



# ***L'envol, a dream of flight***

**last exhibition  
from June 16<sup>th</sup> to October 28<sup>th</sup> 2018**

PLEASE RETURN  
TO THE FRONT DESK



**Ground control to Major Tom**

**Take your protein pills and put your helmet on**

**[...]**

**Ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one, lift-off**

**Ground control to Major Tom**

**Commencing countdown, engines on**

**Check ignition and may God's love be with you**

**[...]**

**Ground control to Major Tom**

**Your circuit's dead, there's something wrong**

**Can you hear me, Major Tom?**

**Can you hear me, Major Tom?**

**[...]**

**Can you hear...?**

**[...]**

**Here am I sitting in a tin can**

**Far above the moon**

**Planet Earth is blue**

**And there's nothing I can do...**

# ***L'envol, a dream of flight***

**Curators: Bruno Decharme, Antoine de Galbert,**

**Barbara Safarova and Aline Vidal**

In June 2004, La maison rouge opened to the public with a collection that gave the shape of things to come: ***Behind Closed Doors: the private life of collections***. Since then, 131 solo or group shows have been held here. They include presentations, each year, of private collections which reflect programming at the foundation (which has the status of being "in the public interest"). La maison rouge has always made a point of showing unconventional, even "marginal" works and practices. Its purpose has always been to take us "behind closed doors" and, most of all, to assemble artists in unexpected and sometimes challenging ways.

## **A FINAL FLIGHT**

And so true to the spirit of La maison rouge, *L'envol, a dream of flight* brings together works of art brut, modern, contemporary, ethnographic and folk art. Regular visitors may recognise artists they (re)encountered at previous exhibitions: **Dieter Appelt, Henry Darger, Nicolas Darrot, Hélène Delprat, Hervé Di Rosa, Didier Faustino, Agnès Geoffray, Rebecca Horn, Eikoh Hosoe, Ilya and Emilia Kabakov, Panamarenko, Stéphane Thidet, Philippe Thomassin** or **Adolf Wölfli** to name but some. Similarly, co-curator Bruno Decharme showed his ***art brut / collection abcd*** here in 2014. These recurrences are proof of an

unwavering commitment and a chance, not to be missed, to bring back memories of past exhibitions in this last ever show.

The exhibition's open-space design by Zen+dCo invites visitors to make up their own itinerary, skipping ahead then doubling back, allowing body and mind to roam free. Because *L'envol* is about the "dream of flight" in every sense: social mobility, spiritual elevation, defying gravity, rites of passage, stages in a journey, ecstasy and rapture, artificial highs... Who hasn't, in one way or another, dreamed of leaving the weight of the world behind!

This challenge thrown to the gods or, more generally, an orderly cosmos is *hubris*, from the Ancient Greek *hybris*, i.e. a disregard for limits. It is also a place of infinite possibilities, where utopias are built and the imagination takes flight.

## **WE HAVE LIFT-OFF**

The stage is set from the moment we set foot inside the "red house" - now a "blue house" watched over by a swarm of superheroes, presided by Superman. And here's a word of advice from a prickly cosmonaut: "Don't reach for the stars!" (*Greif nicht nach den Sternen!*). A paper plane by German artist **Hans-Jörg Georgi** hovers above our heads. His model airplanes, made out of shoeboxes at a workshop for disabled artists, are part of an ambitious plan to carry the human race to safety when the planet is no longer habitable. The prospect of flying in this paste-and-paper contraption gives new meaning to the expression "a wing and a prayer", and still something wonderful happens: a shoebox is no longer grounded!

Other no less ambitious undertakings follow. What if a statue were lost in (holy) translation? Must we abstain from laughter? Italian director **Federico Fellini** leaves the question up in the air. The opening scene from *La Dolce Vita* shows the statue of a saint being transported high above the ground. But this is no ordinary saint: "It's Jesus!" exclaim onlookers below.

Our Saviour winched to safety by helicopter, that's quite a turn of events! Fellini's masterpiece was censored in Francoist Spain because of this opening sequence – though it's said to have been inspired by a real-life event. And it's another real-life happening that produced this photograph, taken by the British writer and humourist **P. G. Wodehouse**, of Father Patrick Moore from the Scarborough Foreign Mission on a world tour to spread a message of peace, taking with him a statue of Our Lady of Fatima. The naivety of this evangelical adventure combines with the sight of the Virgin, safety belt duly fastened. Even the most noble intentions can take on an unwittingly humorous dimension. He is the master of situation comedy, matching unruffled elegance with the resourcefulness of the engineer: French artist **Philippe Ramette** makes orthoses and prostheses that will relieve our souls and our bodies from metaphysical burden. Levitation is thus rationalised: it's physical, QED. But this very bearable lightness of being must sometimes contend with an unwieldy accessory, like an imposing helium balloon, designed to take a weight off our mind.

