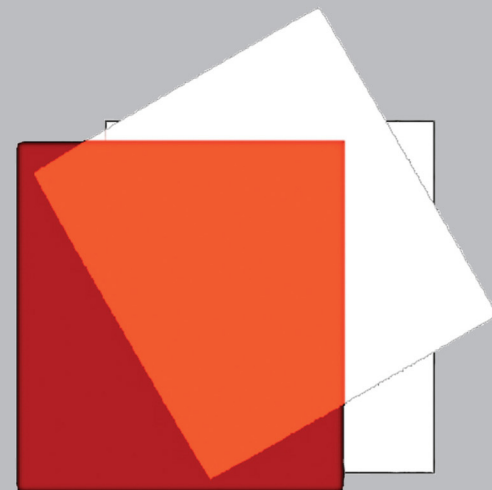


Future Pixs:
the book



Retro Specks Future Pixs : the book ● Gilles Massot aka Ma de Marmat



Retro Specks



Retro Specks Future Pix:
the book

(station to station)

à Jean Jacques,
à Jean Paul,
and any other John
who might feel concerned.



?1st



ISBN 981-05-6428-7

person(ne) / production ?



Jean Jacques Martin

+



Gilles Massot



=

Mar + Ma

=

Marma

Mar: la mer

Ma: la mère

2 x *M*

C'est du Rock and Roll Graphique
à l'm e³

A pictorial jam session between two individuals in which the resulting image, while borrowing from the graphic vocabularies of each member, is much more than their simple sum.

An early awareness of the fundamentally interactive nature of reality (I mean, we were about five years old when it all started!).

A way of bringing fun and wonderment to life by looking for the extraordinary at the heart of the ordinary.



Self - pencil and water colour on paper - 1990 - 18x26cm

It's all about "being".
Une sensation entre "ici"
et "maintenant" but not quite
"here" nor "now".

Intangible, but very présente.

Should there be a beginning to the story?
La chose a de toute évidence existé de toute éternité.
So here it goes...

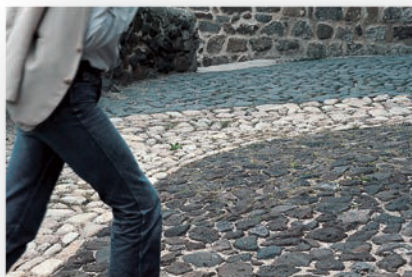
"In October 2004, while preparing for the exhibition Retro Speck Future Pixs", Gilles decided to use again the name "Ma de Marma". While Jean Jacques Martin had much earlier on officially adopted the name Jean Jacques Mar to sign his sculptures, Gilles had yet to formally acknowledge the powerful influence of Marma on his formative years in Provence. By becoming once more "the one between things", Gilles was bridging the gap between the adult he had become and the teenage co-founder of Marma he was."

"Marma as we know it"

Evangeline Modovar

©2078 Publications of the Great Flood

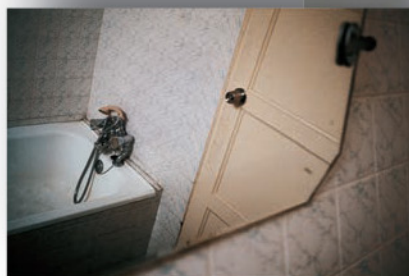
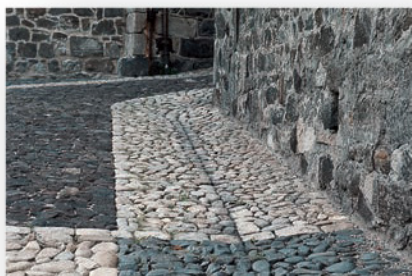
MARMA?



Mar



Le Puy en Velay - 1977



Singapour - 1983



Ma

Mar(tin) plus Ma(so) = Marma. Élémentaire mon cher Watson.
L'aventure démarre vers l'âge de 5 ou 6 ans en regardant passer le Tour de France.
Vers 13 ans, elle devient ouvertement artistique.
Et puis à 25 ans, il y eut

Marseille - 1980

La



Fresque

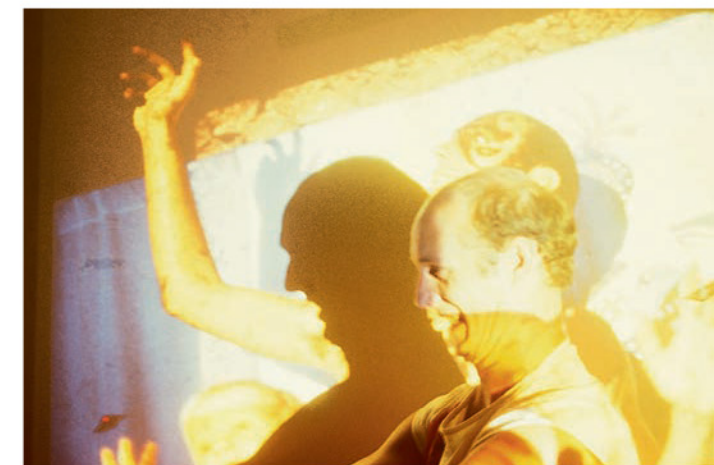
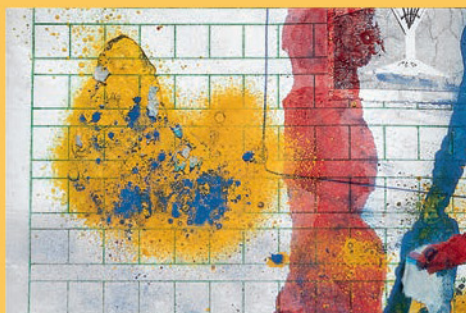
Une belle aventure que celle de 'la fresque'...
deux copains qui commencent un boeuf graphique à même
le mur, lequel évolue en fête pictoriale communautaire.
Elle résume tout le Marma: plaisir ludique et ping pong graphique.

I AM MA

MA DE MARMA

AS SIMPLE AS THAT

and I work on the space between things



Marseille. Summer 1977

Cette année-là, l'été fut particulièrement éprouvant. Chaleur étouffante et sécheresse avaient provoqué des feux importants dans les collines environnantes et l'odeur d'incendie arrivait jusqu'au centre ville.

Yet, despite (or maybe because of) the surrounding apocalyptic mood caused by the raging bush fires, I found myself particularly inspired and productive in my studio.

In 1976, after studying architecture for three years, I came to the conclusion that images were my true calling. Buildings and architecture fascinated me for sure, but not the nitty-gritty of construction. In June, after a year spent drawing and painting using an intricate pen and ink technique, I passed the examination to enter a school of photography recently opened in Marseille. While waiting for the beginning of the school year in September, I spent the summer exploring the relation between the traditional graphic mediums I had been using and the photographic medium I had recently grown fond of.

Taking photographs was of course interesting, but what fascinated me most was the medium itself. I couldn't help but wonder about the effect of photography on the perception of time and space, and the resulting paradox that took the form of a photograph.

The transition between these two phases of my life took on the form of a drawing. In it, I was for the first time purposely exploring the relation between graphic and photographic mediums. I forgot which title I gave it then, but many years later when preparing to exhibit it in Singapore, I called it: *Time Frame*.

La Genèse

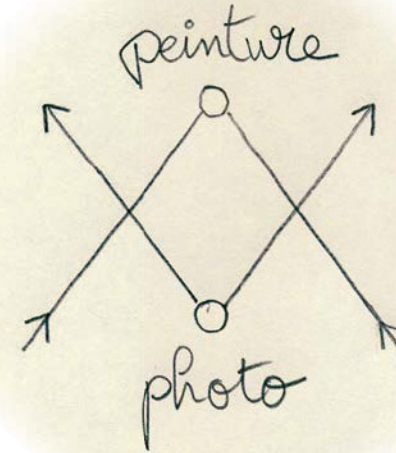
Le début d'un long voyage



Time Frame - photo and mixed media on paper - 1977 - 65x50cm

*temps
et
espace*

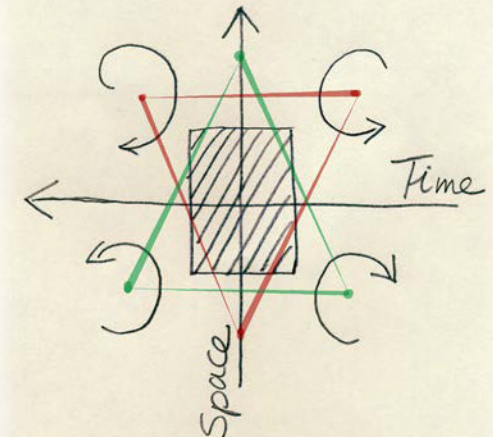
Time Frame was based on an observation that had occurred to me while pondering on the nature of painting and photography and their relation to one another. I could see them as basically working in opposite directions, as if looking at reality from two opposite angles.



There is no fixed formula defining how long one should take to create a painting or a photograph. But one can reasonably assume that paintings in general develop over a long period of time, while photographs capture a fleeting instant. Paintings compile long hours of work, if not days or years, into an image that can then be perceived within just a few seconds. Photographs on the other hand turn the instant into a moment of all eternity that can be seen over and over. Similarly, painting has the power to transcend space by allowing the

juxtaposition of many different places and points of view in one single image, while photography will do so by allowing the single point of view of a single place to exist simultaneously in many locations at the same time through the virtue of its reproductive capability.

My drawing was conceived as an almost mathematical illustration of these interactions, with a horizontal axis symbolising time flowing from right to left and a vertical axis relating to space from bottom to top. Photography, the instant, the “here and now” stands at the junction of these two axis, surrounded by diverse graphic interpretations of the photo’s subject, me for the matter, in a photograph taken by my friend Xavier Gaeremynck.



The left and right top boxes symbolise the possibility of infinite reproduction coming from one single moment at the bottom/centre. The side boxes at the bottom focus their movement on the centre top box where I used the contrasting texture of enamel paint on the empty silhouette, the question of substance and identity. Little did I know that this work had opened the way for a life long research on the phenomenology of photography. Eight years later the first graphic would show up in Tokyo, while the second would reappear almost thirty years later in Singapore.

Ecole
de
Photographie
et
Audiovisuel
Marseille St Charles

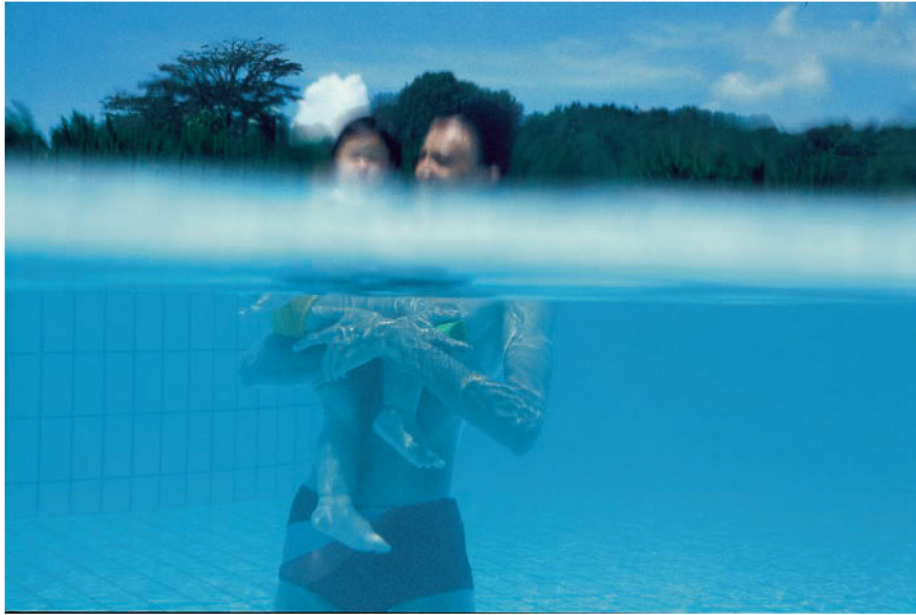


Portfolio de diplôme:
des maisons, des arbres, des autos
a study of mankind's environment
as resulting from the combination
of three components: houses,
trees and cars

Mr. XG



Jan 81



SINGAPOUR




The East...

i m m e r s i o n

les premiers voyages...tu te souviens?





Talking Eyes was an adventure
that took a few of us by
surprise.

It started as a timely meeting with François
Verlet during the 1981 New Year party.

François had a vision. He wanted to
use the power of music and
light to change the world, so to speak.

I was all for it of course. Let me dance
my soul away and I will be the
happiest man on earth.

For three years we did party our life
away, organising wild nights that
mixed kampung life with disco beat,
dreamlike settings with
outrageous performances, beautiful people
with luscious fruits.

These were the magic nights of the Art of Parties.

Talking eyes

Les yeux dans les étoiles

We also did more respectable projects, such as audio-visual productions. One of them, meant to present the up-coming MRT system to the public, even saw me designing the first network map of Singapore subway!

The highlight of our activities however was a commission by Jessica Leo for an outdoor multimedia show in the first Singapore Festival

Toa Payoh

Festival Fringe 1984

Talking Eyes and the Concrete Jungle

This I believe was among the first street art performances in Singapore.

Teaching French...



Raconte-moi!

He and He - ink and gouache on paper - 1994 - 40x30cm

Image

communication

Language

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z



Listen - silver print - 1985 - 25x17cm

My first photographic exhibition. I had been commissioned by the French magazine City to take black and white photographs of Singapore. This photojournalistic work eventually triggered in me the desire to explore once again the relationship between photography and painting. I began working on the photographs with colours, at first in a realistic manner, then pushing this approach towards increasingly graphic and expressionistic works. This resulted in a series of works ranging from pure black and white photos to images bursting with colours. They were presented as an installation within the typically Singaporean environment of a flatted factory, using the stored furniture and machinery of a carpentry workshop put at my disposal by the antiques dealer Lucina Talib.

Singapore from BW to C

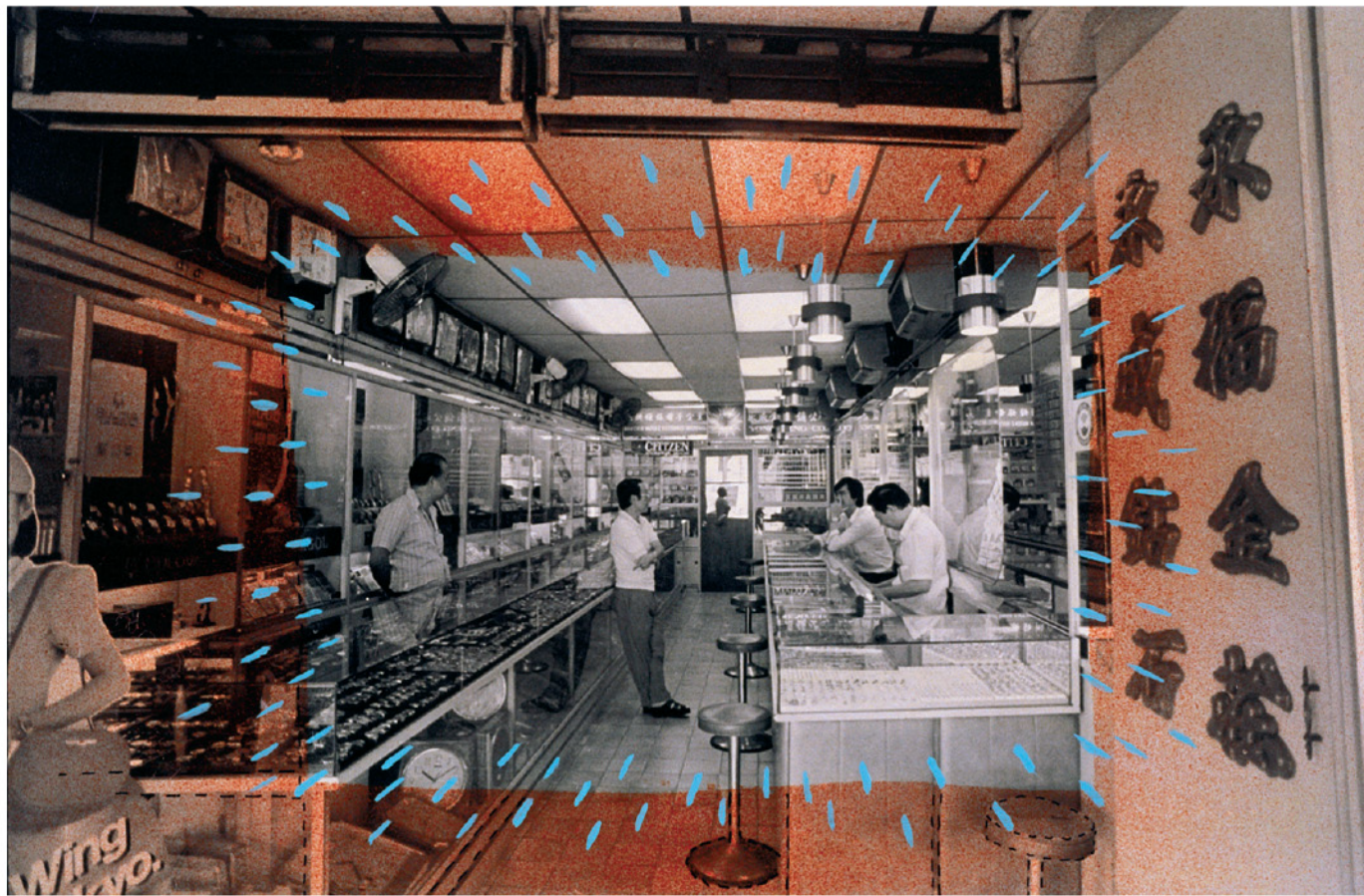


The Real Thing - mixed media on silver print - 1985 - 25x17cm



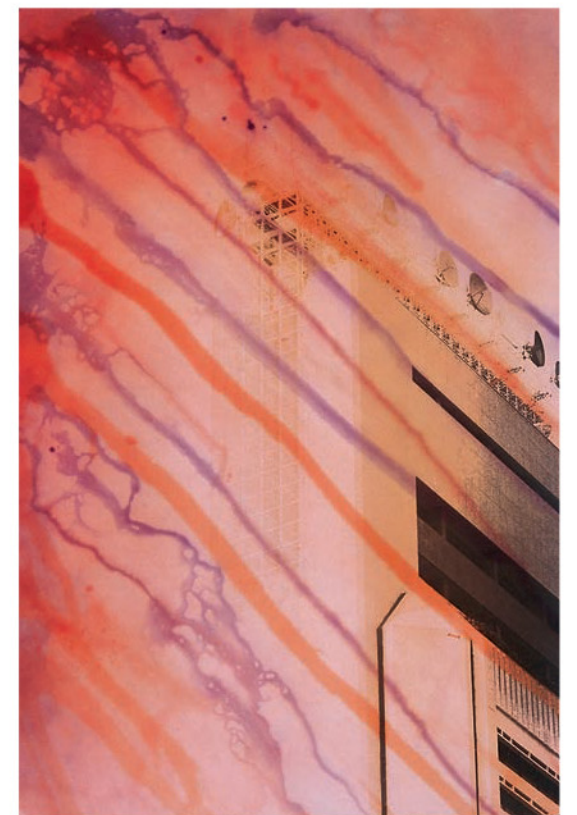
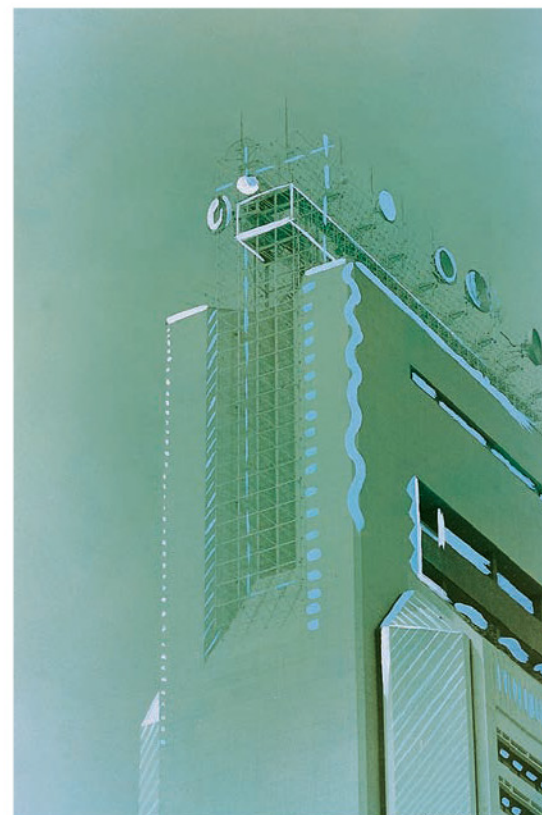
Singapore 1985

Adam & Eve - mixed media on silver print - 1985 - 25x17cm



Time Frame 2 - mixed media on silver print - 1985 - 25x17cm

Un jour, j'ai pris la route...



