



press kit

june 8th to September 24th, 2006

press preview Wednesday June 7th, 4pm to 6pm in the presence of the artists

preview Wednesday June 7th, 6pm to 9pm



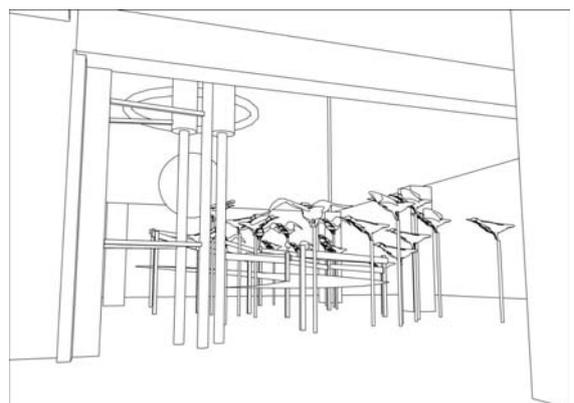
Sound and fury,
the work of Henry Darger (1892-1973)



Michaël Borremans, *The good ingredients*
recent paintings and drawings



Denise A. Aubertin, *Cooked books*



Nicolas Darrot, *Passage au noir*

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introduction

La maison rouge is a private non-profit contemporary art foundation whose vocation, since opening in June 2004, has been to promote contemporary creation through temporary exhibitions.

It alternates exhibitions of private collections of international calibre with solo or thematic exhibitions. Following "L'intime, behind closed doors", "Central Station - the Harald Falckenberg collection", "Arnulf Rainer and his collection of Art Brut", and "Une vision du monde - video works from the Isabelle and Jean-Conrad Lemaître collection", for the coming months la maison rouge leaves aside its cycle of exhibitions of private collections. This will begin again in October with works from the Sylvio Perlstein collection.

From June 8th to September 24th, 2006, the foundation will host four individual exhibitions:

Sound and fury, the work of Henry Darger

Michaël Borremans, *The Good Ingredients*

Denise A. Aubertin, *Cooked books*

Nicolas Darrot, *Passage au noir*

contents

- p.3 **Sound of fury**, the works of Henry Darger (press release)
- p.4 bibliography, catalogue, related events
- p.5 excerpts from *The Realms of the Unreal*
- p.6 Michaël Borremans, ***The Good Ingredients*** (press release)
- p.7 excerpts from a conversation between Michaël Borremans and Peter Doroshenko
selected exhibitions, bibliography
- p.8 selected works by Michaël Borremans shown at la maison rouge
- p.9 **Denise A. Aubertin, *Cooked books*** (press release)
selected exhibitions
- p.10 selected works by Denise A. Aubertin shown at la maison rouge
- p.11 **Nicolas Darrot, *Passage au noir*** (press release)
selected exhibitions
- p.12 Marguerite Pilven, *The Chemical Union* (excerpt), on Nicolas Darrot's proposition for the patio at la maison rouge
- p.13 practical info

Sound and fury, the works of Henry Darger (1892-1973)

Bruit et fureur (Sound and Fury), the works of Henry Darger, is the first French monographic show devoted to this reclusive American artist who lived alone in a room on Webster Street in Chicago.

It wasn't until 1972, when he left his home for the hospital where he would later pass away, that his landlord Nathan Lerner, himself a photographer and a professor at Chicago's New Bauhaus, discovered the written works and paintings of his eccentric boarder.

This exhibition is an opportunity to discover the artist's early work, including five recently restored collages, which have never before been on view.

biography

Henry Joseph Darger was born in 1892 to a poor Chicago family. Shortly before his fourth birthday, his mother died while giving birth to a baby girl. His father placed the baby in an orphanage the same day.

Until the age of 9, Henry lived alone with his father. At school, he was considered aggressive with his schoolmates and with a tendency towards pyromania. He was subsequently placed in a boys' home and later in an institution for feebly-minded children, where he received minimal education and was mistreated.

