



Syndicat and Matthieu Laurette present
MATTHIEU: Une rétrospective dérivée, 1993-2015

Chaumont design graphique, 26th Festival, 27th May – 14th June 2015

The artist Matthieu Laurette (b.1970) operates like a Buren stripe. Since the start of his career in 1993 he has inserted himself into pre-existing situations with the aim of raising questions about their premises and exposing their mechanisms. While still a student, Matthieu took part in a show titled *Tournez Manège* (The Dating Game) on which he introduced himself as 'a multimedia artist'. He has been using TV formats as *ready-mades* ever since and calls his appearances 'Apparitions'. Among them is a session on *Je passe à la télé* (I am on TV), a talent show in which both the aim and the prize are avoiding being voted off by a live audience. Alongside his work on screen during the 1990s, Matthieu undertook several long-term endeavours including 'Produits remboursés' (Money-back products), a scheme that involves taking the cajolery of marketing to its extreme by living for free on products that allow their cost to be recouped.

Invited to do a project at Frieze Art Fair in London in 2005, Matthieu organised a series of tours titled 'What do they wear at Frieze Art Fair?'. Led by fashion experts including Isabella Blow and Peter Saville, these events anticipated the intense attention paid to the outfits paraded by art fair visitors in recent years. Matthieu was quick to recognise that, while the fair's ostensible business is art sales, the crux of its activity is human interaction. Using Guy Debord's assertion that 'The Spectacle is not a collection of images; it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images' as the headline of his Instagram account, Matthieu combines conceptual art's ascetic pursuit of the idea with pop art's wallow in mass media.

Working together as Syndicat the graphic designers Sacha Léopold (b.1986) and François Havegeer (b.1987) use exhibitions as vehicles to explore the interaction of craft and economics behind the production and distribution of text and images. At Chaumont, alongside this exhibition, they are showing a project that involves printing a single poster in several different countries - titled 'Ricardo' after the British classical economist David Ricardo who believed that nations would produce more wealth through industrial specialisation - and another that looks at the industrial and craft printing process- titled 'Taylor', after Frederick Winslow Taylor the author of *The Principles of Scientific Management*. Meeting while they were teaching at the ISBA at Besançon, Matthieu and Sacha realised that they were interested in similar sets of issues, but were starting from different positions, put reductively those of art and design. This sense of common ground prompted Syndicat to invite Matthieu to collaborate on in this exhibition.

At the start of the process, Sacha and François asked Matthieu to submit his entire archive of images of 22-years of work, just as they would for a retrospective monograph. The graphic designers then chose a selection of these images to reproduce on mass-produced items that can be customised via online print-on-demand companies. Many of Matthieu's images are extremely high-resolution -

perversely even photographs taken from very low-resolution TV images - but on the goods created for the exhibition they are reduced to a minimal numbers of pixels. Also, although not deliberately so, some of the designers' choices ran against the usual hierarchy of images of the artist's work. For example, a widely reproduced photograph of *The Freebie King*, a wax sculpture of Matthieu pushing a laden supermarket trolley that was exhibited by Harald Szeemann at the Venice Biennial in 2001, is reprinted on the least imposing objects in the exhibition, a small metal military dogtag on a stainless steel ball-chain (Matthieu himself think of this image as something of an icon). Syndicat commissioned only one of each of the products, except for the iPhone 6 case printed with a selfie of Matthieu with Jeff Koons, several of which will be distributed as prizes during the Chaumont 2015 International Poster Competition.

Matthieu had mixed emotions when he first saw the products at Syndicat's Paris studio. More than just the standard ambivalence that is the outcome of confronting the sum of one's past efforts, he had to deal with seeing images of his work badly printed on poor quality materials. For anyone who is not the artist, the objects are by turns witty, funny and pathetic. Although intentionally amateur in execution, they call to mind the spin-off merchandise - Van Gogh tea towels, On Kawara totes - found in the increasingly well-stocked shops of the world's major museums. The show's subtitle, 'une rétrospective dérivée' emphasises that connection, yet it also brings to mind the chance encounters of the Situationist 'dérive'. At Chaumont the items are arranged in a grid on a low 4x9 meter platform covered with three identical 3x4 meter posters. First created in 2004 as an artists project commissioned by *Viacom Outdoor* to fill advertising hoardings in the low season, this poster is titled 'Applause' and shows Matthieu as a member of an applauding TV audience. In all, the exhibition is an entirely new take on the retrospective.

The Chaumont Festival is a graphic design event and, while there is conventional graphic design in this project, it is not the work of the exhibition's authors Syndicat, but that of anonymous teams who create the formats through which images are applied to products. Likewise, Matthieu's decision to allow Syndicat free rein in creating the objects for this exhibition is an idea akin to those that have driven his work, yet the project is not Matthieu's work in a traditional sense. Strictly speaking 'Matthieu: une rétrospective dérivée' is not a design nor an art project, but, in being neither one, it calls both into account.

