

PASCAL KERN

IN PRAISE OF PARADOX

OPENING ON TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12 FROM 6 TO 9 PM
EXHIBITION FROM SEPTEMBER 13 TO OCTOBER 21, 2017

From Wednesday to Saturday, 2-7 pm and by appointment



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While Pascal Kern's works are all technically speaking photographs, let us not be fooled: there is much more at work here.

If we look closely at his large Cibachrome prints, with their seductive colours, we see temporary sculptural installations, settings built from natural elements (cucurbits) as well as industrial ones (found objects) that forever explode our codes for perceiving space. In the three series presented here, *Fictions colorées* [Coloured Fictions], *Sculpture* and *Nature*, Pascal Kern blurs the lines.

As Philippe Piguet says, "everything works in terms of binary oppositions: full-empty, negative-positive, front-back, surface-depth. He is always trying to bring the presence of a virtual space to the fore, building off of a reality that is as much conceptual as it is tangible."¹

In fact, everything is a thinly-disguised paradox. If we are prepared to accept that Kern's intention is not to represent objects in themselves, then we must further admit that his work questions the methods of representation that are specific to the history of painting and sculpture, going from two dimensions to three, and back again. For Régis Durand, "all of this leads the viewer back and forth between fascination for the photographic image at its most refined, and the awareness that its traditional function has been displaced, requiring a new type of attention from us. What we behold is neither a celebration of, nor a lament for the world, as is so often the case with photographs. Rather Kern's work is a rich meditation on the use of forms, their fate, their delicate passage through the world"².

Since his passing in 2007, there has been no individual exhibit dedicated to Pascal Kern in France, so it is a wonderful opportunity for the gallery to be able to host a new rereading of his work, which is exceptional in so many ways.

¹ Philippe Piguet, "L'espace entre-deux", in *Pascal Kern*, Le Parvis, Tarbes et Parvis 3, Pau, 1992.

² Régis Durand, "Pour une poétique des transferts", in *Pascal Kern*, C.A.P. Royan, 1994.

PASCAL KERN : SNAPSHOTS OF PHOTOGRAPHIC ART

In hindsight, it is now possible to glimpse what was taking place in the 1980s and 90s, particularly with regard to photography. But is there such a domain unto itself? Would it not actually be better to abandon the notion and give up our perpetual attempts at definition, specificity and even identity? Those were the years of 'fine-art photography', a type of photography that, by its scope and its stated break with traditional photography, opened up a new critical space.

Of course it makes little sense to bring up those debates now; what matters more is being clear about the works in progress. Something happened then in the field of photography, but in what way was that more important than the other changes that have affected photography throughout its history? And why Pascal Kern in particular, among those who were at work in the same period? Because, in addition to its visual splendour, his work embodies with unrivalled conceptual rigour certain forms of questioning.

Formats, subjects, issues turn toward an autonomy of form. Photographic works become free of their dependence on the subject and on the conventions of representation, striving for a similar degree of autonomy as painting. At the same time, this type of autonomy is not without its problems. Painting itself has its own debts to pay to tradition, and it is misleading to assume that it enjoys a form of freedom that stems only from itself or from the demands of a few theoreticians. And what about sculpture, which to all appearances is even more subject to a series of constitutive rules? In fact, when it does free itself of them, it is famously constrained by ever-expanding definitions of what sculpture is.