**François Burland's** *Soviet Union Rocket* has landed in the patio, a leftover from the Cold War and the early days of the "space race" that pitted the United States against the Soviet Union. Marooned like some giant toy, it tells us something of a bygone age. Because symbols die too: students at the University of Cape Town rejoiced when the statue of Cecil Rhodes, mining magnate and Prime Minister of the Cape Colony (in present-day South Africa) under the British Empire, was taken down. The moment is captured in this photograph of **Sethembile Msezane** (*Chapungu – The Day Rhodes Fell*). The artist appears, warrior-like, as Chapungu, "the bird that never loses its feathers" and national emblem of Zimbabwe. Rhodes has fallen, and the country can rise anew. Msezane's performance is an act of resistance and memory. The inventions of **Gustav Mesmer** are another form of resistance. He spent much of his life shut away, first as a sickly child, then as a seminarist and later in a mental institution, "punishment" for proclaiming religion was a fraud. Finally

released after years of internment, he spent the rest of his life building the fabulous spring-loaded shoes and flying bicycles that would enable him to (re)gain his long-lost freedom.

## REACH FOR THE SKY

In a sense, **Auguste Rodin** will have spent his life trying to break gravity's hold on sculpture and literally extract movement from inert matter. Reflected over and over in its mirrored case, *L'Aile* reminds us that dance informed so much of the French sculptor's work. It also leads into the next section. Silence and strangeness inhabit the photographic stagings of German artist **Dieter Appelt** and French artist **Lucien Pelen**. Set among gorges in southern France, *Canyon à Oppedette – pour Marguerite Duras* introduces an element of mystery, even mysticism, to this mineral landscape. Pelen, in a different way, uses his body to create moments of mysterious stasis. His photography is a leap of faith, aligning his body for the "decisive encounter" with the camera lens. Opposite the third work in the "Chairs" series, shown here, is *Kamaitachi 17* by **Eikoh Hosoe**, named after a supernatural creature that travels on the wind in Japanese folklore.

Straining against folds of fabric, this spirit leads into a series of photographs depicting athletes and tightrope walkers, some anonymous and others famed for their exploits. Instinctively we hold our breath before these remarkable compositions: the black sun formed by the tightly curled body of a swimmer in *Dive* by **Alexandre Rodtchenko**, founder of Russian constructivism, or the swimmers photographed by **Lev Borodulin**, whose work was heavily influenced by Rodtchenko. Caught at unusual angles, they are more akin to airplanes or birds in take-off. Beyond the cult of the athlete that is a typical feature of Soviet propaganda (in particular), these works portray the dual artistic and political revolution taking place at that time. In stark contrast, **Dara Friedman's** short film *Government Cut Freestyle* signals the end of utopia. The artist asked a hundred young men what they most

liked to do, and what they wished they could do. The majority answered "sleep" to the first question and "fly" for the second. They are filmed here "sleep-flying", launching off a pier into water in dreamy slow-motion.

Floating on the end of its string, Japanese artist **Shimabaku's** self-portrait kite (*Flying Me*) is a poetic invitation to go with the flow. Trained as an industrial designer at the Vienna Academy of Applied Arts, **Mario Terzic** makes "extension devices" that dialogue with the history of art. *My Wings* suggests the machines of Leonardo da Vinci, as well as the myth of Icarus. Yet despite his pilot's garb and glowing wings, the artist stays firmly on the ground. The elusive **Gino de Dominicis** enjoyed nothing more than sowing doubt in our minds, though in the most poetic, least serious way possible. In 1970 his *Tentativo di volo* featured in one of the *Fernsehgaleries* ("television galleries") that were broadcast on German public television, between 1968 and 1973, by Gerry Schum and Ursula Wevers. After *Land Art* in 1969, a second televised exhibition, *Identifications* in 1970, showed the Italian artist comically flapping his arms in vain. Earlier in the 1960s, German artist **Otto Piene** (one of the co-founders of the Zero group which merged art, science and architecture) developed the Sky Art concept. In *Sky Kiss-Linz*, cellist and performance artist Charlotte Moorman is lifted into the air, with her instrument, by inflatable tubes.

