

# Portfolios #3

John Baldessari  
Stéphane Couturier  
Rodolf Hervé  
Jacqueline Salmon and Robert F. Hammerstiel

Opening  
Thursday September 15, 2011 from 6pm to 9pm

Exhibition from September 16 through October 29th  
From Wednesday through Friday : 13h-19h  
Saturdays : 14h-18h  
And by appointment

Dedicating an entire show to the presentation of portfolios has from here on in become a ritual at the Douches la Galerie. It's a visual boost that we are particularly fond of. It permits the viewing of a particularly coherent body of images from the artist's work at a given creative moment.

The portfolio is intrinsically connected to the history of photography. Don't look at it as competing with the artist's original work but rather see it as simply a new vantage point, a way of looking and feeling the artist's body of work which has been produced as rigorously and carefully as the original permitting a broader number to enter the artist's world.

The artists that we are presenting within this exhibition - John Baldessari, Stéphane Couturier, Rodolf Hervé, Jacqueline Salmon and Robert Hammerstiel, have all voluntarily chosen to try out this new way of viewing.

They all share the same impulse to explore unaccustomed aesthetic supports; nonetheless each has his/her own particular vision.

**Press Contact:** Françoise Morin  
Tel : 01 78 94 03 00 – Email : [contact@lesdoucheslagalerie.com](mailto:contact@lesdoucheslagalerie.com)

## Falling Star, Two Hands (with Distant Figure) et 2326 Third Street, de John Baldessari

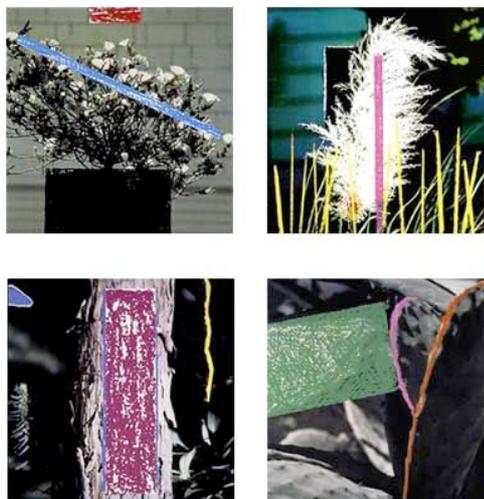
Based in Los Angeles since the 1960s, John Baldessari is one of the most influential artists of his generation. Making his name as a pioneer of conceptual art in the 1960s with his text and image paintings, he shocked the art world when he announced in a newspaper that he was cremating all the artworks he had produced between 1953 and 1966. He then turned his attention to photographic works often incorporating found film stills, trawling dumpsters for discarded material from which he created his famous photo-compositions.

Baldessari's lifelong interest in language, both written and visual, has been at the forefront of both his artwork and his teaching, through which, over more than thirty years, he has nurtured and influenced succeeding generations of artists. His work has had a huge influence on Cindy Sherman, David Salle, and Barbara Kruger among others. His works incorporate wit and irony, both mocking conceptual art and delivering it in his iconic work

We're presenting within this exhibition Portfolios #3, three artworks :

*Falling Star* was part of a series of prints published by Brooke Alexander in 1989, completed in 1990 and printed by Branstead Studio, New York.

Baldessari returned in 2000 to create *2623 Third Street, Santa Monica*, with Brooke Alexander. This creation is a suite of four prints, copublished by Brooke Alexander and Sabine Knust, Munich and printed by Derrière l'Etoile Studios, New York. The images used in these prints are of the artist's personal garden. They are not images collected anonymously.



**2623 Third Street, Santa Monica, 2000**  
Suite of four color lithographs with screenprint  
Size of each print : 69.6 x 69.6 cm  
Edition n°40/61



**Falling Star**, 1989-90  
photogravure with color aquatint  
Format de chaque tirage : 62.6 x 69.6 cm  
Edition n°25/45



**Two Hands (with Distant Figure)**, 1989-90  
photogravure with color aquatint  
Format du tirage : 134 x 88.9 cm  
Edition n°14/45

## Le Grand Palais II, by Stéphane Couturier

The photographic work on the Grand-Palais II in Paris was done in 2003-2004. It logically follows the work entitled « urban archeology » first begun in 1995.

Stéphane Couturier continues to explore the renovation of the Grand Palais first presented through a Portfolio made from photographs taken in 1997.

In this project, architecture is treated as a living organism which grows through the sediments accumulated over time.

In the place of a timeworn, tired metal architecture, you find a second metal architectural structure supporting the first like a prosthesis in a sick, weakened body.

The photographer's preference for a frontal viewpoint reshuffles structural hierarchies and stratifies parts in the photographed fragment.

Beyond the impact of these superimposed structures, such proliferation of signs and colors is meant to bear witness to the sedimentary dimension of these places caught in a kind of intemporality.

The theatricality of these visual layers, thus detailed, allows for the coexistence of several levels of understanding at the crossroads of architecture and the visual arts.



The portfolio « Grand Palais II » by Stéphane Couturier is composed of eight photographic prints signed and numbered by the artist, in a 74cm. by 58cm format on Arche, Velin, Museum Rag, 315gr., Canson paper done by the atelier Vimagie in Paris. The prints are presented as a boxed set made by the Dermont-Duval Ateliers in Paris.