Phone Waves 1,2,3,4 - mixed media on silver print - 1985 - 25x17cm

Left: Raffles City - mixed media on silver print - 1985 - 25x17cm



Central Real(i)ty - cibachrom print - 1986

Marseille 1986

*Elle était belle et
insouciante,
me faisant
découvrir un monde
où*

les images



White Dreams - cibachrom print - 1986

Presented in Marseille, Asimages was the first exhibition intending to share something of my Asian experience with a French public. The exhibition Singapore from BW to C was followed by a six month-long journey to Thailand, Hong Kong and Japan during which I collected lots of images and writings. They were presented in a vacated villa, transformed almost overnight into a gallery by an enthusiastic group of close friends, a collaboration that lent to the one night event the quality of a collective happening.

s'appelaient **Asimages**



Les vélos de Vincent - mixed media on print - 1985 - 25x17cm



Happy Go Lucky - cibachrom print - 1986



Two things happened during the stay in Tokyo that were going to have long-term consequences. By the time I reached the Japanese capital, I was pretty clear about the multi-disciplinary nature of my work. I had actively practised painting, photography and performance for many years and was even beginning to sell my writing to magazines.

Amazingly enough, I was soon to learn that this was also true for the whole Japanese society. In the course of my researches, I discovered that one of the concepts central to Japanese aesthetics is called *ma* and that it describes precisely the notion of space or moment between things. Whether it is the empty space in a painting, the silence between two musical notes, the void between two stones in a Zen garden or the moment between two poses of a kabuki actor, what truly makes the value of artistic expression to the Japanese mind is the *ma* in it. It doesn't matter if it is about time or space, *ma* is the "nothing" that makes "something" exist.



Far from feeling the urge to focus on what I was supposed to be best at as people often suggested, I looked at these disciplines as complementing one another in the expression of my full personality. I thus began defining that personal approach to creativity as a work taking place in the space between disciplines, rather than within the disciplines themselves. I was "Ma, the in-between".

Another timely event brought new elements to my research on time and space, painting and photography. The spring issue of Vogue is traditionally edited by a personality of some sort. In 1985 it had been handed to David Hockney who presented a portfolio featuring and explaining his latest photo montages. They were based on the notion of "reversed perspective", a photographic version of the Cubist representation of space. What struck me most was that the graphic he had done to illustrate the opposition between the two notions of perspective strangely resembled the one I had done to conceptualise my seminal 1977 drawing. I loved Hockney's works but didn't feel the call to embark on a similar research right away. Things were to happen in their own rhythm.

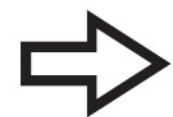
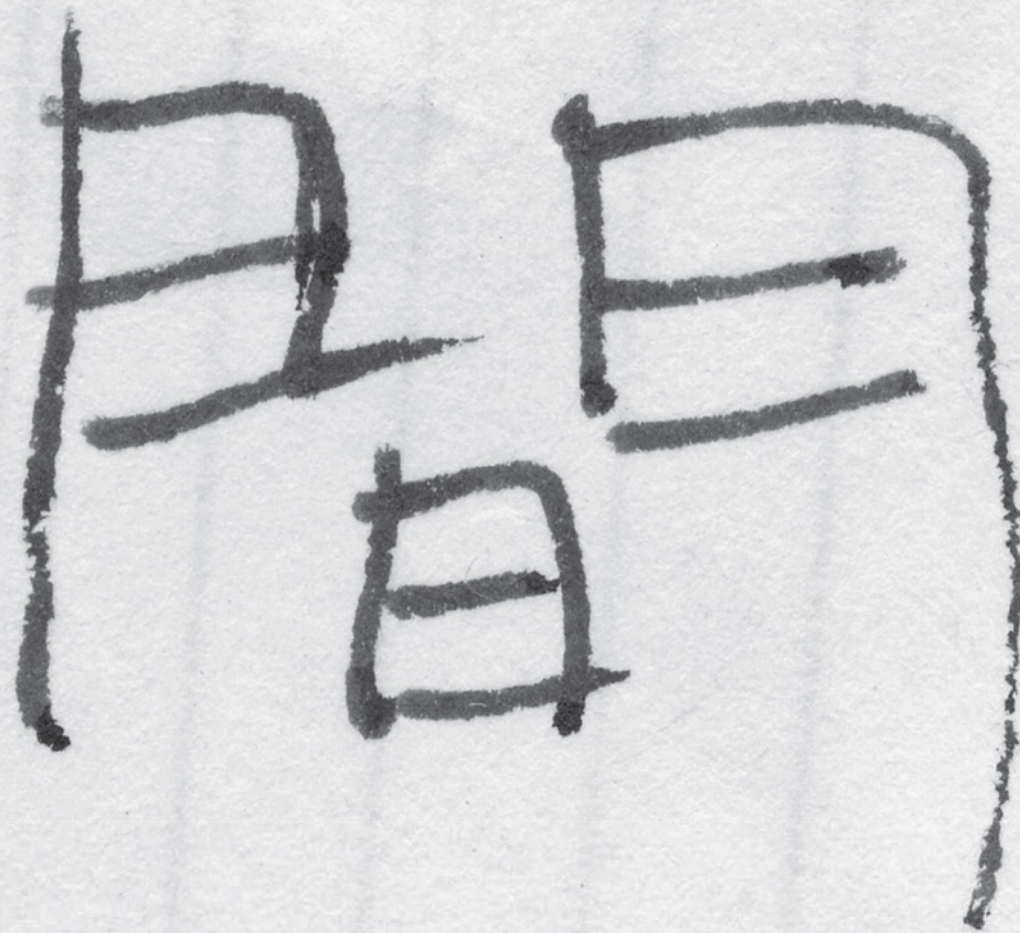
Une route qui dansait.



La route me fit entre autre découvrir quelque chose d'étonnant: les Japonais ont un mot très précis pour décrire le concept d'espace entre les choses. Ils en ont bien besoin car c'est précisément là ce qui fait la qualité d'une oeuvre d'art à leurs yeux! Qu'il s'agisse de l'espace vide d'une peinture, du silence entre deux notes de musique, du rapport entre les pierres d'un jardin Zen ou de la pause entre deux expressions d'un acteur de Kabuki, ce qui fait la valeur de tout cela, c'est le Ma que l'on peut y percevoir. L'espace entre les choses qui les fait exister, le vide sans lequel elles seraient confondues et indistinguables. Comme si le Big Bang ne les avait pas séparées. C'était plutôt bizarre. Moi j'ai dit bizarre, comme c'est bizarre, oui car c'est bien là le nom que le Marma m'avait donné et que j'avais gardé pour décrire mon travail sur l'espace entre les disciplines.

Le Marma, une bien belle aventure dont on ne sait encore trop jusqu'où elle ira. Lui c'est Mar et moi c'est Ma et comme l'a dit Jean Jacques, c'est du Rock and Roll graphique. D'autres expériences avaient aussi développé en moi la certitude que la réalité existe surtout à travers un flux continu d'échange entre gens, choses, gens et choses. Tout cela avait pris la forme

d'un dessin réalisé durant l'été 1977 dans lequel j'explorais pour la première fois le rapport entre la peinture et la photographie et leurs interprétations respectives du temps et de l'espace. Je les avais représentées comme deux disciplines percevant la réalité de deux points de vues opposés. Cela se poursuivit en 1984 avec ma première exposition photographique dans laquelle les tirages noir et blanc se coloraient petit à petit pour se transformer en une explosion de couleurs.



̄ ⚡ ESPACE ENTRE LES CHOSSES

The Space Between Things



et ensuite?

85



95

les années voyages











↑ Singapore

↗ Paris

⇒ Dali

↘ Pagan

↓ Tanah Rata

↙ Ho Chi Minh City

⇐ Jakarta

↖ Songkhla

↑ Tokyo

↙ Bukittinggi

↗ Paris

→ Bangkok



95



85



Singapore ⇨ Kuala Lumpur ⇨ Singapore



prémonition?



Aller-retour

Back and forth

So many of these in the course
of the many years spent
on the road

My visa is running out

Je dois renouveler mon visa

La visite à Kuala Lumpur est toujours
a great pleasure anyway

The
1987
Yin
Yang
Festival



Les années évènements

5 days of interaction between art practitioners of all kinds to propose a contemporary understanding of Yin Yang; a round-the-clock happening, set within the grounds of the Singapore University graduates club. Certainly one of the first interdisciplinary art events of that kind in Singapore.

concept / production

87

88



80 000 people gathered on the spot where Esplanade stands today to welcome the 1988 Singapore Arts Festival with a multimedia extravaganza conceived by the American artist Marilyn Wood. The city as a canvas... warming up the ground for what was to come in Marina Bay...

production

City Celebration

Katmandou, ...le toit du monde...



The Swayambunath - photo montage - 1988 - 25/37cm

Singapore 1988

In January 1988, a delayed trip to Calcutta saw me leaving for the Himalaya instead of Bengal. While preparing for that journey, I was shown some photographs of Kathmandu and the surrounding valley by a friend who had just been there. The extensive use of bricks I could see in the local architecture quickly made me think of Hockney's collages.



The Swayambunath - pencil on paper - 1988 - 30x40cm

Fragmented Whole

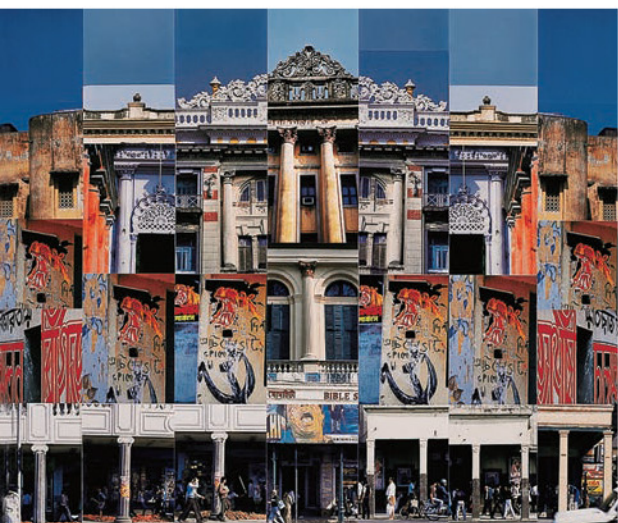
Time Frame - water colour and pencil on paper - 1988 - 40x30cm



Kathmandu seemed to be a subject for which the tiling effect of these collages would work well. So I left with lots of negative films and a sketch book in my bag. The collages were composed as a dialogue between the camera and the pencil. The sketches done on location to help me visualise the progression of the compositions were later exhibited with the final prints. While the camera fragmented the subject seen through the viewfinder, the pencil re-unified its perception on the paper. This graphic exploration of time and space initiated a body of work that developed over the next few years and eventually took the form of photo-objects.

Wandering in the mosque - photo montage - 1988 - 58/37 cm





Calcutta is an extreme city that triggers reactions on par with its unique identity. My stay there in late 88-early 89 proved to be most inspiring. For three months I kept a disciplined rhythm of work, on location in the city in the morning, back in my room in the afternoon. The Imaginary Facades series developed as a natural continuation of the work on Kathmandu. Architectural elements of the decrepit buildings were photographed across the city and later re-arranged as facades of my own fantasy. The black and white prints focused on the street life and the human dimension of this amazing city teeming with people. The sketches too were conceived as a continuation of the Kathmandu work by assembling different moments and viewpoints on the same page.

Imaginary Facade #10 - photo collage - 1989 - 58x45cm

Les Façades Imaginaires de Calcutta

Paris 1990



Alone in the Crowd - silver print - 1989 - 39x26cm

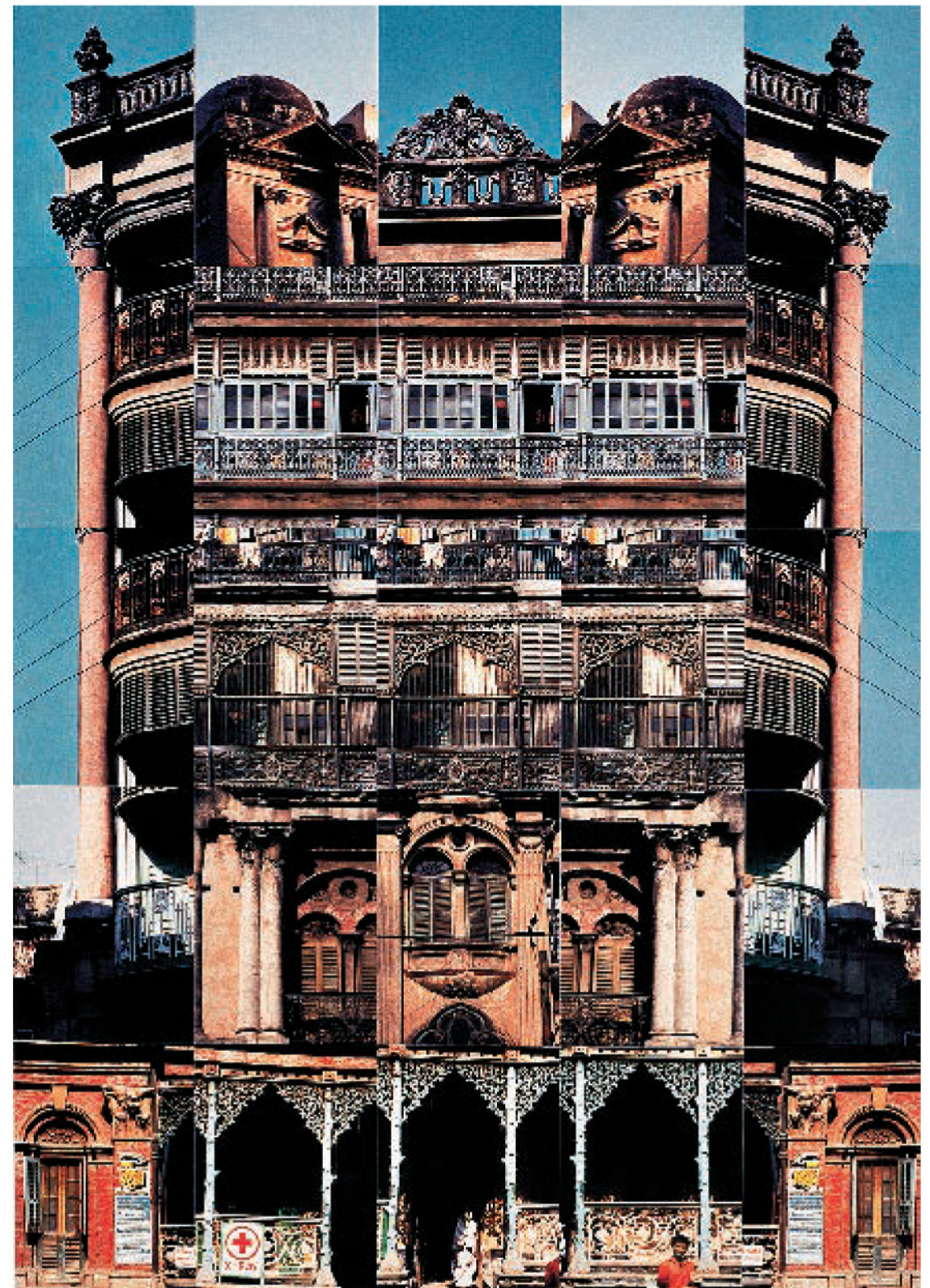


Street Scene #12 - water colour and ink on paper -1989 -18x30cm

... Calcutta, tout en bas dans le delta...



Imaginary Facade #3 - photo collage - 1989 - 50x70cm



Imaginary Facade #4 - photo collage - 1989 - 50x60cm



Not to Forget - silver print - 1989 - 39x26cm



Street Scene #8 - water colour and ink on paper -1989 -18x30cm



Imaginary Facade #16 - photo collage - 1989 - 58x37cm



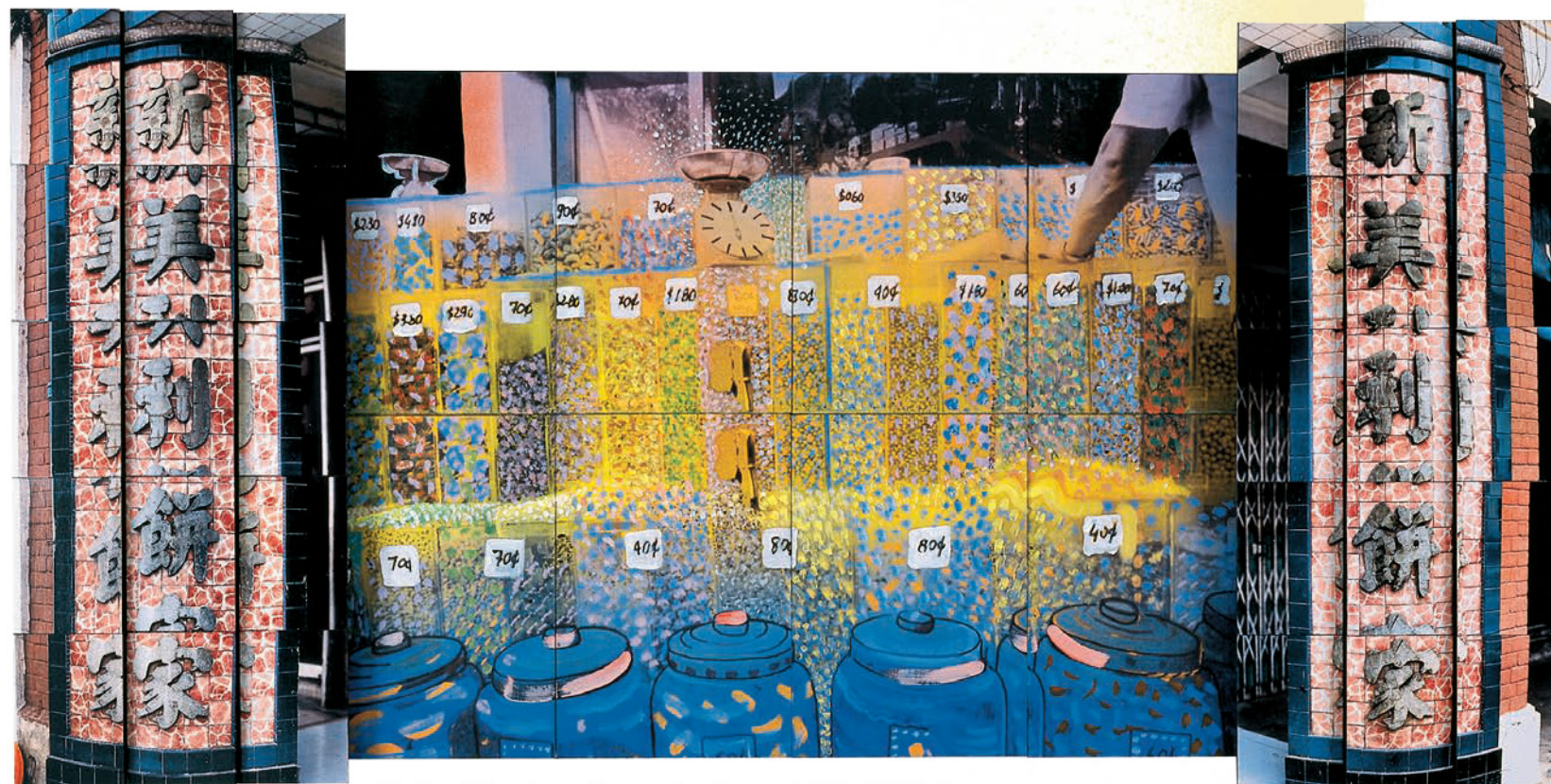
Singapore 1991



...à la maison à Singapour...