At stake with regard to Pascal Kern, and perhaps more obviously so than with others, is the possibility of creating art on site and with the medium or media that one has chosen, and this in itself justifies rediscovering his work today. (The reasons for the choices go beyond the scope of this brief presentation.) One of his first works, which carries the general title *L'Usine à Bastos* [The Factory in Bastos], consists of a series of situations built around the resources of an abandoned factory, with all the fictional possibilities it offers. This collection of foundational works makes use of different approaches (in particular graphic research, prints, various technical objects) that are subjected to the deforming effects of time and the artist's own manipulation. This led to works in space, 'interventions', fruits of a form of collapse in urban space, but also to the first photographs of *Fictions colorées* [Coloured Fictions]. They are fictions because their narrative content is evident in the collections of arranged, found objects that are even more closely tied to the memory of industrial activity. Coloured because their near monochrome development is heightened by chalk and paint additions that prepare, as it were, the photographic staging. Any archeological or performative temptation gives way to a brilliant, enigmatic transformation through Cibachrome. But the artist's passage to photography as sole platform cannot be understood without recalling his initial apprenticeship in printing and engraving.

Taking this into account, we can see how Pascal Kern engages in a subtle, ever more complex game with the different conventions associated with genres such as painting and sculpture.

The works in the series *Nature* display variations on natural objects, vegetables – squash and pumpkins in particular – and a slice of a fallen tree trunk. These objects are rarely shown by themselves; they are part of diptychs and triptychs for the point is not to make portraits of them, or to capture them in the full glory of their condition as autonomous objects, but in their qualified form, as agents. And it is for this same reason that they are often cut in two – not to expose their insides, but to show what actions become possible: casting, counter-casting, the slow absorption of pigments by the mould.

He takes another step in that direction with his series of *Sculptures* which features the actual tools used in casting. Here Kern magnificently explores a poetics of sculpture as a complex state, part industry, part craft; the tools are certainly specialised objects, but they are also fundamental enigmas of processes. In them the artists sees an opportunity to connect with the time and memory of objects, to dig into their own history and their emptiness – to examine possible states of surfaces, while still trying to find his footing in the world.

Régis Durand
Art Critic

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SELECTION OF WORKS



Pascal Kern

Nature, 1990

Triptych, Cibachrome prints, framed with wood, made by the artist



Pascal Kern

Sculpture, 1992

Diptych, Cibachrome prints mounted on aluminium, framed with wood, made by the artist



Pascal Kern

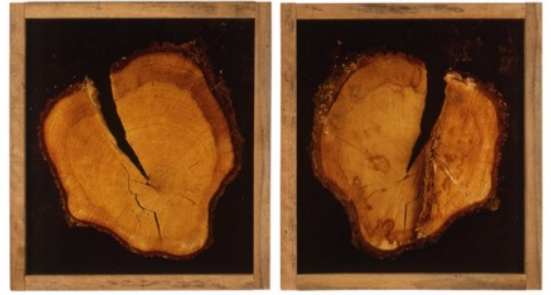
Sculpture, 1994

Diptych, Cibachrome prints, framed with wood, made by the artist

Pascal Kern

Nature, 2000

Diptych, Cibachrome prints, framed with wood, made by the artist



Pascal Kern

Sculpture, 1993

Diptych, Cibachrome prints mounted on aluminium, framed with wood, made by the artist



Pascal Kern

Nature, 1990

Triptych, Cibachrome prints, framed with wood, made by the artist



Pascal Kern

Nature, 1990

Triptych, Cibachrome prints mounted on aluminum,
framed with wood, made by the artist



Pascal Kern

Fiction Colorée, 1987

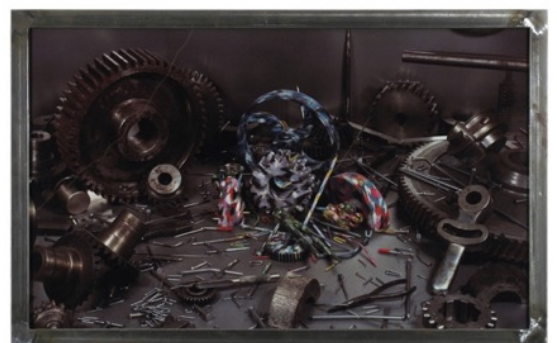
Cibachrome print mounted on board, framed with metal,
made by the artist