## THE SPIRIT FLIES FREE

A prelude to the anonymous photographs and contemporary works on the Plexiglas walls, and to the ethnographic artefacts inside the display cases in the far corner of the main gallery, **Pierre Henry's** *Envol* is at the top of a short flight of stairs. Henry, a founding figure of electroacoustic music, described this "work for loudspeaker orchestra" as "aerial swimming" comparable to the "dynamic of birds". Taken from the *Envol – Pulsations* album, it prepares mind and body for the more disconcerting experiences to come. Levitation, shamanic



trances, ritual or recreative ingestion of hallucinogenic substances, mystical ecstasy and amorous rapture sometimes combine. We are brought back down to earth with the same humility as M. Makovicka who, after a failed attempt at flight, put away his home-made wings but agreed to wear them one last time for the Czech photographer **Miroslav Hucek**.

Having admired the treasures in the impressive display of ethnographic objects, the moment has come to communicate with the spirits. **Agnès Geoffray's** heroines appear to have fallen prey to a mysterious presence. One seems to be convulsing while the other has abandoned herself to absent arms. The French artist, whose work extends to video, writing, performance art and installations, frequently uses found photographs as a medium, adding or removing elements, distorting reality and revealing the darker side of seemingly mundane or sometimes more dramatic scenes. In doing so, she revives the link between photography and the earliest days of spiritism. Photography, after all, has the power to reveal, to immortalise and create apparitions. Spiritist photography developed from the latter half of the nineteenth century, and photos were also widely used to "prove" the existence of paranormal phenomena. On the other side of the Plexiglas partitions, next to Arthur Conan Doyle's illustrations for *The Coming of the Fairies* and a drawing from **Fernand Desmoulin's** brief mediumistic period (1900-1902), a freestanding case contains photographs of anonymous subjects alongside several others by **Jacques-Henri Lartigue**. His many snapshots of elegant ladies under the influence suggest a fascination with ether. Other recurring themes are tennis balls in mid-bounce and airplanes in tentative flight. Lartigue was introduced to photography early on. He was barely eight years old when he was given his first camera. He used it to photograph his brother Zissou's madcap inventions – the rolling, floating, flying contraptions that filled the family's country mansion. At just eleven, with a child's sense of humour, he captured his cousin Bichonnade in all her turn-of-the-century glory.

Two rapturous faces draw us towards the back of the room. They hang on each side of a poster by American Newsrepeat Co. whose title, *High*, requires no further explanation. It reminds us that political contestation often goes hand-in-hand with opposition to all forms of order, moral included.

## OUT OF THEIR MIND

The two faces in question are those of a young woman on an LSD trip (left) and a certain Marcelle Chantal (right). **Albert Rudomine** paid considerable attention to renditions not just of the model's skin but also the "sensitive surface" of his photographs, which he developed using the carbon printing technique. The resulting velvety grain and deep blacks make this ecstasy all the more sensual. In contrast, **Jean-Philippe Charbonnier** turns his model into a wild-eyed Gorgon in *LSD : Une bombe atomique dans la tête*. This image by the French photojournalist became the cover illustration for the satirical journal *Le Crapouillot*, which devoted its issue 71 to LSD. **Heinrich Nüsslein** needed no outside stimulation. "I do not paint," he insisted; "it paints". This self-proclaimed "psychic painter" and "metaphysical writer" worked in a darkened room or with his eyes closed, in short bursts and for never more than fifteen minutes at a time. His *Himmel Fahrt* (Sky Ride) takes us into a different reality.

Ecstasy, in its literal sense, means "to stand outside" (of oneself, of course). **Henri Cartier-Bresson** captures this primary meaning in his image of a young bride watched by her new husband at *Chez Gégène*. Radiant in her pristine white gown, she revels in the innocent pleasure of swinging back and forth. The image is made all the more delicious by the presence of **Jan Malik's** devil ravishing a maiden. Their heads are thrown back in unmistakable erotic pleasure for us to contemplate. In *Trypps#7*, part of a series of short films, **Ben Russell** charts a woman on an LSD trip. The American artist investigates contemporary western rituals and trances. His work, which he describes as "psychedelic

ethnography", subverts the language of documentary filmmaking. Like the woman in the film, we are removed from reality, prey to doubt and fascination. Even more sensual is the ambiguous beatitude that we see in the faces of *Le Phénomène de l'extase* by **Brassaï** or **Salvador Dalí**. A chronicler of Paris and its creatures of the night, Brassai also worked with the surrealists on certain projects. His blacked-out beauty joins other images of heady delight (religious or of the flesh, who can say) in a photo-montage created under Dalí's direction for the surrealist magazine *Minotaure*.

