

From 31 January to 28 March 2004, the Villa Arson is putting on two solo shows: **Stéphane Calais** and **Rachel Khedoori**, as well as an exhibition of photograms and documents about the film work of **Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet**.

Opening: Friday 30 January 2004, at 6 p.m.

The praxis of drawing first and foremost constructs an axis around which all **Stéphane Calais'** works are then organized. From the preliminary sketches to the wall and architectonic drawings, by way of the most varied of formats on paper, the act of drawing informs and forges the entire body of work, squeezing it into one single and indivisible project, which cannot be reduced to the sum of its parts. The irony that underwrites the Calais line and stroke and which defines each one of his images (in all meanings of the word and, for example, as in: "Surrender, image, you're surrounded!") prevents the little scraps of reality from fleeing all together, and vanishing into the readymade and the Mannerist relevance, but it also signs a kind of Nietzschean nonchalance (the offhandedness of the *free spirit* "forced to stay on the thinnest of ropes"). Stéphane Calais quotes readily, plunders at times, and uses — on the back of modernism, interceptions of inheritances and formal hijackings, but without turning appropriation into a design. His works dialogue with each other in a virtuoso and separatist ping-pong-like to-and-fro, in which what is involved is not so much crossing historical references as crossing swords with history itself and its ghosts. Like a Fourier-esque pound, pictorial (Fourieristic) phalanstery, and heinous cluster with variable geometry, the Calais undertaking is Utopian by virtue and by necessity, like "the air pocket between ice and water." Stéphane Calais was born in Arras in 1967. He lives in Paris.

Rachel Khedoori's cinematographic sculptures (but are we dealing with sculptural cinema or filmic installations?) are rooted in the artist's autobiography, and more accurately put in her auto-topography; she strives, for example, to recreate familiar places, laden with her own experiences, such as her bedroom (*Untitled (Blue room)*, 1999), or her studio, an erstwhile small shop, long and narrow (which she will be showing here, at the Villa Arson). Alternatively, her images and atmospheres also borrow many of their forms, sites and spatial treatments from the entertainment industry. Thus, again for her show in the Villa Arson's square gallery, the artist went to Bronson Canyon (Griffith Park, Los Angeles) to film a tunnel often used in the past as a natural set for many film and television productions. In the end of the day, however, the film space, in Rachel Khedoori's work, is just as much the represented-filmed-sculpted space as the space returned to the carpet of representation. Her installations actually involve viewers in a process of complex vision and seeing, tugging them well beyond the comfortable routines of passiveness. Confronted by machinery, the flipside of the set, the onlooker thus becomes part and parcel of the cinematographic illusion in an oblique way, turning into a conscious cog of the machine — an extra reel. Rachel Khedoori was born in Sydney, Australia, in 1964. She lives in Los Angeles.

Since the 1960s, the films of **Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet** have formed a field of atypical resistance, irremediable involvement, and combative words. Through their keen and alert reading of the past, the two film-makers endeavour to shed light, film after film, on how and why "there is something unbearable about living *now*". Each one of their films is a complex and lucid work, woven from the history of human beings, ideas, social and economic relationships, and above all intensely connected with the rest of the body of the work. Singling out certain photograms from this cinematographic whole and presenting them as autonomous images might seem paradoxical, were it not for the fact that there is this glowing evidence of the Straubian framing, which "carries time"; "is included in the length of the image" and "permits the incorporation of a unique experience in a place whose primary analogy is the frame of the painting". Far from being a documentary supplement to the Straubs' work, this exhibition attempts to come up with a new, perpendicular approach. It is also noteworthy how each image contains, germ- and metonymy-like, the entire film from which it comes.

This exhibition is a proposition of the association *Des films et leurs sites*, and is curated by Servane Zanotti, Pascal Kern, and Jean-Louis Raymond.

Jean-Marie Straub was born in Metz in 1933.

Danièle Huillet was born in Paris in 1936.

They live in Rome and Paris.

Around the exhibition several screenings of the films of Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet will be organized:

— *Le Retour du fils prodigue. Humiliés*, from 4-10 February, discussion with Philippe Lafosse on Monday 9 February at 8.30 pm, Le Mercury cinema, Nice.

— A major selection of the Straubs' films, screenings, discussions and lectures (guests: Jean-Marie Straub et Danièle Huillet, Jean-Charles Fitoussi, Jacques Rancière, Hervé Joubert-Laurencin, Bruno Tackels, Philippe Lafosse) from 11-17 February at the Espace Magnan, Nice.

— *Chronique d'Anna Magdalena Bach*, 23 February at 8.30 pm and *Le Retour du fils prodigue. Humiliés*, 15 March at 8.30 pm, Les Visiteurs du soir, Valbonne.

— *Du jour au lendemain*, then *Lothringen*, 10, 12, 14 and 16 March at 6 pm and *Antigone*, 11, 13, and 15 March at 6 pm, Le Rialto cinema, Nice.

These exhibitions are being held with the backing of the Délégation aux arts plastiques, the Drac Paca (ministère de la Culture et de la Communication), the Conseil général des Alpes-Maritimes, the Conseil régional Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, the city of Nice, the gallery Hauser & Wirth and the french-american fund Étant donnés.

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31/01 – 28/03/2004

STÉPHANE CALAIS RACHEL KHEDOORI JEAN-MARIE STRAUB & DANIELLE HUILLET