At 17, and after several failed attempts, he managed to escape. He moved back to Chicago where, with his father now deceased, he lived alone. He found employment as a janitor in a Catholic hospital.

Henry Darger was a solitary young man who, while working to earn his living, remained cut off in the imaginary world he had elaborated for himself, a means of compensating the lack of affection and poor education he had always known.

For 50 years, Henry Darger shared his days between his job at the hospital and his neighbourhood church, attending up to four services a day. Throughout this time, he never breathed a word about his "other" life, the evenings and nights he entirely devoted to his life's work, ***The Story of the Vivian Girls, in What is known as The Realms of the Unreal, of the Glandeco-Angelinnian War Storm, Caused by the Child Slave Rebellion.***

The Realms of the Unreal

This 15.000-page epic narrative, begun in 1911, recounts life in a kingdom ruled by a general who has seven pretty young daughters, the Vivian Girls. The kingdom falls under attack by surrounding countries, and the valiant Vivian Girls attempt to save the children who have been forced into slavery and violently massacred by enemy soldiers. The story ends with the little girls' victory and the return to an idyllic world, a veritable Garden of Eden. When writing this narrative, Henry Darger was largely inspired by the events of the First World War, by his readings about the American Civil War, but also his own fantasies.

the collages and drawings

Around the 1920s, Henry Darger decided to illustrate his writings. He began with collages, a technique he had experimented with a few years earlier with vast illustrations of battle scenes. He cut figures from newspapers and magazines which he glued onto increasingly large panels.

Considering himself incapable of drawing, he created a method which could be called "proto-pop art". He searched children's books, advertisements, children's clothing catalogues and magazines for illustrations which he traced on carbon paper, then painted with watercolours. Using this technique, he painted ream upon ream of paper, on both sides, which he then glued together to form panels over two metres long. For decades, Henry Darger kept these paintings in his room, though he never dated them.

"[...] While almost all his drawings were done from tracings, they have a value of their own, because they reflect part of Darger's world, which far exceeds that which one might usually expect from a tracing. One feels he really could have produced his own drawings had he not found his creative method, a sort of pictorial "adoption", so significant in itself."

(John M. MacGregor, *Henry Darger: In the Realms of the Unreal*, Delano Greenridge Editions, 2002).

The force, the violence, the very technique of this unique oeuvre sets it apart in the history of art. Discovered by an artist 35 years ago, it continues to influence the work of the new generations, including the Chapman brothers, Paul Chan, Marcel Dzama and Grayson Perry.

bibliography

J. M. MacGregor, *Henry Darger: In the Realms of the Unreal*, Delano Greenridge Editions, 2002.

M. Bonesteel, *Henry Darger: Art and Selected Writings*, Rizzoli, New York, 2000.

Klaus Biesenbach, Kiyoko Lerner, *Henry Darger: Disasters of War*, KW Institute of Contemporary Art, Berlin, 2000.

B. D. Anderson & M. Thévoz, *Darger: The Henry Darger Collection at the American Folk Art Museum*, Harry N. Abrams, New York, 2001.

catalogue

A catalogue published by Andrew Edlin Gallery in New York accompanies *Sound and fury* at la maison rouge. Text by Edward Madrid Gomez. In French and English, 80 pages, illustrated, €35.

related events

"In the Realms of the Unreal – The Mystery of Henry Darger", an 82-minute film about the life and work of Henry Darger, directed by Jessica Hu in 2003, will be screened in parallel to the exhibition.

This exhibition could not have taken place without the kind contribution of Mrs Kiyoko Lerner, custodian of Henry Darger's estate, who opened her archives in Chicago and has allowed us to show its treasures.

Excerpts from *The Realms of the Unreal*

Storm



“At about twelve o'clock noon the resistless flood increasing more rapidly tore away the huge forest of trees not so far off and this was the real beginning of the end [...] The enormous mass of trees were rapidly hurled down upon the doomed town or city, and the lines of every stream was rapidly obliterated and was nothing but a raging sea.”

