



Nouvelles Vagues
Omar Ba, EW, Irene Muñoz Martin, Gil Pellaton
Dorian Sari, Président Vertut / Villa Bernasconi

“Where would you go outside the world?”

It is a sparkling dawn whose sharp light dazzles the memories of men, and their painful recollections are confined to the recoiling darkness that dissolves and which makes them vanish away. At the very top of Saint Isaac’s dome, Christ Pantocrator holds in his long white hands the warhead of a shell that did not explode and floats in the air like the feather of a dove. One has to live and hasten to forget, one has to let the light dim the outlines of the tombs.

Jérôme Ferrari

The Sermon on the Fall of Rome

Nouvelles Vagues, an Introduction

Sketches, journeys, artworks yet to become, this edition documents in the manner of a journal the New Waves (Nouvelles Vagues) presented at the Villa Bernasconi: the new enterprises carried out by EW, Omar Ba, Irene Muñoz Martin, Gil Pellaton, Dorian Ozhan Sari and Président Vertut. All that you see is as real as the world, this diverse world, concrete and perceptible in its mobility. Each of these works uses a language and a technique of its own, each one offers an entrance to apprehend the spasms of our current time: the mathematical and language installations of EW capture the movements, the paintings of Omar Ba create bridges between cultures and centuries, the sculptures of Dorian Ozhan Sari extend the dreams and aspirations of the individuals in the same way as Gil Pellaton invents new codes without a pre-existing repertoire. How can one distinguish the videos of Irene Muñoz Martin from that of Président Vertut’s? The document from the invention?

This diversity of techniques is like our everyday life, and the diverse approaches are personal and collective at the same time. Each real is possible when reality lets itself be read as a fiction. This edition is a recording as much ephemeral and urgent as the waves that unite these six artists.

Omar Ba

Of Politics and the sacred

Born in 1977 in Senegal, Omar Ba studied at the National School of the Arts of Dakar before obtaining a postgraduate degree at the Fine Arts Graduate School of Geneva (ESBA) in 2005, and later a Master in fine arts in the public domain in the Valais Art School in Switzerland in 2011.

As leaving Senegal for Switzerland in 2003, Omar Ba brings with him the mastery of painting whilst at the same time leaving behind the abstraction that characterised the beginning of his career. In Geneva where he finishes his training – and where his painting undergoes an identity crisis – he will assert a particular technique that will make him stand out: on a cardboard base, he lays a black opaque background that he enhances with white illuminations. The multitude of details seem to multiply the chromatic scale which is yet based on only two colours. This is how his portraits take shape. Very quickly, the success that he encounters will draw him away from teaching to which he initially wished to dedicate himself.

In his big vertical paintings we can recognise mostly masculine, military and authoritarian stand-up figures. Their faces are replaced by the heads of animals or by a bunch of plants that makes them unable to be identified, in this way either softening or exacerbating the general statement. Most often, this unveils and denounces a violence. We would like to see in it a political stance, but this violence is as much inherent to man and to his duality as to the world in general. The animal and the human incidentally merge on the surface of the painting without the one or the other predominating either in force or in value.

During the summer of 2015 Omar Ba began a training to learn the technique of icon-making in Albi. In order to gain access to these lessons reserved for Orthodox Christians, he had to negotiate. Before applying the obtained skills, he committed to doing, as all the other partakers, a Christ or a Saint George killing the dragon. He first chose the Christ. As soon as he acquired the technique, he applied himself for the second plate for which he drew inspiration from a personal iconography inspired by the current everyday life in Senegal, juxtaposed with European reality. If the centrality of his subjects is common in his practice, the sacred usage of icons, the small format and his chromatic code find with him a sense that interrogates as much the tradition as his own practice: “Traditionally, he says, the world of black does not appear in icons. On the contrary, black is reserved for representing the evil or the devil. Gold is reserved for the positive and the sacred of which the Black and Muslim culture is excluded. I wish to depart from this technique in order to appropriate the icon in view of my own reality.”

