

Galeria **Francisco Fino**

Adrien Missika

Portfolio

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Adrien Missika

Adrien Missika (Paris, 1981) lives and works in Berlin. Co-founder of the art space 1m3 in Lausanne in 2006, he graduated from ECAL (École cantonale d'art de Lausanne) in 2007. He has had numerous personal exhibitions including: 21er Haus in Vienna, Kunsthaus Glarus, Switzerland, Centre Culturel Suisse, Paris; Centre d'art contemporain Genève, Switzerland and Palais de Tokyo in Paris. His work has also been shown in many group exhibitions, among which at Centre Pompidou, Paris; Metro Pictures, New York; Aargauer Kunsthaus, Aarau; Nouveau Musée National de Monaco, Montecarlo; Le Magasin, Grenoble; Fotomuseum Winterthur and Centre Pompidou Metz. In 2009 he was awarded the Swiss Art Award, in 2011 the Prize of the Fondation Ricard and the Kiefer Hablitzel Prize.

The work of Adrien Missika humorously investigates the natural and the cultural. Using epistemology as a base for research, his conceptual approach drifts into poetic and hypothetical narratives. Through a variety of media, from video, photography, sculpture to installation and action, the work digs into the wide range of natural and environmental sciences, such as biology, landscape architecture and geography to name a few. Overcoming the logic of capitalism, Missika's artistic practice nurtures a space for possible worlds.

[More about the artist](#)



Adrien Missika

TransPlants, 2024

4k color video with sound + Agreement fac simulé 2x printed A4 paper,
caligraphy rice paper, color photographs, frame from recycled wood