The war



“Millions of men on both sides howled at each other like demons, striking at each other, pouring a murderous fire at point black, cutting, stabbing, hacking, thrusting, and slashing like wild savages bent on wholesale butchery, while amid all this was an indescribable tumult of bayonets adding to the din [...]”.

A dream of Paradise



“They soon found themselves in a lovely place with beautiful flowers of all kinds about, and green unearthly grass of indescribable beauty, and trees more beautiful still, and the air was still and sweet. There was no sun, but there was such a bright heavenly light, that it could have blinded us, and many millions of unearthly colors.”

Michaël Borremans, *The good ingredients* recent paintings and drawings

La maison rouge presents the first showing in France of the work of Michaël Borremans, a Belgian artist, born in 1963 and who lives and works in Ghent.

The viewer is instantly struck by the technical virtuosity of Michaël Borremans' works, both his canvas oil paintings and his pencil drawings, watercolours and gouaches, which he sometimes creates on pages taken from old books.

References to the Flemish masters and, to an even greater extent, Manet immediately come to mind. However, the subject matter brings us closer to the present day, or at least to the mid-20th century, with references to illustration, 1940s cinema, and most of all Belgian Surrealism.

Indeed, there is something disquieting in Michaël Borremans' works. The narrative themes are often dream-related or drawn from the imagination, and the characters hold enigmatic poses as they perform difficult-to-decipher tasks. Meticulous factory workers or small groups of middle-class figures appear just beyond the grasp of a reality that is only suggested by a detail.

Many of his drawings use elements of scale and *mise en abîme*. The figures seem to be living inside an architect's model or a theatre decor, observed by some external entity. Texts often accompany the drawings, transforming them into draft sketches or blueprints.

The artist's scathing sense of humour, the intriguingly strange titles and the technical mastery of the works themselves all give Michaël Borremans a singular status in the contemporary art world.

At la maison rouge, Michaël Borremans shows eight recent paintings in which the patterns of light and shadow, the earthy brown, grey and ochre tones and the subdued brushstrokes all play an essential role. The composition is austere, uncluttered and tightly framed, drawing all the more attention to the absurdity of the human condition in what is, here, a uniquely masculine environment.

Another room shows ten drawings entitled ***The House of Opportunity***, a series which Borremans commenced in 2002 and has regularly added to since then. The house in question is a parallelepiped with a three-sided roof and hundreds of red shutters covering its walls.

The house appears again in each of the small pencil drawings and watercolours, seemingly as models, projects or monuments in environments as diverse as the open countryside and a museum room, always throwing back to the Flemish masters

This critical view of modern architecture, the repression of the "happiness for all" which society promised us, is evident in all these works.

Paradoxically, Borremans also presents an object, a white and red cube that is also an allusion to contemporary art and to sculpture, and which he makes the subject of his work, an "opportunity" for himself.

In ***The Hostages***, his latest drawings which make up ***The Good Ingredients*** series, Borremans tackles a burning issue with ferocity and derision.

He paints bodies that have lost their identity, bodies at the mercy of those who are threatening them with guns. These bodies, which are used as objects to be arranged into patterns, inevitably recall the images of Abou Ghraib prison in Iraq, but also countless other moments in history.

**Excerpts from a conversation between Michaël Borremans and Peter Doroshenko,
published in the catalogue for Michaël Borremans' exhibition, *Zeichnungen/Tekeningen/Drawings****

In what way are your drawings different from your paintings?

When I draw I have no systematic plan; that is different when I paint. I consider drawings mostly as autonomous works of art. Only occasionally I draw with a potential painting in the back of my mind. I've made drawings all my life. I can't live without drawing. It is my way of dealing with reality. It is a kind of escape: when I feel uncomfortable in certain situations, I create my own reality.