Omar Ba

Born in Senegal in 1977, lives and works in Geneva, Switzerland

Recent solo exhibitions

2016: one man show, 1:54, New York; one man show, artgenève, Galerie Guy Bärtschi; Galerie Anne de Villepoix, Paris ; Galleria Giuseppe Pero, Milan

2014: Hales Gallery, London; Galerie Guy Bärtschi, Geneva; Standart/Deluxe, Lausanne.

Recent group shows

2015-2014 :

Aqui Africa, SESC Belenzhino, São Paulo; Il s'en est fallu de peu, La Kunsthalle, centre d'art contemporain, Mulhouse, France; Le Manoir 1964 – 2014, 50 ans d'expositions, Martigny, Le Manoir de la Ville de Martigny; Collective III, Galerie Guy Bärtschi, Geneva; Summer Exhibition 2014, Royal Academy of Arts, London (curator: Cornelia Parker); Discoveries sector, Art Basel Hong Kong, Hales Gallery, Hong Kong; Ici l'Afrique/Here Africa. Contemporary Africa as Seen through the Eyes of its Artists, Château de Penthes, Geneva; Authentik Energie, Le Manoir, Martigny

EW

The Writing of Change and Technology of Dreams

From the end of the 20th century humanity has stepped into a new phase of intensive mutation. The usage of technologies of information transformed us into cyber-organisms. We now wander into the fractal horizons of contemporary cities whilst diving into the electronic ether of networks.

The signs that surround us project us in a multi-layered temporality. We travel in a flood of events by a single line. It is this figure drawn in time by each individual that enables to gain consciousness of one's self inside the pyramid. A pyramid that's ever-moving top coincides with our present and sinks with it into the future.

The event to which I participate carries out a circular time: manifestation, conservation and dissolution. It is in a march in circle that our place starts to be delimited. There is an identity between the topology of this place and our mind-set. It is the crossroads and the transition between the eternal and the temporal. Our place looks like all the places, our place is our body. Let's trace the origins.

The left hand is in the right hand, the thumbs touch each other. Then the forefingers, the middle fingers, the ring fingers and little fingers join each other by their extremities and constitute a sphere. The association of ideas create the movement, the impulse is given and the global movement is distributed between the signs.

We witness the formal development of the event, tied to the linkages and repetitions of positions, postures and attitudes of bodies. The metamorphosis of the circle becomes the occasion for the encounters of the cone and the flat, the arrangement of appearances. The points of views coexist and the algorithm becomes a substitute to the narration. Circle, spiral, triangle and rectangle compose a set of geometrical figures and curves take part in governing and ordering the production of the event. Encoded in the signs and the objects understood around us, it is the invariance of these primitive forms that will enable to distribute and to orientate a whole group of related, albeit dissimilar figures.

As in a baroque fugue, the tales are distributed and inserted into one another. Going back along these lines of refraction and multiplying, we attain bottomless oceans of myths and we intershape the different networks of time.

At the beginning there is only light, the matter and the void. Then bodies come to life and have at their disposal material that surrounds them to form other groups. Our material is essentially plastic, and this surface is immediately curved, folded and unfolded. Let's change scale, and go from the line to the surface, from the surface to the volume.

Soon, the distribution and the repetition of the movement create a depth. The light is there to cut the shape that became architecture. At the edge, bright figures appear. Now, a flow of images of the event is rendered visible whilst it is reflected ad infinitum on the surfaces.

I am standing and my body is released. From the sacrum to the atlas, I direct my attention to the vertical axis. My back is straight enough, my arms along my body, the palms turned inwards, I feel my feet anchored into the ground and I exhale.

Indraught of the diaphragm, I inhale deeply and I look towards East. My iris dilates and the light becomes more intense. My spinal column lines up towards West and the right triceps sets South. The left hand towards North, the fingers are wide open and the middle finger points out to a benchmark on the floor.

I then raise my arms to a horizontal position so they align with my clavicles, and carry out a internal rotation of each shoulder. I refold my arms and join my thumbs at the height of the celiac plexus. Forefingers and middle fingers connect to the extremities. In this way begins the event of the pyramid.

EW

EW is an identity created in 2010 in order to question the interaction between bodies and constructed spaces and knowledge in the contemporary technological societies. The work of EW is oriented towards research-based projects that involves speculative futures, cybernetics and science-fiction.