As much as it may resemble one of surrealism's automatic drawings, the picture hung immediately above in fact portrays a different form of de-realisation, namely television. Japanese artist **Yuichi Saito** has composed a dense cloud of ideograms by writing over and over the names of the shows he likes to watch. On its left, **Frédéric Pardo's** *Bouddha invisible* owes as much to the Italian Primitives as to an epileptic flash. Which makes sense knowing that this iconic figure of the Paris underground scene was high on LSD when he painted this psychedelic vision. French **artist Robert Malaval's** *Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds* takes its name from the Beatles song and its initials LSD. Part of the "Rose-blanc-mauve" series, it continues Malaval's exploration of "white food" (the meaning is clear). Like this free-floating body, our sense of perception is thrown into disarray.

## **BEYOND GRAVITY'S HOLD**

Behind Malaval's painting, more free-floating bodies await – those of dancers. But first take a moment to consider *How to Make Yourself Better* by **Ilya and Emilia Kabakov**. Escape is a recurrent theme for the Russian conceptual artists, having experienced the restrictions and absurdities of an authoritarian regime. A pair of wings hangs like a jacket from the back of a chair. If we could sit at the table and wear these feathery attributes, perhaps every day, how many weeks would it take to make ourselves better?

Highs and lows, leaps and falls are of course central to the section on modern and contemporary dance, presented as movements and sequences (whether accidental or deliberate), as well as in choreographic narratives which suggest the vicissitudes of our existence and, sometimes, the lives and careers of these *étoiles*, the stars that shine then disappear. Looking at the photograph of **Loïe Fuller** against a backdrop of mountains, we can picture the American choreographer performing her *Serpentine Dance*. Fuller, whose extraordinarily innovative use of costume and lighting marked the history of dance, refused to be filmed, leaving us to admire her many imitators. The great Vaslav Nijinsky would have an equally compelling destiny. Legend has it that his lady admirers would faint at the very sight of his gravity-defying leaps (see *Vaslav Nijinski dans le rôle du prince Albert, au second acte de Giselle* by Louis Roosen). Another leap, into madness in the late 1910s, would seal his legend. In 1939 the choreographer Serge Lifar went to see Nijinsky in his Swiss sanatorium. Lifar reproduced some of the steps from the master's ballets, and the master unexpectedly responded with that very jump – a reminiscence from a bygone era. The two Rodin sculptures, *Nijinski* and *Figure volante* (Flying Figure), say it all.

Modern then contemporary dance succeeds in combining disenchantment and re-enchantment in one and the same movement; nor does it disdain poetry and humour. Extracts from films of recent performances at the Centre National de la Danse – CN D pay homage to this marriage of gravity and gravitas. Lie back and take in extracts from *L'Après-midi d'un foehn, version 1* by Phia Menard, *Event* by Heli Meklin, *Cavale* by Yoann Bourgeois, *Le Parc* by Angelin Prejlocaj and *Nos solitudes* by Julie Nioche. Just as funny and moving in its off-beatness is **Robert Rauschenberg's** *Pelican*, the American artist's first performance (the film and photograph shown here are by **Peter Moore**). A collaborative artist, Rauschenberg enlisted dancer Carolyn Brown and artist Per Olof Ultvedt to portray this comical flight (which brings to mind Gino de Dominicis and his equally infructuous attempts). Next to it is a photograph of rehearsals for *Beach Birds for Camera* by **Merce**

**Cunningham.** Taken by Michael O'Neill, it is typical of the New-Yorker yogi-photographer's determination to suspend time. And here's another freeze-frame: American photojournalist **Alfred Statler's** *Jumping Cat* fulfils two fantasies of post-war modern life: excitement and home comfort!

## ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND

Are feline extraterrestrials really just an invention of the internet jokers? Who's to say! Welcome to a world of make-believe for children young and old, where even the wildest dreams can go on long after waking – an abrupt awakening, in certain cases! Take *Little Nemo in Slumberland* for example, an American comic strip created in 1905 by **Winsor McCay**. Nemo's surreal adventures are governed only by the unpredictable logic of dreams, veering occasionally into nightmare situations... until morning comes and Little Nemo wakes up at the foot of his bed. A similar mechanism of dream-like images prevails in *Arzarch* by **Mœbius** – although a sensation of violence runs throughout the five graphic novels that make up the hero's absurd quest, always with his "pterodelph" by his side. In the photos to the right of the comic strips, an unknown individual in thigh boots shows off machines tinkered from odds and ends. Around a hundred such photos were taken, probably between 1940 and 1970. They were discovered, stuffed into an envelope, by Galerie Lumière des Roses which decided to give their anonymous author a name: Zorro.

Facing them, *Spoutnik russe, CCCP 28000 km à l'heure* by **André Robillard** is a similarly bric-a-brac contraption. It was after a difficult childhood that Robillard, by then a patient in a psychiatric hospital, began making spaceguns and spacecraft – a symbolic patching together of broken parts. **Guillaume Pujolle** produced his cosmic drawings also while undergoing psychiatric treatment, mixing ink or gouache with pharmaceutical products. A gust of wind appears to have swept through his drawings – or is it a gust of madness. On

his farm in Nebraska, **Emery Blagdon** composed the six hundred assemblages and the eighty paintings that make up his monumental *Healing Machine* - just a small part of which is shown here - using castoff materials which he was convinced had been charged with a powerful magnetic force. The display case contains one of twelve books of collages, texts and drawings of airships by **Charles August Albert Dellschau** – all imagined by members of the Sonora Aero Club, a secret society dedicated to the invention of flying machines.

We return to the patio via the corridor, pursued by alien hunters. **Ionel Talpazan's** obsession can perhaps be seen as symbolic of the solitude he felt following his exile to the United States. Flying saucers fill his paintings; a form of peaceful, humorous resistance. In 1970, **Julius Koller** published his *Universal-Cultural Futurological Operation* (one of the many variations he gave to the meaning of U.F.O.) as a statement on Czechoslovakia's ideological and political failure. **Melvin Edward Nelson**, who also styled himself as MEN and as Mighty Eternal Nation, claimed to have made numerous U.F.O. sightings. His paintings are records of his astral travels, using earth and rock pigments which he believed had been charged with energy from the universe. Crammed into suitcases, **Chucho's** scattered notes recount his experiences within parallel societies on other planets, after being kidnapped by aliens. A series of drawings by German artist **Karl Hans Janke** hangs opposite. His legacy to humankind consists of over four thousand five hundred detailed drawings of his intergalactic flying machines and visions of the universe, which he hoped would "benefit humanity and propagate peace". He has his feet firmly on the ground but would like us to think otherwise: in the projection room, **Fantazio** sends La maison rouge skywards. Join him in *Instantané#partitura-sparizione*, breathless, arms flailing, here we go, off we go, lift-off!

## A CHIMERA TAKES FLIGHT...

On the right-hand side of the patio are several works by a contemporary artist who regular visitors to the Fondation Antoine de Galbert know well: Henri Van Herwegen or **Panamarenko**. Since the 1960s, this Belgian artist has been creating improbable machines which, with luck, can be driven, flown or sailed. Most of these orthoses would turn us into strange hybrids. **Kiki Smith's** harpies introduce a different order, where human and animal join together to form monstrous bodies. Her *Sirens*, creatures which lure sailors to their deaths, are part of the artist's exploration of social and cultural representations of women. **Joel-Peter Witkin** has pieced together his *Bird of Queveda, New Mexico* from disparate elements, the very way chimeras are formed. Echoing Smith's sculptures, his photomontage is fascinating for its strange beauty and deviant eroticism – in which the woman remains ambivalent.

Self-proclaimed astrologer, clairvoyant and magnetic healer, **Friedrich Schröder-Sonnenstern** was a prolific draftsman as much as a regular inmate (of both psychiatric hospitals and prison). His sexually charged drawings, such as *Der Friedens Habich*, earned him a place at the International Surrealist Exhibition of 1959. There are more extraordinary hybrid creatures in the *Sortilèges* of symbolist poet and painter **Roger Lorange**. At the turn of the nineteenth century, **Abbé Fouré** decorated his house in Brittany, known locally as "La Haute Folie" ("the height of madness"), with more than two hundred wood sculptures depicting both saintly figures and traditional folklore. He even sculpted the rocks overlooking the sea – hybrid *hybris*?

In contrast, the adventures of the Vivian Girls, aided and abetted by captain **Henry Darger**, show prepubescent or intersex bodies, including those of little girls complete with butterfly wings or the stomach of a dragon (*In the Realms of the Unreal*). Chimeras swell the ranks of this army of innocents fleeing Glandelinia, the nation of adults and its inherent cruelty.