A strong relation between drawings and paintings is not prerequisite?

Not really, because for me the paintings have a completely different significance in my work. For me paintings function in a different manner: They have a different aura, they develop differently and require a different kind of involvement from the viewer. Drawings are more like poetry or literature: they must be "read", whereas paintings are rather experienced.

Do you see your work following a classical artistic direction or rather a mixture of old and new work processes?

In a certain sense my works do not fit in anywhere. But that was intended from the beginning. I want to make works that are filled with anachronisms-works that do not tell a story or illustrate anything. I use clichés to create a misleading and deceptive aesthetic. But in time, my work was accepted by a larger public. Perhaps my work is not really as alternative and strange after all. I wonder about that, anyway. [...] In the recent paintings, I try to evoke more with less-both in the way I paint and in the subject matter. [...] In any case, I don't intend to abandon painting and change to another medium-although the idea did occur to me in the early stages of my career.

selected solo shows

- 2006 *Horse Hunting*, David Zwirner Gallery, New York, USA
- 2005 *The Performance*, The Royal Hibernian Academy, Gallagher Gallery, Dublin, Ireland
Hallucination and Reality, The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, USA
The Performance, Parasol unit foundation for contemporary art, London, United Kingdom
An Unintended Performance, S.M.A.K., Ghent, Belgium
- 2004 *Zeichnungen*, Museum Für Gegenwartskunst, Basel, Switzerland
Four Fairies, Kunsthalle, Bremerhaven, Germany
Fisherman's Luck, Zeno X Storage, Antwerp, Belgium
- 2003 *Trickland*, David Zwirner Gallery, New York, USA
- 2002 *Young and Innocent*, Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp, Belgium
- 2000 *Vereniging van het S.M.A.K.*, Ghent, Belgium

selected group shows

- 2006 *Of Mice and Men – 4th Berlin Biennial*, Berlin, Germany
ARS 06 Exhibition, KIASMA contemporary art museum, Helsinki, Finland
- 2005 *Pijn*, Musée du Dr. Guislain, Ghent, Belgium
Drawings from the Modern, 1975-2005, MoMA, New York, USA
(...) the duck was still alive, Abbaye Saint-André, Centre d'Art Contemporain, Meymac, France
La Belgique Visionnaire, c'est arrivé près de chez nous, Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, Belgium
- 2003 *Apparitions*, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Tourcoing, France

publications

"The Performance", S.M.A.K. catalogue, Parasol unit foundation and Royal Hibernian Academy, published by Hajte Cantz 2005.

"Michaël Borremans, Zeichnungen/Tekeningen/Drawings", Cleveland Museum, S.M.A.K., Kunstmuseum Basel, Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, Cologne, 2004.*

selected collections

Art Institute of Chicago, County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, Museum of Fine Art, Boston, Museum of Modern Art, New York, Museum of Modern Art of San Francisco, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Öffentliche Kunstsammlung Basel, S.M.A.K, Ghent, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.

Michaël Borremans is represented by Galerie Zeno X in Antwerp and by Zwirner Gallery in New York.



The House of Opportunity (The Chance of a Lifetime), 2003 and *The House of Opportunity (Im Rhölandshaft)*, 2004, SMAK, Stedelijk Museum voor Aktuele Kunst Citadelpark, Gand, courtesy Zeno X Gallery.



The Bodies (i), 2005, courtesy David Zwirner Gallery, New York.

Page 1 of this press pack: *The Hare*, 2005, courtesy David Zwirner Gallery, New York.

Denise A. Aubertin, Cooked books

Denise A. Aubertin began working with books in 1969, after discovering the artists' books of Lettrist Gil Wolman and of Tom Phillips, and the food art of Dieter Roth.

Closed books with their pages stuck together... sometimes forced open months later causing bizarre rips, pages, sentences, words overlapping... Sculpted, carved books... Books thrown into hamster cages... Books with transformed covers... Books taken along on trips that have retained traces of the places visited... Denise A. Aubertin.

