



Vinyl. Records and covers by artists The Guy Schraenen collection

Curator: Guy Schraenen

Organised by the Research Centre for Artists' Publications/Neues Museum Weserburg Bremen, Germany and by the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA), Barcelona, Spain.

Legends

- : Visitors can listen to extracts of the sound content at the deck at the end of the exhibition
- : Author of the cover
- : Author of the sound content and cover

Vinyl shows a selection of some 800 pieces from the collection of Guy Schraenen (see glossary). The main of this collection comprises vinyl records and covers by artists, musicians and poets in LP, single and other formats, alongside other sound media (tapes and CDs). The collection also includes documents that came with the sound content (posters or booklets) or which

shed light on the context in which they were made (photos, posters, manifestos, catalogues, artists' books).

The common denominator of virtually all these objects is that they are multiples, the main focus of Guy Schraenen's work as a collector and producer. They must, for the most part, be seen as works of art, produced in small quantities like an artist's book. Rarely collected by institutions, their conservation often falls to private individuals.

The more widespread use of the vinyl record by artists corresponds to a change in artistic practice. Early twentieth-century avant-gardists, such as Dada and the Futurists, were first to see sound and the voice as having creative potential. Performances, happenings, videos and sound works grew from the late 1950s, often spanning several disciplines. Artists seized upon new technologies (photography, film, discs, cassettes) to use them in their work.

Individual artists take very different approaches. Some are interested in the record as a form of sound experimentation, using sound as a medium in its own right, on a par with photography and video. Others see the record as a way to diffuse existing works or to document events. Covers become "canvases" to illustrate artists' own work or that of others.

Vinyl shows artists and artistic movements of the second half of the twentieth century through this complex medium, with its dual visual and audible components. A selection of 300 records can be listened to on the deck at the end of the exhibition.

Glossary

Adapted from Guy Schraenen's glossary for the *Vinyl. Records and covers by artists* catalogue, NMW, Bremen and MACBA, Barcelona.

Laurie Anderson • Laurie Anderson (b.1947) is unusual in that she is equally renowned in the worlds of both music and contemporary art. Since the 60s her performances have almost always included music, often in the shape of one of her adapted electronic violins. In the 70s she featured on many recordings, in collaboration with other artists such as John Giorno and William Burroughs. With her single *O Superman*, which climbed to number 2 in the British charts, Anderson's fame spread beyond the world of art.

Beat Generation • Beat Generation refers to a group of American writers of the 50s that included William Burroughs, Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, John Giorno, Gregory Corso and Brion Gysin. Generally associated with sound poetry, their works were typically very rhythmical and written in extremely open form.

Harry Bertoia • In the 70s, sculptor and designer Harry Bertoia (1915-1978) began to make sound sculptures, which he called "sonambient." Partially mobile, standing metal structures, the sculptures produce sounds through their own movement or when touched; sounds which Bertoia conceived as human expression. He recorded hours of these sounds which he released as a series of albums in the mid-70s.

Joseph Beuys • Multiples are central to the work of artist Joseph Beuys (1921-1986) who saw in them an essential means of spreading his ideas. Beuys believed discussion and debate were components of what he called social sculpture. He was at pains to ensure his performances were orally transmitted and recorded, such as his 1974 performance at the ICA in London (*Art into Society, Society into Art*). His records show the extent of his collaboration with a network of artists, including Nam June Paik, Henning Christiansen and Albrecht d.

Come-back (vinyl) • Just when CDs seemed to have pushed vinyl to the edge of extinction, vinyl records returned to favour in the 90s when DJs began using them for mixing and scratching (variable speed turntables are essential for mixing one track into another). True sound-lovers boast the incomparable sound quality of vinyl over CDs or mp3s. Fans of vinyl enjoy the ritualistic aspect involved in the need to handle record and stylus with great care, which turns the act of listening into an observance worthy of one's full attention. The size of the cover makes it a remarkable medium for artistic expression. This is one of the reasons why vinyl records are increasingly released for promotional purposes, or as collector's items for audiophiles, fans and others who are simply nostalgic for the past.

