

sequence of rituals, traditional and new, in countries ranging from the photographer’s native Spain to Haiti. The photographs, in dramatic black and white, focus on human bodies in ecstasy, confrontation, and trance-like states; in short, Rodero shows us corporeal expressions of intense emotion. Her work exemplifies the seductive technical prowess and voyeurism of contemporary photojournalism at its highest level. But with little specific context pro-



**Yves Klein, *Le Saut dans le vide* [*Leap into the Void*], 5, rue Gentil-Bernard, Fontenay-aux-roses, France, October 1960** [the title of this work by Yves Klein, according to his newspaper *Dimanche 27 novembre 1960*, is, “A man in space! The painter of space throws himself into the void!”, Artistic action, © Yves Klein, ADAGP Paris. Photo © Roy Lichtenstein Foundation, photo Harry Shunk-John Kender, courtesy of Yves Klein Archives

vided for these images, the presentation evokes an updated “Family of Man,” a visual narrative of a homogenized global community unencumbered by any ethical concerns over spectacularizing moments of intimate internal and sacred life.

If Rodero’s work establishes photojournalism’s representation of the human body in performance as the exhibition’s unifying theme, the other works featured in “Bodies in Trouble” – in part through St-Laurent’s selection of images and innovative emphasis on performance – productively compli-

cate the experience of photojournalistic viewing. Most of the remaining works in the exhibition are by artists using cameras or by photographers whose work merges aesthetic expression with documentation, often the documentation of performance. Greta Pratt, for example, explores the performance of American nationalism in her series *Using History*, which is represented here by two ironic, deadpan images showing re-enactments of historical events in U.S. history. In *Artist Rifles*, the British artist (and former soldier with the Royal Corps of Engineers) Paul M. Smith multiples his own image in combat gear, wielding firearms, until he has formed a digital army of one; these works at once display a conventional form of violence-infused masculinity and recall Susan Sontag’s famous equation of the scopoc violence of the camera to the physical violence of the gun. The performance of gender and violent confrontation takes another form in two images selected from Croatian-Canadian photographer Lana Šlezic’s 2004–06 series *Forsaken*, a body of work visually exploring the lives of Afghan women today. One depicts a woman known as Malalai, the only police-woman in Kandahar; Malalai poses for the camera fully shrouded in a burka and aiming a handgun, a figure of both force and subjugation. This image is paired with a second, more disturbing, portrait. Here we meet eleven-year-old “Gulsuma,” who, we are told by an accompanying caption, was sold into marriage at four years of age into a family that beat her and treated her as a slave. In contrast to Malalai, with her veiled body, Gulsuma appears naked before the camera revealing the scars on her back, indices of her torment. Like Šlezic, photographer Alex Webb treads a line between photojournalistic documentation and self-reflexive imaging strategies in his series *Crossings*. The two photographs by Webb shown here underscore the arbitrary nature of borders through the cinematic posing of figures, with one image presenting a human border formed by a string of men waiting anxiously on a precipice.



**Lana Šlezic, *Malalai*, 2005 (from the series *Forsaken*), c-print, 60 x 90 cm**

Along with photo-based expression, photographic documents of performance punctuate the exhibition; indeed, one of the recurrent themes of the show is the overlapping of those interlaced categories. The works include a photograph of Canadian artist Jana Sterbak’s harrowing 1986 performance *Artist as Combustible*, in which she set herself aflame, and Ottawa-based photographer Jackson Couse’s documentation of performance artist Hélène Lefebvre’s enactment of a violence-tinged domestic life for the performance cooperative *Fait Maison*. But the exhibition also reaches back for historic moments when art, performance, truth and fiction collide subversively. “Bodies in Trouble,” for example, includes a print of Yves Klein’s 1960 *Le Saut dans le vide* (*The Leap into the Void*), a celebrated monument of performance art comprising a feigned “document” of Klein jumping from a window. Finally, the exhibition includes a rarely seen selection of stills, restored specially for the exhibition, from a 1961 film on Haitian voodoo by the American experimental filmmaker Maya Deren. As the viewer follows the dancing figures from frame to frame, the spaces

between media document and art overlap and merge.

The innovative pairing of performance and photojournalism underscores the constructed nature of news photographs while linking images across fields through a visual poetics. This is evident in the one remaining work in the show. *The Kiss of Life*, a 1968 Pulitzer Prize-winning news image by photojournalist Rocco Morabito, pictures a Florida lineman performing CPR on an accidentally electrocuted colleague. The grace of the image – evoking both human compassion and homoerotic love – transcends the human drama that it conveys, offering the image as a performance of lived experience.

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**Climats, *Terre de brumes*, 2010, 15 photographies montées sur plaques de métal et bois, trois modules architecturaux, bois, caséine, laque, vue partielle de l’installation, 76 x 114,3 cm ch.**



**Climats, *Terre de sang*, 2010, 10 scannophotographies, quatre modules architecturaux, bois, caséine, laque, vue partielle de l’installation, 152 x 240 cm ch.**

rence introduit la notion de cycle comme on le dit d’une suite d’œuvres musicales.

*Terre de brumes* (2010) comprend une quinzaine de photographies d’un iceberg prises à Terre-Neuve par l’artiste à bord d’un petit bateau. Devant ces impressions au jet d’encre, des structures de bois peint à la caséine avec des plaques de verres ajourées forment sur plus de 15 mètres un déambulateur évoquant la muraille de l’iceberg. Comme pour contredire cet effet, les photos grand format se collent à la texture de ces murs de glace qui baignent dans un halo de brouillard. L’iceberg devient quelque chose d’intime.