7':25" | Ed. 1/5 | 40 x 67 cm

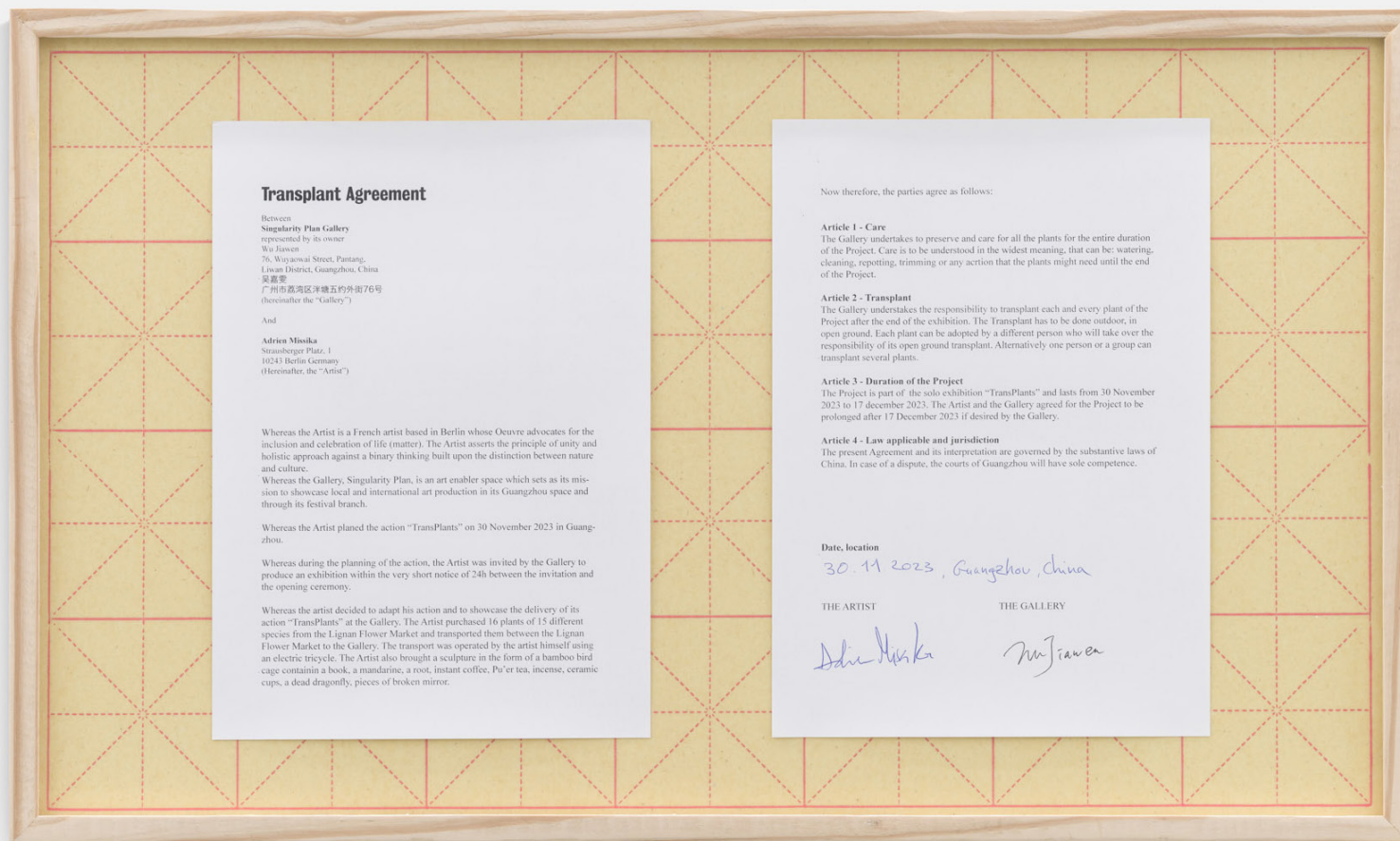
Video



This work consists of a video and a contract, it is part of the *Cura Series*, where the artist is performing actions of care for plants in the urban environment. On November 30th, 2023, the artist purchased 16 plants of 15 different species to free them from the captivity of a flower market and from the planters that enclosed their roots. This rescue journey entails a certain motion. The artist operates the transport to the final destination using a minimalistic electric tricycle all across the hectic traffic of the Asian metropolis.

The car-chasing sequence shows the quirky manner in which Missika navigates amidst the speed of the city. The feeble convoy of plants that he carries reveals the constant micro violence one body suffers in the city environment. If humans alike are disturbing their reciprocal boundaries, how will the limits of plants not be systematically crossed?

The action concludes when Missika arrives – not without distress – at the destination and he unloads the planters in their new home: the backyard of a gallery space. The selected species join other fellow veteran plants, and all together breed a micro-forest, diverse and dense enough to contribute to the rewilding. The video work is accompanied by an agreement that specifies the duties of the guardianship of the plants in this garden. The “care” of the new neighbors will be understood in the widest meaning, which entails: watering, cleaning, repotting, trimming, or any action that the plants might need until the ultimate transplant.



Transplant Agreement

Between
Singularity Plan Gallery
represented by its owner
Wu Jiansen
76, Wuyajowai Street, Panyang,
Liyuan District, Guangzhou, China
吴建森
广州市荔湾区洋塘五约外街76号
(hereinafter the "Gallery")

And

Adrien Miska
Straussberger Platz, 1
10243 Berlin Germany
(Hereinafter, the "Artist")

Whereas the Artist is a French artist based in Berlin whose Oeuvre advocates for the inclusion and celebration of life (matter). The Artist asserts the principle of unity and holistic approach against a binary thinking built upon the distinction between nature and culture.

Whereas the Gallery, Singularity Plan, is an art enabler space which sets as its mission to showcase local and international art production in its Guangzhou space and through its festival branch.

Whereas the Artist planned the action "TransPlants" on 30 November 2023 in Guangzhou.

Whereas during the planning of the action, the Artist was invited by the Gallery to produce an exhibition within the very short notice of 24h between the invitation and the opening ceremony.

Whereas the artist decided to adapt his action and to showcase the delivery of its action "TransPlants" at the Gallery. The Artist purchased 16 plants of 15 different species from the Lignan Flower Market and transported them between the Lignan Flower Market to the Gallery. The transport was operated by the artist himself using an electric tricycle. The Artist also brought a sculpture in the form of a bamboo bird cage containing a book, a mandarin, a root, instant coffee, Pu'er tea, incense, ceramic cups, a dead dragonfly, pieces of broken mirror.

Now therefore, the parties agree as follows:

Article 1 - Care

The Gallery undertakes to preserve and care for all the plants for the entire duration of the Project. Care is to be understood in the widest meaning, that can be: watering, cleaning, repotting, trimming or any action that the plants might need until the end of the Project.

Article 2 - Transplant

The Gallery undertakes the responsibility to transplant each and every plant of the Project after the end of the exhibition. The Transplant has to be done outdoor, in open ground. Each plant can be adopted by a different person who will take over the responsibility of its open ground transplant. Alternatively one person or a group can transplant several plants.

Article 3 - Duration of the Project

The Project is part of the solo exhibition "TransPlants" and lasts from 30 November 2023 to 17 December 2023. The Artist and the Gallery agreed for the Project to be prolonged after 17 December 2023 if desired by the Gallery.