Compact Disc • Compact discs or CDs, optical discs storing digital data, first appeared on the market in 1982 and quickly replaced vinyl records, being longer-lasting, more easily portable, providing extended listening time and delivering good sound quality. Their small size means the sleeves are less suitable as a medium for visual works but makes them easier to insert in magazines and catalogues.

Hanne Darboven • The pioneering conceptual artist Hanne Darboven (1941-2009) created a visual notation language in the 60s, based on the dates and numbers that are part of everyday life and accompanied by a form of handwriting of her own invention. This methodology produced a body of work which chronicles time and marks its passing, through various protocols. The *Wende 80* is the first of the artist's projects to use musical notation. A trained pianist, Darboven developed a code in which numbers correspond to musical notes. With the help of a composer, she then orchestrated and released vinyl recordings of these compositions, extracts of which can be heard as part of the exhibition.

Die Tödliche Doris • Active in Berlin in the 80s, this German performance art and music group was part of the *Geniale Dilletanten* movement, a fusion between New Wave and Punk. Each of their albums was radically different in style or image from the previous one (pop, minimalist etc.), throwing music marketing strategies into disarray. Their records are highly sought-after by collectors, particularly the *Chöre und Soli* box set which contains 8 doll-sized records and a miniature record-player.

Distribution • Considered to be limited editions, records by artists (visual arts, sound poetry, experimental music) are often privately distributed, outside the usual record industry channels. They are mainly sold in bookshops, specialist galleries and art galleries.

Documents • Records can take on documentary status when they are the only trace of a given event (performances, happenings, concerts, conferences, lectures). An example is the voice recording which portrays an artist's personality or brings a deceased artist "back to life."

Jean Dubuffet • In the early 60s, Jean Dubuffet (1901-1985) and his friend Asger Jorn (1914-1973), co-founder of the Cobra group, taped several of their musical improvisation sessions and released them as albums (*Musique phénoménale*). Dubuffet then continued these musical experiments alone, in his home studio. His lack of musical education was a considerable advantage in his search for freedom and innovation. He produced unusual sounds from his instruments and fully embraced his amateur status and the limitations of his recording equipment as sources of authenticity, imagining himself as "a man from fifty thousand years ago [...] who knows nothing about western music and invents his own."

Flexi disc • A flexi disc is a thin, flexible micro-groove disc, usually 17cm in diameter. Fragile and cheap to produce, the sound quality was generally poor hence flexi discs were used chiefly for advertising purposes or were inserted in magazines and art books.

Fluxus • Inspired by the spirit of Dadaism and strongly influenced by John Cage's thoughts on chance and indeterminacy, the 60s art movement Fluxus combined happenings, concerts, poetry, objects, lectures, books and projections. It proclaimed there should be no boundaries between the different forms of artistic expression, or between art and life ("Art is what makes life more interesting than art," according to Robert Filliou's famous definition). Music was of great significance to Fluxus: the movement originated with a concert organised by George Maciunas in 1962. Its many members included musicians La Monte Young, John Cage, Nam June Paik, Philip Corner and Ben Patterson.

Giorno Poetry Systems • Closely linked to the New York underground movement, particularly William Burroughs and the Beat Generation, in 1961 the poet John Giorno (b.1936) created Giorno Poetry Systems. His aim was to use modern mass media and technologies to disseminate poetry more widely. GPS released some forty tracks.

Laibach • This Slovenian industrial music group, founded in 1980, belongs to the New Slovenian Art movement (NSK). Much of the Laibach aesthetic involves ambiguous references to the visual codes of totalitarian ideologies of both the far left and far right. Their albums are experiments with sound which often closely resemble popular music forms, in particular their own, heavily-reworked versions of pop classics such as the Beatles' *Let It Be*.

Language • The Russian futurist and constructivist movements explored language's potential as a form of expression independently of its semantic value. This was further researched by Dada artists such as Schwitters, Huelsenbeck and Hausmann. The latter published a book of monosyllabic poems in 1915, followed, from 1922 to 1932, by his famous phonetic poems, *Sonate in Urlauten* or primitive sound sonatas. They considerably influenced the sound poetry of the 50s.

Locked groove • A silent loop at the end of a vinyl record. Generally, there is no sound content although some artists have recorded in the locked groove. The RRRRecords label has released several albums consisting only of sound loops.