In 1974, as a continuation of this process of alteration and recreation, Denise A. Aubertin made her first "cooked books". Following whatever the book's size, cover colour, title and contents inspired in her, she creates unique "book-based" recipes with flour, spices, herbs, rice, pasta and candied fruits, which she then bakes in the oven.

I love the sensuality of the ingredients, the colours and thickness of the substance. The uncontrollable factors which cooking brings to each work make every copy unique, just like pottery. Denise A. Aubertin.

For her exhibition at la maison rouge, Denise A. Aubertin presents a hundred or so of her "forbidden content" works. Although sealed closed by the cooking process, the very sight of them will open your appetite.

selected exhibitions

- 2005 *Métamorphose du livre*, Bibliothèque de la maison pour tous, Choisy-Le-Roi, France
- 2004 *L'Intime, le collectionneur derrière la porte*, La maison rouge, Paris
Livres d'artistes, galerie Lucien Schweitzer, Luxembourg
Les autres livres, Bibliothèque Municipale de Vesoul
- 2003 CRDP de Poitou-Charentes, Poitiers
- 1997-98 Centre hospitalier de Marez
- 1996 Galerie Convergence, Nantes
- 1995 Galerie Josiane Mercuri, Paris
- 1994 *Le Temps de l'Ailleurs*, Galerie Lara Vincy co-réalisation Liliane Vincy et Pierre Restany
- 1991 Galerie Galéa, Caen
- 1991 Galerie Convergence, Nantes
- 1990 Bibliothèque Mendès-France, Epinay-sur-Seine
- 1988 *Le Salon*, Gilbert Descossy, Paris
- 1986 Cycle personnel. Galerie Caroline Corre, Paris
- 1985 Sélection Livres d'Artistes. Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre G. Pompidou, Paris (en collaboration avec la Bibliothèque Nationale de France)
- 1982 Rétrospective à la Galerie Donguy, Paris
- 1979 *Outsiders*, Hayward Gallery, London
- 1978 *Artitudes de François Pluchart*. Galerie d'Art Contemporain des musées de Nice
- 1978 *Les Singuliers de l'Art*. ARC, Paris
- 1977 *Les Mythologies Quotidiennes*, ARC, Paris
- 1975 Musée des Sables d'Olonne

Denise A. Aubertin is represented by Galerie Lara Vincy, Paris.

The cooked books belong to the category of books which cannot be read, books whose content, "an absolute medium for thoughts and knowledge", radiate a magical force.

I coat the books with a flour-based edible paste, add other non-perishable ingredients from the kitchen until I reach an interesting level of quality then bake them in the oven, closely surveying them as I do. Each cooked book is a specific composition. The uncontrollable factors of cooking make each one unique.

Denise A. Aubertin



Jean-Paul Sartre, *Les mains sales*, not dated ; Guy de Maupassant, *Fort comme la mort*, 1990 ; Ramon Gomez de la Serra, *La femme d'ambre*, 2000, courtesy of the artist.



Artaud, 1995 ; Edouard Glissant, *Le sel noir*, 1995 ; *Les plus beaux tableaux du Louvre*, 1992, courtesy of the artist.
Page 1 of this press pack: Philippe Dereux, *Petit traité des épiluchures*, 1975, courtesy of the artist.

Passage au noir, Nicolas Darrot

Nicolas Darrot (born 1972 in Le Havre, France) continues the cycle of events created especially for la maison rouge and its patio, an open-air space under climatic influence.

Nicolas Darrot, who is fascinated by the relationship between living creatures and machines, is a kind of artist-sorcerer. He transforms insects into chimera, gives the power of speech to hunting trophies, creates automatons which come to life when a visitor approaches. The world of Nicolas Darrot stimulates the imagination on several levels: that of myth and fable but also in the equally vast realm fed by technological advances and scientific discovery.