Emily King

Matthieu Laurette (born 1970 in Villeneuve Saint Georges, France) is a multimedia and conceptual contemporary French artist who works in a variety of media, from TV and video to installation and public interventions. Laurette uses various strategies to explore the relationships between conceptual art, Pop art, Institutional Critique, economics and contemporary society.

Laurette's work has been shown in venues such as Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (1998), the ICA-Institute of Contemporary Arts, London (1999 & 2003), de Appel, Amsterdam (2000 & 2013); 49th Venice Biennale (2001), Castello di Rivoli, Turin (2001) Deichtorhallen, Hamburg (2002), Artsonje Center, Seoul (2002), Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2003 & 2006), Biennial de Pontevedra (2004), P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center/MoMA, N.Y (2005), Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (2005), Yvon Lambert Gallery, Paris (2005), Kunsthalle & Kunstforum, Vienna (2005), the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney (2006), MoMA-Museum of Modern Art, New York (2007); MNAM-Centre Pompidou, Paris, (1997, 2000, 2004, 2007 & 2009); Z33, Hasselt (2012); Mac/Val - Musée d'art contemporain du Val de Marne, Vitry-sur Seine (2012, 2015); Museo La Tertulia, Cali (2013), Paralel, Oaxaca (2014). In 2003 he received the Fondation d'entreprise Ricard Prize.

Current exhibitions include « Cherchez le Garçon » (7 March - 30 August 2015) at MAC/VAL - Musée d'art contemporain du Val de Marne in Vitry-sur Seine and « A Republic of Art » (27 June - 04 October 2015) at the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven.

www.laurette.net

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Sacha Léopold (b. 1986, Cosne-Cours-sur-Loire, France) and François Havegeer (1987, La Bassée, France) met during their undergrad studies at the École Supérieure d'Arts Appliqués de Nevers (France), where they obtained their BFA, majoring in visual communication in 2008 and 2009, respectively. The two graphic designers have been working together in Paris under the name Syndicat since their first La Grande Ourse residency at CAC Parc Saint-Léger, France, in 2012. Their work investigates cross-disciplinary graphic design commissions, where images are confronted with installation art and where object-making reflects their questioning of printing techniques. This interest for fabrication techniques and their sensibility for the materials used in mechanical reproduction are essential components of the distinctiveness of their collaborative projects, whether working at creating visual identities or curating exhibitions.

Syndicat has most notably created and developed the visual identity of the Cirva in Marseilles (since 2011), and of the Villa du Parc in Annemasse (since 2014). They have actively collaborated on the following artist books; Aurélien Mole, *Les Référents* (2013) and *Les Images vieillissent autrement que celles qui les font* (2012), Rémi Groussin, *Rémi Groussin*, Dilecta (2014), Sarah Tritz, *L'œuf et les scandales*, Tombolopresses (2015), and worked with institutions such as the Bibliothèque Kandinsky in Paris for the *Journal de l'université d'été* (2014), Bétonsalon – Centre d'art et de recherches, Paris, with *On ne se souvient que des photographies* (catalog and exhibition design, 2014), and the Villa Arson in Nice, for the graduate show catalog, (2013), and *Bricologie, la souris et le perroquet* (2015).

Sacha Léopold and François Havegeer have curated the traveling exhibitions *Monozukuri: formes d'impression* (2012) and *Monozukuri: façons et surface d'impression* (2013). Syndicat has also collaborated with Sarkis, taking part in *Magiciens de la terre, retour sur une exposition légendaire* at the Pompidou Center, Paris, and participated in *L'usage des formes*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 2015.

www.s-y-n-d-i-c-a-t.eu

Chaumont Graphic Design's approach is to produce and transmit various graphic design sensibilities through exhibitions, publications and productions. Founded in 1990 as a poster festival, it has made possible the collecting of over 45,000 contemporary posters, going beyond questions of medium and format via exhibitions, publications and projects. In 2015 it will expand its mission with research and training sessions that will take place in a building signed by the Moatti & Rivière architecture firm. Chaumont Graphic Design has produced or exhibited the work of Åbåke, Jean-Marc Ballée, Barney Bubbles, Anthony Burrill, Dexter Sinister, Paul Elliman, Experimental Jetset, Ed Fella, Laurent Fétis, Graphic Thought Facility, James Goggin, Jürg Lehni, Lust, Karel Martens, M/M (Paris), Metahaven, Josef Müller-Brockmann, Norm, Loulou Picasso, Paul Rand, Sonic Youth and others.

In a spirit of synergy and co-production, Chaumont Graphic Design has most notably been associated with the Royal College of Art in London, the National Libraries in France and in Russia, the Cobra Museum, the Écoles Supérieures d'Art et de Design in Amiens, Besançon, Bordeaux, Cambrais, Lyon, Pau, Valence, Dijon or Cergy as well as European schools in Den Haag, Amsterdam or Arnhem in the Netherlands and Zürich, Geneva and Lausanne in Switzerland for various collaborative projects.

www.cig-chaumont.com

Images available on request.

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Chaumont design graphique

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