Singapore... boy, time flies with you... and indeed it had! This exhibition was conceived as a way to celebrate the 10th anniversary of my arrival in Singapore. During that time, I had come to know the city quite well and, yes, to love it in many ways. Half of the exhibition was made up of photo-objects featuring architectural elements of the city-scape. They stood as the continuation of the work developed with the Kathmandu and Calcutta series. The other half gathered paintings and drawings of the city's life and its people, a series treated with an almost naive approach in its pictorial style. This drastic departing from my earliest love for Surrealism was a direct reflection of the work developed by keeping travel dairies while on the road.

Singapore Boy, Time Flies With You.



The Sweet Shop - laser print and acrylic paint on wood - 1991 - 176x10x48cm



Top left: The Drink Stall - laser print on wood - 1991 - 80x12x80cm

Top right: A Duck's Life - oil paint on canvas - 1990 - 65x92cm

Bottom: Fu - laser print on wood- 1991 - 39x19x68cm

...de ville

en

ville,



Stop, Look, Walk - laser print on wood - 1991 - 80x12x80cm

de port

en port,

jamais

encore



Dancing Perspective - laser print on wood - 1991 - 96x15x78cm



About to Leave - laser print on wood - 1991 - 27x12x63cm

je te le jure,

La route se concrétisa par des journaux de voyages qui eurent un effet inattendu: le surréalisme de mon adolescence fit place à une approche presque ethnographique teintée d'art naïf! Cela s'exprima en particulier dans les peintures de l'exposition qui marqua le dixième anniversaire de mon arrivée à Singapour. L'autre partie de l'exposition présentait mes dernières recherches



Kopi or Teh, that is the Question - oil paint on canvas - 1990 - 134x92cm

photographiques sur le temps et l'espace: des photo-objets mettant en volume le découpage temporel des prises de vues mosaïques. La démarche inspirée des collages de David Hockney prit sa source dans les briques de Katmandou, se répandit sur les façades de Calcutta, pour aboutir à Singapour.



Singapore Madonna - oil paint on canvas - 1991 - 88x121cm

je n'ai pu oublier ton corps.



The trip I made to Nepal in December 1987 was unplanned, almost accidental. Yet, the body of work initiated during those three weeks in the Himalayan kingdom turned out to be one of the most inspiring I ever worked on. The camera had first recorded the movements of the eye over the subject. It fragmented the moment into a kaleidoscopic vision of the space. The collage had re-unified the pieces of memory and made it whole again. The brush then came to smooth the edges of the time-frame. The question was: how to present the final stage of this time-space dialogue?

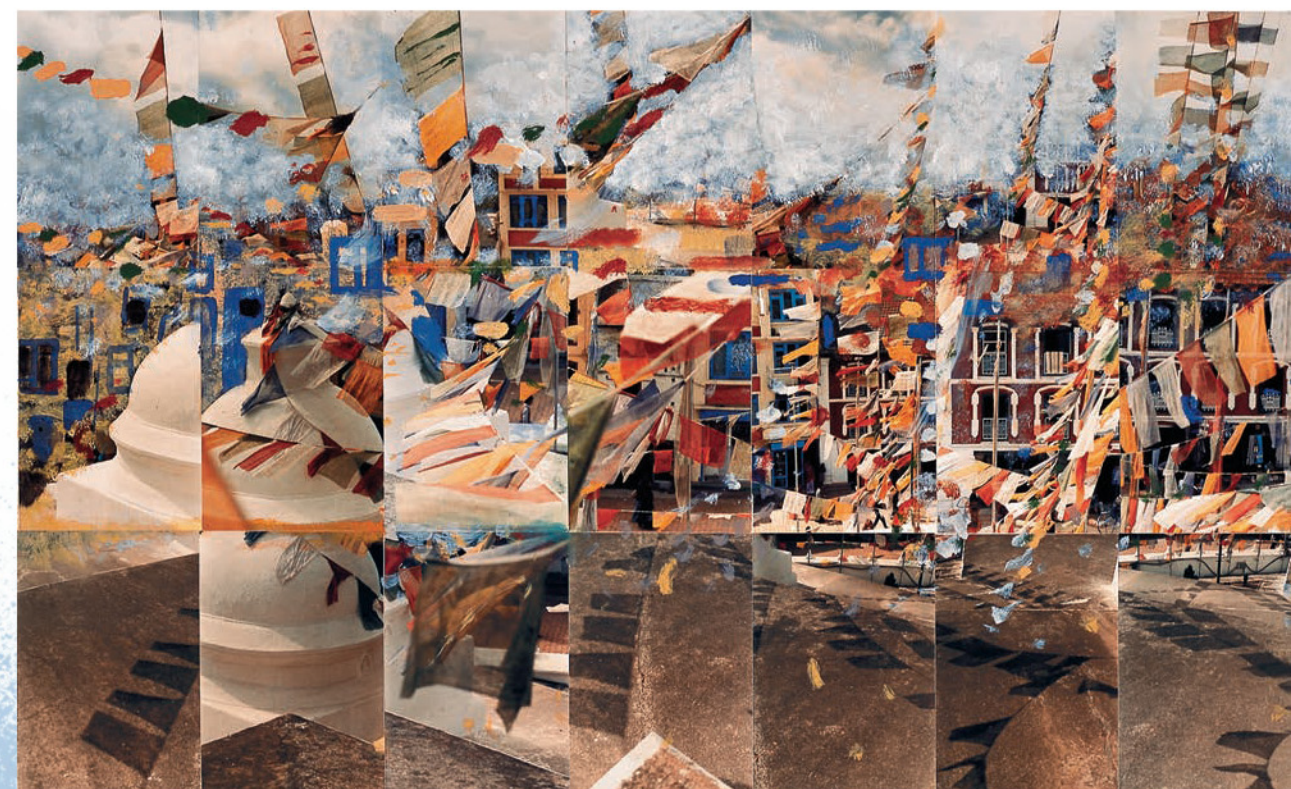
The initial sketch was unique, while the collage, by virtue of photographic reproduction, could exist in any number I liked. Obviously, the last step in the process, the collage reworked with oil paint, had to be somewhere between photography and painting, between the unique and the multiple. I began experimenting with laser copying. The medium had the advantage of offering a process of reproduction using light, as in photography, while printing the final result with powdered pigments as in painting. I liked the first results but these were still multiples, since I could print as many as I wanted. The reproduction had to become unique. The answer was in a way quite simple: turn the image into a volume, the photograph into a sculpture.

After much experimenting, I finally developed a technique in which the laser copies were glued on plywood and varnished with the same acrylic base. The image was then assembled again, but this time it was extended in space with depth and angles that re-enacted the effect of photographic lenses. The process being rather costly, I intended to do the work as and when I could afford to do so. But a good fairy had overseen that work from the beginning. On the occasion of a trip to France, I went to visit my hometown mayor to ask for a room where to present the first version of the exhibition. I walked out of his office with the promise of the budget to produce the new works and the resulting exhibition, without even having to ask for it!

Gardanne 1991

The Blue House
water colour, photo collage and oil paint on photos - 1988/1990

Les Moments de l'Instant



Gust of wind over the Stupa 1,2,3 - water colour, photo collage and oil paint on photos - 1988/1990



La route:

Temps

le croquis devient collage,



le collage devient peinture,

et la peinture devient objet.



*On se transforme beaucoup tout au long de la route .
Mais il reste néanmoins des constantes, "Heureux qui comme Ulysse..."*



*Je suis entré dans le bureau de Roger Mei, mon ancien instituteur devenu
maire de Gardanne, pour demander l'usage d'une salle dans laquelle
présenter les croquis et les collages de la première phase.*

Espace

*J'en ressortis, sans l'avoir demandé, avec
le budget pour réaliser
les objets que nécessitait ma*



*démarche à mi-chemin entre peinture et photo,
unique et multiple. Le voyage presque accidentel à Katmandou
se révélait être un des plus productifs de ma carrière.*



Partition pour 18 Promenades en 3 Temps 3 Mouvements



Paris 1992

The final presentation of the Kathmandu work took place in the Maison du Geste et de L'Image in Paris. The photo objects were displayed across the building, interacting with the architecture. And for the process to complete its full loop, I decided to rework on the presentation of the initial stage: the sketches done on location in Kathmandu.

I used a map of this city to create paper banners that presented the sketches in relation to the place where they were made. The banners were then hung from the ceiling to create a sort of labyrinth evocative of Kathmandu old streets. The time and space Kathmandu journey had come to its completion.



Suspension?

Above: *The Wave of Time* - photo installation - 1988 - dimension variable

Opposite bottom: *The Eyes that See in the Royal Palace* - laser print on wood - 1990 - 165/220cm

Opposite top: *The Year of the Totem* - laser print on wood - 1990 - 150x160cm

Les cartes sont un aspect fascinant de la route. On les regarde avant de partir et on imagine alors des paysages, des rencontres, des repas au bord de la route et des couchers de soleil.

Au retour, elles restent les mêmes, mais elles ont pris un aspect concret que le temps aura buriné au détour des chemins. On se souvient alors des paysages, des rencontres, des repas au bord de la route et des couchers de soleil.



Le travail sur Katmandou trouve sa forme finale avec une exposition à Paris à la Maison du Geste et de l'Image.

Pour boucler la boucle, je décidai de reprendre la présentation des croquis de départ

en les exposant suspendus entre ciel et terre, montés sur des photocopies plastifiées d'une carte de Katmandou.

Cela faisait un peu comme un labyrinthe... si l'espace est en suspension, où est le temps?



Gila Masok, Malay contemporary artist



Ma Geylang, Peranakan naive painter



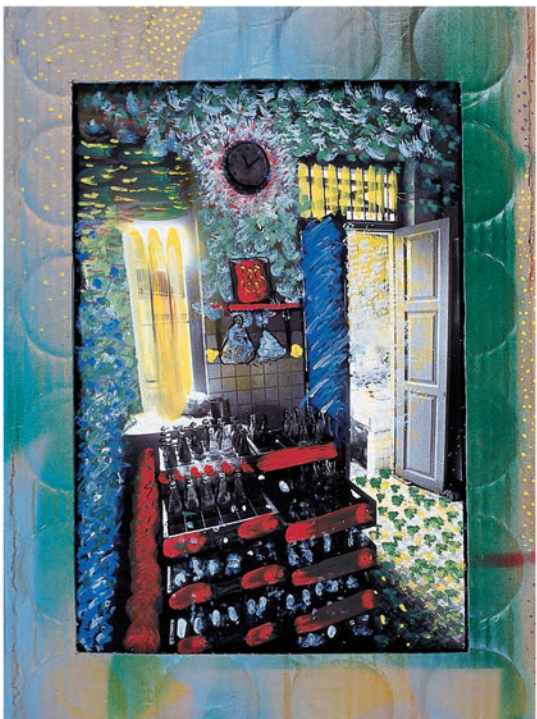
Singapore 1992

Coffee Shop

Lu Ma Su, Chinese brush painter



This was certainly my most schizophrenic exhibition ever! It featured a body of work developed over a few years in the Chye Hong Coffee Shop on Bukit Timah. The place was an interesting summary of the Singaporean society: the Chinese family who owned it sold the drinks, Malays and Indians offered cooked food, and the scene was completed by a few regular western customers from the nearby offices. I had photographed, sketched, painted the subject in all kinds of different ways and styles. The works were so diverse that the idea came to me to present them under different names, while I, Gilles, only stood as the organiser of the event. I asked the owners if they would like to see the show presented in the coffee shop and they agreed to it! In order to simply tape the works on the wall, I used the cardboard boxes containing the drinks as frames and integrated them to the works. For five days this typical Singaporean coffee shop was turned into an art installation, customers, smells and curry stains included.



Gila Masok



The works of Jill Nasso, Ma Geylang, Gila Masok in Chye Hong Coffee Shop



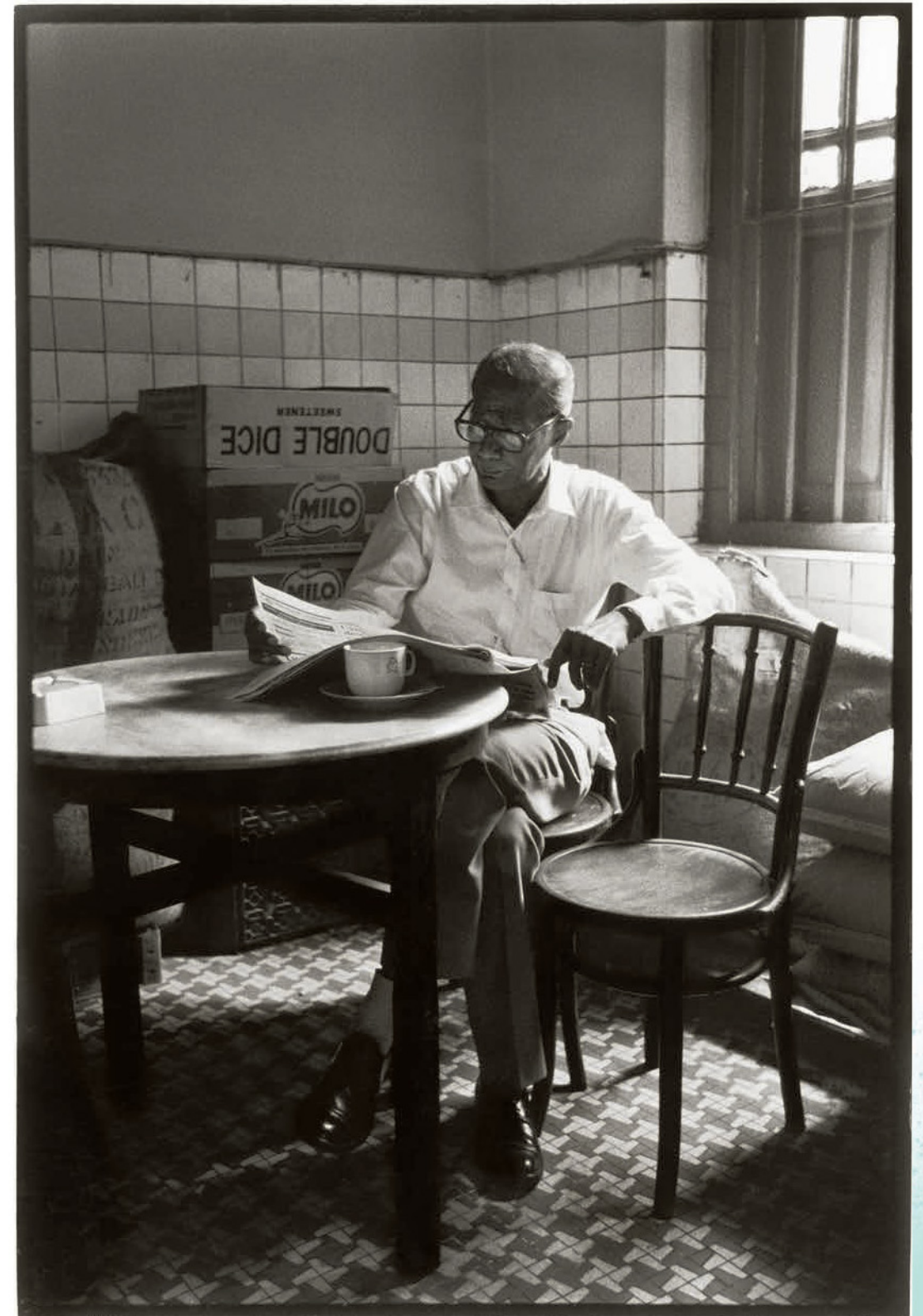
S'arrêter un moment...

Family altar and the drinks crates used as framing material



The works of Lu Ma Su, Ma Geylang and Jill Nasso in Chye Hong Coffee Shop

et prendre le temps de regarder le temps passer.



Jill Nasso, New Zealander photographer



The exhibition Espace 3356 in Raffles City

France - Singapore 1993

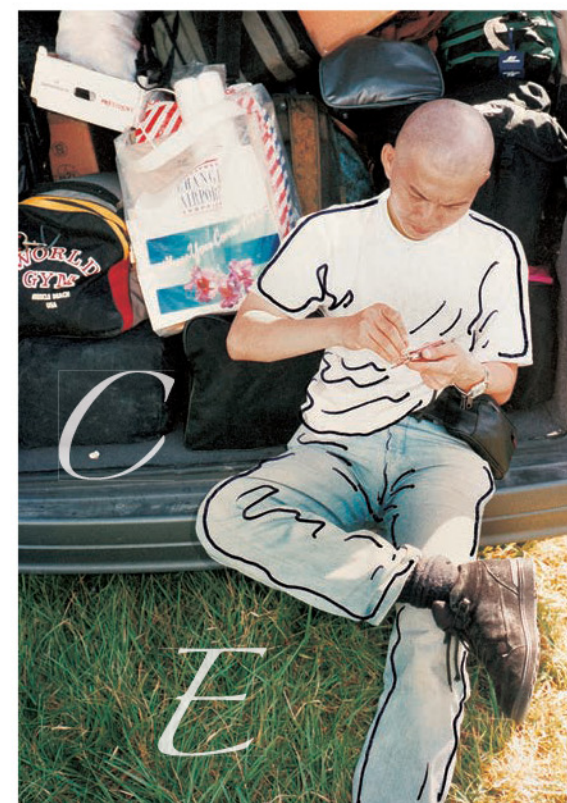
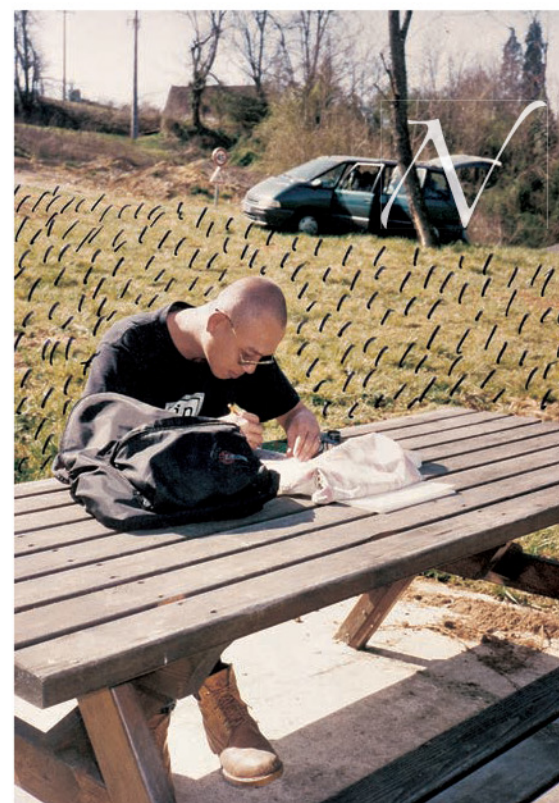
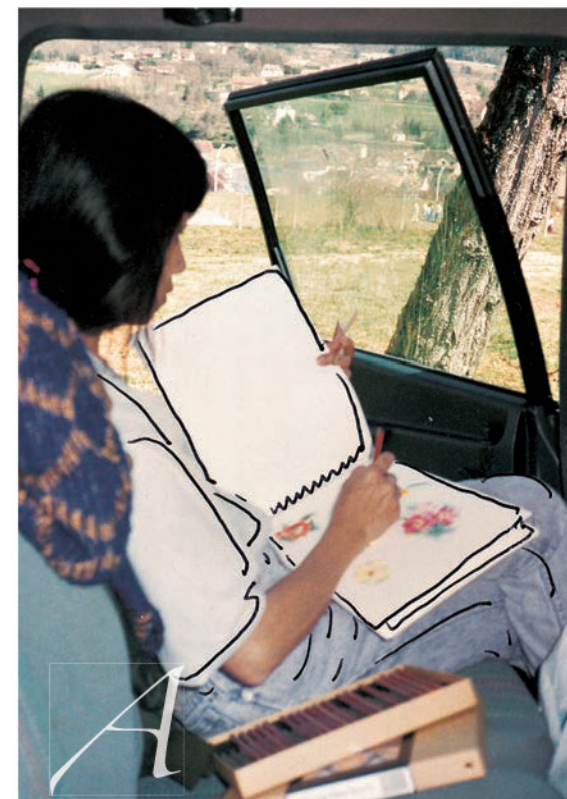
Of all the projects I have worked on, *The New Journey to the West* might well be the most emblematic of my identity as “Ma, the in-between”. The project, conceived for the 1993 French Festival in Singapore, aimed at re-actualising the original artistic link between the two countries. In the first half of the 20th century, the first generation of Singaporean artists had gone to Paris to study. Drawing a parallel with the classic Chinese tale “The Journey to the West”, in which a Chinese Buddhist monk travels to India in search of the original scriptures, I asked four Singaporean artists to embark on a six weeks tour of France with me as guide and bring back an exhibition of their vision of the country. For the duration of the project, I truly felt in between worlds and cultures, while working as curator, artist, organiser and tour guide. Two exhibitions resulted from the journey. They offered a rather unusual vision of France that proved particularly appealing to the Singaporean public.