*Terre de sang* (2010) se compose aussi de structures verticales et horizontales et de 10 impressions au jet d’encre. On pense à des orages ou à des tempêtes. À la fois

photos et dessins numériques, ces images nuageuses affichent une gamme de noirs et de gris associée à des tracés de sable rougeoyants. Provenant de la Côte-Nord, ce sable est soufflé sur une épreuve à la gélatine argentique. Propulsé par déplacement d’air, le dessin éphémère de l’artiste est passé au numériseur de grand format. Proche de l’*action painting*, le procédé met l’accent sur la charge du corps qui balait la surface. *Terre de neige* (2010) emploie du sable blanc et, pour la dernière image, du sable noir.

Mettant en exergue la place du spectateur, Alloucherie « cadre » comme à son habitude ses photos accrochées au mur par une succession de volumes en U. Cet emboîtement désaxé défragmente l’espace. Sinueux parmi les photographies et

les volumes, nous naviguons quelque part entre le discontinu et le recentrage. Partant de cette volonté de déstabilisation physique, Alloucherie secoue très vite les limites non seulement spatiales mais aussi sensorielles et même mentales de ce point de départ issu du minimalisme pour enraciner sa subtile et inventive méditation sur d’autres fronts.

Le dispositif génère ainsi par contamination un faisceau de suggestions contradictoires. Comme en réponse à l’incertitude de cette dynamique, la photo viendrait afficher l’artificialité de son pré-supposé de réalité. « Alloucherie, écrit en présentation Diana Nemiroff, teste l’élasticité de la photographie et en élargit le pouvoir expressif par des moyens élémentaires. »

Le document brut est ainsi l’enjeu d’une série d’altérations et de transformations alors que les éléments architecturaux lui confèrent une monumentalité, une nouvelle assise. Ces photos sont tout autant tributaires des gestes de la main et du corps que de la fixité de leur enregistrement mécanique. Le choix de l’iceberg et la façon même dont l’artiste a capté son sujet fait référence à la tradition du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle de la photographie d’exploration qui repoussait les frontières du monde connu en convertissant en clichés ses confins.

Ces déplacements à travers l’alignement subtilement non linéaire des structures. Les différents angles qui s’interposent devant la photo. La multiplicité des séquences à l’intérieur d’une même œuvre. La volonté de se situer entre « l’ici et maintenant » du dispositif et « l’ailleurs » de l’image photographique. La façon dont ces photos sont façonnées par le

corps à la manière de dessins. Le rapport qu’elles entretiennent entre l’abstrait et le documentaire... Ce n’est pas tant que le spectateur pourrait louvoyer à travers ces seuils, ces tensions, certains de ces paradoxes comme si des énergies opposées se donnaient rendez-vous à tour de rôle. Il s’agit davantage de coalescence persuasive et de pratiques de fusion. Cette stratégie renvoie à la fois à l’incapacité manifeste du regard à saisir la nature mais aussi à l’ambition de vouloir tout de même traduire l’aspect indéfinissable de notre relation à un lieu. Et ce, comme l’indique Diana Nemiroff, « avec tout ce que cela suppose de va-et-vient entre espace ouvert et monde intime, entre perception immédiate et mémoire ».

Devant ces œuvres envoûtantes, nous sommes un peu comme devant un jardin zen aussi construit sur la promesse que l’agencement de ses roches et de ses tracés dans le sable pourrait refléter notre rapport à la nature et au monde.

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## William Kentridge

**Five Themes**  
Jeu de Paume, Paris  
June 29 to September 5, 2010

A resurrection of hand-drawn film animation as a procedure to be presented in museum installations in this era of digital abstraction is a brilliant move. The simplicity of this strategy highlights the delusion resident in the efforts of so many contemporary artists to produce a critical art practice using technologically “advanced” techniques. In many cases, these attempts simply play a role in confirming the cultural status quo.

This summer, *Le Jeu de Paume* in Paris presented a retrospective of about forty of William Kentridge’s recent works, all of which offer for our consideration his continuing dedication to “the hand” and handwork as worthy of merit in contemporary art. The exhibition includes an earlier collection of films, *Drawings for Projection*, and a more recent work, *Five Themes*. Kentridge, born in South Africa in 1955, has received

extensive international acclaim for his practice, which combines drawing, film, and theatre. He first gained recognition in 1997, when his work was included in Documenta X in Kassel, Germany, and the Johannesburg and Havana Biennials; ambitious solo exhibitions followed.

In the *Drawings for Projection* series, we encounter Kentridge’s characters Soho Eckstein, a rich businessman, and Soho’s angst-ridden alter ego, Felix Teitelbaum. During this one-hour cycle of animated films, we follow the pursuits and catastrophes of Soho and Felix, two fictional inhabitants of Johannesburg. The animation is remarkable for its wealth of primitive sensuousness and materiality, even though the medium is the technical one of photographic mediation and filmic projection. Drawn with soft charcoal (the ashes of burnt wood), these handmade animations let the dust fly as the technique records or traces itself out in the motions of composing image and story.

“Drawings for projection” is how Kentridge describes his hand-drawn animated films, and “palimpsest” is the term frequently used by commentators to describe the



**Felix in Exile, 1994, video still, 35 mm animated film transferred to video, 8 min 34 sec**

result of his unique combination of drawing, erasing, and single-frame filming. What seems unique in his technique is that both procedures, additive and subtractive, occur on the same sheet of paper. And what we see are, as films, visible scenes perpetually in progress, equally mechanical

and artisanal, building and unbuilding as a process ongoing before our eyes. Marks and images are drawn and erased as the projection device moves the film always ahead, each frame displaced by the next.

What is most remarkable in this play between the handmade and the technical