

# Galerie Thomas Bernard

## Cortex Athletico

### Press release

Jungle Joh

Invitée : Anne Bourse

Artists : Jean-Alain Corre

Location : Galerie Cortex Athletico - Bordeaux

From : 27 June 2014

To : 01 November 2014

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## COMMUNIQUE DE PRESSE :

### On the principle of culture in the art of Jean-Alain Corre

In 1928, Doctor Alexander Fleming came back from holidays to his laboratory at Saint-Mary's Hospital in London. He had the unpleasant surprise to find the Petri dishes in which he did his experiments on staphylococcus overrun by cottony colonies of white-green mould. They were contaminated by stem cells of a microscopic fungus, *Penicillium notatum*, on which his lab partner, an apparently careless young Irish mycologist, was working on. When disinfecting the contaminated dishes, Fleming noticed that there was a circular zone around the mould colonies in which the staphylococcus hadn't grown. He put forward the hypothesis that a substance secreted by the fungus was responsible for this and named it "penicillin".  
(based on Wikipedia France)

When I was a child, my father often told me the story of Doctor Fleming who had discovered penicillin by accident, and how this accident had saved an extraordinary number of human lives, all thanks to the productive negligence of a young laboratory operator. What moral and educational teaching did he want to share with me, thanks to this? The fact remains that years later, this story comes to mind to explain some of the issues of Jean-Alain Corre's work, on the occasion of his first personal exhibition at the Cortex Athletico gallery.

An artwork is like gardening for me (...) The idea is to see how artworks can push at one another, or against one another, or into one another.

(the artist's words in an interview with Franck Ballard, mixed with an extract of his statement for the Jungle Joh exhibition)

The notion of culture is interesting on two levels in Jean-Alain Corre's practice. The artist gathers many cultural materials to incorporate them in his practice, whether they be from high culture (modern and contemporary sculpture) or so-called popular cultures (American series, tabloids, agricultural machinery, cooking methods such as breadcrumb dressing, etc.). These elements coexist in the artworks thanks to an intuitive collage process, in sync with the dehierarchisation claimed by the artists of his time who have seen mass media blur the lines between style, source and culture. But the artist also uses the notion of culture as a dynamic process, as if to talk about a culture of bacteria or of shallots, for example. Jean-Alain Corre talks

about the fabrication of art as a culture in the sense that an artist needs to develop a specific link to time and to the event in the production strategy that he unfolds. The idea is to create protocols that will admittedly come to life through success or failure, whilst also showing the possible transformation from an initial situation into another. One can also think of a workshop as a defined space functioning with certain rules, that often need to be adjusted, renegotiated along the way. The idea is to accept, like Doctor Fleming, that an accident can happen, not in a Fluxus-like sense with an apolitical offhandedness, but more as an opportunity to seize, an occasion to modify the course of things. And for this happy accident to happen, you need the time for protocol, a time that can be used in an idle or intense manner, this is not the question ? and always opposed to another Fluxus-like idea, that of idleness, that appears to me even more problematic in these troubled times where time counts more than ever ? in a logic of dynamic willpower, striving towards the idea of result. A result that, even if it is not in keeping with the initial idea, take it or leave it, is the intentional consequence of a defined work protocol, left to the responsible appreciation of the artist.

All this to clarify something linked to the word trash that has apparently often been associated with Jean-Alain Corre's works. The word trash (from the English rubbish, waste) refers on one side to the idea of chaos, and on the other to the idea of filth, expiration, what is to be thrown out. If the chaotic proliferation intervenes as a first step in the experimentation of the artist's practice, it is then - as we have seen - carefully put back under control, sorted, chosen, according to the Nietzschean logic of the Apollonian knife coming to sever the Dionysian flow. The final installations show a complexity that must in no case be confused with chaos. On the other hand, trash can be used with an aesthetic acceptance of the word, in the sense that the artist accepts to confront himself with the ugliness and unsightliness of certain forms, if this ugliness or this nonconformity appears to him to visually serve the artwork and its interpretation. The partial upholding of the artwork on its Dionysian side, referring to disturbing concepts such as putrefaction, obsolescence, death, creates a specific link that is at once mental and physical with the artwork. The constant reference to the mechanics of the agricultural world, where the machine enters into play as an auxiliary of culture, a monstrous matrix or tutor, confronting itself to the matter that sometimes makes it dirty, modifies it or renders it inoperative, is revealing in this sense. Jean-Alain Corre's art is trash, but not because it brings to mind a world out of control. On the contrary, it reminds us of what culture owes to nature, of which it is the inseparable corollary in all its controlled violence, its unavoidable link to death like an extra process of the cycle of life.

Johnny is a sort of graft that grows on the work. He isn't a psychoanalytical double, I prefer speaking in biological terms. (ibid)

In this respect, Johnny acts in the artwork as a metaphorical creature of the artist's production, just like Doctor Frankenstein's creature was seen as a metaphor of the problematic rapport of its creator Mary Shelley

to her work (she also became the inventor of modern science fiction). Johnny is neither an alter ego, nor a double, nor even a character: he remains personified, like an imperceptible operator ? like the principle of life itself ? in the art of his creator. Jungle Joh, episode 10, is therefore the reunion at a time of several of the artist's works, some pre-existent to the exhibition, others produced for the occasion. A shirt created by Anne Bourse, the artist invited for the occasion by Jean-Alain Corre, will be shown and will represent the suit of a situation mentioned in a previous conversation and that inspired the artist for the creation of the ensemble. One can also see two posters, remote reminders of an advertising system, as well of drawings of the on-going series Grazia, made from pages of the eponymous magazine over a specific period of time and implying the idea of smoking many cigarettes and accepting the misdemeanour inherent to an afternoon at the workshop. One can also see engraved ceramic silos shown in a previous exhibition at the IAC in Lyon, as well as an unstructured shalom distantly referring to the dwarf of Montmartre ? another painter ? as well as other elements that will be personified to make this exhibition the ephemeral and one-off result of all these exciting and serious protocols that Jean-Alain Corre's work implements. Let's dance in our head to the imaginary sound of the Jungle music of the title.

by Dorothée Dupuis

## Jungle-Joh

Johnny is the title of a group of works that I like to think of as a sort of series that works with episodes. The exhibition project Jungle Joh will resemble the credits of a television series. Jungle Joh mixes elements from different episodes of Johnny. The idea is to see how artworks can push at one another, or against one another, or into one another. The jungle vines are organisms that have developed features to be able to climb up to the treetops, in order to find some light.

The word "Jungle" is also used for a hybrid musical movement born in the nineties. Jungle Joh is also an occasion to work with the artist Anne Bourse who will produce shirts for the occasion to dress the bodies of the people dancing.

Jean-Alain Corre