Christian Marclay • Artist and musician Christian Marclay (b. 1955) addresses sound and how it can be portrayed. His work explores the area where sound and vision intersect, through sculptures, videos and installations which use recycling, appropriation and alteration. His 1989 installation *Footsteps*, a tribute to Fred Astaire, consisted of a gallery floor covered with 3,500 records, all of which contained recordings of footsteps. Visitors walked on the records and, when the exhibition was over, each record had become a unique work as each was now a mixture of random compositions associating the original recording with the alterations caused by the visitors' footsteps.

Hermann Nitsch • A member of the Vienna Actionist movement, since the 60s Hermann Nitsch (b. 1938) has been organising performances and happenings. Originally influenced by Fluxus, his performance pieces became more spectacular with his *Theatre of Orgies and Mysteries*, a global work encompassing painting, architecture and music. These precisely orchestrated and documented public ceremonies portray extreme and bloody Dionysian rituals which address all five senses.

Noise • Italian futurism was the first arts movement of the 20th century to take an interest in noise, and more particularly the noises that are typically part of the modern urban industrial soundscape (factories, cars, trains, aeroplanes). In *The Art of Noises* in 1913, Luigi Russolo suggested a system of classifying noises that was to revolutionise music. He also created a number of musical instruments, including the *intonarumori*. Russolo is considered a precursor of electronic music and influenced the work of John Cage, Pierre Schaeffer and Pierre Henry. Industrial sounds and noises mixed with rock and electronic instruments were also the basis for industrial music, which appeared in the mid-70s.

Roman Opalka • In 1965, Roman Opalka (b. 1931) began work on a piece that attempts to give the passage of time a physical presence, by painting the numbers from 1 to infinity. The canvases are of identical shape and size, but each time the background is a little lighter, so that the numbers gradually disappear. As he paints, Opalka says each number out loud into a tape recorder, so he can continue with the work even when painting white on white. He ends each session by taking a photographic self-portrait, always in the same conditions.

A.R. Penck • A self-taught musician and artist, A.R. Penck (b. 1939) played in a free jazz group in the 70s, and produced and recorded many records. He

designs his own record sleeves, using the graffiti-like graphic style that made him famous in the 80s.

Picture disc • A record that has a photograph or illustration printed on one or both sides. The process was invented in the 30s but only became popular in the 70s. The records are generally limited editions of original vinyl recordings, intended mainly for collectors and fans although they can be played.

Record • A phonograph record is a flat disc, generally vinyl, that carries an analogue sound recording inscribed on a spiral groove (one on each side). Invented in 1887 by Emile Berliner, these flat discs replaced the cylinder-based method of recording which Edison had developed ten years earlier. The first discs were made of shellac. In 1948, Columbia began to produce records made from vinyl, a material that allowed finer micro-grooves to be inscribed for extended listening time. The most common sizes are 17.5cm diameter with one track per side (singles), revolving at 45 revolutions per minute (rpm), and 30cm diameter revolving at 33rpm (LP or long play lasting 40 to 60 minutes). The 25cm / 78rpm format disappeared in the 50s. Numerous variations exist, such as 30cm records revolving at 45rpm (EP or Extended Play), reverse direction grooves (spiralling out from the centre), locked groove, etc.

Record/object • Record/objects are a form of *objet d'art*, produced as one-offs or in a very limited edition. Although they resemble records and are packaged in sleeves, as a rule there is no sound content.

Revolutions per minute (The art record) • Set of two vinyl records accompanied by 21 lithographs, published by New York gallery owner Ronald Feldman in 1982. Feldman asked the artists he represented to provide items for the album. The subsequent recordings range from experimental sound to lectures, from song to story.

Dieter Roth • Writer, poet, performance artist, musician and inventor of Eat Art, Dieter Roth (1930-1998) was a multi-faceted artist who, in 1973, started making records and giving concerts, either alone or with artist friends such as Arnulf Rainer, Hermann Nitsch, Gerhard Rühm, Oswald Wiener and Günther Brus, as part of the *Selten gehörte musik* project (Music seldom heard). His 1978 "Radio Sonata", played live on the radio, consisted of "45 minutes of piano improvisation, played in a state of increasing inebriation." In the 80s, working with his son Björn, he produced works that incorporated tape recorders and musical boxes.