The New Journey to the West

The exhibition in Substation
and the team working on the scroll used as a pictorial journal



Tour de



Clockwise from top left: Chandra Sekaran, Han Sai Por, Koh Ng Hua, Vincent Leow

pour 4 artistes Singapouriens

Copies de Voyages

Regarder le temps passer... c'est un peu ce que l'exposition Copies de Voyages me permit de faire. Cela faisait dix ans que j'avais pris la route. Suite au travail sur Katmandou, la photocopie laser était devenu un medium de prédilection. Il en découla une exposition conçue autour de cette technique, présentée par l'Espace Canon au Rond Point des Champs Elysées. Je piochais dans mon fond d'images pour créer le collage ci-dessous. Il servit de toile de scène à une performance mise en musique par le groupe Edgar Rice Cooker. La performance utilisait l'invitation en forme d'avion de papier que les invités avaient reçue par courrier. Ils y écrivaient d'abord quelques mots



Paris 1995

concernant le moment où ils l'avaient reçue, puis les échangeaient en les faisant voler. Ils écrivaient alors quelques mots sur le moment présent et je transformais l'invitation en oeuvre originale sur la photocopieuse. Les mots eux formèrent le poème suivant:

*Concorde, condor, concordance,
Tard dans la nuit
Je m'ai pris un avion
Sur la tête.*

Je t'aime.

C'est quoi ça?

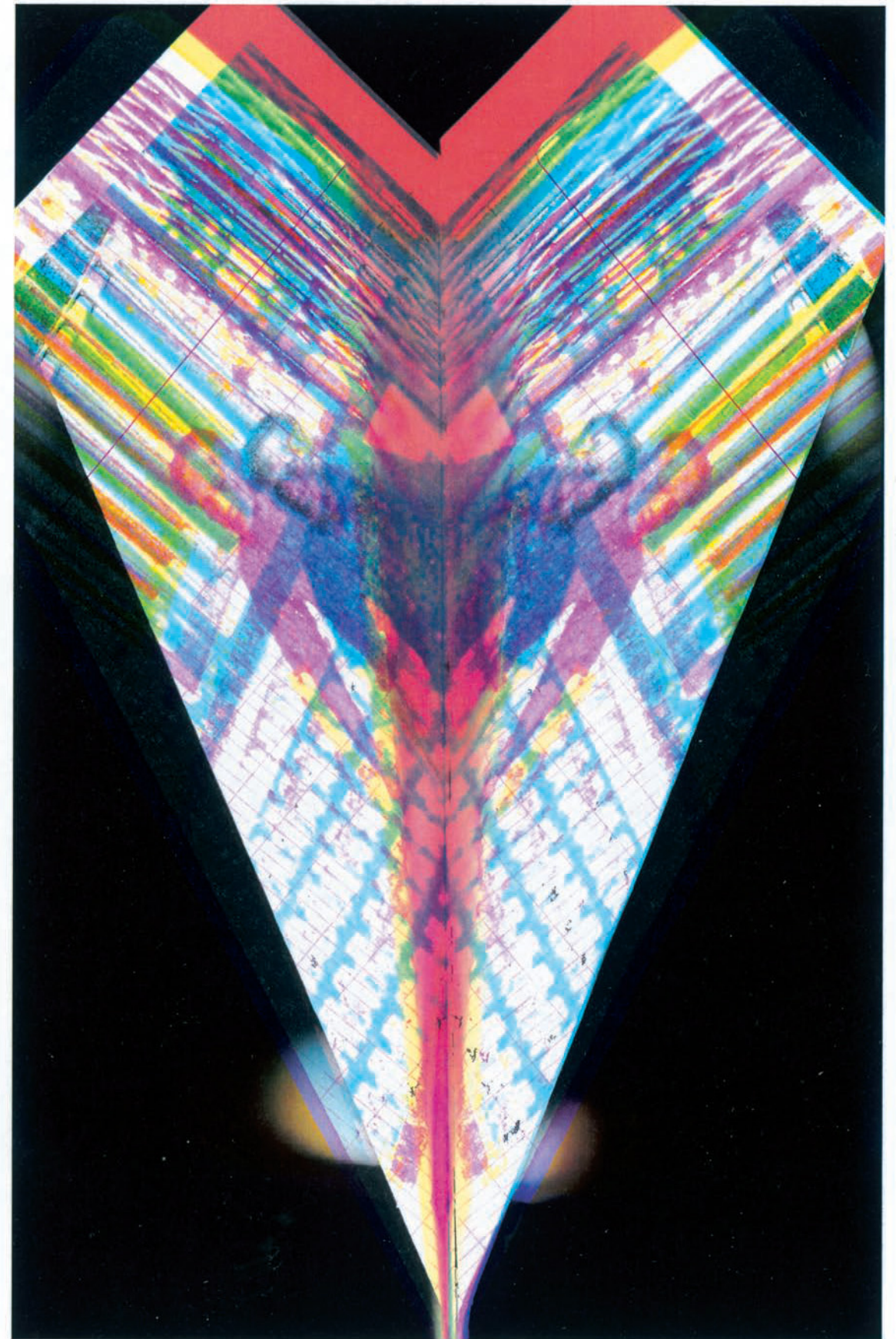
*C'est un jeu ou une farce,
Pour une fois sans din don
Mais avec des Ding Dong.
Chaleur, odeur, nuage d'électrons
Hammam party, I muy caliente!
Come fly with me!
where? How? When? Why?
Use your imagination.*

*Lumière, luminosité,
Shangai et les soleils de Marseille.
Mystère, harmonie,
Songe et sortie au delà du présent.
Heaven can wait...
Que la vie soit d'un moment à l'autre,
Le temps passe-t-il vite?
So so na.*

*Chouette un avion!
A plane?
Tiens donc! Avion vole!
Ah! Un copy artiste de l'objet.*

*L'homme sans frontière,
Téléphone, voiture, vitesse.
Question? Partage.
One more step towards the art cathedral,
En revenant des Indes,
Un voyageur de plus.*

With the work on Kathmandu, laser copying became one of my favourite mediums for many years. This led to an exhibition entirely built around the copier and presented by the Espace Canon in Paris. It included a performance, complemented by the music of my friends from the band Edgard Rice Cooker. We performed with the collage seen in the previous pages as a backdrop, a collage about the perception of time that would find a new version with the video installation of Retro Specks Future Pixs. The performance was built around the invitation sent over the mail in the form of a folded paper plane. It requested guests to bring it along with them on the opening night. In the course of the performance, I asked them to write on it a few words that related to the moment they were experiencing when they first received it, and to send it flying around as they would do with the paper planes of their childhood. For a couple of minutes, the usually rather business-like atmosphere of the Canon showroom was turned into a children playground. Each one then picked up a plane on the floor to write again a few words, this time about the moment we were experiencing together. I then collected the paper planes from them, giving in exchange a laser print done on the spot by playing with the plane over the copier. Selected words inscribed on the planes were later rearranged into a poem that had travelled through many imaginations before reaching its final destination.

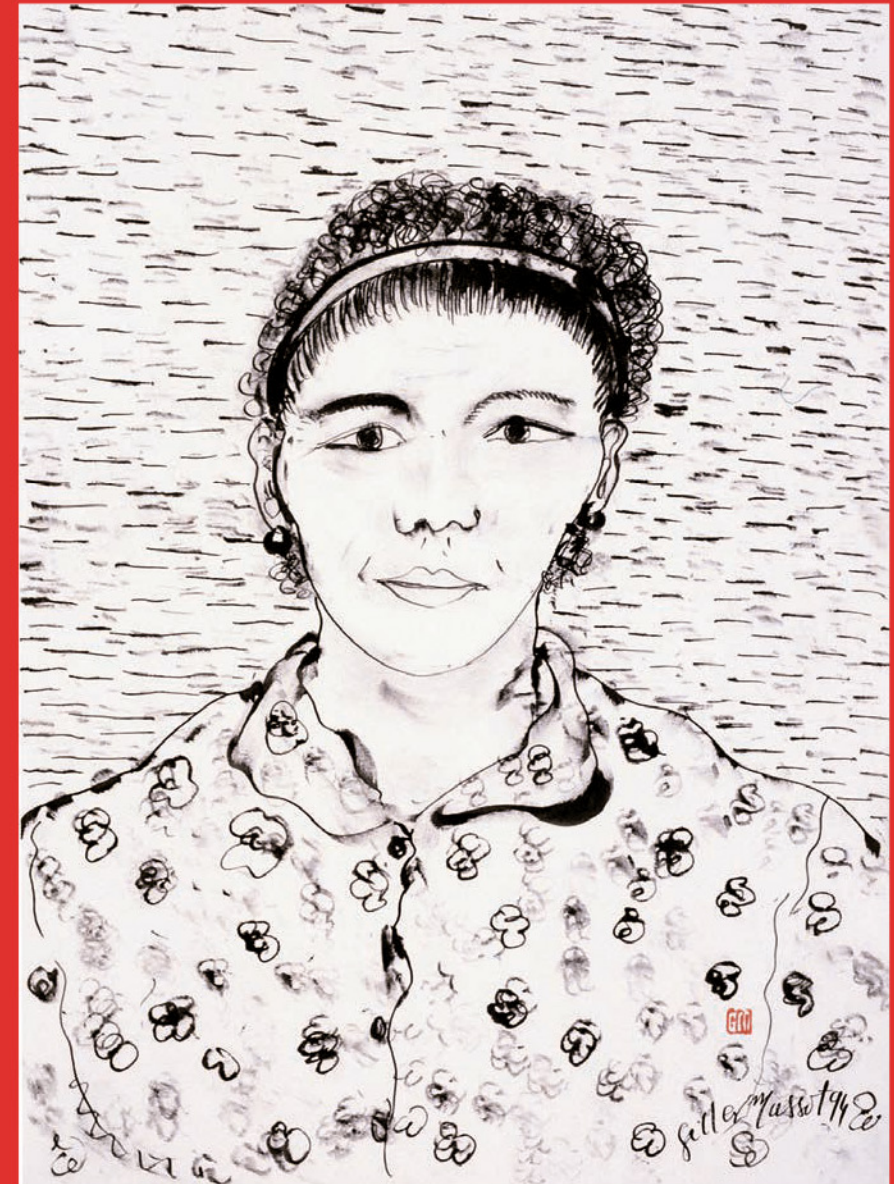
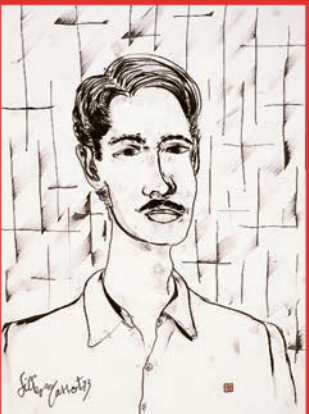
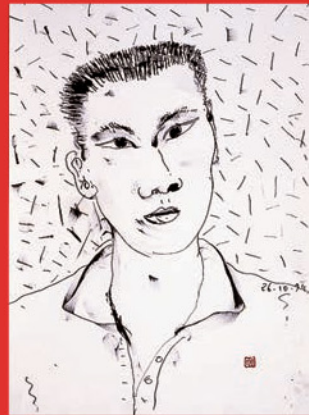
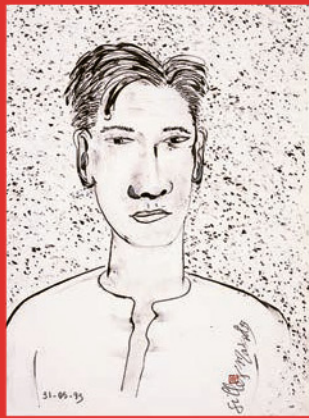


Des morceaux de visages,

Visavisages remains to this day my last experimentation with the concept of multiple time-space elements combining to form one image. The working method of Visavisages was initiated on the occasion of a trip to Shanghai where the overwhelming sense of the crowd in the streets led me to create portraits the way I had created facades in Calcutta. Features of different faces were memorised through the day and recombined in the evening into a simple pen and ink drawing, giving birth to a visage that reflected the day's encounters. I kept practising this exercise when back in Singapore, where the work finally resulted in an exhibition presented in the gallery Utopia.

Visavisages

Singapore 1996



Visavisage #8 - pen and ink on paper - 1995 - 30x40cm

tout au long de la ville.



Singapore 1997

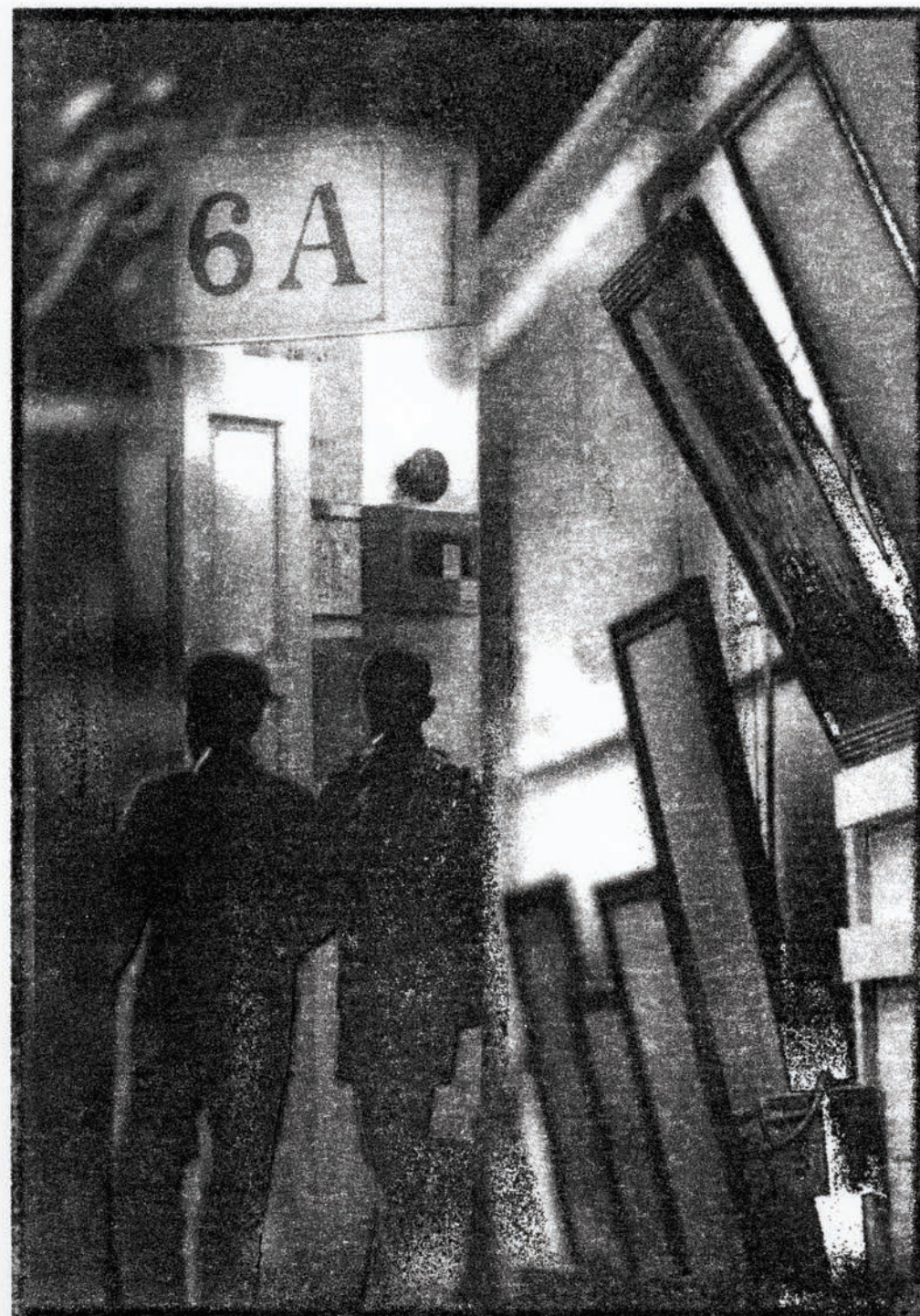
This exhibition was produced at the request of a group of friends who had opened a trendy café in Keong Saik Road. The street, long famous as the red light district of Chinatown, was in the process of being gentrified and certainly made an interesting subject. However, most of the action in Keong Saik takes place behind closed doors and my first attempt at photographing the discreet coming and going of the girls in the street exuded some impression of voyeurism that I didn't like. I had recently purchased a new computer and was experimenting with graphic programs for the first time. Since they needed something "more" that wasn't there at first, these images looked like a perfect ground to do so. I manipulated with Photoshop, and transferred the laser prints onto thick paper, giving a feeling of lithograph to the final result. The show was presented in the café Operetta for the regular customers but the girls too came, and they liked it.