Article 4 - Law applicable and jurisdiction

The present Agreement and its interpretation are governed by the substantive laws of China. In case of a dispute, the courts of Guangzhou will have sole competence.

Date, location

30.11.2023, Guangzhou, China

THE ARTIST

Adrien Miska

THE GALLERY

Wu Jiansen

Detail of *TransPlants* (Agreement fac similé), 2024



Installation view of *La Pensée Sauvage*, Galeria Francisco Fino, 2024

Adrien Missika
Rhône Drone/Bourdon du Rhône, 2023
Installation
Rhône pebbles, ink, hemp jute.
670 x 180 cm





General view of *Rhône Drone/Bourdon du Rhône*, Biennale Son, 2023 (Photo Laura Morier-Genoud)

On *Rhône* pebbles of all sizes, Adrien Missika has inscribed Zs, also of all sizes. The polished stones are laid out randomly on a carpet where the lines of a 7-meter-long span run. Is it a musical tune? It certainly is. Contrary to museum rules, visitors of all ages are free to take the pebbles in their hands and arrange them differently, according to a known tune, or one composed on the spur of the moment, skilfully or randomly.

Why a Z? In reference to the bumblebee, that precious pollinator that accompanies its flight with a continuous thud. The drone is also the continuous note or chord that underpins certain types of music, such as hurdy-gurdies and bagpipes and is especially fundamental in Indian music, especially ragas. Contemporary composers such as La Monte Young have taken an interest in it.

In 2022, *Marble oracle, pebble gamble...*, the first version of this work, in a more modest format, was made with pebbles from the Aegean Sea and called for murmuring, and chanting, with M's and H's.





Adrien Missika

Pioneer's Treat, 2021 – ongoing

Action, first performed by the artist in Lisbon, Portugal, November 2021

Video documentation, 7'22" 4k colour video with sound

[Video](#)



Adrien Missika

Cura, 2019 – ongoing

Action, first performed by the artist in Mexico city, Mexico, 2019

Video documentation: Full HD video with sound, 5'16"

[Video](#)



Adrien Missika

Unkrautpflege, 2018 – ongoing

Action, first performed by the artist on Karl-Marx-Allee, Berlin, August 2018

Video documentation: 4K colour video with sound, 6'22", 2020

Video

**Take a bucket
or any container
Fill it with compost
Go out on the street
Walk down one way
FERTILIZE ALL WEEDS
gently adding
compost to soil
Go on until
compost runs out**

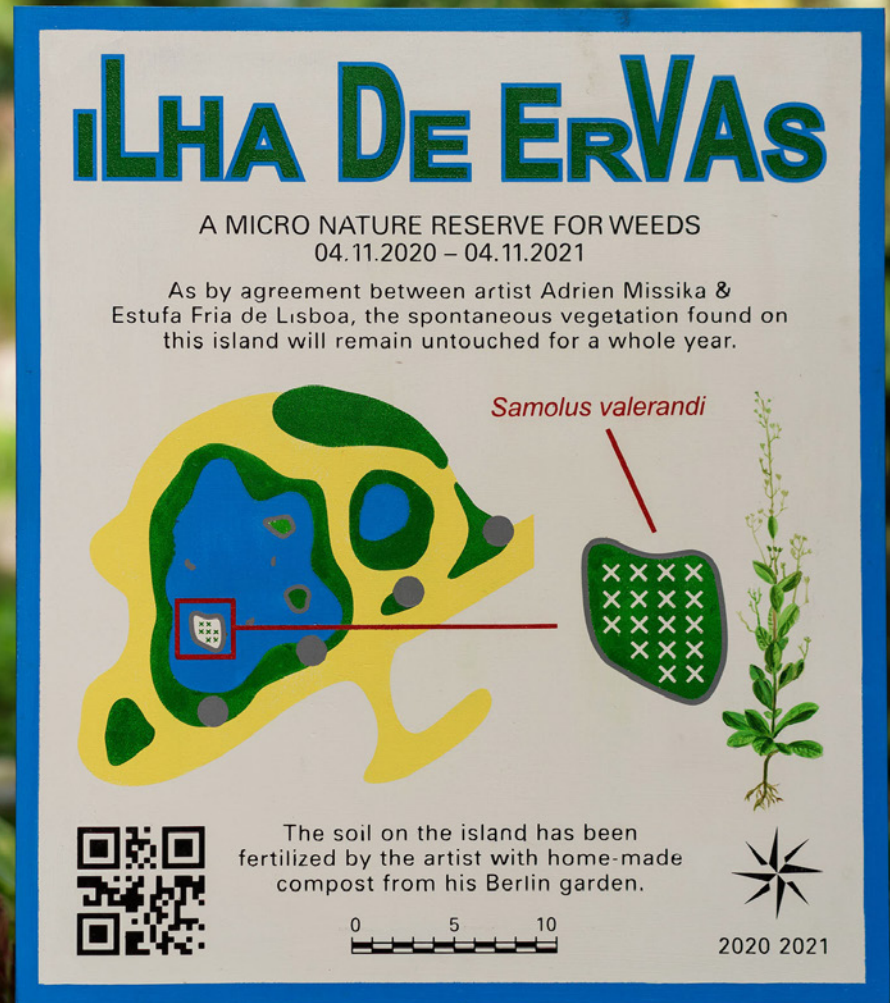
**Take a bucket
a cloth
and a sprinkler
Fill them with water
Go out on the street
Find dirty plants
in public space
CLEANSE PLANTS
with care
leaf by leaf
Go on until
tired or hungry**

