civic virtue.¹² According to Alberti, perspective in painting was less concerned with mathematics and calculation and more with emotion, sense perception and appearances—how things appear to the eye rather than based on a priori principles—a plastic form of knowledge that changes along with one's point of view. While in visual studies perspective has tended to be thought of in negative terms as distancing and objectifying, as the language of the Cartesian cogito, it has also been understood as distance-denying (Panofsky), or as an epistemological emblem that reveals limitations and that is always incomplete—a reversible system (Damisch). In this regard, it is interesting that in the photo-documentation of *Millet Matrix I* Desnoyers included an image of Hans Holbein's *The Ambassadors* on her study wall. I tend to think of the works you made for the third exhibition as anamorphic, referring to works that are now absent, or to a different moment in time and space that is reconstituted by this work, or set of works, from different viewpoints throughout the apartment. This issue also brings to mind Desnoyers' discussion, in her thesis, of the development of an industrial aesthetic, which of course had not been elaborated at the time you wrote your essay.¹³ With regard to visibility, the classic critique of perspectivalism is that it separates subject and object, rendering transcendental and transparent both bourgeois subjectivity and capitalist society—a modern rationalism that privileges the eye above the other senses.¹⁴ Jonathan Crary, however, challenges any continuous development or technical progression of perspectivalism from the Renaissance to nineteenth-century visual devices. Interestingly, in her chapter, Desnoyers insists on the co-presence of science and art in art's mass commercialization. Through the process of supervision, however, a few things were removed from her thesis. The question of labour-time being directly related to the creation of new commodities and to class antagonism was downplayed. This makes it harder to appreciate the contradictory sociological implications of the fact that middle-class women, in this context, championed Berlin work as a miracle of industrial innovation, as can be noticed in the 1794 painting by Henry Singleton, which depicts Mary Linwood, the needlepainter, in the company of Mrs. Lorraine-Smith, the Third Viscount Maynard, Charles Lorraine-Smith, and Henry Singleton himself. In this painting, scientific invention is depicted

in the same context as artistic innovation. In reference to this painting, Desnoyers discusses Jonathan Crary's *Techniques of the Observer*, which argues that the classical 'camera obscura' model of subjectivity was displaced by early nineteenth-century optical devices—practices, techniques, institutions, and procedures of subjectification, such as photography and stereography, for instance—that operate directly on the body and impose a regularizable, measurable and exchangeable (in a capitalist context) experience.¹⁵ However, what Desnoyers points to is a non-linear, non-deterministic account, in which the virtues of needlepainting could first overlap with and then be separated from those of automation. She says:

Unlike Crary, I would not say that pictorial Berlin work can be readily associated with the collapse of the classical model of vision. This can be noticed in the ways that Berlin work canvases were framed and hung, and in the way that they emulated the logic and prestige of painting. Crary in some ways overestimates the idea of the regimentation of the body at the expense of epistemological considerations. I argue, rather, that through forms of automation, standardization and systematization, pictorial Berlin work sought to domesticate and commercialize those cultural and intellectual values associated with bourgeois humanism, understood not only empirically and materially, in terms of the social organization of bodies, but ideologically, insofar as ideas and forms of knowledge can outlive the social and technological conditions from out of which they emerged.

Moreover, bourgeois ideology also sought means through which it could correct itself. Insofar as the camera obscura model provides a space of observation for the isolated, autonomous, free-floating individual, it was nevertheless aimed at the possibility of correcting the senses through the judicious function of criticism. The modern bourgeois subject polices the correspondence between the interior and exterior world and makes use therefore of cultural constructs as mediating devices that inform experience, sense perception and knowledge. Bourgeois humanism was as such invested in the use of reason in the advancement not only of scientific instruments but of human culture. According to Martin Kemp, the artist's interest in science was often of a 'conspicuous' nature. Science and technical innovations were manipulated by artists and aligned with pre-established practices as well as philosophically informed conceptions of the social world.¹⁶ This brings her to a discussion of Matthew Bolton's invention of mechanical painting. Bolton was a member of the Lunar Society and a good friend of Mary Linwood's. He wanted his mechanically produced copies of paintings (for instance, works by Joshua Reynolds, Benjamin West, Joseph Wright of Derby, and Angelica

Kauffmann) to be as high in quality as the originals. Some consider that Bolton's silver plates, which might have been produced by Thomas Wedgwood, could have had something to do with the invention of photography. The point Rosika makes is that mechanical paintings involve the camera obscura model of vision and subjectivity at the same time as they incorporate the kind of division of labour that we find in Berlin work, producing unique multiples and displacing the creative skill of the maker.