Les Anges Passent #3 - transfer on paper - 1997 - 30x42cm

Les Anges Passent



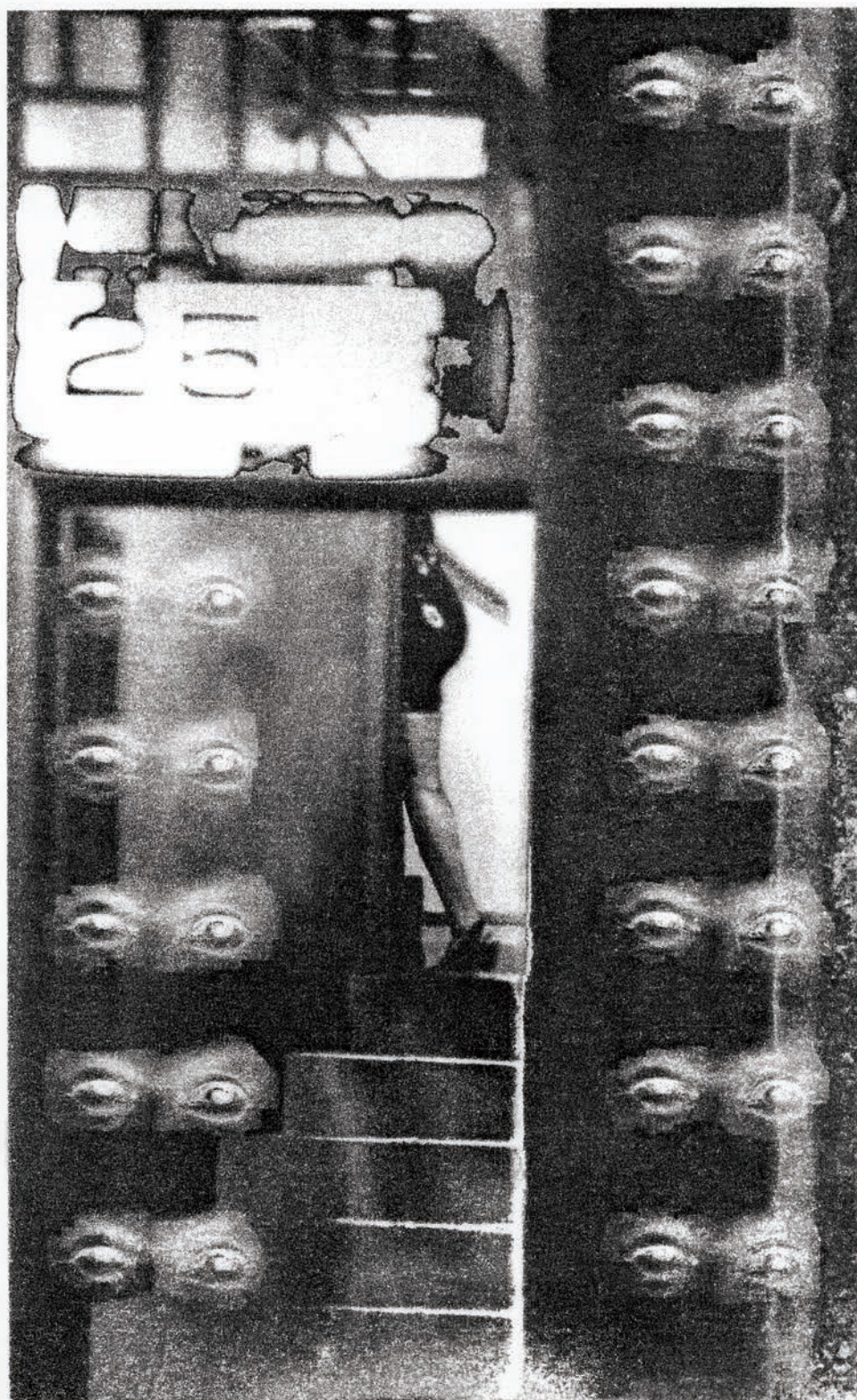
Les Anges Passent #20 - transfer on paper - 1997 - 30x42cm



AP

Jillery Passent 97

Les Anges Passent #6 - transfer on paper - 1997 - 30x42cm



Les Anges Passent #30 - transfer on paper - 1997 - 30x42cm

*Il est des battements d'ailes
plus furtifs que ceux de la libellule,
des blancheurs laiteuses
plus célestes que les rondeurs d'un cumulus,
des chants d'amour de toute éternité,*

*Keong Saik Road:
Les anges passent.*

*La rue n'a pas de mystère
Tout au plus quelques secrets.
Elle pourvoit aux besoins des hommes
Tout comme le champ, la forêt, la rivière.
Elle regarde la vie la traverser avec nonchalance
Et mélange sans y penser désir, plaisir et labeur quotidien.*

*Il est des ombres portées
aussi lourdes que la terre,
des velours d'un noir plus profond
que les abysses sans fin,
des chants d'amour presque aussi vieux que la terre,*

*Keong Saik Road:
Les anges passent.*



Les Anges Passent #24

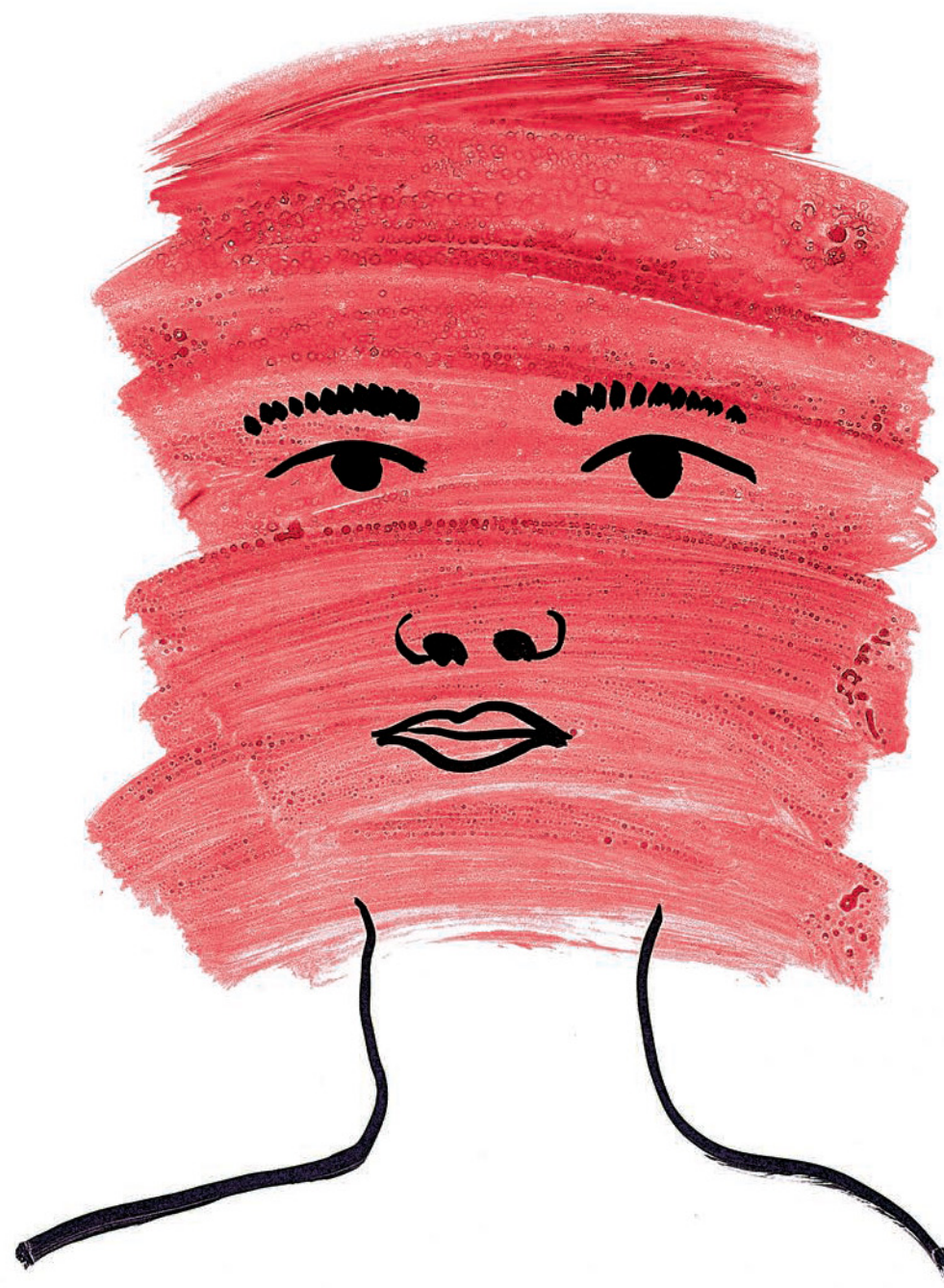
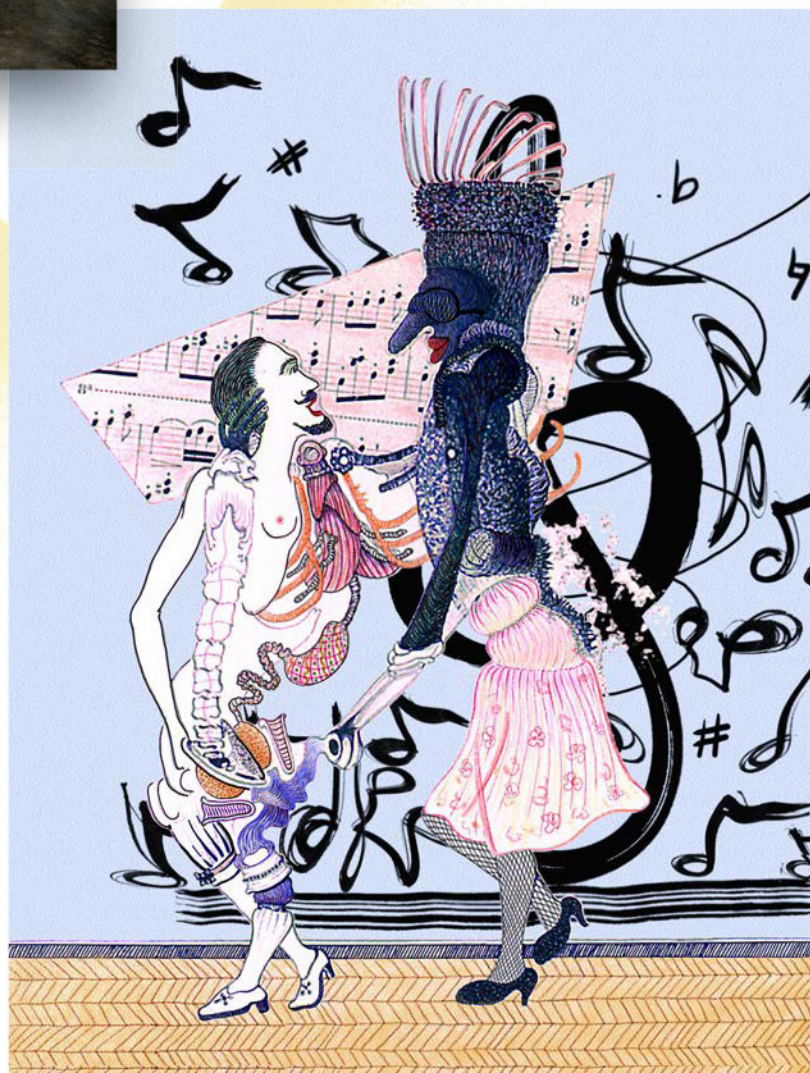
Singapore 1998



In 1998 I was invited by the director of the Alliance Française, to present a show of my liking. I took this opportunity to bring to light a collection of drawings and paintings built over 20 years without ever being presented to the public. They encompassed a wide range of techniques and inspirations. I covered the walls of the newly renovated gallery with black plastic to fit the title, which came from the digital "resurrection" of one of the drawings that I liked best and that had been lost. The only photograph left of it was scanned and enhanced digitally, printed on plastic, cut into strips and glued over the blinds of a window curtain. It was thus a "resurrection" of the form as well as using plastic as a medium. This curtain in turn formed the backdrop of a performance that concluded the event.

Plastic resurrection

Plastic Resurrection - digitally enhanced mixed media on paper - 1977/98



Breath in, Breath out - water colour on paper - 1996 - 50x65cm

Et le dessin dans tout ça? Il était toujours très présent. Peinture et dessin avaient joué un rôle important dans l'exposition *Coffee Shop*. Ce travail de plusieurs années sur un *coffee shop* traditionnel regroupait des styles si différents qu'ils étaient présentés sous quatre noms différents, Gilles Massot n'étant que l'organisateur de l'évènement. L'exposition *Visavisages* était entièrement faite de dessins à la plume regroupant des impressions de visages glanées dans la journée et assemblées sur le papier le soir venu. C'était là en quelque sorte une version humaine de mes façades de Calcutta. Avec *Les Anges Passent*, l'ordinateur fit son apparition dans mon travail. Le dessin digital sur base photographique me permit alors d'adoucir les angles d'un sujet un peu délicat, puisque le travail concernait la rue à bordels de Chinatown. Enfin, en 1998, l'invitation de l'Alliance Française à présenter une exposition de mon choix me permit de mettre en avant un aspect moins connu de mon travail. Pendant toutes ces années, la route avait été le sujet principal de mes expositions. En parallèle, j'avais aussi réalisé de nombreux dessins qui concernaient une dimension plus intérieure. Si la plupart de ces dessins continuaient l'exploration de la notion d'espace entre les choses, ils le faisaient en parlant de l'espace entre deux êtres humains dans lequel la communication prend naissance.



The In-between - plastic, photo and mixed media on paper - 1998 - 80x65cm



Hang #4 - digital print - 2001 - 30x40cm

Hang in There



Untitled - silver print - 2000- 40x30cm

In 2000 I met with Michael Tay who ran a design company. Fate has it that he was also running a café called Travel Café, a place where people with a love for travel could meet, prepare their trip and exchange information. We, of course, got on well and the idea of an exhibition using my travel photographs took shape. I focused my choice on my black and white photographs from around Asia, which had

never been exhibited, to the exception of Calcutta. The shots included scenes from Malaysia, Laos, Vietnam, Myanmar, India and Indonesia. Preparations for the exhibition took place while I was conducting a photography workshop for the fine art students of Lasalle-SIA. This pushed me to pen down some of my ideas on the theory of photography, which in turn led me to, at long last, complete my first book. It was published

only as a limited edition artist book, but at least it existed from cover to cover! Six of the digitally enhanced portraits that concluded the book were later bought for the permanent collection of the Maison Européenne de la Photographie in Paris.



Singapore 2001



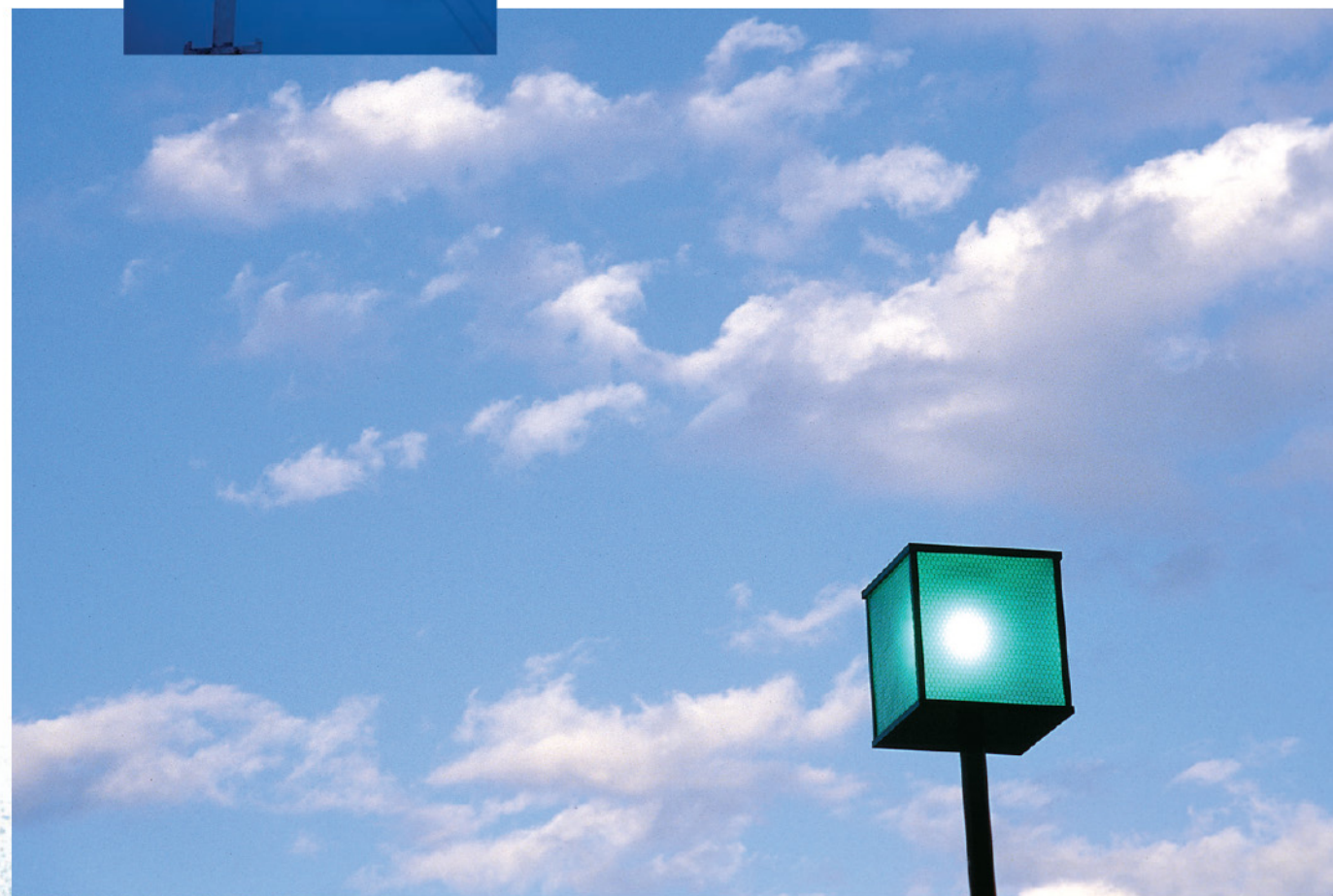
Regarde, enfin... le premier livre!



Quiet in Solo- silver print - 1998 - 3040cm



In 2001, the news came that a Singaporean version of the prestigious Parisian Mois de la Photographie was to be organised the following year. I then thought of using my series of lamp-post photographs, started in my school days, with the shot of a lamp-post lighted in bright daylight in Amsterdam. Over the next twenty five years, this paradoxical sight repeated itself many times. And the isolated shot grew into a series of over a hundred, lamp-posts from around the world that expanded the original theme, exploring the contrast between natural and artificial light. In 1990, the opportunity to publish some of these photographs in a magazine led me to write a fictitious essay, in which Lamp-post 37 told a story about "his life as a lamp-post". I used the title of the article for the show and the text to produce a catalogue published as a limited edition artist book.



My Life as a Lamp-post

Singapore 2002



Une vie de lampadaire...



Just Be It - acrylic paint and digital print on canvas- 2002 - 83x54cm

Singapore 2002

Moving Pictures, Disturbed Realities.

Giant images flashing across the cityscape are a distinctive feature of Singapore urban life. Because of a limitation on advertising billboards, the local advertising industry was forced to explore other potential supports for the poster campaigns. The answer was found in a fruitful collaboration with the bus companies. At first timid and restricted to standard square images, the designs progressively evolved to fully utilise the shape of the support with bold collages and compositions. The result of this approach turns the whole vehicle into a new image of its own, which goes out to interact with its counterparts in a forever changing graphic ballet animating the streets of the island-city.