**Take a watering can
Fill it with water
Go out on the street
Walk down one way
WATER ALL
thirsty WEEDS
Refill water
wherever you can
Go on until
tired or hungry**

Ilha de Ervas, 2020

04.11.2020 – 04.11.2021 at Estufa Fria de Lisboa, Lisbon, Portugal
Conservation agreement, painted wood sign, compost

I was invited to make a work at an incredible botanical garden, the Estufa Fria in Lisbon. The place is such a wonder that not much can add to its magic and surely nothing can compete with its lushness. Thus, I decided not to add anything, or rather, almost nothing. When I visited the garden to find out what and where my project could be, I spotted a tiny island on the main pond of the warm greenhouse. It seemed the only place without a sown plant. Later, the keepers confirmed that it was transitioning, and that only spontaneous vegetation settled there. In no other area could we find the so-called weeds. After some investigation, it turned out that one species colonized the 2sqm island : *Samolus valerandi*, also called water cabbage. I then started discussions with the Estufa Fria and the municipality to preserve the island as a nature reserve, which led to me drafting a conservation agreement with the duration of one year. I made a painted sign depicting a map in a Burle Marx style inspiration with a QR code (also painted) which opened on to the contract signed by both parties, Lisbon's Councillor for the Environment, and me. Also, as a kick-off to the project, I came with my home-made compost and fertilized the island soil before the opening. Alas, on the opening day already a second plant (stinging nettles) was growing on the island, taking over more than half of its surface. – Adrien Missika

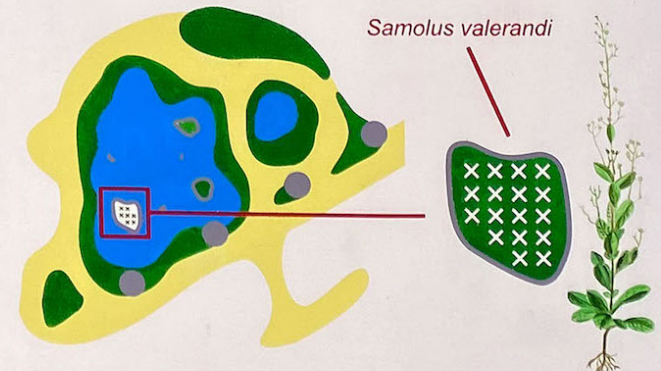




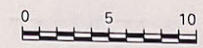
ILHA DE ERVAS

A MICRO NATURE RESERVE FOR WEEDS
04.11.2020 – 04.11.2021

As by agreement between artist Adrien Missika & Estufa Fria de Lisboa, the spontaneous vegetation found on this island will remain untouched for a whole year.



The soil on the island has been fertilized by the artist with home-made compost from his Berlin garden.