Irene Muñoz Martin

Nouvelles Vagues, Between Art and Politics

– How would you define your practice?

I am interested in all connections that art can maintain with autobiography. Everything that implies working with one's own experience and building on reality that confronts strongly our lives. In my work I deal with social issues such as identity, history and memory, personal questions that accompanied me all my life and which emerged more intensely since the economical crisis in Spain and my arrival to Switzerland. These concerns, born out of the incomprehension of the stories and experiences that affected not only myself, but also those around me, eventually became the topic of my investigation. From there on I started to question the relationship between art and its political and historical context, its social function, and the political involvement and responsibility of the artist.

– What does the expression *Nouvelles Vagues* evoke for you?

The term *Mareas* (tide) in Spanish refers to the periodical variation of the level of the sea caused primarily by the force of attraction of the Sun and the Moon on the oceans and seas. But this term also refers to new forms of citizen organisations born in Madrid during the economical crisis, and that spread to other larger aspects of the Spanish society. The source of these tides goes back to the manifestations that took place the 15th of May, 2011 (15M) and which represented for my generation an unprecedented opening event towards a new political space: they produced a space for debate and a struggle against the financial cuts, the political austerity, the economical situation, corruption, unemployment and the privatisation of the public sector that was producing the greatest democratic crisis of the last decades. We can say that the Tide is the formation of a community or communities that did not exist before and which self-organised and mobilised in order to defend fundamental common rights. Just as the ocean tides that are constituted by millions of heterogeneous waves, the citizen tides are composed of millions of people of different identities, experiences, beliefs and theoretical and practical backgrounds who gathered together under the revolutionary impact for a common good. Consequently, the tides represent a new organisational reality that overruns that which existed before it, in order to create a new platform that enables to gain consciousness of the problems of society and to rediscover the ties with issues related to our reality.

– And in the artistic fields?

Currently in Europe, it seems that we lost a war: millions of unemployed, the destruction of the welfare state, the expropriation of the public, evictions, economical inequalities, wars, climate related disasters, migration, we all know what's going on. The question is why doesn't all of this lead to a social explosion? "New waves" should appear in the tide so as to erode, collide and question more forcefully our reality and to not to disappear in this "great ocean" called the Earth. And art is no exception. A raising tide of young, politically committed Spanish artists prosper to reflect not only the beauty and the cruelty of the world, but also to use artistic means to question it more profoundly.

– How does your new piece blend into this context?

Je suis suisse ! (I am Swiss!) is a video-essay project that deals with the concept of identity as a symbolic base material and questions the situation of integration of immigrants in Switzerland. The relationships with different cultures, past experiences and political orientation of the six members of the Commission of Naturalisations of the City of Geneva, as well as the celebration of a naturalisation ceremony of foreigners show in this project different points of view and official voices expressing various possible Swiss identities whilst exposing an ethical debate on obtaining a Swiss passport.

Irene Muñoz Martin

Born in Spain in 1991, lives and works in Geneva

Filmography

Opération Retour, 2016, Switzerland

Je suis Suisse !, 40 min, 2016, Switzerland

La Vague, 13 min, 2014, Switzerland

Samuel Buffat, 9 min, 2014, Switzerland

Reflections from the Campsite, 7 min, 2013, Switzerland

Exhibitions

2016: Nouvelles Vagues, Villa Bernasconi, Lancy, Geneva;

Between Raw Material and Behaviors, Galerie Canal 05,

Brussels; Mecal, 18. Barcelona International

Short Film Festival, Barcelona; 51th Solothurn Film

Festival, Solothurn; reGeneration3, Nouvelles perspectives

pour la photographie, FORMAT International

Photography Festival 2016, Quad Gallery, Derby

2015: 32. Kasseler Dokumentarfilm und Videofest,

Kassel; reGeneration3, Nouvelles perspectives

pour la photographie, Festival FotoMX, Museo Amparo,

Puebla, Mexico; 19. Internationale Kurzfilmtage

Winterthur, Swiss Competition, Winterthur; 24 FCMPNR

Festival de Cine de Madrid; 31st Hamburg

International Short Film Festival, No Budget Competition,

Hamburg; 28th European Media Art Festival

EMAF, Media Campus, Osnabrück; reGeneration3,

Nouvelles perspectives pour la photographie, Musée

de l'Elysée, Lausanne; Museumsnacht Bern, Credit

Suisse Förderpreis VideoKunst and the Kunstmuseum Bern

2014: 31. Kasseler Dokfest, Counter histories /

Counter-Stories, Kassel; Festival Côté Court, Pantin, France;