There is a deep paradox at work in this process, a paradox that epitomises the evolution of the consumer society we live in, relentlessly feeding on its own image. In many cases what we see passing before us is nothing less than the image of an image of an image; a seemingly harmless but in fact rather potent embodiment of the much vaunted virtual reality slowly shaping-up before our eyes. The nature of photography is to freeze time by capturing the motion and space of life in a two dimensional image made of the very light that was cast on the subject at the moment of the shutter's release. It encapsulates the reality of a specific moment, a reality that then goes on to live a life of its own, as if floating at the surface of the time-space continuum. The process finds a particularly decisive expression with the moving images travelling at the surface of Singapore's reality. The still images find themselves to be moving. We have entered the movie. And the people in the buses have entered the images.

In this body of work, the paint work complements the original photograph by questioning the elusive border between the fiction and reality seen in Singapore streets. As the image of an image of an image is re-worked with paint, where does the final layer of this disturbed reality lie?

Nous sommes entrés dans le film...

Crossing the Thin Line - acrylic paint and digital print on canvas- 2002 - 116x75cm





Anonymous et plus Encore - acrylic paint and digital print on canvas- 2002 - 83x54cm

Samsara Wheel - acrylic paint and digital print on canvas- 2002 - 83x54cm



The Bottle - acrylic paint and digital print on canvas- 2002 - 60x41cm

Come on, Bite into Me - acrylic paint and digital print on canvas- 2002 - 83x54cm



3 years of research and writing
années de recherche et d'écriture

10 years of photography
années de photographie

1 year of design
année de design

2003

over
plus de

80

persons involved
personnes impliquées

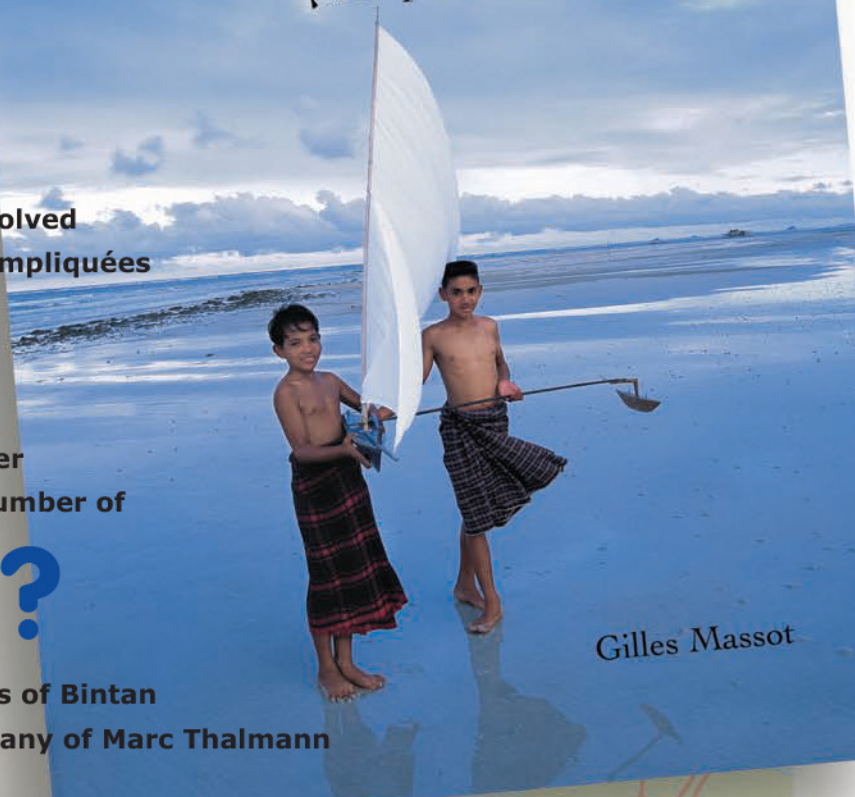
and a forever
unknown number of

km ?

on the roads of Bintan
in the company of Marc Thalmann

Bintan

Phoenix Of The Malay
Archipelago

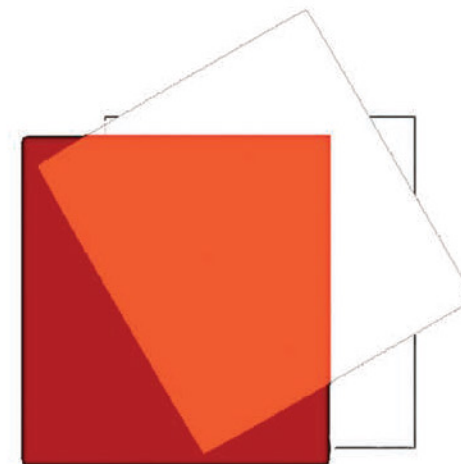


Gilles Massot

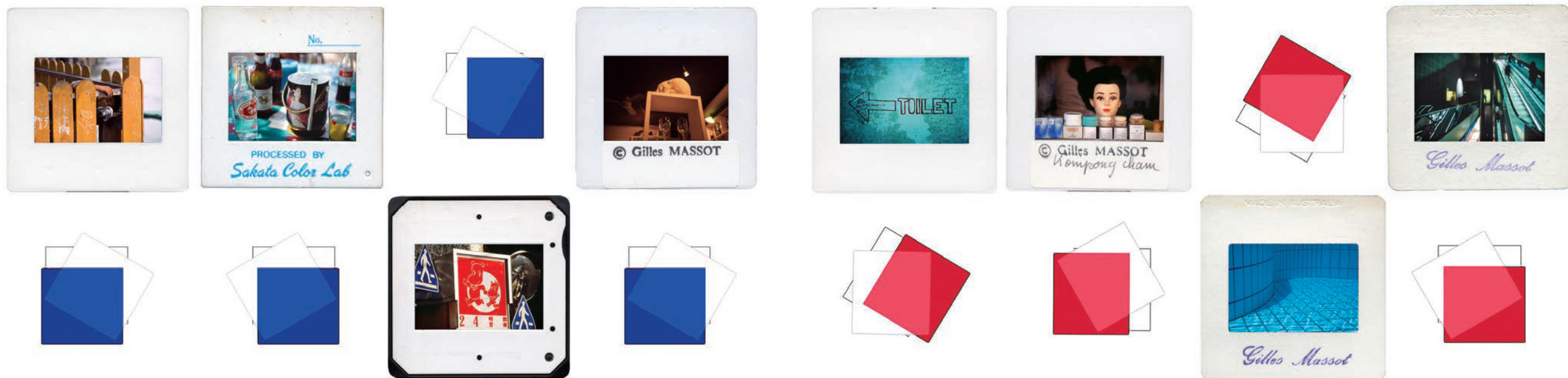
L'immersion totale!



And what about these funny little squares that keep appearing since the beginning?



MOP 2004



Well, there is of course a reason for them to be here. They are in fact the graphic symbol of one of the most meaningful and most 'marmic' moments Jean Jacques and I ever experienced. While working with stencils for the signboards of a children's library in Aix en Provence, these strange little squares started appearing on the cardboards we used as support. At first discreet, they slowly took us into a maelstrom of creativity in which for a whole night, everything ended up feeling at the right place at the right time.

The cardboard taken back home became the subjects of further experimentation. A course of concomitant events eventually gave them a deeper meaning, too esoteric to be explained within the context of these pages. And their images stuck in my mind for all these years. When in 2004, I began to develop some concept for the second Month of Photography held in Singapore, I remembered them and decided to use them as a symbol relating to a few different aspects of photography. The 3 squares represent past, present and future, the sequential perception of time upon which our perception of the world is based thus far. They tilt, from one position to the next, representing the many possibilities of point of view inherent to the photographic act. Finally, they represent light itself, the angle of reflection by which light bounces off the subject and the colours of the spectrum by which light becomes visible.

Avec le nouveau siècle, les choses se précipitèrent et la photographie prit de plus en plus d'importance. L'exposition Hang in There me permit de compléter mon premier livre. My life as a Lamp-post utilisa une série bâtie sur plus de 25 ans. Les photos peintes de Moving Pictures Disturbed Realities furent ma première tentative de mise en image des idées que je commençais à développer sur la théorie photographique. Enfin arrivèrent ces étranges petits carrés chargés d'une histoire expliquée dans la page ci-contre, hé hé!



Et puis vient le moment...

28 - 02 - 2005

Conclusion / Introduction?

Retro Specks



Retro Specks

Future Pixs

Retro Specks Future Pixs - Sculpture Square - 18 December 2004 / 27 February 2005

RSFP / The return Ticket - National Institute of Education - 12 August / 28 September 2005



Future Pixs

et si... le temps n'existait pas, quelle serait la situation de l'espace

Some time in May 2003, as I was coming back by train from Kuala Lumpur, I noticed an electric line along the track, running all the way from Johor to the Singapore station. At times crumbling under the thick cover of vegetation, only to later reappear, standing strong and proud with all its wiring intact, this electric line was a piece of the past which for some reason had withstood the onslaught of modernity.

Having travelled by train on many occasions between Singapore and Kuala Lumpur, I had been aware for sometime already of the peculiarities associated with the train line between the two countries. This section of the train line, and the Singapore station itself, are Malaysian territory within Singaporean territory. This rather unusual situation inherited from the colonial past is so paradoxical that one administratively enters Malaysia before having physically left Singapore.

This electric line stood as an anachronism in the context of Singapore's 21st century landscape, an anachronism that was a direct consequence of a territorial paradox. In it, I could see a subject that would fit particularly well the study of time and space in photography upon which my work is based.

RSFP, or *Retro Specks Future Pixs*, was conceived as a "video and photo based time-sculpture", an installation, in which video, photography and sculpture interacted to take the viewer back and forth in time, back and forth in space, while remaining here and now in Sculpture Square. It was based on a double screen video projection respectively showing the back and forth journeys between Tanjong Pagar and Johor Baru.

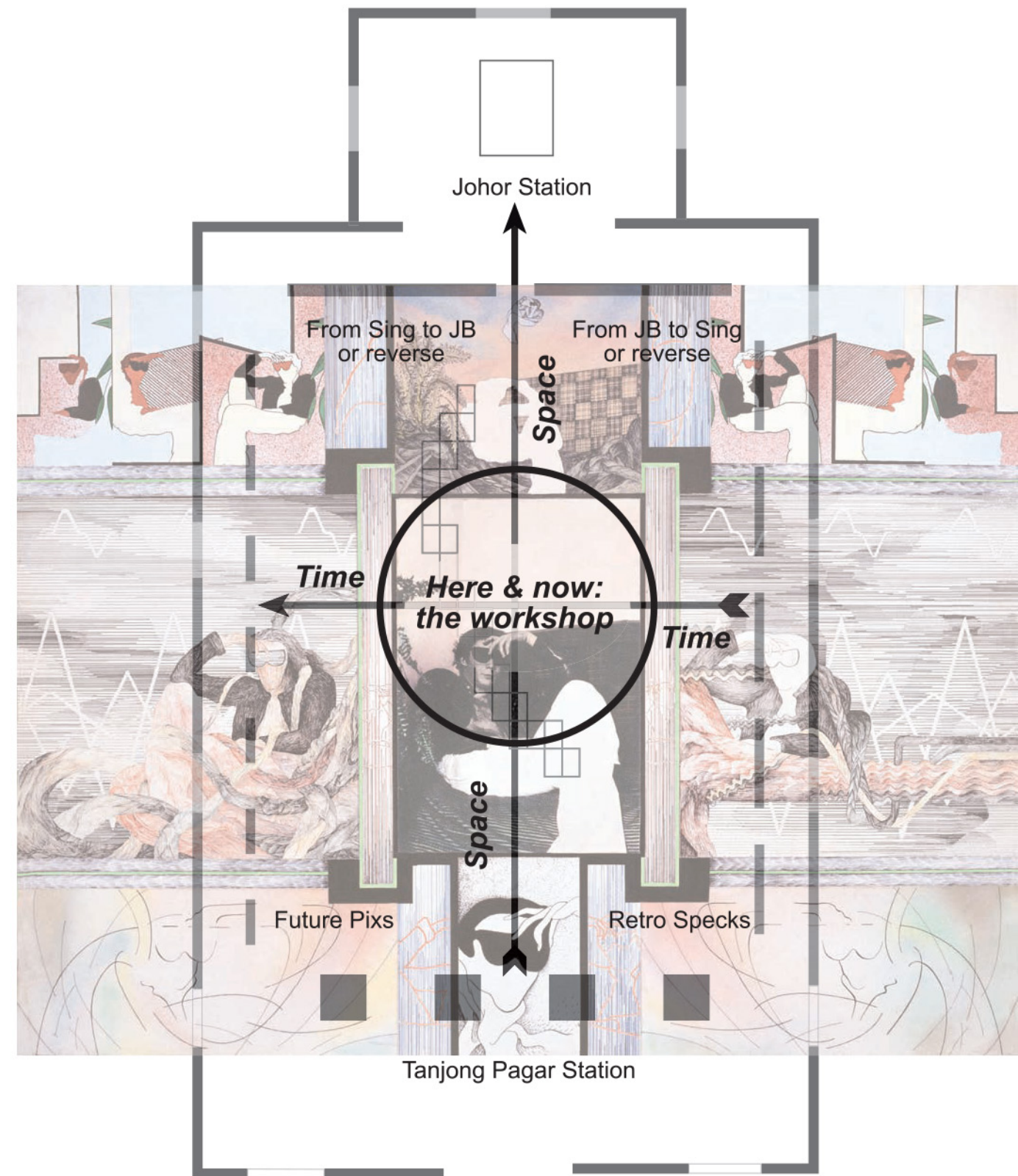
On one side, the journey from Tanjong Pagar to Johor Bahru, filmed with a backward motion, looking at the point of departure getting further and further. This is the Past, looking at "where I am coming from". On the other screen, the journey from Johor Bahru to Tanjong Pagar, filmed with a forward motion, looking at the point of arrival drawing closer and closer. This is the Future, looking at "where I am going to". By looking at both projections at the same time, the spectator is thus placed into some sort of "no-time, no-space" zone. Is he going forward? Is he going backward? Is he looking to the left? Is he looking to the right? He is doing all this at once by doing nothing... A Taoist version of the Middle Path?

The videos were digitally manipulated on the video camera itself to graphically age or 'futurise' the films and still photographs were extracted from their respective videos to illustrate the Past and the Future, thus resonating into "retro specks" and "future pixs". The "retro specks" were elongated to fit the slower motion of the past, while the "future pixs" were compressed into squares to fit the concept of pixel in digital imaging. They were presented hanging in space, as the landscape seen through the window of the train carriage, while the back of the images showed that very carriage.

The space component of the exhibition was represented by the train line and the stations marking the beginning and end of the journey. Upon entering the exhibition hall of Sculpture Square, the visitor was greeted by four photographic sculptures reproducing Noll's sculptures decorating the facade of the train station in Singapore. Behind the screen, a photo-sculpture featuring the clock tower of the Johor Station was used to hold the projection material. On it, was also projected a clock in real time, the focus point of the "time-sculpture" installation. Standing between the two photo-sculptures symbolizing the stations, an enlarged map reproducing the lay-out of the train line occupied the centre of the floor.

The map became the subject of workshops that developed in the course of the exhibition, giving further meaning to the expression "time-sculpture". Children from schools located along the train line were asked to document their everyday environment with digital photography. These images of scenery, buildings and landmarks were then turned into self-standing paper images placed according to their original location on the map. To the artistic practice, the workshop therefore added another dimension by giving a better knowledge and understanding of their country to the children.

Now something rather unexpected happened in the course of putting up the exhibition, something that eventually led to the production of this very book. While working on the graphic explaining the layout of the installation, it suddenly dawned on me that the floor plan of RSFP was reproducing exactly the layout of the seminal 1977 drawing in which I purposely explored for the first time the notions of time and space and their nature in painting and photography. The idea to trace the progression between these two significant moments of my career took shape in the blink of an eye. And as fate would have it, I was lucky enough to be given the needed budget for this project by the team of the Cultural Services of the French Embassy. Some things are just meant to be.

