

Alain Fleischer

I am nothing but an image

Je ne suis qu'une image

Galleria del Cembalo from the 27th of October 2018 to the 19th of January 2019, shows a wide selection of works by Alain Fleischer, starting from the first projects in the 70's up to the most recent works.

Alain Fleischer is a multidisciplinary artist. His production is very prolific and protean. With more than 50 books, 350 films and unnumbered video, photos and installations, his work is really wide. Far from any interdisciplinarity, he uses any mean of expression in its specific field. Alain Fleischer cannot be defined as a writer who makes movies or a film-maker who plays as an artist, nor a photographer making videos, but a *writer*, a *film-maker*, a *photographer*.

His passion for the technical aspect, and its bricolage reinterpretation, give space to unlikely inventions: one thinks to see an old vinyl on the player, while instead in reality we are looking at the projection of the video taken when the long-playing was on and turning, now seen on the vinyl player as screen. Some themes are recurrent in his work: the female face and body, the eroticism, the sense of survival, the illusion, the reflection and the double, the ritual, the world of childhood and play, the transfiguration of the shapes, the ruin, the wilderness.

The artist explores the photographic mean. Images freed of the need of representation of the visible, claim their role saying: "I'm nothing but an image".

This statement, title of the exhibition, starts from the observation that in the movies sound becomes an image. The audio track is an optical signal presenting all the characteristics of a photography: contrast, texture, clarity. Alain Fleischer has transferred the optical image of the recorded sentence "I'm nothing but an image" on different media. The signal contour, made of waves of different frequencies, turns into a landscape, or a shape on a paper, or a contour of a blade, and so forth.

Evidences of events which have never happened, unbiased memories and therefore lying of the photographic track, still images set in motion and moving images suddenly frozen, reflections, interceptions, projections, rotations, suggest questions on their own nature and their reality. Emotions, seductions and enjoyment experienced by the author are captured to be intuitively shared by the viewer, without the need or the imperative of necessarily finding an underlying meaning or a symbolic value.

In the series *Lumières oubliées (Forgotten lights)*, the artist deals with the etymological sense of the word "photography", by using lanterns and bright traces.

Among videos and magic installations, the visitor will discover the "crestation" phenomenon of the cactus - a specific botanic word, defining their monstrous metamorphosis, turned into an algorithm and applied to any kind of object.

Biography

Alain Fleischer grew up in a very multilingual entourage, as his father was Hungarian and his mother half French and half Spanish. He started studying literature, linguistics, anthropology and semiotic at the Sorbona University and the EHESS (École Supérieure de Sciences Sociales).

He obtained a degree in Literature, Drama, Spanish Language, Linguistics; he obtained a master in Animal Biology and finally a PhD in Semiotics.

Teaching - From 1979 to 1985 he is a teacher at the Paris III Sorbonne Nouvelle. In 1975 wins the position at the École nationale supérieure d'art, Nizza (Villa Arson).

In 1979 he is back again in Paris, winner of the contest as teacher at the École Nationale Supérieure d'Art de Paris-Cergy. In 1982-1983 is visiting professor at the École Nationale Supérieure de la Photographie of Arles. Then he is the pedagogical coordinator at the Cinema Study Institute (IESC) which later becomes the Fémis. - Many times member of the Examining Board in the Art schools as IDHEC and DNSEP.

In 1992 and 1993 he teaches at the Quebec University in Montréal (UQAM) and talks at the PhD lectures. - On charge of the Culture Ministry, Alain Fleischer devised and supervised the project of the National Study of Contemporary Art Le Fresnoy at Tourcoing, being its Director since the opening in 1997.

Film Director. Alain Fleischer is author and director of about 350 works (experimental films, short-films, full-length movie and art educational films). In 1962 being eighteen years old he realizes his first movie with his schoolmates,

named *An unfinished film*. Then follow several short-films, such as travel journals.

His first movie *Montage VI* makes him win the grant by the Research and Experimental Cinema Group (G.R.E.C., Centre national de la Cinématographie) with the particular support of Jean Rouch and of Henri Langlois, who in 1970 realizes the

first projection at the French Cinémathèque. Alain Fleischer worked together with Christian Boltanski as well as with Sarkis, Bernar Venet, Danielle Schirman and others.

Three of his films gained the financial help issued by the National Cinema Centre: *Les Rendez-vous en forêt* in 1971, *Zoo Zéro* in 1977 and *Rome Roméo*, 1988. His films have been the object of many retrospectives: at the National Museum of

Modern Art (Palais de Tokyo) and the New York Anthology Film Archives (Jonas Mekas), at the Galeries nationales du Jeu de Paume (Parigi), the Pesaro Film Festival (Italia), the Cinematek (Cinémathèque royale de Belgique) in Bruxelles, the International Film Festival in Montréal (FIFA).

His films have been presented at the most important international festivals: Cannes, Venezia, Locarno, Berlino, Rotterdam, Montreal (Festival des Films du Monde, Festival du Nouveau Cinéma). Since 1990 Fleischer regularly speaks at the International Art Film Festival of Montreal (FIFA).

Visual art, multimedia, photography, video. In 1972, Alain Fleischer established a reputation as artist and photographer among his colleagues (Christian Boltanski, Annette Messager, Sophie Calle, André Cadéré, ecc), thanks to personal and collective exhibitions, initially set up in alternate locations.

In 1980 at the International Art Biennale of Paris Fleischer presents the first installations based upon cinema projections. In 1982 the first large photographic compositions are exhibited at the Modern Art Museum of Paris and in the same year

he is shown at the Centre Pompidou with a personal exhibition. Later on his work goes to museums, art centres and galleries in France and abroad.

Alain Fleischer represented France at the International Exhibition Art Biennale of Kwan-Ju (Corea) and at that in Cuba. In 2014 he participated at Biennale of Busan (Corea). The cultural services of the Foreign Affairs Ministry organized a retrospective of the works by Alain Fleischer artist and photographer and it has been presented in different Countries: San Paolo and Rio de Janeiro, Montreal, Rotterdam, Barcellona, L'Avana, Buenos Aires. The cultural services of the French Embassy in New York presented an exhibition and a review of his films.

Exhibitions. Alain Fleischer participated to many collective exhibitions in France and abroad, as the one dedicated to Roland Barthes and Samuel Beckett at the Centre Pompidou; among the last ones, the one by Georges Didi-Huberman, *Atlas, Comment porter le monde sur ses épaules?* (Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid nel 2010, ZKM di Karlsruhe and Falckenberg Collection in Hamburg in 2011); *La mémoire traversée, Eléphant Paname / Mois de la Photographie* in Paris (2014). In 2015 he was at the Photomed, the Mediterranean Photography Festival, at the Hôtel des Arts of Tolone.

Several retrospectives have been dedicated to his work as artist and photographer.

We name in particular the following:

- Maison de la Culture, Saint-Étienne, 1982;
- Musée de l'Abbaye Sainte-Croix di Les Sables-d'Olonne, 1985;
- Maison de la Culture, La Rochelle, 1986;
- Centre national de la Photographie, Paris, 1995;
- Maison européenne de la Photographie (MEP) and Centre Pompidou, Paris, 2003.
- Sungkok Art Museum (Samsung Foundation), Seoul, 2008.