DT: The points that you make in this question, as I understand them, seem to pivot around a certain perception of cultural reductionism in my concept of technicity in general, but also when specifically applied to the commissioned work *Millet Matrix*. I think that this critique is also implicit in your question regarding a machinic "elsewhere," which you suggest has something to do with a "notion of a machine interface and with the commission of *Millet Matrix*," or "in the machine's terms" and not just "with regard to Sol LeWitt's idea of conceptual art."

I originally introduced the word *technicity* in an article I wrote, in 1988, on the human/posthuman transformations that were mapped in William Gibson's dystopian science fiction stories, which I had read on a friend's recommendation.¹⁷ I introduced the word *technicity* because I thought that it could accurately describe the new type of technology-based 'post-ethnicity,' which was a defining characteristic of the cyborg-like entities that were able to interface with a digital world existent *within* a computer-based information matrix, as described by Gibson. Obviously, it is clear that the gradual fusion of technology and the human body has been taking place for hundreds, if not thousands, of years (if one takes into consideration the artificial creation of fire). What is interesting, however, from both historical and anthropological points of view, are the existence of thresholds that represent major evolutionary jumps or accelerations in this process. For me, Gibson's stories mapped out some of the science-fictional possibilities implied in one such threshold. Berlin work represents an earlier threshold, although my programming article did not explore its links to a history of posthuman evolution.

In reference to Desnoyers' dissertation and working practice, you are therefore right to point to the rich and complex relationship that has always existed between technologies of observation and western humanist culture. There is always a danger of treating the development of science and technology through the optics of autonomous, internally regulated, and therefore artificially delimited, disciplinary histories. Desnoyers' needlegraphs are not only a product of this complex relationship, but they actively promote its existence in their own terms. However, the concept of technicity also points to another way of highlighting this relationship in a



Works by curator David Tomas
in the exhibition *Millet Matrix III*,
December 2-18, 2013.
Photo: David Tomas.

different technologically-mediated context. We live in a more scientifically/technologically saturated culture than did Alberti, Linwood, Bolton, or Marx. We have advanced much further along the route of convergent technological integration, even when compared to 1990, or 1988 when I wrote my article. Take, for example, the idea of a conventional paper-based photograph—this material artefact now seems to belong to an earlier period in the history of automation, especially when considered in relation to the recent history of the computer-based image. The same can be said of the increased sophistication, speed and power of the computer. We now live in the epoch of what Harun Farocki has described as the *instrumental image*: the algorithmic image that is designed to be ‘processed’ and *consumed* by machines as opposed to human beings. These images are conceived to function without direct human intervention or interpretative agency. This development warrants further exploration in terms of the intimate relationship that can exist between programming languages and technicity. Farocki has also highlighted some of the multiple processes involving the reprogramming of human behaviour within our society in a way that raises the spectre of a culture-wide emergent posthuman condition.¹⁸ We are now living in a world where new, autonomous, often robotic technologies are increasingly replacing human labour. This means that humans are gradually abdicating their governing role in the evolution of their species. When considered from this point of view, there was no conscious desire to ‘posthumanly’ program or condition Desnoyers’ behaviour through the commissioning of *Millet Matrix*, although it is clear that two years of work represents a major investment of time and energy in one project. Machine culture was not the primary frame of reference for the commission, even though her system of working could be considered to be mechanistic. I simply proposed a way for her to use her own working methods to explore the space between *my* programming article, its frame of reference (and therefore my point of view on her practice), as well as its historical significance (when considered in terms of expanded definitions of painting and conceptual art) and *her* genealogical practice. This was a proposition to produce a work *from her point of view* as opposed to mine, which was already invested, in *Millet Matrix I*, in questions pertaining to the reflexive spatial deployment of the various

concrete and ideational elements of her artistic practice. In other words, it was another way to explore and promote a *process of thinking* about a complex artistic practice through a “materialization of intersubjective mental processes.”

“I simply proposed” should, moreover, be nuanced since the proposal could only be accepted as the basis for a work within the context of a collaboration and common goal, which was to explore an artist’s work culture *to its fullest extent*—an exploration which would obviously have to take my activities and strategies into critical consideration.