Paris Bivouac, Villa du Parc, Annemasse, France;

Homes to sell, Fieldwork Gallery, Marfa, Texas.

irenemunozmartin.wix.com/cuarto_piano

Gil Pellaton

Paint in order to see

Gil Pellaton likes to slip into the skin of a craftsman, to leave art in order to come back to handmade work: shoes, wood, ceramics, aluminium. He would do everything himself, from the preliminary drawing to the actual object itself, whilst continuously coming back to painting. Onto the frame, he holds out a plain canvas, then a more raw silk one, and finally he sews and mounts a canvas in jute that served to transport café that he collected in some grocer's shop. He covers them with rabbit's skin glue or with bone glue before painting. Sometimes there is some transparency that remains on the canvas, or traces of seams or other imperfections that he integrates into the painting. He likes the stories behind the canvas, those that come from Africa or South America. Since his very first canvases that were rather narrative, the subject tends to disappear in favour of the detail that he spares. The detail overrides. The stroke is more precise and creates a general movement. Sometimes entirely vertical, horizontal or diagonal. He superimposes layers of realities by multiplying the wings of a plane or by multiplying the arms and the movements, all of these situations that he studies in his sketchbook like notes that he develops in several positions in space.

In 2014, Gil Pellaton spends six months in Buenos Aires as a part of a residency program initiated by the "Conference of Swiss Cities for Cultural Issues". In Argentina he makes three-dimensional pieces so as for a greater comeback to painting. These explorations in sculpture will continue, and will nourish his drawings and paintings in his displacements. He therefore makes a pair of shoes where his aim was to do everything himself, from the cutting out of the template through sewing the shoe together, up to actually wearing them. The difficult part was to make two identical ones. And once the pair was done he added "deformities": two left-legged shoes – or more precisely one left and one right who turn in the same direction together; or a shoe into which he inlaid an enamelled painting with pictorial elements: the shoe thus becomes the frame of the picture.

In 2015 he presents in Leipzig a 14-handed table (a hand per day during 14 days). The point was to sculpt positions of hands that were uninterpretable, thus offering no spontaneous signification or connotation, so as to allow all freedom of individual interpretation.

It is in this vein that he carries out for Nouvelles Vagues inlays on the building with the only stance of not wanting to signify but merely to give to see in all freedom.

Gil Pellaton

Born in Switzerland in 1982, lives and works in Biel/Bienne

Solo exhibitions

2016: Body & Soul, Geneva;

Standard-Deluxe, Lausanne

2014: Lokal Int, Biel/Bienne

2012: Selz art contemporain, Perrefitte (with Marcel Freymond)

2011: Prix Anderfuhren, Centre PasquArt, Biel/Bienne.

Group exhibitions

2016: Nouvelles Vagues, Villa Bernasconi, Lancy, Geneva

www.gilpellaton.ch

Dorian Ozhan Sari

Animals and Men

During the first presentation of his three sculptures envisaged as a trilogy, Dorian Ozhan Sari wrote a text in the form of a conversation on the psychiatrist's couch. He recounts his practice, his course, his dreams and concerns. Here are some extracts.

– What does the bull represent in your dreams and in your reality?

– For me, there are two animals that embody the power and the wild instincts of man: the lion and the bull. Out of the two, the bull seems more stable to me, more humble and quieter. In my sculpture *Je me suis réveillé. Il faisait encore nuit* (*I woke up. It was still nighttime*), we see a bull lying on its back with his four feet raised towards the sky. The shape of the back of its neck and the general movement of the body gives the impression that it is almost still living. That is as if, in a final spurt, it was trying to straighten up – at least this is what it does in my dream – after having been slaughtered, decapitated, and having fallen on the ground, as if it were living its last moments in life.