Pascal Kern

Fiction Colorée, 1983

Cibachrome print mounted on aluminum, framed with
metal, made by the artist





Pascal Kern

Nature, 1990

Triptych, Cibachrome prints, framed with wood, made by the artist



Pascal Kern

Sculpture, 1988

Diptych, Cibachrome prints mounted on aluminium, framed with wood, made by the artist

Collection FRAC Normandie

PASCAL KERN

SOLO SHOWS

2005

Sculpture – Culture – Nature, Galerie Lucien Schweitzer, Luxembourg

2004

Sculpture - Culture – Nature, HackelBury Fine Art, Londres

2003

Sculpture – Culture – Nature, Galerie Lucien Schweitzer, Luxembourg

2002

Nature – Culture –Sculpture, HackelBury Fine Art, Londres

2001

Nature – Culture –Sculpture, L'Imagerie, Lannion

Travaux, Maison Espagnole, Festival Contrebande, Révin

2000

Galerie Municipale, Vitry-sur-Seine

1999

HackelBury Fine Art, Londres

1998

Sculpture, Galerie Zabriskie, Paris

Sculpture, La Fraternelle, Maison du Peuple Saint-Claude

Sculpture, FRAC Auvergne, Clermont-Ferrand

Sculpture et autres avatars, Halle au charbon du haut fourneau, Dommartin le Franc, Haute-Marne

Sculpture, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lons le Saunier

1997

Quelques travaux 1983/96, La Fraternelle, Maison du Peuple, Saint-Claude

1996

Travaux 1988/95, Espace Peires, Toulon

Les avatars, Galerie Zabriskie, Paris

Les avatars et autres travaux, 9^e Photofolies, anciennes casernes Burloup, Rodez

1994

Sculpture – Culture – Nature, Centre d'Arts Plastiques, Royan

Sculpture, Galerie Zabriskie, Paris

1993

Sculpture, Galerie Zabriskie, Paris

Sculpture – Culture – Nature, Printemps de la Photographie, Cahors

1992

Sculpture - Culture – Nature, Les Parvis, Tarbes et Parvis 3, Pau

1991

Sculpture, Chapelle du Méjan, Arles

Sculpture, Künstlerhaus Mousonturm, Francfort

Culture – Nature, Galerie Zabriskie, Paris

Sculpture – Culture – Nature, Centre National de la Photographie, Palais de Tokyo, Paris

1990

Sculpture, Galerie Zabriskie, New York

1989

Icônes & Sculptures, Centre d'Arts Plastiques, Villefranche / Saône

1988

Icones & Fictions Colorées, Galerie de l'École des Beaux-Arts, Rouen

Icones & Fictions Colorées, Institut Français, Cologne

Sculpture, Galerie Zabriskie, Paris

1987

Fictions Colorées, Maison de la Culture, Amiens

Icones, Galerie Zabriskie, New York

1986

Fictions Colorées, Galerie Thomas Barry Fine Art, Minneapolis (USA)

Fictions Colorées, Palais des Congrès et de la Culture, Le Mans

Icones, Galerie Zabriskie, Paris

1985

Colored Fiction, Galerie Anna Leonowens, Halifax (Canada)

Fictions Colorées, FRAC Champagne - Ardennes, Chaumont

1983

Fictions Colorées, Axe-Sud Art Actuel, Toulouse

1982

Cinéma l'Épatant & Triptych, installations, Usine Pali-kaio, Paris

1980

Usine à Bastos, Ateliers Contemporains, Centre George Pompidou, Paris

1979

Usine à Bastos, Paris

GROUP SHOWS**2004**

20 ans de la Collection Frac Champagne Ardennes, Reims

2003

Arles et la Photographie, Collection du Musée Réattu, Fondation Maeght, Saint Paul de Vence