Guy Schraenen • Guy Schraenen is born in London, he lives between Paris, Brazil and Portugal. Between 1966 and 1978, he holds a gallery in Antwerp and leads from 1973 his activity of editor at the same time. In 1974, he created the Archives for Small Press and Communication (A.S.P.C), with an important section devoted to sound art, avant-garde music and sound poetry. Since 1999, this section has become an autonomous collection including vinyl records, tapes, compact discs, specialised publications, reference books, catalogues, specific objects and plastic works.

During the 1980s, he became a radio producer in Belgium, in Spain (counting the serial: *I am an artist*), and runs the *Archive Space* in Antwerp. In 1989, he founded an independent department for artists' publications at the Neues Museum Weserburg Bremen, Germany. In 1999, the Serralves Museum of Contemporary Art in Porto asked him to create a department for multiples. So he did in 2007 at the MacBa, Barcelona and since 2008, he goes on building this collection for the Reina Sofia Museum in Madrid too. He was the curator for the following exhibitions: *D'une oeuvre l'autre*, *Out of Print*, *Homage to Mallarmé*, *Métamorphosis of the Writing* and *Vinyl*. He published retrospectives about artists such as Sol Lewitt, Daniel Buren, Hans Peter Feldman, Richard Long, James Lee Byars...

Scores • As a rule, sound works by visual artists do not use musical scores. There is no intermediate stage between the conception and production of the work. For sound poets, the text can be seen as a score. Scores and music stands have been used in the visual arts as raw materials (Rühm, Darboven), while scores written by some contemporary composers resemble abstract works of art and are totally incomprehensible to the uninitiated (Stockhausen).

Sleeve (collaborations) • Sometimes musicians have asked famous artists, with whom they feel a certain affinity, to design covers for their albums. Bobby O and Roy Lichtenstein are one example of this, Philip Glass and Sol Lewitt another. Rock and pop groups also call on artists: the Beatles chose Richard Hamilton for their *White Album* and Peter Blake for *Sgt. Pepper's*; Raymond Pettibon designs all the record sleeves for Black Flag; Warhol designed covers for both the Velvet Underground and the Rolling Stones. Sonic Youth has entrusted each of its album covers to a different artist (Jeff Wall, Gerhard Richter, Richard Prince, etc).

Sound poetry • The 50s saw the emergence of sound poetry in France. Its aim was to shake poetry out of the books where it was "dozing" (Bernard Heidsieck) and turn it into something active and alive. The origins of this approach to poetry can be found in the work of the early twentieth-century avant-gardists, in futurist poems and research by the Dada movement (Scwitters' *Ursonate*) which explore the sound potential of words, irrespective of their semantic content.

Some of the fundamental research in sound poetry was a direct result of developments in sound recording technology (launch of ReVox tape recorders), particularly the work of Heidsieck and Henri Chopin. The term "electronic poetry" can also be used here. Another approach focused on the voice and was thus closer to the body, such as Isidore Isou's Lettrism and François Dufrêne's *crirythmes*.

A large part of the exhibition is about poetry. It gathers together compilations, recordings of festivals such as *Polyphonix*, and collections of works focusing on a few important proponents of sound poetry: Henri Chopin and the recorded magazine OU which, from 1964, released sound poetry compilations on vinyl records, with selections of work by pioneers from the past and contemporary artists. Among these were John Giorno and his Giorno Poetry System, plus the other Beat Generation poets; sound collages by Ferdinand Kriwet (b. 1942) using archive recordings from the 1972 American presidential election campaign; and the fruits of a collaboration between Belgian composer Henri Pousseur (1929-2009) and writer Michel Butor (b. 1926), which produced *Votre Faust*, "an operatic variable fantasy."

Speed • Vinyl records are designed to be played at 33, 45, 78 and occasionally 16 revolutions per minute. Variation in turntable speed distorts the sound. As early as 1922, Darius Milhaud began experimenting with changing how voices sound by altering turntable speed.