– What is the symbolic behind the mattress that composes the bull?

– When I arrived in Geneva, I found my materials in the streets. I still find today my materials, mattresses abandoned on the sidewalk. This feeling of abandonment moves me, and it is very revealing for me. The mattress symbolises the social individual. Used and then abandoned. It is a symbol of identity, of habitat. Where is your mattress? At home. It was a difficult period for me and I was looking for a means of expression. When I found my first mattress, it was as if all my psychological, identity, economical problems found a common body. And as I always had a passion for sewing, I started to sew as a form of therapy. The fabric of the mattress became my skin. And the foam my muscles. Each mattress in my sculptural work has its own story, and without a doubt no one will have the opportunity to get to know them. The patterns, the thickness, the fabrics are always different. And the painting that covers them also develops a different reaction every time. I draw a shape from which I then construct the skeleton that I weld with metal bars. Then I put up the foam that will deconstruct the initial form, and I compress the foam with adhesive tape. Finally, I sew and cover again the whole of it with the fabric of the mattress, which will give rise to a new volume.

– Why doesn't the animal have a head?

– I think it is easier to let your imagination run free with the head missing. If we imagine that our head takes the place of the animal's head, that would mean that we were beheaded. Isn't that so? At least this would seem to be the case for me. I would be happy if the spectators felt the same thing. It is also the disappearance of the spirit. I find that decapitation evokes a very strong gesture, very clear and very brutal at the same time. In my previous works, I had the habit of using golden foil to symbolise my skin. And during my presentations, I covered my neck and throat with golden foil. I was expressing in this way a certain personal and bodily fragility, as if I had a lump in my throat so to say. The colour of gold in a state of intense brightness was so powerful that it made me think of a divine, spiritual and vibrant gesture. Thus, this new sculpture certainly conveys more violence through this action of decapitation, but at the same time the missing, paralysed spirit brings to the space valuable stability.

– Why is your bull black?

– Two years ago my sculptures took up the form of dolls. They were partially painted with bright colours. It was colour that gave life to my sculptures. In retrospective, it seems to me that they present a spectacular and playful character. The choice of black is simple but much

more stronger, it renders the sculptures more obscure, more serious, more dramatic. These are adjectives that correspond to my current state of mind, to the consciousness I have regarding what surrounds me. And we are also in the night, in a dream. Black is much closer to the idea of death, of frozen and suspended time. Sculpture is like a nightmare that is awake. The black semi-gloss paint can also suggest the latex that we generally associate with the usage of fetish objects. This however is not what I was searching for whilst I was developing this imaginary world.

– Why did you call your sculpture Je me suis réveillé. Il faisait encore nuit (*I woke up. It was still nighttime*)?

– All of my titles are related to one another. I did two other sculptures at the same time as the bull. The first is called Cauchemar (*Nightmare*). It is a human scale sculpture that is facing us. Neither woman nor man, since it is impossible to define the sex of a human being. Its body is without a head; it has only one arm, without a hand. Its legs are open at 90 degrees, as if it were dancing in a ballet. A part of the body of the sculpture thrusts into the floor as if it had crashed and gone through a part of the flooring. The eye of the spectator is placed at the level of where the legs spread apart. The man is knocked over, but wooden crutch keeps him back and gives him a last equilibrium. The second sculpture is called Une Maman (*A Mummy*). She is sitting on the floor and turns her back to the spectators; when we place ourselves in front of her, we can see her greasy spread out legs, the knees compressing her off-centred bosoms, overflowing and heavy, as if filled with breast milk. This woman has only one arm, which seems disproportionate, far too long, as if it were continuing to grow in order to compensate for the absence of the other cut off arm. The spectators need to walk around these sculptures in order to get an appropriate perception of them. On the one hand, the Nightmare dances, on the other a Mummy seems to hide something, or at least not to reveal everything, which leads us to observe even more intensely, as if in this darkness there was something that we were failing to understand. I find that the three titles evoke the night. We have nocturnal nightmares and the fear provoked by this dream calls for calming down. Imagine a child waking up violently from a nightmare in the middle of the night and calling his mother. But the mother turns her back at the end to the nightmare, to the bull.