Humanity in **Janko Domsic**'s drawings turns out to be part-angel, part-demon. He subjects his creatures and text to an exacting geometry; mysticism and hermeneutic references abound. Pursuit of a so-called truth can lead art into darker realms. These obscure countries include that of the American **Prophet Royal Robertson**. Convinced he was the victim of a global female conspiracy (mounted by his ex-wife), he warns against the dangers of adultery and fornication in works that bristle with secret codes. In comparison, the modern-day angel (*Engelmann*) of German sculptor **Stephan Balkenhol** has an almost hieratic air, cutting short any attempts at interpretation. The first part of the exhibition ends with the hilarious fake propaganda poster of Ghanaian artist **James Kwabena Anane** and its ironic slogan, "China leading the world to higher heights". An example to follow as we leave behind chimeras, dragons and other monsters, still earthy creatures, and venture into space.

### **WALKING ON THE MOON...**

We continue our journey on the balcony, where a comely **Urs Lüthi** invites us join him on his living-room flying carpet. As always, the Swiss artist plays on his androgynous physique and cultivates the art of cross-dressing in this self-portrait. **Georges Méliès** put his former career as a stage magician to use in creating the visual effects that helped define the history of cinematic technique. Their rudimentary aspect, compared to the sophisticated SFX of today, adds to the charm of *Voyage dans la lune*, which is widely considered the first ever sci-fi movie. The work of French artist **Philippe Thomassin** is informed less by his studies of art history and more by time spent at a flying club. The items that accompany him in the cockpit are nothing more than references to flight times (*Flight Time 5h30*, part of the "Météo-Rites" series). Altitude implies a shift in scale, even detachment.

Modest defines the work of Japanese artist **Nobuko Tsuchiya** too. *11 Dimension Project 2* kindles distant memories of minimalism and antiform, but these are references to be taken



with a pinch of salt. She presents an ovoid shape as fragile as our collapsing certainties. And what of *Hometown Sky Ladder* by Chinese artist and pyrotechnician **Cai Guo-Qiang**, which is nothing more than dust, or rather gunpowder. He makes an eloquent tribute to his hometown, as well as to Oriental philosophy and painting. The figurative works of Austrian artist **Oswald Tschirtner** are comparable in their fragility. His fragility, for he was schizophrenic. Teetering on long, spidery legs, his figures appear to hesitate while the world carries on around them (*Untitled (Der Mann im Mond)*). **Fabio Mauri** cuts short our melancholic musings of touching the sky with two words – "The End" – posted at the top of his ladder (*Macchina per fissare acquerelli*) – the kind used by painters to adorn domes with heavenly canopies and *putti*. *Luna*, also by the Italian artist, invites the spectator to step through the screen and experience the lunar dreams born on television. The same fictional potential underpins the work of French artist **Stéphane Thidet**. *From Walden to Space* suggests a more cosmic, metaphysical journey in the form of the Mercury VII space capsule crossed with Henry David Thoreau's cabin in *Walden; or, life in the woods* (1854).

Back on the balcony, we encounter *Letatline*, its name a portmanteau from the Russian *letat* ("to fly") and its inventor, **Vladimir Tatline**. A dyed-in-the-wool revolutionary, Tatline believed art should contribute to society and foster progress. Utopia, ideology and faith roll into one in this appendage, designed to augment the human body's physical capacities and enable its wearer to rise above the ground, powered only by his own arm movements. In a different vein, the installations of French artist and architect **Didier Faustino** create uncomfortable experiences: the (physical) body is exposed, pulled in different directions, much like the social body. Faith gives way to a fierce lucidity. Why should art be any different: *Opus Incertum* invites us to recreate the *Saut dans le vide* ("leap into nothingness") that **Yves Klein** claimed to have made in 1960, in a fake newspaper-brochure. No more utopia. When the chair in *Escape Vehicle n°6* reaches the edge of space, it

disintegrates. British artist **Simon Faithfull** reflects on the post-Anthropocene epoch and the possible end of the world. As the chair slowly ascends, its fate is gradually sealed.