Tape recorder • In the 50s, tape recorders allowed artists to undertake sound-focused research, as it became relatively easy for them to rework sounds, declarations and speech which they recorded in their everyday environment. From 1963, cassette recorders meant artists and smaller labels could produce cassettes and copy them on demand (as opposed to vinyls with a minimum production run of 500). The invention of the cassette recorder had a similar impact on recorded works of art as the photocopier had on books: these could now be reproduced and distributed independently and to smaller audiences.

Turntable • Micro-groove records can be played on a gramophone or record player (also called a pick-up) with loud speakers, or on a turntable (which only

has a play-back mechanism). The record's micro-groove is tracked by a stylus and amplified. John Cage's 1939 *Imaginary Landscape #1* was the first work to use record players as instruments.

Vinyl • A synthetic material used for making records from 1948 on. Vinyl quickly replaced shellac which had been used to make 78s. Vinyl is usually black, and can be inscribed with micro-grooves. This increases the listening time of an LP to around 30 minutes. The word "vinyl" has become synonymous with micro-groove record.

Andy Warhol • Andy Warhol (1928-1987) was close to the world of music. He designed some fifty record sleeves during his career, although only a few have achieved legendary status. One is the peel-off banana for The Velvet Underground, whom he produced and managed. Another is the *Sticky Fingers* album cover for the Rolling Stones. Warhol's covers display the successive hallmarks of his style: pre-pop line drawings, photo-booth portrait repetitions, and most of all silk-screen portraits (Paul Anka, Diana Ross, John Lennon).

Lawrence Weiner • Language is the raw material of conceptual artist Lawrence Weiner (b. 1942), many of whose works consist of declarations in type-set lettering on various media, such as books, posters or tee-shirts, and even gallery walls. Wiener's recordings, which again use multiple media, highlight the acoustic aspect of his declarations.

Céleste Boursier-Mougenot

A musician by training, Céleste Boursier-Mougenot (Nice, 1961) composed for the theatre company of author and director Pascal Rambert for the ten years from 1984 to 1995, before his first exhibitions in contemporary art circles. Through this transition towards the visual arts, he was able to move away from the limited timeframe of a live performance to the extended time of the exhibition. It also allowed him to develop an experimental work which builds on given situations to create living, autonomous, always different sound forms.

Sound and the installation of sound in space are the starting-point for his experiments, which culminate in hybrid works that are part sculpture, part installation, part musical performance, part scenography. The artist creates musical situations by developing the sonic potential of objects, beings, natural phenomena, situations and ordinary activities: porcelain dishes knocking together inside an inflatable swimming pool (*Untitled*), finches landing on amplified guitar strings (*From Here to Ea*), fish swimming in a tank (*Videodrones*), feedback from a microphone relayed by two loudspeakers (*Scanner*), computer keyboard strokes translated into notes on a piano (*Index*).

Céleste Boursier-Mougenot's works are self-generating, most often by transforming various signals (movement, video) into sound. These transmogrifications occur in real-time thanks to relatively simple software which he develops himself. Visitors are left to observe, listen and subsequently deduce the relation between the visual and changing audible elements. Indeed, the visitor is a link in each of these interactive pieces.

Transcom 1, Céleste Boursier-Mougenot's installation for la maison rouge, is a new creation which reprises certain processes from previous works. Visitors enter a half-dark, empty space, edged by alternating mirrors and screens. The live images on the screens are filmed non-stop by four security cameras attached to two helium balloons. White dots floating through the darkness, the balloons perform an unpredictable choreography that is determined by factors such as the number of people in the room, the temperature, the flow of air through the ventilators, and the expansion and contraction of the helium. What the cameras film depends on where the balloons are in the room, and these images in turn determine the sounds, a principle already

explored in *Videodrones*. the flow of images that passes before each camera is interpreted as sound which varies according to the light, speed, number and size of the filmed objects. Visitors hear "the sound of images," an apt description of the intuitiveness and poetry of this installation.

Caught in a continuum of sounds and images - their filmed image, their reflection, and the filmed image of their reflection - visitors are plunged into a complex and continually moving reality in which they are both transmitter and receiver.

Céleste Boursier-Mougenot lives and works in Sète. He is represented by Galerie Xippas in Paris and by Paula Cooper Gallery in New York.

The Association des Amis de la Maison Rouge has produced a Céleste Boursier-Mougenot multiple to coincide with the exhibition.