2002

Les Regard de l'autre, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Rouen

2000

2000 ans de créations d'après l'Antique, Musée du Louvre, Paris

1998

Présentation d'une collection, Fondation Cartier, Paris

1997

Heureux le visionnaire dont la seule arme est le stylet du graveur, Présentation d'une commande publique pour le FNAC, Musée de L'Estampe, Rueil-Malmaison ; Musée du dessin et de l'estampe originale, Arsenal de Gravelines ; Musée-Château d'Annecy, SAGA 97

5 ans d'acquisition, FRAC Alsace, Centre européens d'actions artistiques contemporaines, Strasbourg

1996

Extrait de la Collection, FRAC Picardie, Abbeville et Amiens

1994/96

Photographie et au-delà : nouvelles expressions en France, Musée d'Art Moderne, Jérusalem ; Boca Raton Museum of Art ; M.C.P Chicago ; M.P.A, San Diego (USA)

1994

La Tentation de la 3^e dimension, Mai de la Photo, Reims

1993

Laiterie en friche - Europe en chantier, La Laiterie Strasbourg

La Photographie dans les collections publique françaises, Pinacothèque nationale, Athènes

Dada, Arp et après, Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain, Strasbourg

De Brancusi à Boltanski, Castello di Rivoli, Turin

1992

P. Kern, B & M Leisgen, E. Nono, G. Traquandi, Galerie Christine Debras et Yves Bical, Bruxelles

Primavera, Musée d'Art Moderne, Barcelone

1991

Photographie Française en liberté, I.C.P, New York
The second east-west photo-conference, Musée d'Architecture, Wrocław
Photographie/ Sculpture, Centre National de la Photographie, Palais de Tokyo, Paris
Sur-Nature, Nouveau Théâtre et Galerie de prêt, Angers

1990

Georges Autard – Pascal Kern – J.L Poivret, Galerie Miguel Marcos, Madrid
D'un Art, L'Autre, Centre de la Vieille Charité, Marseille, Objectifs 1968/1988, Kinocentre, Moscou
7 Situations d'Art en Franche-Comté, Chapelle des Jésuites, Gray
Une commande publique, L'Estaque, Centre d'Arts Plastiques, Hérouville Saint-Clair
Photographie Française en liberté, Fondation Gulbenkian, Lisbonne
Aktuelle Kunst Europas, Sammlung Centre Pompidou, Deichtorhallen, Hambourg
Chroniques des Apparences, Le Volcan, Maison de la Culture, Le Havre

1989

Nadja Mehadji – Christophe Boutin – Pascal Kern, Salle Saint-Jean, Hôtel de Ville, Paris
Ateliers et Pratiques d'Artistes, Musée d'Art Moderne, Strasbourg
1968/88 : 20 ans de photographie créative en France, Kultur Abteilung Bayer, Leverkusen ; Ludwig Museum, Cologne
L'invention d'un Art, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris
Das Konstruierte Bild, Kunstverein, Munich ; Breme ; Karlsruhe ; Kunsthalle, Nuremberg

1988

Objecto y Realidad – Vision del Arte Frances, Foire d'Art Contemporain de Valencia, Valence
Questioning Europe, 1ere Biennale de photographie, Rotterdam
Art or Nature, Barbican Art Gallery, Londres

1987

The Spiral of Artificiality, Hallwalls ; Buffalo (USA)
Sans titre, Musées, Houston ; New York ; San Francisco
A Visible Order, Galerie Liberman et Saul, New York

1986

Signs of the Real, White Columns, New York
Constructions et Fictions, Venise ; Naples ; Munich ; Berlin
L'Éternité Heureuse – F aucon – Kern – Rousse, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Bar le Duc ; Galerie Passage, Troyes
Jeune Sculpture – Exposition Bilan, Port d'Austerlitz, Paris

1986

Surfaces sensibles – 15 artistes à la Salpêtrière, Chapelle de la Salpêtrière, Paris
Sites, Carrefour Création Contemporaine/Alsace, Strasbourg