I would say that Desnoyers’ practice mines the histories of programming and the gendered working body in terms of the present, as opposed to fictionally prospecting a posthuman future, or mapping its immanent emergence as Farocki has done, for example, in his *Eye/Machine* trilogy. However, I would definitely also argue that *Millet Matrix* represents a radical programming statement not only through its relationship to a work history (which Desnoyers has explored in Foucauldian genealogical/effective terms), or its roots in an illustration published in my 2009 *Intermedialités* article, but also in terms of its *materially-based*, potentially ‘error-free status.’ I say this because I believe that it is in the material sense of a *potentially error-free experimental product*—a commissioned set of ‘perfect’ surfaces, named *Millet Matrix*, that are hypothetically situated between *Millet Grid* and *Millet Matrix III*—that *Millet Matrix* transcodes a genealogical method and its effective history, according to an implicit future tense, while still retaining its particular ontological status as object-image/image-process produced by a named and skilled professional artist. Here, as elsewhere, I use ‘error-free’ not in an anti-genealogical/anti-effective sense, since Desnoyers’ work practice is deployed within a research network that has nurtured an astute engagement with history and theory, but rather in the sense of an important *limit-event* triggered by contact with a small black and white illustration of *Millet Grid* (2006): triggered, but then gradually translated (processed) over a two-year period of time. Commitment and painstaking production have changed the nature of the *Millet Matrix* project, not least of which because *Millet Matrix* was not foreseen in the original plans for the exhibition. It was a product of *Millet Matrix I*’s suggestive potential and the project’s collaborative potential.

If my *Intermedialités* article attempted to link computer programming and the work program encoded in Berlin reproduction templates with LeWitt’s nuanced conceptual art program, then it did so in order to place Desnoyers’ practice at the forefront of a certain type of knowledge and research-based contemporary art practice. I think that *Millet Matrix I* needs to be seen from this viewpoint. However, *Millet Matrix II* and *III* should not only be approached from the viewpoint of the transcoding of *Millet Matrix I*’s complex network of academic research and two distinct artistic practices within an apartment space, or from the perspectives of *Millet Matrix III*’s anamorphic functions within that same space, but also from *Millet Matrix*’s implicit future tense.

Interview by Marc James Léger

- 1 See Léger, Marc James. “An Interview with David Tomas Concerning His Recent Collaboration with Rosika Desnoyers, Part 1.” *Etc: Revue de l’art actuel* 93 Jun-Sep 2011: 46.
- 2 Lacan, Jacques. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI, The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. Ed. Jacques-Alain Miller. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: W.W. Norton, 1981, 20.
- 3 Tomas, David. “Programming and Reprogramming Artworks: A Case of Painting and Practicing Conceptual and Media Art by Other Means.” *Intermedialités* 13 Spring 2009: 89-113.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 90.
- 5 *Ibid.*, 93.
- 6 *Ibid.*, 100.
- 7 *Ibid.*, 102.
- 8 *Ibid.*, 102.
- 9 Léger, Marc James. “*Homo Academicus Curatorius: Millet Matrix* as Intercultural Paradigm.” *On Curating* 19 June 2013: 14-22. Available at http://www.oncurating-journal.org/index.php/issue-19.html#_UjBpqBbvz-k.
- 10 Tomas. “Programming and Reprogramming Artworks.” 104, 106.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 92, 95.
- 12 Alberti, Leon Battista. *On Painting*. Trans. John R. Spencer. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966.
- 13 See Desnoyers, Rosika. *A Genealogy of Berlin Work: A History of Errors*. Doctoral Dissertation in the Humanities, Concordia University, 2013.
- 14 See Foster, Hal. “Preface.” *Vision and Visuality*. Ed. Hal Foster. Seattle: Bay Press, 1988, x.
- 15 Crary, Jonathan. *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1990, 3.
- 16 These citations were removed from the chapter titled “Towards an Industrial Aesthetic” in Rosika Desnoyers, *A Genealogy of Berlin Work: A History of Errors*. The Kemp reference refers to Kemp, Martin. *The Science of Art: Optical Themes in Western Art from Brunelleschi to Seurat*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990, 1.
- 17 Tomas, David. “The Technophilic Body: On Technicity in William Gibson’s *Cyborg Culture*.” *New Formations* 8 1989: 113-29.
- 18 See Tomas, David. *Vertov, Snow, Farocki: Machine Vision and the Posthuman*. London: Bloomsbury, 2014.