Marco Decorpeliada *Schizometers*

This first showing of the work of Marco Decorpeliada (1947-2006) is a collection of objects, documents, correspondence and artwork loaned by Julie W., the artist's sister, and Dr Sven Legrand, the psychiatric doctor who treated Marco Decorpeliada during the last years of his life. Given the wealth and diversity of his patient's work, and with the support of colleagues, Dr Legrand approached la maison rouge with the idea for this exhibition. So as to understand the "discovery" of this artist, and the different stages in this project, visitors are invited to view the video last.

The work of Marco Decorpeliada can be qualified as *art brut*, a term coined in 1945 by Jean Dubuffet (and which Roger Cardinal referred to as *outsider art*) to describe the work of non-professional artists having no formal art training and as such who escape the conventions and boundaries of accepted culture. Generally, these artists are self-taught recluses, mediums or psychiatric

patients. However, it would be misguided to label Marco Decorpeliada, as his entire work is a counter-reaction to the cataloguing he underwent in different psychiatric hospitals.

The target of his work is the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th Edition (DSM IV), published by the American Psychiatric Association. This manual proposes a universal decimal classification for practical, statistical and epidemiological purposes. This classification is mandatory in France when treating patients in psychiatric hospitals.

Marco Decorpeliada was variously labelled over the course of his stays in psychiatric institutions, and felt persecuted by this onslaught of diagnoses. Each time he made a point of finding the (always different) codes for his "disorders" and tried to understand the logic behind them. This came to him when flicking through a frozen food catalogue. He saw a clear correspondence between the codes which the DSM IV gave to mental disorders and the catalogue product codes: two items, one number!

This "discovery" would occupy Marco Decorpeliada's thoughts and spare time from 2004. Encouraged by Dr Legrand, he gave form to this correlation in several series of objects.

In his early works, he structured these two numerical series around a third reference: the metre. A thousand millimetres which, in his mind, corresponded to the DSM's thousand boxes. He cut and glued strips from the DSM and the frozen food catalogue onto rulers and measures of all shapes and sizes to make his schizometers.

He then set about finding other numerical coincidences, taking his riposte to the DSM IV further still by annexing various corpora, which are shown here. The frieze, printed in a careful, childlike hand, notes the correspondence with the DSM codes of the various "disorders" diagnosed during his three hospitalisations.

By extending this use of a single system to classify heterogeneous bodies, Marco Decorpeliada discovered the limits of the DSM IV: there are a thousand boxes for just 307 "disorders." The system is incomplete. There are still illnesses to be found. In the rows and columns he drew on fridge doors, these missing illnesses immediately stand out as "worrying white holes" opposite the names of each frozen food.

When viewing the work of Marco Decorpeliada in a contemporary art venue, artistic references inevitably come to mind. The black and white squares on the fridge door suggest minimalist art in its reduction of works to their simplest, most elementary geometric forms (François Morellet, Sol Lewitt); the use of a "protocol" to produce serial works evokes certain aspects of conceptual art (Stanley Brown, Hanne Darboven).

The skeleton is the artist's last work, produced in November 2006 on the Day of the Dead in Mexico, which he visited with one of Dr Legrand's friends. Building on an unconscious assimilation of classification with calcification, it stands apart from the other pieces and gives a glimpse of the direction Marco Decorpeliada's unexpected work might have taken.

This entire body of work testifies to what effectively amounts to artistic guerrilla warfare. A war against the armada of referential knowledge and its dead ends; against psychiatric medicine's frenzied need to classify. Using simple techniques (decoupage, collage, détournement), Marco Decorpeliada's work brings to light the great secret he penetrated: the underlying "orders" that emerge in the arbitrary nature of any classification. A joyful, ironic, paradoxical, comical war that is no less rigorous in its quite personal logic.

Schizomètre. Petit manuel de survie en milieu psychiatrique is published to coincide with the exhibition (EPEL, 2010).

la maison rouge is organising two round tables to discuss Marco Decorpeliada's work on Saturday February 20th and Saturday May 8th. Information and reservations on 01 40 01 08 81.

thu van tran, 199 491 le nombre pur selon duras

Les amis de la maison rouge commissioned Thu Van Tran to produce a work for the patio, a glass-encased space in the centre of la maison rouge.