1985

Geschichteals Widerstand, Kunsthall, Breme ; Karlsruhe ; Dusseldorf ; Hamburg
Des intrus dans la photographie, musée des Beaux Art, Annecy ; Besançon ; Rosny-sur-Seine ; Le Havre
Images Fabriquées, exposition itinérant, Musée National d'Art Moderne
Acquisitions 84 et autres pièces, FRAC Picardie, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Beauvais
Pascal Kern et Patrick Tosani – Accrochage, Fondation Cartier pour l'art Contemporain, Jouy-en-Josas
Livres d'Artistes, présentation des collections de la Bibliothèque Nationale, BPI, Centre Georges Pompidou
Accrochage, Galerie Zabriskie, New York
Un Monde Naturel, Maison de l'Avocat, Nantes
1ere Biennale de Sculpture, Fort Miot, Belfort
Journées Jeunes Créateurs, organisées par les revues « Art Press » et « Autrements », Galerie Zabriskie, Paris
XXXe Salon de Montrouge, Montrouge (Prix Spécial du Jury)

1984

La Sculpture Autour, Galerie Zabriskie, Paris

L'Hôtel Revisit , Fondation Jourdan, Paris
XXIXe Salon de Montrouge, Montrouge

1983

Art Provisoire III, Palais des Congr s, Le Mans

Pr sentation des Collections du FRAC des Pays-de-la-Loire, Abbaye de Fontevraud

1982

XIIe Biennale de Paris, section « Livres d'Artistes », Paris

Salon de la Jeune Sculpture, Port d'Austerlitz, Paris

  l'origine, il s'agissait d'une usine... Contributions particuli res   l' tude de la ruine industrielle, « Cin ma l' patant », Usine Flipo, Tourcoing

1981

Sans titre, ou les figures du vide, Rennes

1976

Assemblage, mise en espace de la « T te M canique » de Raoul Hausmann, Palais de Tokyo, Paris

ORDERS AND RESIDENCIES

1997/98

Artiste r sident, Maison du Peuple – La Fraternelle, Saint-Claude

1996

Commande Publique d'une estampe pour le FNAC, D l gation aux Arts Plastiques

1992/93

Artiste r sident, Laiterie en Friche – Europe en Chantier, Strasbourg

1989

Commande Publique du FNAC pour le Mus e de Marseille

1987

M dicis hors les murs, New York, Minist re des Relations Ext rieures

1986

Bourse d'aide   la cr ation, Minist re de la Culture

Commande Publique du FRAC de Champagne – Ardennes, r alis e   la fonderie de Sommevoire

1985

Prix sp cial du jury, Salon de Montrouge

COLLECTIONS

FNAC (FR)

FRAC Pays de Loire (FR)

FRAC Champagne Ardennes (FR)

FRAC Picardie (FR)

FRAC Haute Normandie (FR)

FRAC Franche Comt  (FR)

FRAC Basse Normandie (FR)

FRAC Alsace (FR)

FRAC Auvergne (FR)

Mus e du Havre (FR)

Mus e de Belfort (FR)

Mus e d'Aurillac (FR)

Maison Europ enne de la Photographie (FR)

Biblioth que Nationale (FR)

Centre National d'Art et de Culture George

Pompidou (FR)

Mus e R atu – Arles (FR)

Mus e National d'Art Moderne (FR)

Mus e d'Art Moderne de Strasbourg (FR)

Mus e Cantini – Marseille (FR)

Fondation Cartier (FR)

Mus e de Santa Barbara (2) – (US)

Mus e de Baltimore (US)

Mus e de Philadelphie (US)

Museum of Fine Arts– Houston (US)

Collection Royale Belge (BE)

Collection de la Ville de Lannion (FR)

Collection de la Ville de Vitry-sur-Seine (FR)

Fonds D partemental d'Art Contemporain de
Seine St Denis (FR)

Artoth que Angers (FR)

Artoth que Nantes (FR)

Art Institute of Chicago (US)

(European and American private collections)