## **NO GOING BACK**

Feathered mechanisms by Panamarenko and **Rebecca Horn** re-enchanted body and soul. The German artist, who suffers chronic pain following serious health problems, encases her body with her *Éventail blanc pour un port* and undertakes a choreography of photographs that is typical of her "somatic art". When disillusionment becomes too great to bear, the mind can still escape. A video work takes us into the final two rooms. In *The Garden of Stones*, Iranian film-maker **Parviz Kimiavi** tells the story of a shepherd who, acting on a dream, hangs stones from dead trees to create a garden in the desert, communicating only with the sky.

A large display case contains a group of drawings by different authors, each a schematic representation of the world – seen from far above. Each in his own way, **Matthew Ivan Smith** and **Kim Jones** have suffered a form of claustrophobia: Smith, the son of a musician and a mathematician, is autistic. Between the ages of seven and ten, Jones was confined to a wheelchair. Smith is haunted by spatial views, Jones by games of strategy. In *War Drawing*, the pencil advances methodically over the surface of the paper, a conquering army. Patience is a characteristic of **Johannes Stek's** oeuvre, too. Little by little, these "views from above" become increasingly organic, monstrous even, as with the drawings of Korean artist **Kim Dong-Hyun**. Having moved around a lot as a child, he reproduces railway and underground networks that sprawl across the paper like rhizomes or intestines.

**Zdeněk Košek** had no means of escape; he was, after all, the Universe's messenger on Earth. Born in the Czech Republic, he covered maps, beer mats and notebooks with reams

of figures and mysterious annotations, intended to give order to chaos – and control the weather! Similarly, **Palanc** conceived his drawings, alphabets and *Autogéométrie* treatise with the ambition to fathom the laws of the universe and achieve intellectual elevation. While the drawings by German set and costume designer **Robert Herlth** may appear to have been dictated by a far darker force than film, these expressionist chiaroscuro sketches were preparation for his work on *Faust*, directed by Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau. And so we arrive at *Château Bremgarten* by **Adolf Wölfli**. Institutionalised and schizophrenic, Wölfli is one of the key figures of art brut and the author of hundreds of drawings, collages, texts, even musical scores – an imaginary biography filling some twenty-five thousand pages.

#### **COMING IN TO LAND...**

When artistic release or gentle folly isn't enough, there is always humour, the "courtesy of despair". A kid's inflatable pool becomes a landing pad for a toy helicopter (*Heliport*) thanks to Swiss artist **Roman Signer**, whose disruption of daily objects equally disrupts our point of view. Master of the absurd, he explodes the everyday, quite literally. Behind woefully descriptive titles, his videos play on the comic potential of events that would otherwise struggle to capture our attention. *56 Klein Helikopter* puts "56 small helicopters" on a collision course. *Zwei Schirme* follows "two umbrellas" dancing across a field. *Start* shows an upturned van, now a rocket ready for lift-off. Five, four, three, two, one, ignition!

**Damián Valdés Dilla**'s flying machines look as though they might have crossed Signer's path. They haven't, of course: the Cuban artist assembles the broken and bust elements he finds into new machines - accidents waiting to happen. American **George Widener**, who is autistic, transcribes the (forgotten) dates of plane crashes that happened on a Sunday (*Sunday's Crash*). Did **Pierre Joseph**'s witch (*La Sorcière*) crash into the wall of La maison rouge on one such Sunday? More like at the exhibition preview: as per the French artist's

usual protocol, the photograph shown here was used by a performance artist to produce the scene live, for one night only.

We now know the tragic fate of the 1897 Arctic balloon expedition in which **Nils Strindberg** and two other explorers perished. Their story was put together several decades later following the discovery, circa 1930, of rolls of film from the expedition. It's then our turn to piece together history as we watch Agnès Geoffroy's *Flying Man* slideshow, in which the artist stretches out the one minute and thirty-seven seconds of the Pathé archive footage at the origin of the work. We watch horrified and dumbfounded as Franz Reichelt in his parachute suit leaps to his death from the first platform of the Eiffel Tower.

Before returning to the (still blue) foyer, take a look at *Oui-ja enregistreur* by **Jean Perdrizet**, who perhaps used his training as a civil engineer when devising his machines for communicating with the beyond or contacting alien life. He submitted his blueprints to NASA, the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique and the Swedish Royal Academy of Sciences. Such a vast programme would appeal to painter, video artist, performance artist and scenographer **Hélène Delprat**, who describes her work as "extending the worst". *Simorg* makes reference to the simurgh, a fabulous bird in Persian mythology, but also touches on photographer Eadweard Muybridge's research into the breaking down of motion, in the nineteenth century. And on this subject, *Décomposition du vol d'un goéland* is a bronze cast by the French doctor and physiologist **Jules-Étienne Marey**, inventor of chronophotography. *Vol d'un goéland* (the last work in the exhibition) is an example of the technique in use. **Nicolas Darrot's** mechanical sculpture creates surprising plays on words. How else could "l'apesanteur" ("gravity") become "la peur sainte" ("holy fear")? So while the cage is still open, let's follow the lead of the men and women who refuse to be shut in, and get out of here! The superheroes brought along by French artist **Hervé Di Rosa**, who again shares part of his collection with us, restore our faith in the impossible. We should believe them.