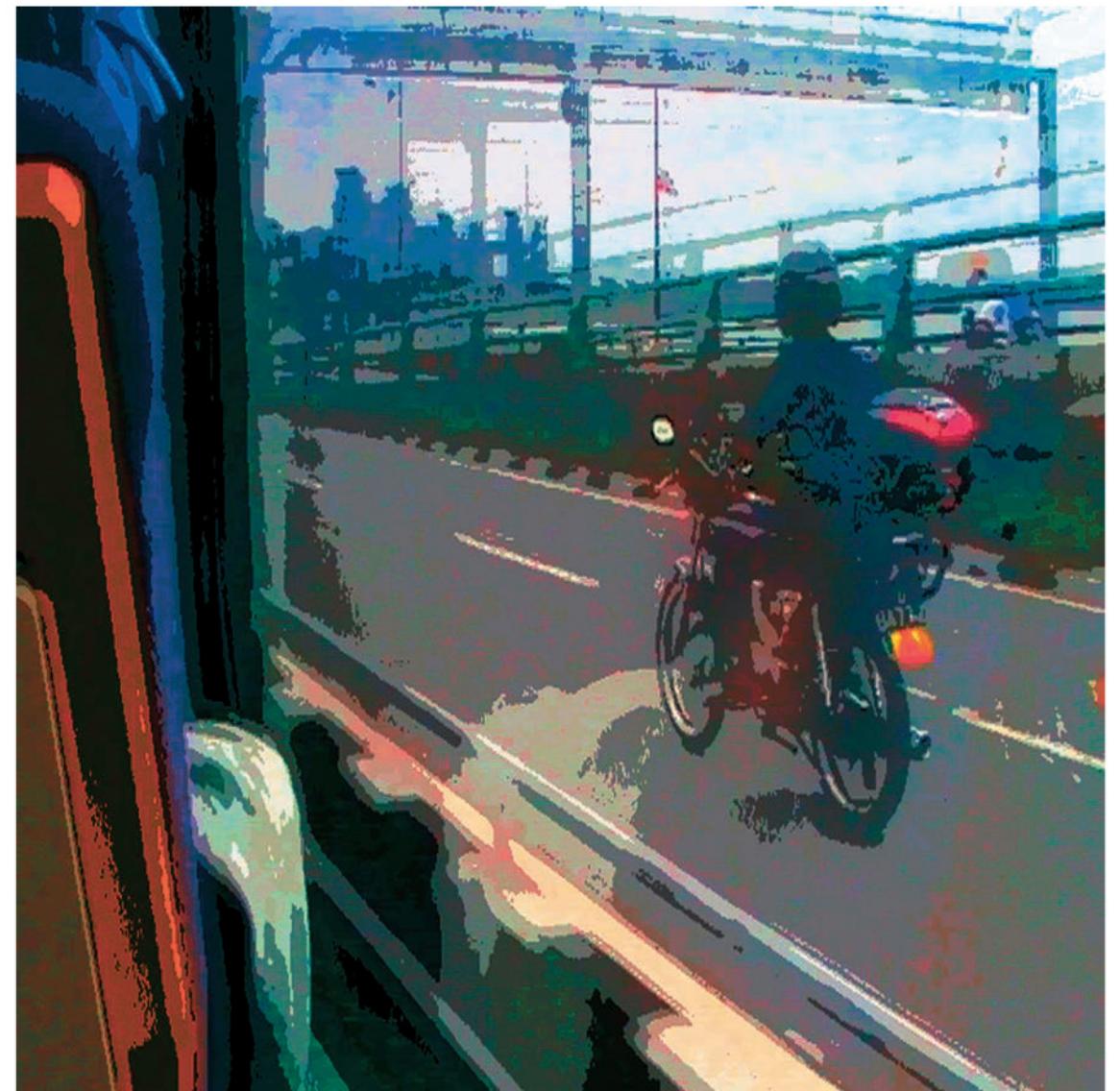


Retro Specks



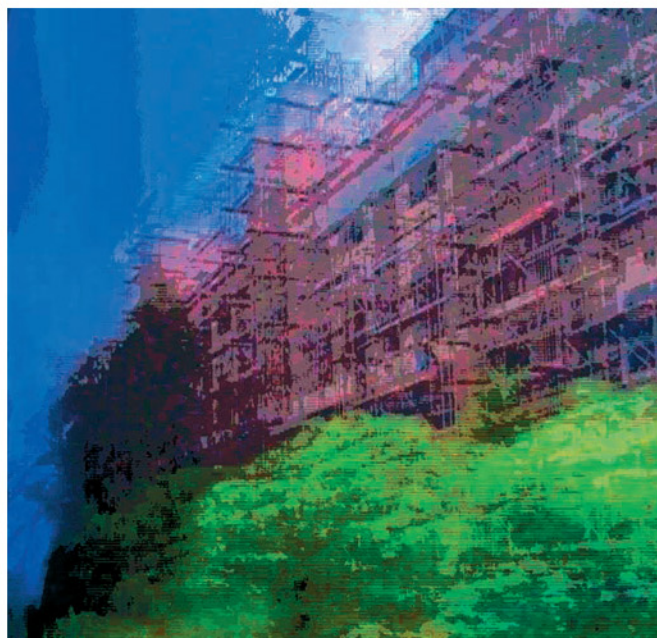
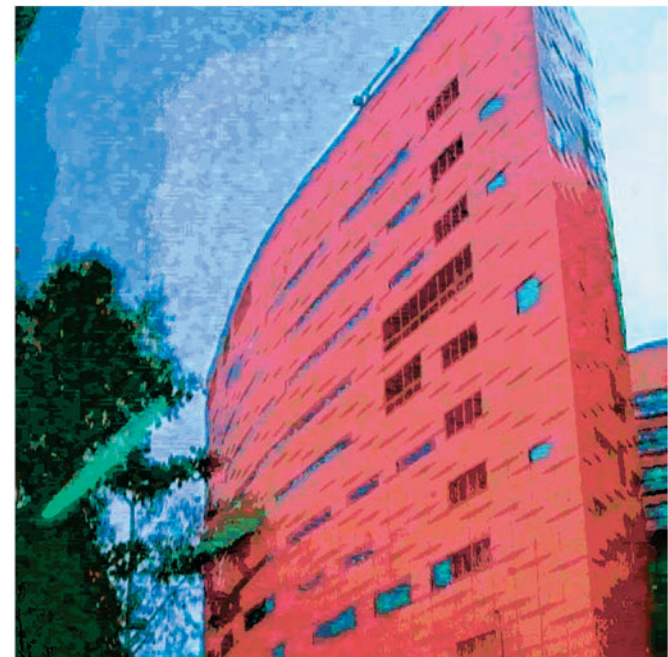
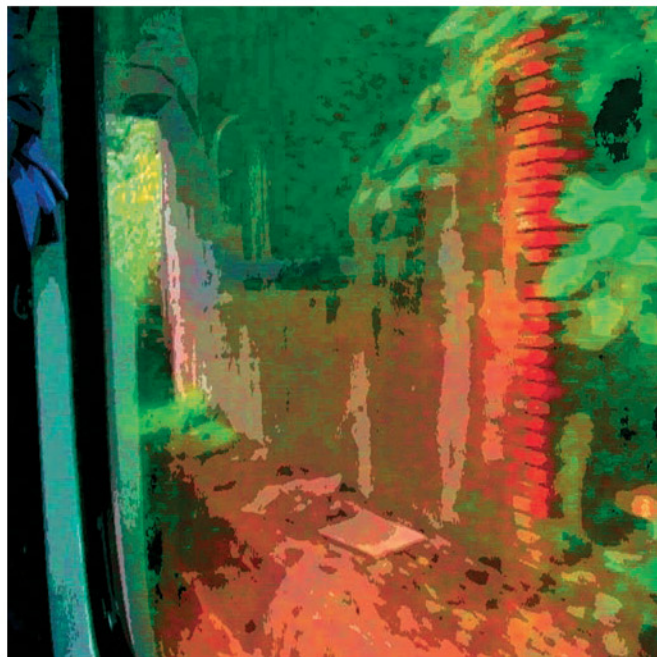
5 digitally enhanced video stills - digital prints on metal - 2005 - 120x70cm

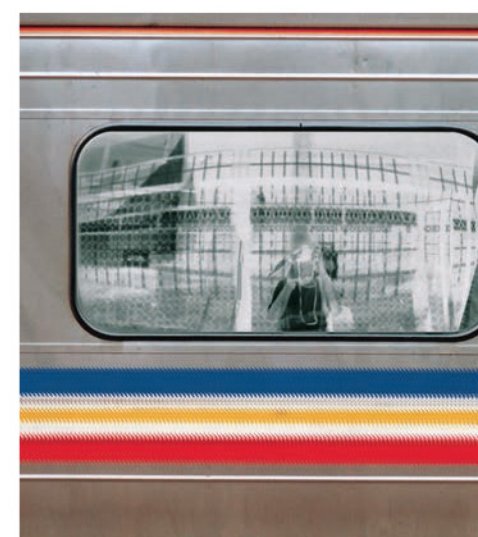




7 digitally enhanced video stills - digital prints on metal - 2005 - 80x80cm

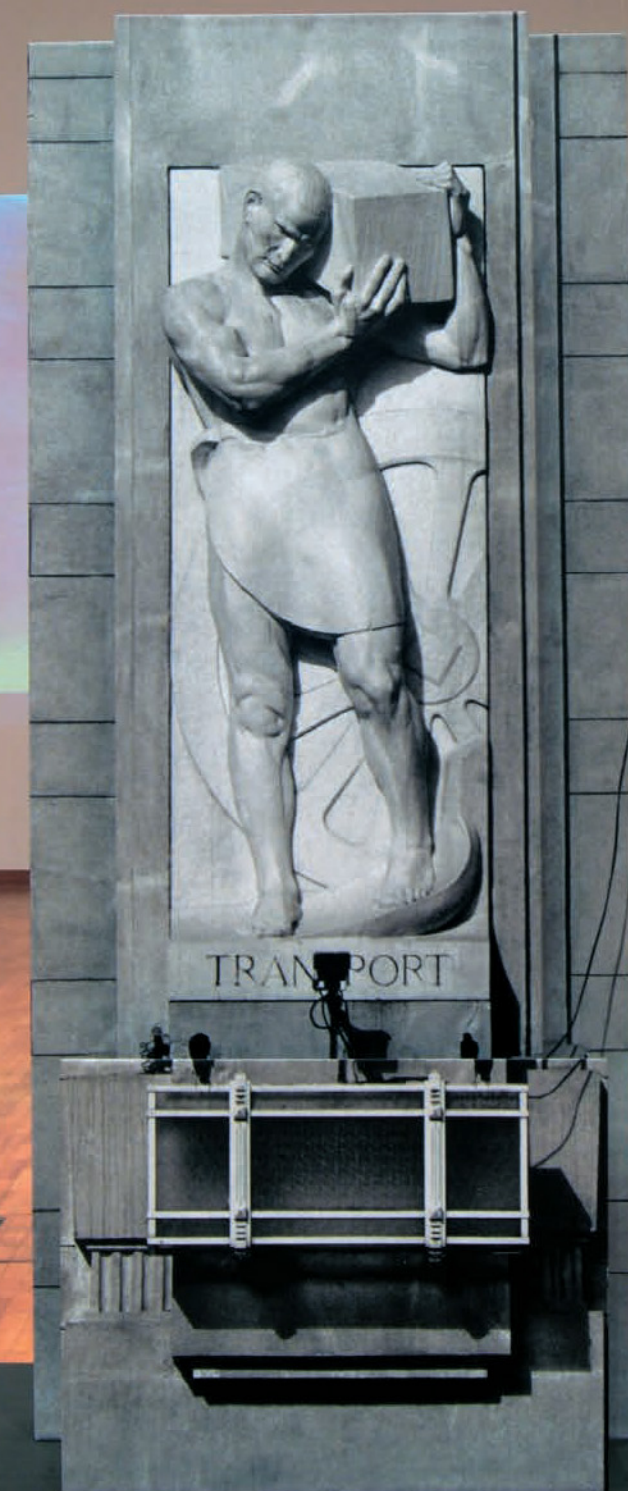
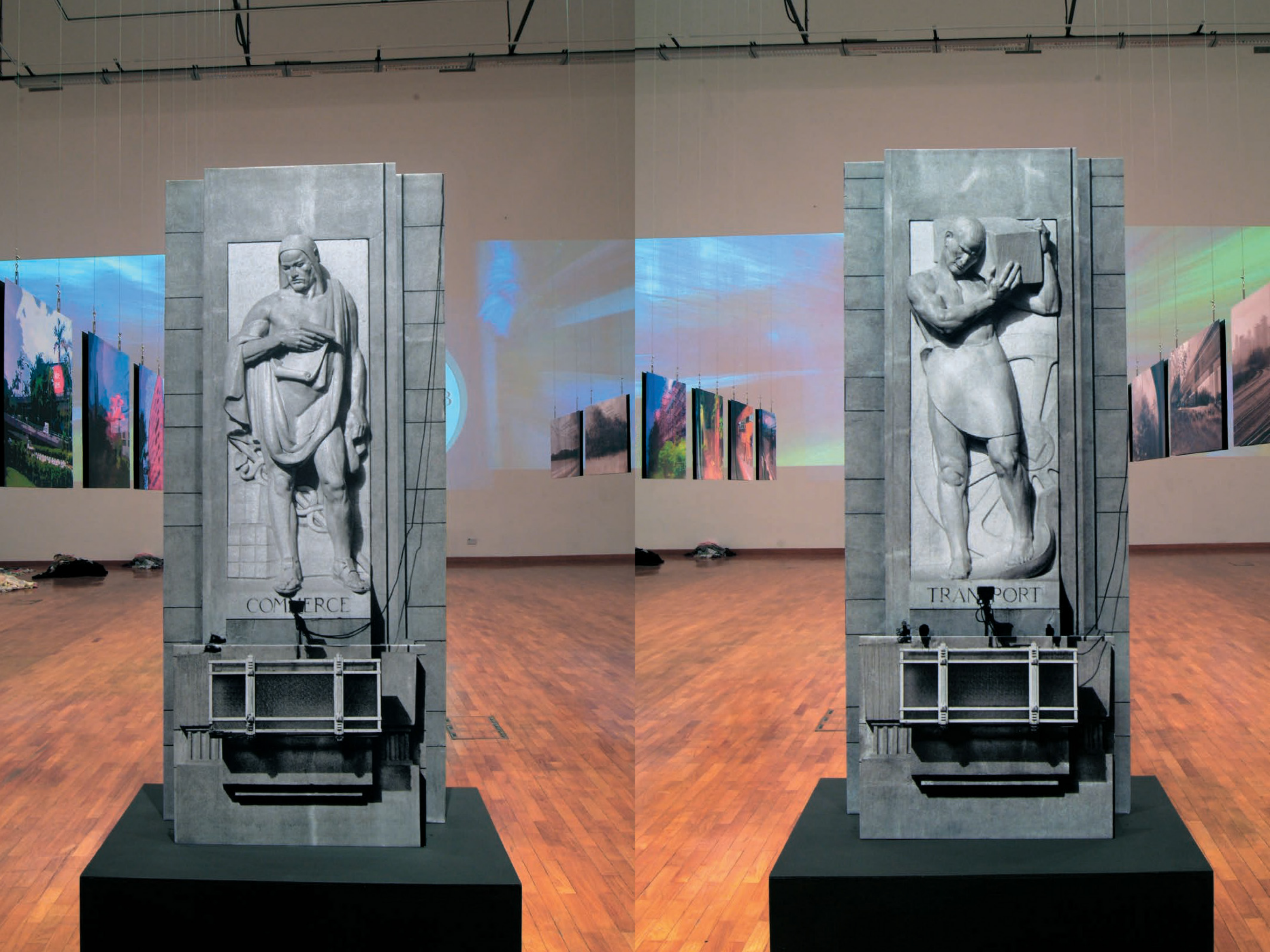
Future Pixs





Retro Specks Future Pixs... le nom de l'exposition lui-même demande quelques explications. *Specks* se traduit par 'petite tache' ou 'grain' (de poussière par exemple). *Pixs* se réfère bien sûr aux pixels du monde digital contemporain. Le titre est donc un jeu de mots évoquant 'les grains du passé' et 'les grains du futur', ou peut-être les graines du passé et celles du futur! L'idée de l'exposition prit forme lors d'un voyage en train entre Kuala Lumpur et Singapour. Alors que nous venions de quitter Johor Bahru, la dernière ville malaisienne, et que nous roulions dans la lumière blafarde du petit matin vers Tanjong Pagar, la gare au centre de Singapour, je remarquais le long de la voie ferrée une vieille ligne électrique abandonnée datant probablement des années 50, ou peut-être bien même des années 30! Si l'on prend en compte le fait que tout le système électrique de Singapour est souterrain et qu'il n'existe plus de ligne électrique dans le paysage de l'île, vous comprendrez que la chose suscita ma curiosité. Ayant maintes fois effectué ce voyage en train entre les deux capitales, j'étais parfaitement conscient de la situation administrative à l'origine de ce paradoxe. Suite à une histoire post-coloniale compliquée, ce morceau de la voie ferrée était resté la propriété de la société des chemins de fer malaisiens au moment de l'accès à l'indépendance de Singapour, un morceau de territoire malaisien à l'intérieur même de Singapour! Il en découle qu'aujourd'hui encore on entre administrativement en Malaisie avant d'avoir physiquement quitté Singapour si on voyage en train. Les autorités malaisiennes ne s'étaient pas soucies de cette ligne vétuste. Celles de Singapour n'avaient pas le droit d'y toucher. La ligne électrique était un anachronisme qui reposait sur une anomalie spatiale. Elle m'apparut comme un sujet idéal pour la suite de mon exploration du temps et de l'espace en photographie.







The Four Nolli Sculptures and their back - digital prints on metal - 2004 - 60x20x140 cm

Le travail prit la forme d'une installation que je définis comme une 'sculpture temporelle'. Elle était basée sur deux vidéos, une prise dans le sens Tanjong Pagar - Johor et regardant le côté de la voie où se trouve la ligne électrique, et l'autre dans le sens inverse et regardant par la fenêtre opposée. La vidéo Singapour - Johor tournait le dos au sens de la marche et regardait le point de départ s'éloigner inexorablement. Avec la ligne électrique dans le paysage, elle symbolisait le passé. L'autre regardait vers la destination d'arrivée, le futur! Les vidéos furent ensuite manipulées numériquement avec un effet sépia pour le passé et une solarisation pour le futur. J'en tirai alors des images fixes qui furent suspendues dans l'espace, complétées au dos par des images de l'extérieur du train. L'espace fut symbolisé par des éléments architecturaux des deux gares, les sculptures art déco de Nolli à Singapour et la tour d'horloge de Johor. La sculpture photographique représentant celle-ci contenait une petite caméra de surveillance filmant une horloge en temps réel, projetée à son tour sur la sculpture elle-même. Au centre de la pièce, une carte géante du trajet ferroviaire, qui devint le support d'un atelier graphique conduit avec les élèves de diverses écoles situées le long de la voie ferrée. Il se passa alors quelque chose d'inattendu pendant que je travaillais sur le schéma expliquant la configuration de l'installation: je remarquai que le plan au sol reproduisait exactement la composition du dessin de 1977 qui avait mis en route cette exploration du temps et de l'espace à travers la photographie. L'idée d'un ouvrage retraçant la progression entre ces deux moments décisifs s'ensuivit tout naturellement. Elle dut plaire à mes bonnes fées, car les services culturels de l'Ambassade de France m'accordèrent le budget qui me permettrait de la réaliser. Cet ouvrage, vous l'avez maintenant entre vos mains.

So what could be a conclusion to these 30 years or so of research? Hum... can there be a conclusion to a mystery that has pounded on the human mind since the beginning of time? Hardly of course, but in the process of formalising my thoughts for teaching purposes over the last couple of years, I have derived a few concepts, which judging by the reaction of people around do hold water. So here we go...

When photography was invented, it brought about a shift in the perception of time and space the effect of which still has to be fully evaluated and understood. Suddenly, far away places could be seen as they were and the appearance of bodies could forever be preserved. By using the very light that made the world visible, photography made images from bits and pieces of it, images that started floating around, travelling across the world, recalling long gone departed ones. The infinity of space found itself compressed and the relentless flow of time fragmented. Things were forever different. Roland Barthes in his seminal book *Camera Lucida* suggests that if we had then begun asking ourselves what is photography truly doing, we would have gone mad. We had no other choice but to take it for granted. Maybe, rather than asking what photography does, we could wonder what happened when Reality looked at itself for the first time in the form of a photograph. The question is not any easier to answer, but one thing for sure, we can assume that Reality must have liked it a lot, given that by now photographs and their ersatz in the form of films and TV are simply everywhere!

From the packet of cereals on our breakfast table, to our IC in the wallet, to the avalanche of images in real-time on 24-hour TV news channels, images of a photographic nature are all around us. In fact it is as if Reality got so hooked on looking at its own self that it went into a process which I propose to call the *constant self recording mode*. The latest and most efficient tool of this



Constant Self Recording Mode is obviously digital photography, a medium that allows instant visualisation of the moment and the almost surreal choice given to us to either preserve or erase it. The long term effect of this is anybody's guess but judging by the impact it already has on us today it will certainly be decisive.

There are a few well entrenched misconceptions about photography, within the public and even within the specialists community. The first one is about the naturalistic aspect of the medium. Because of its uncanny resemblance to the original moment, photography was perceived as the perfect realistic means of representation. But if we look at the effects of its apparition in our realm, we can see that far from having comforted the notion of reality, it has on the contrary blurred the thin line between fact and fiction, evolving eventually into the virtual reality now slowly but surely shaping up around us.

The second is its similarity to death, a perception of the medium naturally comforted by the function it fulfills in the remembrance of the departed ones. Even Barthes, although most visionary in the book already mentioned can not avoid this trap. To many commentators, Photography is 'the death of a moment'.

No doubt that Photography confronts us to our own transience. Yet physics say that "nothing is lost, nothing is created, things are transformed". And if one refers to spiritual traditions, indeed Nature does not die, it transforms itself. Rather than reading a photograph as 'the death of a moment', I prefer to see it as a moment detaching itself from the four dimensions space continuum (three for space and one for time), a moment that goes on floating around in a new continuum of its own. Recent developments have led physics to pre-suppose the existence of other dimensions than the four we perceive to explain the world. I suspect that photography creates (a) dimension(s) of its own in which what happens is again anybody's guess. Some new time theory even suggests that not only time but even movement would not exist. Photography would then show the world as it 'really is', for ever still, and cinema then explain the illusion of movement.

The last misconception is about the supposedly 'transparency' of the medium. This notion, induced by the medium's realistic aspect, is emphasised by the use of transparent films and light. It is said for example that the effortless reconstitution of perspective in a photograph makes its support 'transparent'. However, if one looks at the history of photography, the very first image recorded in 1826 was anything but 'transparent'. The *Point de Vue d'une Fenêtre du Gras* by Niecephore Niepce was actually a rather 'opaque' affair. To begin



with, the image is embedded, not printed, in a coat of bitumen of Judea, a chemical that has the property to turn from black to white. This bitumen is laid over pewter, a perfectly dull metal with no shine to it. Lastly, the image itself is almost invisible because it needs a specific angle of incidence of light to suddenly reveal itself. All things that make the first photograph anything but transparent

The image's subject however was indeed 'transparent': the view out from a window

over Niepce's property. In this very first image, photography was a 'window' over the world and because of that superficial transparency, most readings of the medium focused on what could be seen 'through' that window, the social, historical, political content. But what makes the 'frame' of the window has been largely ignored. We know very well how to take good photographs, but what truly happens when photography records a moment in space and time, and when subsequently we look at it, remains a complete mystery.