Nicolas Darrot has taken his project beyond the limits of what was originally asked of him, creating a spectacular device that fills the patio and the heart of the foundation, the "red house".

A white, air-filled probe encircles the house. A flock of larger-than-life crows attached to their perches begin to caw and flutter when the probe comes near them. This encounter takes place in the patio in what resembles a courtship ritual. The event recurs in an endless cycle which the spectator can take in at leisure as he strolls around inside the foundation.

selected exhibitions

- 2006 *Le journal des enfants-loups*, Galerie Eva Hober, Paris
- 2005 *Artificialia 2*, Château de Bar-Le-Duc
Galerie Eva Hober, Paris
- 2004 *Mutadis Mutandis*, Musée d'Histoire de la Médecine, Paris
L'Intime, le collectionneur derrière la porte, La maison rouge, Paris
- 2003 *Leurres, Anamorphoses, Calculs et autres petits mensonges*, La réserve d'Area, Paris
Cabinets de Curiosités, Centre d'Art contemporain, Oyonnax
Artificialia, Hôtel Rothschild, Paris
De l'homme et des insectes, Fondation EDF, Espace Electra, Paris
Park, environnement d'une performance de Claudia Triozzi, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre G. Pompidou, Paris
- 2002 *Explosion*, Centre d'Art Contemporain, Saint Cyprien
Parcours Privés, La maison rouge, Paris
- 2001 *Yggdrasil*, Chapelle de Villerase, Centre d'Art Contemporain, Saint Cyprien, Fondation COPRIM, Paris
Electromassacre, Galerie Rachlin-Lemarié Beaubourg, Paris
- 2000 *Machins-Machines*, Donjon de Vez
Les fêtes, Galerie Rachlin-Lemarié Beaubourg, Paris
A vif, exposition avec Dado et Emmanuelle Perat, Galerie Rachlin-Lemarié Beaubourg, Paris
- 1999 *Reflets d'Afrique*, Galerie Rachlin-Lemarié Beaubourg, Paris
Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris
- 1998 Galerie Weiler, Paris
Diplôme avec les Félicitations du jury, Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris

Nicolas Darrot is represented by Galerie Eva Hober, Paris.