– Can you say something about the gender of these sculptures, and namely of that of the bull's?

– Men experience strong erections in general during their sleep. Especially when they wake up in the middle of the night. For my sculptures, the question of gender does not come up straight away. It is just a detail at the beginning of the observation, I think. For Une Maman, the question is of no interest since the title and the bosoms are explicit enough. For Le Cauchemar we cannot decide upon the identity of the character and even less of its gender, on the contrary the bull imposes upon the spectator the size of its sex, which is very noticeable from the start. We can talk of romanticism or of eroticism. It is possible to make connections between my homosexuality and the bad reputation of fetishism associated with the gay environment. If we wish to attempt to explain further, it is undoubtedly possible to find an Oedipal or Freudian complex behind all of this. Yet, I never do any psychoanalytical interpretations of my sculptures, even though I do this analysis for myself and with you here.

With many thanks to Marie Matusz, Iléana Parvu, Katharina Hohmann and Héléne Mariéthoz

Dorian Ozhan Sari

Born in Turkey in 1989, lives and works in Geneva

Solo exhibitions

2015: Le Cabinet, Geneva

Group exhibitions

2016: Nouvelles Vagues, Villa Bernasconi, Lancy, Geneva

2015: Musée de la Croix-Rouge, Geneva; St-Martin, Lausanne; Villa Bernasconi, Lancy, Geneva; Festival Act, Geneva

www.doriansari.com

Président Vertut

Long view to the president

Président Vertut is a Janus whose face is known to all Genevans since 2011, the date of his intervention on the flags on the Mont-Blanc Bridge and the banners of the Quartier des Bains where his effigy accompanied by the slogan Choose me! gathered the electorate to vote for a totalitarian republic entirely destined to the cult of flabby consensus, to individualism and the dilution of identity. The other face of the President that does not appear in the fanzines that report these reversals, is that of an artist whose works and films reveal without words the undersides and the pitfalls of economy, of politics, of art and of communication, and of what makes the world today.

Euroscope Méditerranée presented here, is an installation that takes the name of the brand of the spyglass that allows to observe the landscape on the quays of a city. In the room known as the “portehole” of the Villa Bernasconi, the moving image on the opposite side is a sea, a horizon that served as the background of Sarkozy’s campaign in 2012. No one knew then what the marine landscape seen from the beach would evoke at the moment when the campaign took place. Through time Président Vertut gives new readings of these images and of current events.

Highway to Jahannam made for the exhibition Nouvelles Vagues remains in the same vein: hipsters demolish artworks in a contemporary museum following the punk-rock score of a warrior song of the Islamic State. The suggested juxtaposition of known images of jihadists destroying the Mosul Museum artefacts relates to this same question that underlies Président Vertut’s work: who contributes to what? Who’s looking at what?

Matthieu Vertut, alias Président Vertut
Born in France in 1978, lives and works in Geneva

Solo exhibitions

2014 Villa du Parc, Annemasse;
2013 Prix MAIF pour la sculpture, Paris;
2012 Le Cabinet, Geneva; TMproject, Geneva;
2011 LABO, Geneva;
I sotterranei dell’arte, Monte Carasso;
2010 TMproject, Geneva

Group exhibitions

2014 Mamco – Fonderie Kugler, Geneva; Fundacion Teatro Odeon, Bogota; Halle Nord, Geneva; Must Gallery, Lugano
2013 58th salon de Montrouge, Montrouge, France
2012 Villa Dutoit, Geneva
2010 Centre d’Art Contemporain, Geneva; Laleh June Galerie, Basel
2009 New Jersey, Basel; Darse, Geneva

www.vertut.com

Impressum

This publication was made by the City of Lancy, Geneva, Switzerland
in the frame of the exhibition Nouvelles Vagues
that took place at the Villa Bernasconi from April 9 till May 22, 2016.

Photo credit: with the exception of Président Vertut, all photographs are from the artists
themselves

Translation: Zsuzsanna Szabo

Design: Schaffter Sahli

Printed by Noir sur Noir

Villa Bernasconi/Lancy/Geneva
Route du Grand-Lancy 8, 1212 Grand-Lancy
www.villabernasconi.ch