2020 2021

Installation view at Estufa Fria de Lisboa, Lisbon, 2021

***Atlas Ô*, 2020**

Acrylic paint, glass, 16 frames each made of 4 wood species sourced from the lands surrounding each

Ocean or Sea: (N, W, S, E)

742 x 492 cm (frames)



Oceano Índico Teak, Dark red meranti, Pine, African rosewood

Mar Vermelho Lebanon cedar, Black MDF, Wenge, Sapelli

Mar Cáspio Birch, Maple, European chestnut, Oak

Mar Negro Betula pendula, Quercus alba, Cedar, European cherry

Mar Mediterrâneo Sweet chestnut, Lebanon cedar, Maritime pine, Olive

Mar Báltico Fir, Silver birch, Pear, European larch

Mar do Norte Abies alba, European walnut, Ash, Pear

Oceano Antártico MDF, OSB, Black MDF, Chipboard

Oceano Atlântico Sul Zebrano, Gaboon, Black sucupira, Cedrela odorata

Oceano Atlântico Norte Eastern hemlock, White oak, Zingana, Courbaril

Oceano Ártico Siberian larch, Alaska birch, Canadian hemlock, Silver fir

Mar das Caraíbas Pine, Cedrela, Amendoim, Jatoba

Baía de Hudson Nordmann fir, Canadian hemlock, American cherry, Siberian larch

Golfo do México American walnut, American cherry, Kosipo mahogany, Amami-gum

Oceano Pacífico Sul Purple heart, Jatoba, MDF, Tectona grandis

Oceano Pacífico Norte Tsuga, American cherry, Amaranth, Lauan





Installation view of *Entre Deux Eaux*, Galeria Francisco Fino, Lisbon, 2020



Timeline

2018 - 2020

Collected striped sea pebbles, organic wheat flour, water, sea salt

131 x 19 x 5 cm (to be continued)



Timeline is an ongoing project started in 2018, which builds on a collecting process and a compositional practice. The act of collecting suffuses many of Missika's bodies of work as it grows from observation and acts of caring – be it for other artworks and artists, reclaimed or causal materials, fragments of nature. Here, he looks at pebbles, stripped pebbles more precisely, gathering them at every opportunity – as many and as big as his hands and pockets can hold. An then he cares for this humble collection, assembles his findings and arranges them

in relation to one another, literally ali(g)ning them to create a stripe-time-continuum in a salt-dough slab. The salted bread composition of stones stands as an imbrication of subjectivity, growing with and from the artist's gesture, and as a(nother) "living archive" that expands the notion of a shared stance of time. Baking each slab himself and at home and sharing the recipe, Missika imparts the daily and the familiar in this ever-growing work.



Installation view of *Entre Deux Eaux*, Galeria Francisco Fino, Lisbon, 2020



Triste Galet, 2020

Extruded polystyrene, pebbles, plastic crates

Variable dimensions



Detail of *Triste Galet*, 2020



Stranded on the shore of the Aegean Sea, a piece of extruded polystyrene, made by humans but shaped by the sea, was scooped and preserved by the artist in the summer of 2018. Adopted by the waters of the Global Ocean, *Triste Galet* tells the story of a foreigner raised by the Earth's hydrologic and geologic systems. Like Mowgli

in Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book* stories, Missika reunites this petroleum pebble with their family, the fellow mineral pebbles. Laid atop an architecture of coloured plastic crates filled with stones, this sea-shaped polymer, tells a story of the Plasticocene.

Adrien Missika: Towards a Potential Future

AnaMary Bilbao

As Henry D. Thoreau (1817 – 1862) recalls in *Walden; Or, Life in the Woods* (1854), mythology and ancient poetry suggest that husbandry was once a sacred art; yet, today, it is “pursued with irreverent haste and heedlessness by us,” for the primary purpose of owning and harvesting. The reality we live in is that of a bigger desire to regard “the soil as property.” We know nature “but as a robber,” as we commit to oblivion the sacred character it had once been granted¹. Thoreau is here referring to the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, from which a growing, pitiless deification of material goods and a profound spiritual decline proceeded. How is one to return to a dialogue with Saturn and Ceres, those solar deities of renovation, creation, and liberation? And how is one to depict, or what is one to depict, when the soil itself grants life, is life, while still representing the whole logic of labour and activity? Or what is one to think when the soil consists in a general space of privatisation and domestication in which, primarily as a source material, all living beings are united?