## related events

**thursday 28<sup>th</sup> June at 7pm**

***Fabio Mauri***

talk by Valérie Da Costa,  
coinciding with the publication of *Fabio Mauri – Le passé en actes* by Les presses du réel

**thursday 20<sup>th</sup> September at 7pm**

***Les Mondes d'Hervé Di Rosa***

projection of Alyssa Verbizh's  
documentary about the artist,  
with the filmmaker and the artist

**thursday 20<sup>th</sup> September at 7pm**

***Banquet by Fabien Vallos***

inédits#12, programming by Aurélie Djian

**thursday 27<sup>th</sup> September at 7pm**

***Paroles en l'air***

a musical and literary performance by  
and with François Delvoye

**thursday 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> October  
at 7pm**

***Les jeudis de L'envol***

guided tours with personalities who have  
left their mark on La maison rouge:  
artists, curators, regular and guest  
collaborators, and others...

**information, prices and booking**

tel. 01 40 01 08 81

reservation@lamaisonrouge.org

## and also...

**guided tours**

every Saturday and Sunday at 4pm,  
Thursday at 7pm

**short tours for the family**

every Wednesday at 3pm,  
including school holidays

**family storytime\***

Wednesday 20th June (with Florence  
Desnouveaux), 18th July (with Sylvie  
Mombo), 22nd August (with Fred  
Pougard), 19th September (with Clara  
Guenoun) and 17th October (with Laetitia  
Bloud) at 3pm

\*(from age 4)

**information, prices and booking**

tel. 01 40 01 08 81

reservation@lamaisonrouge.org

## **La maison rouge**

president: Antoine de Galbert

director: Paula Aisemberg

collection curator: Arthur Toqué, with Théo Castaings

exhibitions director: Noëlig Le Roux, with Laurianne Duhayer

technical director: Laurent Guy, with Jérôme Gallos and Steve Almarines

set-up: Alaa Abou Shaheen, Stéphane Albert, Lorraine Châteaux, Tiphaine Civade, Frédéric Daugu, Florent Houel, Nicolas Juilliard, Emmanuelle Lagarde, Yann

Ledoux, Nicolas Magdelaine, Noé Nadaud, Arnaud Piroud, Ludovic Poulet, Brandao

Richard, Matthieu Roualo, Estelle Savoye

exhibition design and signage: Zen+dCo – Zette Cazalas, with Jesus Pacheco

lighting: Abraxas Concepts – Philippe Collet, with Sébastien Audevie and Ugo Cerina

visitor relations: Marie Cantos, with Fannie Raffarin and Elora Weill-Engerer

communication and cultural programming: Aurélie Garzuel, with Sarah Baud

publications: Véronique Pieyre de Mandiargues, with Axel Thoinon

administrative assistant: Stéphanie Dias

front desk: Sybil Coovi Handemagnon and Alicia Tréminio

## **press relations**

Claudine Colin Communication

– Pénélope Ponchelet

## **les amis de la maison rouge**

Véronique Pieyre de Mandiargues, with Camille Maufay

## **media partners**

France culture | Télérama | Trois couleurs |

Connaissance des arts | À nous Paris |

Slash

La maison rouge is a member of TRAM

## **tickets**

- full price: €10

- concessions: €7 (13-18s, students, maison des artistes, over-65s)

- free for under-13s, jobseekers, the disabled and a companion, ICOM, les amis de La maison rouge

- tickets on sale at [www.fnac.com](http://www.fnac.com)

## **opening days and times**

- Wednesday to Sunday, 11am to 7pm

- late nights Thursday to 9pm

- la maison rouge is accessible to disabled visitors

**La maison rouge will close for the very last time at 7pm on Sunday 28th October**

## **petit journal**

texts: visitor relations staff, based on texts by the authors of the catalogue

© photos: Marc Damage

graphic design: Jocelyne Fracheboud

printed by: L.graphic





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