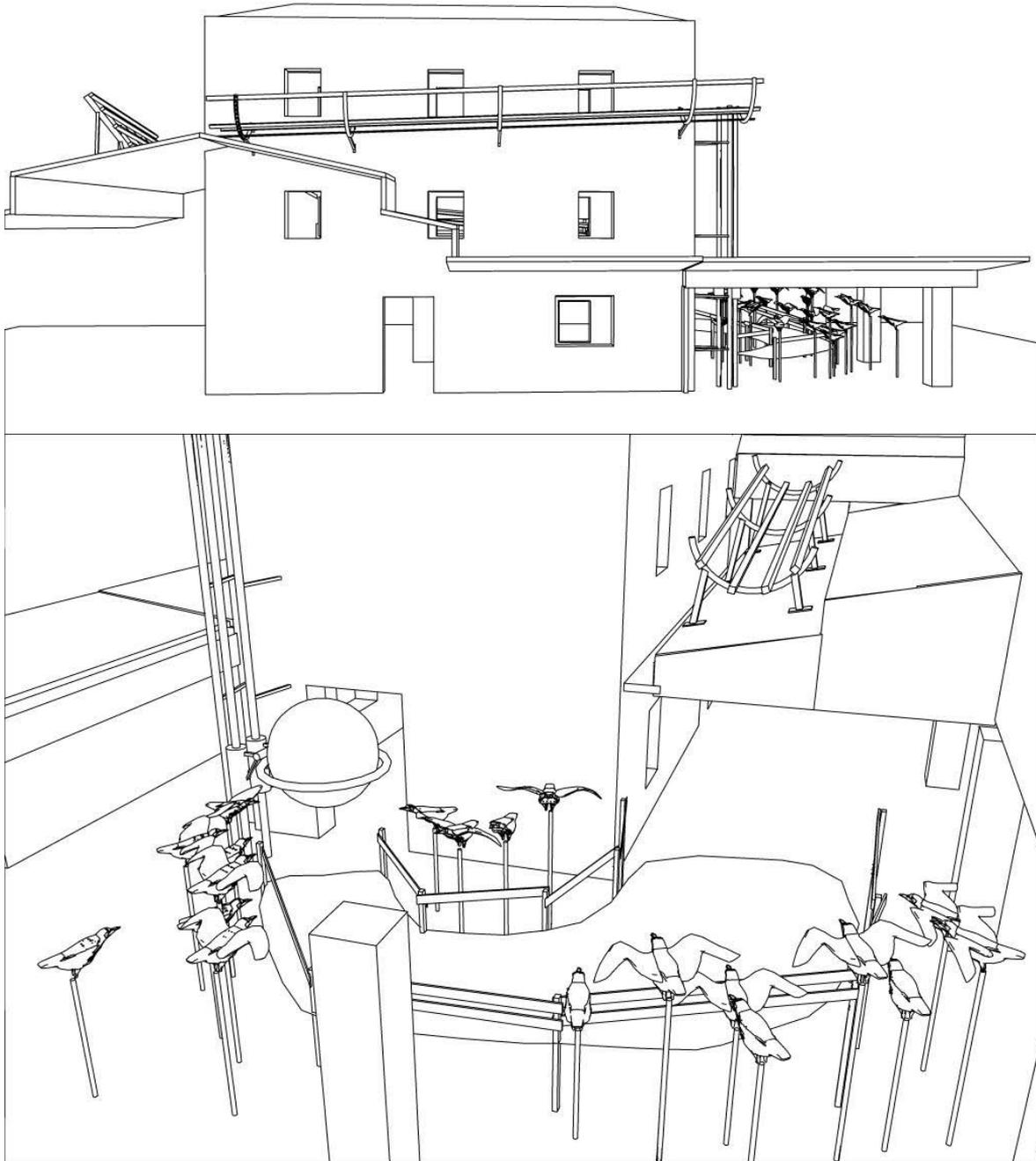
Marguerite Pilven, *The Chemical Union*

Excerpts from the catalogue published by Galerie Eva Hober for Nicolas Darrot's exhibition at la maison rouge

There is, in this *passage au noir*, an exact correlation with the "chemical union" that crowns the alchemical process. That moment of fusion between a volatile matter, symbolised by the dove, and a heavy matter, symbolised by the crow, that gives rise to the Form. Beyond their well-documented attempts to achieve the transmutation of lead into gold, alchemists above all sought to analyse the laws of matter in a state of flux, before it is frozen into accidental configurations. The fusion that takes place between black and white also represents that of matter and spirit.

[...] A bridge between connection and disconnection, through its regular appearances the probe maintains an active link between one and other of these stases. Even when the viewer can no longer see the probe, he hears it moving above his head, an audible flow that accompanies him as he explores the different spaces of la maison rouge.

Far from any relation of dependency or causality that would install us in a teleological narrative, the cyclical nature of this work instead signifies its perpetuity. Each of the egg's revolutions operates a synthesis, a chemical solution, a recommencement.



practical info



getting there

metro stations : Quai de la Rapée (ligne 5), or Bastille (lignes 1,5,8)

RER station : Gare de Lyon

Bus : n°20/29/91

accessibility

the exhibition areas are accessible to disabled visitors and people with restricted mobility

opening days and times

Wednesday to Sunday 11am to 7pm

late-night Thursday until 9pm

closed December 25th, January 1st and May 1st

admission

full price : €6,50

concessions : €4.50 (13-18 years, students, full-time artists, and over-60s)

free : €4.50 (13-18 years, students, full-time artists, and over-60s)

annual pass

full price : €16

concessions : €12

free and unlimited admission to the exhibitions

free or reduced rate admission to related events