There could be however some new developments soon. It is generally accepted that when photography appeared, it took over the function of realistic representation performed until then by painting. Freed of any representational needs, painting could then embark on a path of its own and fully reveal its essence. I suspect that something similar is about to happen in the photographic world because of the development of digital photography. Obviously, digital imaging now fulfills the representational needs of the Constant Self Recording Mode. This could eventually leave analog photography free to reveal the full mystery of its alchemical process in the dark room where water, the very essence of life, reigns supreme.

Espace

Johor Bahru



EXIT

Greenwood Primary School

Fajar Secondary School

Zhangde Primary School

ISS International School

St. Andrew's Junior College

Dunman Secondary School

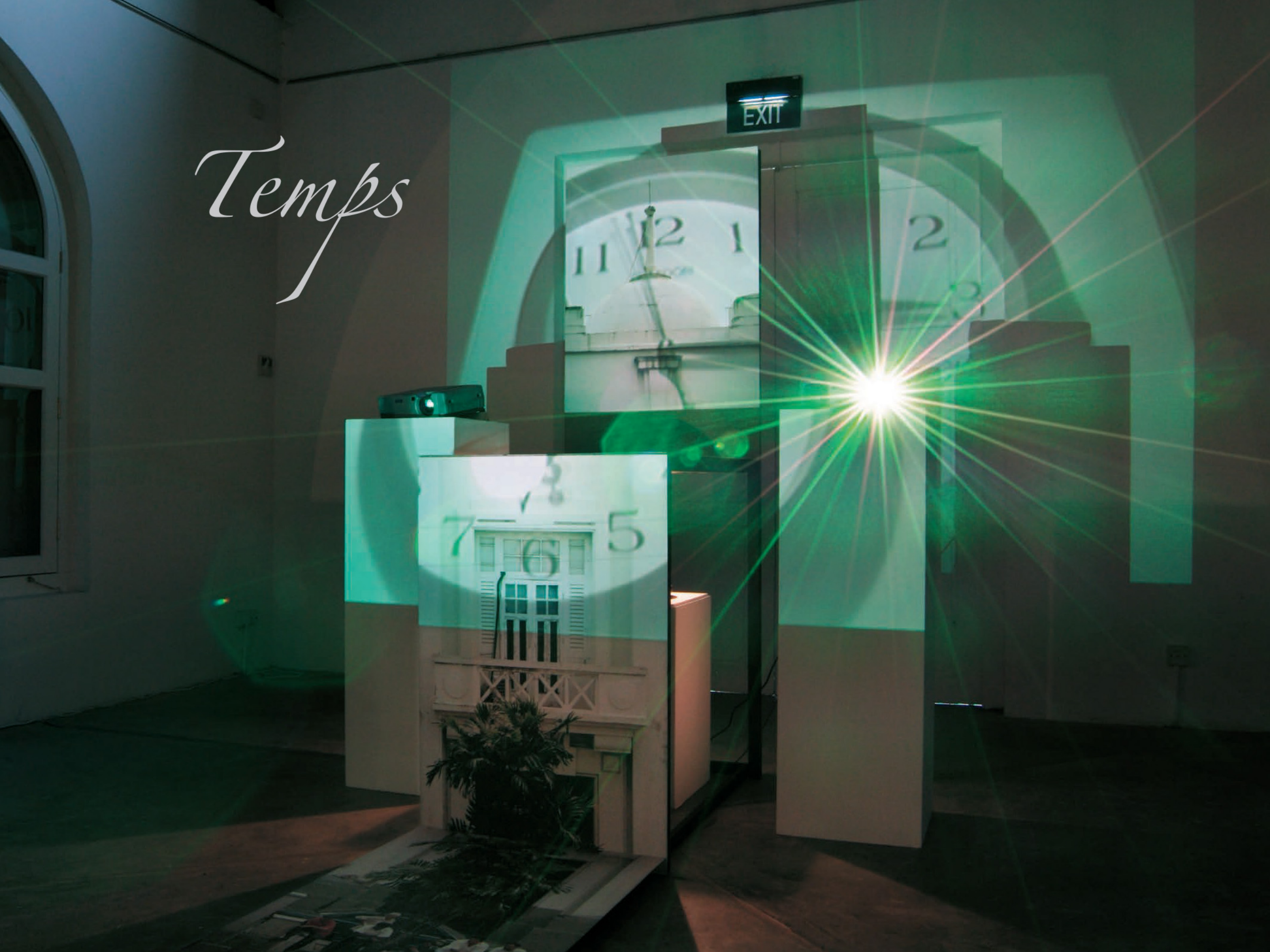
Lasalle SIA

Tanjong Pagar Station



25-01-2005

Temps





St. Andrew's Junior College

The Workshops

The workshops formed an important part of RSFP. They were important for two reasons. Firstly, they made the sponsors look at the project with a kind eye! A rather important point in today's world where the search for budgets to realise artistic visions often takes the best of an artist's time. Secondly, they gave a concrete meaning to the description of the installation as a 'time-sculpture' by changing the appearance of the central map over the duration of the exhibition.

Seven schools participated in the workshop in Sculpture Square and another three in NIE, where it took on a different form. In Sculpture Square, I first went to the different schools involved to present a lecture on photography, together with a representative of Epson who talked about digital printing. With this brief on what their contribution to the exhibition would be, the students photographed their daily life environment, their school and eventually the nearby train track. The photos were then turned into photo-objects which were brought to stand on the map, in relation to their original location, thus recreating the landscape along the track.

In NIE, the teachers made the project fit their respective programmes. One of them had the students documenting the train journey from Tanjong Pagar to Johor with pin hole cameras. Another one, working on a giant kilt, had them to travel while disassembling and assembling the kilt, as a symbol of the relation between the two countries. The last one also made the student work on the relation between the countries but with drawings and collages.

January/February 2005
August/September 2005



Zhangde Primary School



L'invention de la photographie suscita une transformation radicale des notions de temps et d'espace. Avec elle, on pouvait voir à quoi ressemblait le bout du monde et conserver l'image des êtres chers pour toujours. Et lorsque la Réalité, incarnée en la personne de Nicephore Niepce, contempla la première image photographique fixée, Elle dut beaucoup aimer le résultat car la photographie et ses ersatz sous forme de film et de vidéo sont maintenant partout. Le développement de la photo numérique marque bien sûr le stade le plus récent de cette histoire de 'l'instantané' que l'on peut maintenant choisir de conserver ou d'effacer sur le champ. La photo permet à la peinture de se libérer du besoin de représentation réaliste. La photo numérique remplit maintenant cette fonction pour le grand public. On peut sans doute espérer que la photo traditionnelle va bientôt révéler sa véritable nature dans le mystère de la chambre noire où l'eau règne en maîtresse.

L'espace commence à manquer pour véritablement développer les derniers points de cet ouvrage. Mais que diable, usons au mieux de ce que le temps nous donne. Il faudrait parler des ateliers qui réunirent dix écoles au cours des deux présentations de l'exposition. Ces ateliers vous en voyez les résultats dans les images ci-contre. En recréant le paysage le long de la voie ferrée, ils donnèrent un sens supplémentaire à l'expression 'Time Sculpture' qui définissait l'installation. Avec les œuvres des élèves, celle-ci évolua dans sa forme tout au long de sa durée. Mais il faudrait surtout parler des idées plus théoriques concernant la photographie présentées en anglais dans les pages précédentes. Le texte contient principalement la présentation du concept de 'Constant Self Recording Mode' ou Mode d'Auto Enregistrement Permanent que je propose comme description des effets de l'invention de la photographie sur le monde.





The Constant Self Recording Mode

The Performance

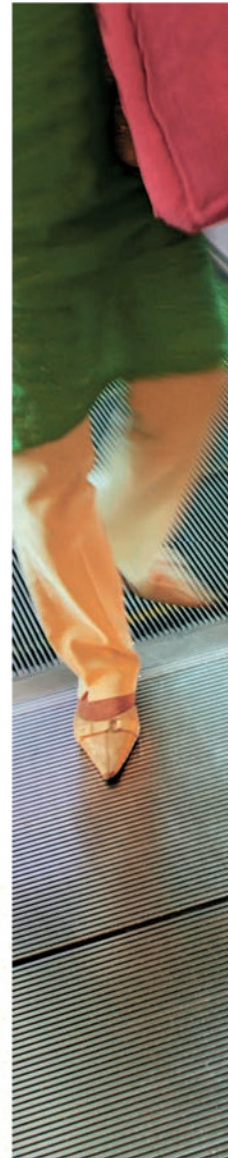
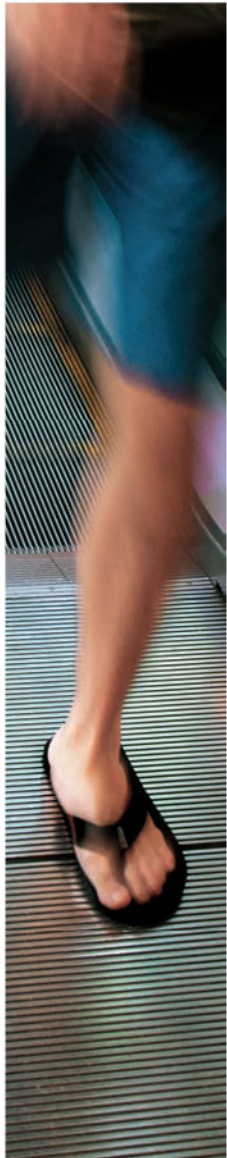
Singapore 27 February 2005

A history of photography, à ma façon



Photos by Juliana Yasin and Cassandra Schultz

La route continue...

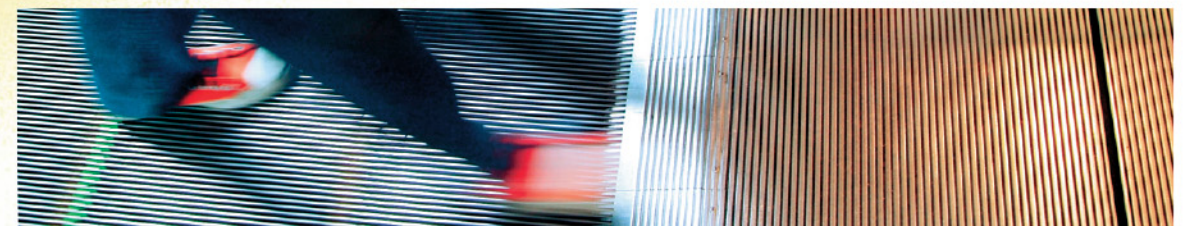


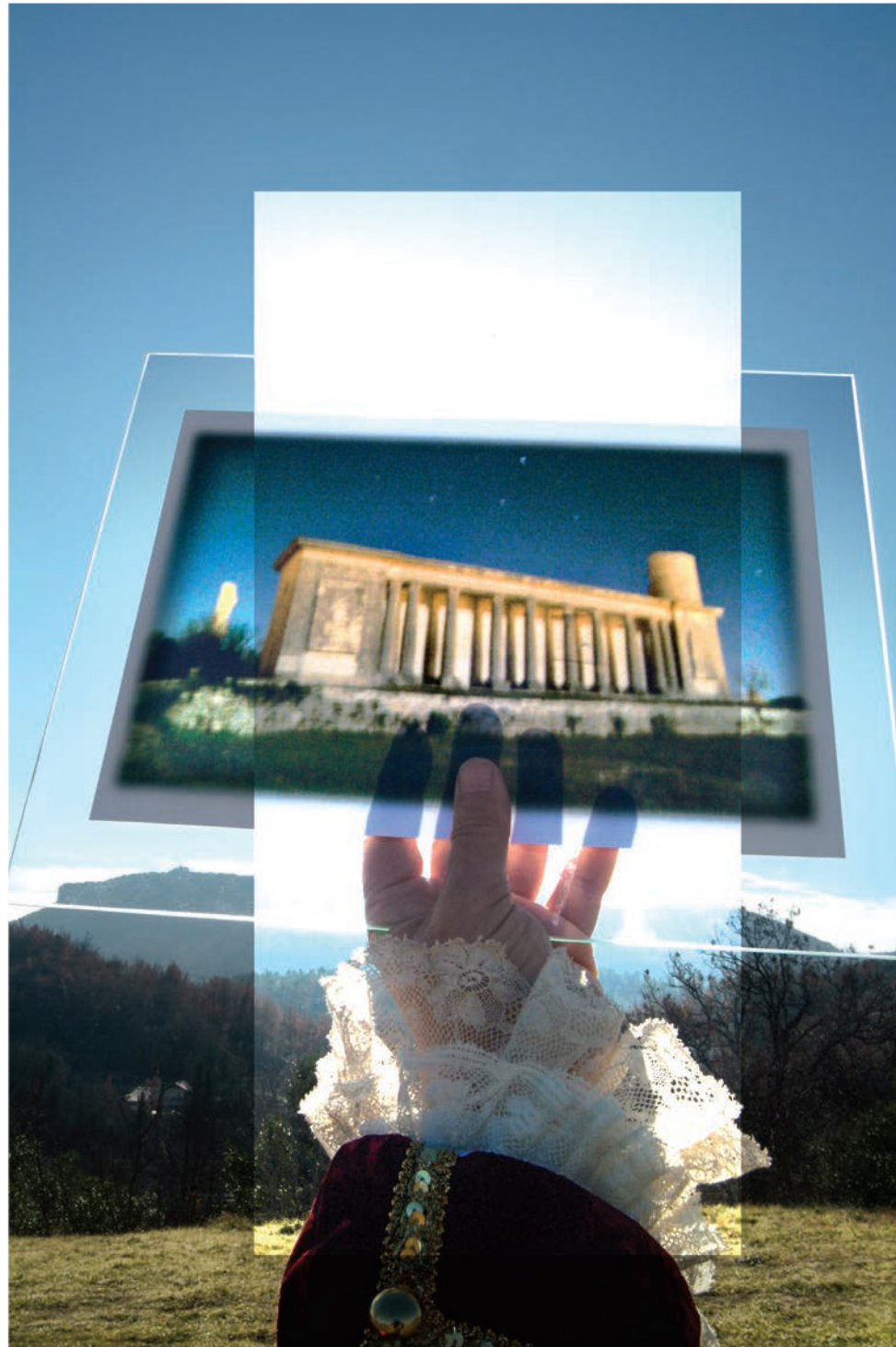
Singapore 2005

First Step_Time Delay

This site-specific installation was commissioned by Sculpture Square for Singapore Art 2005. It was based on the first step people take the moment they step off an escalator. This "first step" is the very moment when the smooth glide of the body in space induced by the movement of the escalator transforms into a purposeful motion generated by the energy of the body. On one side of the threshold moment is a motionless body over a moving ground. On the other is a moving body over a static ground. Yet, at all times, the body keeps moving forward in space.

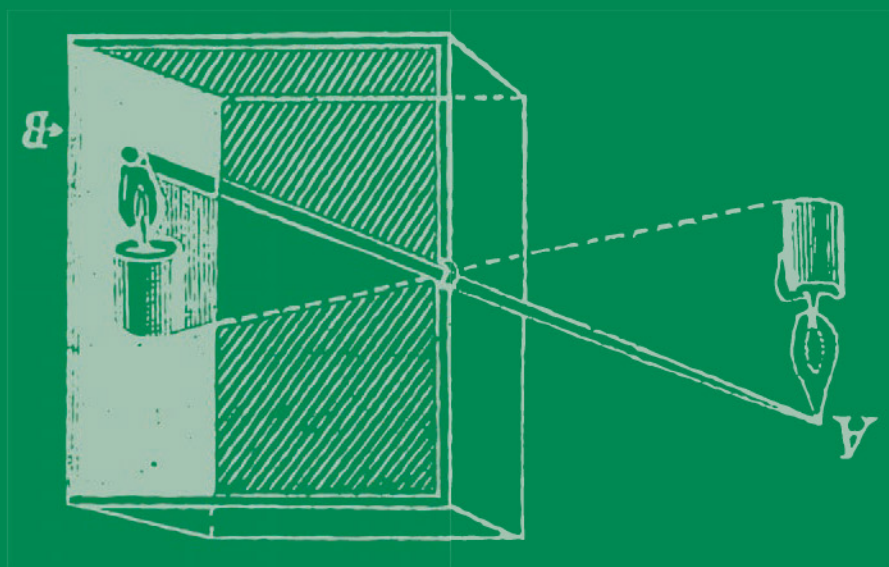
The sudden translation of motion taking place at that moment is probably one of the most perfectly symmetrical interactions of the human body with technology in a modern urban environment. Over 30 prints were installed as transparencies in the ceiling lights, turning the world upside down with images of steps over people's heads. Another 4 were installed on the glass panels beside the escalator. People saw them just as they stepped off or were about to step on the escalator.





2006 Reading Photography as a Myth





On Copyright ©

Over the last few years, I have come to really wonder about the notion of 'copyright' as is nowadays enforced. Although on the one hand it was originally presented as a way to defend artists' rights, I can't help but regard it on the other hand as a purely capitalistic concept that has managed to infiltrate the art world. There is of course nothing wrong with the notion of profit as such, it is what creates wealth, material well-being and improvement of the society. But think of it, how can one truly consider the concept of 'possessing' an idea when it is given for free by life itself in the first place? The spiritual and philosophical damage this has brought about to the artists' role in society still is to be evaluated.

Photographers, who were among the first to campaign for the enforcement of this concept, were also among its first victims. When people realised that there was a big pie in the concept of copyright, everybody aimed for a piece of it. And so one day, photographers found themselves taken to court and asked for hefty compensation for the publication of individuals' images, or even simple material properties without their owner's consent! Their work suddenly found itself restricted in its artistic freedom and turned into a minor administrative nightmare in which every single photograph must come along with model release form and so on, if one wants to make sure it can be published.

What disturbs me most for example in the line usually found at the beginning of books that forbids reproduction without prior authorisation, is that one knows perfectly well that people will do it ANYWAY. So, isn't this creating a rather perverse situation that keep us trapped in hypocrisy? On the other hand, the wish to use freely anything anytime anyhow certainly does not pay respect to the value of the work in it. If anything, it can be regarded as a form of mindless consumerism. So how?

In a way, it all boils down to exchange and sharing. How far do we want to go with it? And how far are we prepared to use other people to our own advantage? The ideal response to that puzzling question will probably wait to be written for a long time. Still, there has been some interesting attempt at it lately, such as the Creative Common concept that integrates the infinite possibility of free exchange created by the VWeb. It offers different levels of copyright that allow people to use the incredible amount of intellectual material available in the world today without infringing the law.

Anyway, this book was nurtured, thought, planned, developed, photographed, written, designed, painted, danced, dreamt, sung, acted, organised, financed, pondered, hoped, woven, laid, erected, dismantled and installed in a continuous flow of activity for the last 30 years. And despite the moments of despair and frustration I overall enjoyed it tremendously. In fact, Life has been amazingly generous with me. So I suppose it is time to pay back. So, here we go... Within the context of any form of use but to the exception of a commercial one, you are not only expected but even encouraged to reproduce any parts of this publication and transmit it in every form and every means possible, be they electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording or any other information storage and retrieval system. Of course, a mention of the artist (Gilles Massot aka Ma de Marma) will be greatly appreciated. But by all means, make these images step out of these pages and discover horizons that they don't even know exist, give them new meanings and new stories, surprise them, seduce them, arouse them and take them to new heights. For in the end, this is certainly the best that could happen to them.