One hundred and ninety-two thousand four hundred and thirty-eight: the number of workers employed by Renault at its Billancourt plant until its closure in 1992. One hundred and ninety-two thousand four hundred and thirty-eight: the last roll number given to the last worker to have been hired there.

In 1989, when Marguerite Duras heard the factory was to shut down and the last remaining workers laid off, she responded with a text describing a project in which the names of every single man and woman ever to have worked there would be recorded in an exhaustive list; a "proletariat wall." "We should reach the size of a major capital [...] History would be number: truth is number [...]. Truth would be the still incomparable, incomparable number, the pure number, the number without comment, the word."¹

Duras, who was then almost 80 years old, asked for help in bringing this insane project to fruition. Twenty years later, Thu Van Tran has fulfilled the author's wish and taken it beyond its original formulation. Inspired as much by Duras' life as by her novels and essays, she has returned to her project and exposed this event as an injustice done to the workers at Billancourt. The artist, who has worked for the past two years from a studio overlooking the disused factory, wishes to commemorate the human element of this story and interact with her own everyday environment.

Thu Van Tran has produced a commemorative sculpture whose architectural form is one of contemplation and pacification. The patio becomes a garden, open to the sky. The structure, which is made from timber covered in sculptor's wax, comprises four columns joined by rounded arches. One of the arches replicates the entrance to the Renault factory, conserved in its original state at the Boulogne-Billancourt site.

At the point where the arches meet – the keystone without which the entire structure would collapse – is an enormous bolt, taken from a precision-

turning workshop. This single bolt is inscribed with the "pure number" 192,438, a synecdoche for the exhaustive and impossible list which Duras had so desired. The workers' all-important presence on the assembly line is thus evoked.

From a stylistic point of view, the arches can have religious overtones while the columns suggest Brancusi. However, Thu Van Tran's sculpture springs from a process of internalisation and transformation of history into potential incarnations, which she has introduced into the patio. Thu Van Tran thus continues her research into memory and territory.

The list of names appears, partially at least, in the sound installation that completes this work. Thu Van Tran has asked the singer Agathe Peyrat to recite the first known names of the Billancourt workers. Her frenzied enunciations rise into a piercing, hysterical scream.

Born in 1979, Thu Van Tran is a Franco-Vietnamese artist who graduated from the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts (ENSBA) in Paris in 2003. She came to public attention with *Fahrenheit 451 Homme Livre Homme Libre*, her solo show at the Bétonsalon arts centre in Paris last year. Curator Christian Bernard (*Désordres de la Mémoire*) presented her work at the *Printemps de Septembre* in Toulouse in 2009. Her work was also part of a group show at Galerie Martine Aboucaya in December 2009.

Thu Van Tran was a beneficiary of an individual creation grant from the Île de France department for cultural affairs (DRAC) for this project.

¹ Marguerite Duras, *Le nombre pur* in *Écrire*, Folio Gallimard, Paris, 1993, pages 112-113.

Daniela Franco

B Side

Since the age of five, Daniela Franco has been collecting lost-and-found photos, press clippings, images, but most of all sounds, music and the iconography that goes with them. The urge to archive her findings quickly overlapped with the idea of a collection, a central theme at la maison rouge. For *B Side*, as in the flip side of a record, she has posted some of these archives online (www.lamaisonrouge.org/faceb).

Daniela Franco asked people in the visual arts, music, literature, design and other creative fields to draw up a list of albums that would become part of the project. These can be consulted on the la maison rouge website and on the computers set up inside the exhibition. Record covers and extracts from albums are listed according to the criteria by which they were chosen: ten records that illustrate a biography; ten covers I would like to be on, etc. A special section has been set aside for authors, who can choose a record from Daniela Franco's archives.

Reproductions of covers and some of the rarest records in the archives (certain originals have been lost or permanently disappeared) are displayed on the wall at the end of the exhibition.

A compilation of the chosen record covers and stories will be published early March.

Bar à platines: every Thursday from 7.30pm to 10pm during *Vinyl*, DJs, artists, collectors and other personalities are invited to mix at the la maison rouge café.