

frieze

Around Town

Various Venues

Curated by Rebecca Lamarche-Vadel at the Palais de Tokyo, 'Le Bord Des Mondes' (The Edge of the Worlds) featured work that is consciously not art, often DIY, hails from the periphery of visual culture, but is created by 22 artists. Inspired by Duchamp's question: 'Can one make works which are not of "art"?', the show included inventor Kenji Kawakami's menagerie of 'Chindo-gu', the Japanese movement he founded that fosters the creation of amusingly useless inventions, such as the umbrella necktie or an underarm deodorant stick-style butter dispenser. A selection of Bridget Polk's riveting 'Balancing Rocks' (2009–ongoing) were featured throughout the exhibition, linking the block-building game Jenga with references to minimalism and land art. Jean Katambayi's festive re-creations of hi-tech medical equipment in cardboard and foam address the near-magical nature of life-saving equipment in a culture of scarcity: *YLLUX* (2012), for example, is a mess of cardboard spools, found and repurposed pressure gauges displayed on a sporty grey and orange stand with wheels fabricated from paper. Jessi Krimes created his soap-transfer portraits of fellow prisoners, 'Purgatory' (2009), during his incarceration: for Krimes, artistic motivation became a means of commemoration and contact between the prisoners and their marginalized friends and family on the outside.

Across the city, in Bellville, Balice Hertling presented 'Sculptures and Collages', a compelling exhibition by the Lebanese, Paris-based artist, Simone Fattal. Fascinated by the archaic era, Fattal's small but monumental sculptures with their blunt terracotta forms – including *Warriors* (2011) or *Homme Portant un Animal* (Man Wearing an Animal, 2011) – might be at home in the Sully wing of the Louvre. Fattal engages with archetypes – the placid, seated figure of Gudea of Lagash or the striding form of the Kouros – in varying degrees of abstraction, playing with a primal sense of familiarity. In her wall-based collages, the artist overlays snapshots of antiquities – ceramics, sculpture and ritual objects – onto meta-forms of the body and landscape.

Much like the gorgeously repetitive architecture of the nearby Place des Vosges, Xavier Veilhan's exhibition, 'Music', at Galerie Perrotin (a different iteration of which was held simultaneously at the gallery's New York branch), employed a kind of sculptural classicism. The show was an homage to music producers; Veilhan depicts them in plywood and resin sculptures, of varying sizes, either reclining or erect. Some of

About this review

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By William Corwin



Bridget Polk, *Balancing Rocks*, 2015, installation view at Palais de Tokyo

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his subjects are also performers – Brian Eno, Quincy Jones and Pharrell Williams – and, as such, are immediately recognizable; others, such as Trevor Horn or the composer Éliane Radigue have remained behind the scenes. These meticulous sculptures are generated via digital mapping and three-dimensional printing, which creates a distance between the artist and his subject: Veilhan’s desire to both elevate and democratize his subject somehow negates any sense of individualism. The smaller portraits were symmetrically arranged on a shelving structure that vaguely evokes ancient mausoleums: Alexander the Great or Julius II might have been satisfied.

Michael Dotson’s exhibition ‘A Whole New World’ at Galerie Zürcher approaches the sublime via Walt Disney; the title is taken from a song in *Aladdin* (1992). Referencing Disney sends out a mixed message: the production company’s films typically re-enforce race, gender and cultural stereotypes, whilst remaining a familiar conduit to the realm of fantasy. Dotson’s psychedelic paintings situate the brand in a very freaky place indeed. Choosing key moments in several movies – *Cinderella* (1950) and *Peter Pan* (1953) are recognizable – Dotson takes iconic compositions, heightens them with even brighter colours and repeats characters with multiple limbs and heads (*Sleep Walker*, 2015), and disembodied hands poised over phosphorescent flames (*White Magic*, 2015). Like Veilhan, Dotson’s reliance on appropriation posits the role of artist as a detached creator rather than a hands-on craftsman. It is in his more eerie abstract paintings, *Showtime* (2015) and *Wet Window* (2013), that we gain greater insight into the artist’s unique imaginative aesthetic.

Receding further back into the catalogue of human gestures, Erik Lindman’s show, ‘Blanks’, at Almine Rech addresses mark-making. In these large-scale oil paintings the artist uses found surfaces, which are then layered onto a larger canvas and framed by colour, almost like heraldic standards. Despite the title of the show, the paintings shy away from minimalism; essentially, they’re expressionistic. Much like Fattal’s sculptures, Lindman’s works seem to offer some secret spiritual or ritual use-value without disclosing their meaning.

Valentina Liernur’s exhibition ‘ahhhhhh’ at Campoli Presti alternatively offered the literal blank – the erasure – as a means of creating language. Her bleached denim canvases resemble monochromatic Rorschach tests and, as with Lindman’s restrained paintings, these drippy calligraphic works question the linguistic assignation of meaning to line and form. This is further explored in Liernur’s painted canvases, from which areas have been excised. The paintings read like redacted NSA documents, in which the voided sections have even greater meaning than what remains. While Dotson, Fattal and Veilhan flirt with the familiar and figural, all of these exhibitions are, in essence, conceptual: thoughts of futility, nothingness, the ecstatic, and the gulf between the historical and the eternal were in the air in Paris this spring.

William Corwin