The portfolio is edited by Ville Ouverte and limited to 30 copies.

## Fulgurance, by Rodolf Hervé

Dazzling. That's the first word that comes to mind when one thinks of Rodolf Hervé (1957-2000). Dazzling due to the relative brevity of his existence. And especially dazzling in regard to his work.

Back at a time — mid-1980s to mid-1990s — when digital photography didn't yet exist, it wasn't by trivial chance that Rodolf Hervé chose the Polaroid. Out of urgency. Urgency to appropriate and transform his space. Polaroid on which he could act as a painter on his canvas. For Rodolf Hervé was just as much a painter, musician, or video-maker as a photographer. There's also another reason that justifies his use of the Polaroid, as he explained in a text that appeared in Hungary in 1991: "Being the only son of Lucien Hervé, I followed in his wake, in collaboration with him, through him... And although through several of my works I had already liberated myself from the statue of the Commendatore it's worth mentioning to what degree the Polaroid helped me break with the paternal style (to the point of damning house spirit)."

In Rodolf Hervé the individual and the work are closely tied. Infinite violence and infinite tenderness. A body of work amazingly built, a body of work amazingly broken. Unique work that couldn't be related to any other. All due to his culture, at the same time man of Enlightenment and notable figure in the underground, fascinated by Surrealism and by Constructivism.

If he scratches and deforms reality, it's because reality wounds him and drives him to deform himself. In an interview in the Hungarian magazine "Kurir" in 1991, Rodolf Hervé made very clear his vision of photography: "I don't want to tell anything with my photographs, I fight against the anecdotal. I just try to make them successes. They perhaps aren't beautiful, but what's beautiful isn't necessarily good. I try to take photographs that are true". And in that same interview he concluded in answer to a question about depression: "I like being sad, I like being happy. I am not categorically sad, although I like depression, for it's like a wave, after the depths comes the crest." When people complimented Schubert for "Death and the Maiden", he would answer back: "No matter how extended my musical knowledge, I couldn't have written that piece because I've expressed my sadness therein... in my case I learned early on that infinity, eternity don't exist. Men disappear for different reasons, because they die or because they go away. While the world gets bigger, it doesn't cease to get smaller. Eternity is what I'm now living, it is just there where I am at this moment... "

The "Polas" by Rodolf Hervé — he said Pola — reverberate like gunshot in the middle of a celebration.

*Olivier Beer*



The portfolio « Fulgurance » by Rodolf Hervé is composed of an edition of 7 polaroids in a 10.4 cm. by 10.1 cm. format. Each copy is numbered and stamped by Judith Hervé, holder of the moral rights of the artist. This edition of polaroids is presented in a 12 cm. by 12 cm. boxed set made by the Dermont-Duval ateliers in Paris. The portfolio is printed in thirty copies along with five artist's proofs by Ville Ouverte and White Note.

# La racine des légumes, by Jacqueline Salmon and Robert F. Hammerstiel

Jacqueline Salmon and Robert F. Hammerstiel, signed their photographic series VEGETABLE ROOTS completed after two years of work in the year 2000.

In describing that experience Ms. Salmon remarks, "I had asked Robert to be my assistant in this work that had to be done with a big format (4" X 5") camera and that I couldn't manage on my own. He accepted. Very quickly I realized that we were two to think about the project, two to make decisions. Obviously what we decided together wasn't exactly what I would have done by myself. I decided to sign with him."

Gilles Béréziat is the vegetable farmer who grows his produce on the Ferme des Bioux at Buellas near Bourg en Bresse. One day at the open market in Ain, I came across his vegetables. They took my breath away. Although I had already begun my work at the Kitchen Garden of the King at Versailles, I found the vegetables there disappointing. The geographic switch from Versailles to Buellas ended the funding for the project! Neither the book nor the exposition ever came to being. The work lasted for more than two years as we were missing varieties and a friendship slowly grew between the vegetable farmer and his family and me. Sometimes we decided together on the missing varieties we wished to include. He would tell us when the leeks, cabbage, egg plants were ripe; then we would have to reach Buellas, cross the fields, choose the vegetables, pull them up, and take them to the improvised studio under a shed that sheltered the vegetables from the direct sunlight which would have wilted them in a minute.

Robert would have liked artificial lighting to avoid the tints of daylight...morning blues, evening oranges. But the heat of the lamps instantly made the plants look sickly. We had to accept the fact that we couldn't control the color of the asphalt floor which formed our backdrop. Robert had built a scaffolding of potato crates that he climbed up. He suspended the big format camera hanging it above the plant I had placed on the carefully swept floor. We then had to recreate a sense of volume by arranging tiny pins, bobbles, blocks, and twigs. Finally, we had to clean the roots with a brush, pull back all of the dried earth so that the rootlets didn't stick to each other and make sure there were no water droplets touching the floor..."

*Jacqueline Salmon*



The portfolio « Vegetable Roots» is composed of 9 photographic prints in a 30 x36 cm format by Jacqueline Salmon done with Robert F. Hammerstiel at Gilles Béréziat at the Ferme des Bioux, Buellas en Bresse 1998-2000.

There are 10 copies (4 copies not for Sale and 6 numbered) on Ilfochrome paper by the Lynx Studio in Lyon. Edition: Photographie d'Auteur and Josselyne Naef Art Contemporain