Deploying a range of media and means of expression (among which photography, video, installation, and performance), Adrien Missika’s (1981) body of work commits to revisiting diverse morphological forms as it attempts to retrieve and reposition the aforementioned questions within the context of contemporary artistic practices. Missika looks at them through nature, seen as the perfect display of the instability and impermanence that govern the life of living beings, among which humans are included. Over the years, a growing desire to take a multisensorial approach to the contradictions raised by these questions has increasingly pervaded his works, as his conceptual stance has come to emphasise the three inevitably interrelated major crises of the present day: the climatic crisis, the economic crisis, and the cultural crisis. In this sense, Missika operates within the natural forces without dominating them, evoking a state of alert for the signs that challenge the foundations of being, of all beings, in a time that seems to deceptively confine “nature in a process of dissolution” using W.G. Sebald’s (1944 – 2001) words in his seminal poem *Nach der Natur* (1988) —a reverie which does no more than mirror the aloofness of the society that gazes at it². In his works, there is also a constant alternation between opposites that is carried out by an anthropological spirit which recognises the growing fading of the separation between nature and culture; a spirit which takes heed of the exploitation of the soil, long fettered by capitalist promiscuity, though it still insists on clearing land within a new “relational landscape”,³ as Nicolas Bourriaud (1965) calls it in his book *Inclusions. Esthétique Du Capitalocene* (2021).

It would thus suffice to highlight *Ontake-san 1 (Ash Paintings)* (2014), with dry leaves of Japanese plane trees and computer cables covered in ash from the 2014 Mount Ontake (Japan) eruption, for one to understand that the nature Missika approaches—while recognising it has not yet been able to find the place of desired balance that

advocates for a technical knowledge within the natural forces, instead of a violation of the latter in a relationship of domination—invariably repeats the idea of an automatous patriarch that operates by taking precedence over the laws of the biosphere and ecological organisation⁴. These “volcanic still lifes”,⁵ at the intersection of the natural and the technological, make up a sort of premonitory vision of what another anthropologist may find in a near future—a reverie which, after all, is not that far from the real and which mirrors the hegemonic position technology currently holds, as it entwines, like a serpent, upon the scattered traces of nature, as it equates itself with it, as it takes precedence over it. However, one cannot disregard such a reversal; one cannot help but see that, in *Ontake-san 1 (Ash Paintings)*, this reality is rendered a thing of the past exactly by virtue of nature, acting as vigorously as a volcano’s ashes to bury what is considered to be one of the pinnacles of our civilisation. The same can be said to happen in *Stargazer (2015)*, for instance, where the sensitivity of the camera’s digital sensor allows for no more than a blurred image of the moonlight that pierces through the clouds and the trees. These photographs, taken as the artist swung in his hammock, underscore once again a gap between nature and technology where the former invariably surpasses the latter, where the former is comprised of an irrevocable, insuperable transcendental until a place in the world is found where it can live, with the latter, in a shared system.

What Missika proposes is a reformulation of our relationship with nature, in an equal connection, where we exist not to dominate but rather to cooperate. When we look at works such as *Jardin d’Hiver*—both the 2012 and the 2013 sculptures—we can discern a suggestion to reorganise the natural elements, to reorganise material and historical references, to take an approach that ought to be an inclusive one, above all. As one observes the earlier sculptures, the allusion

to Brazilian landscape architect Roberto Burle Marx (1909 – 1994) must be pointed out—someone who devoted himself tirelessly to the possible intersections between the discipline itself, horticulture, and botany, as his projects included not only tropical plants but also native ones, and who proved to be an exception among his generation’s architects. See, for instance, *Jardin d’Hiver*, which led to works such as *Ciudad Jardin (Jardin des Tuileries / FIAC, 2015)* or *Impressions Botaniques (Bugada & Cargnel, 2013)*, in which the artist sets a play of reversals where the idea “nature at the service of man” no longer applies. Such is the case when he chooses to include endemic plants, to replant seeds of local weeds, or to use structural materials such as bamboo, which is used for building scaffolding in developing countries and which, in these works’ case, is supported by intertwined ropes that are made using a thousand-year-old technique. In this sense, it is the natural that rises, through vertical structures, to the highest of skies, where green, alluding to the hyperphysical capabilities of the sempervirens, imposes itself and allows everything under threat of vanishing to prevail. And this green is that which one discovers underneath the dust of the plants that survive in the urban space, between the roads; the dust that Missika sweeps in *Cura (2019–)*, a gesture which the artist, in the video’s instructions, suggests for us to repeat and which reveals his desire for man and “happy nature to ever be at one,” in rather the fashion of a Caetano song⁶. Ultimately, such is the essential gesture of caring for the essential organic which is reflected in other works of his, such as *Unkrautpflege (2018)*.

His work thus points to a consciousness that nature, above all, is the founder of itself, as it winks at a Marx (1818 – 1883) maxim which stresses that the human being “can create nothing without nature, without the sensuous external world.”⁷ It is from this perspective that his work insists on the presence of nature, its elements, and its

references, challenging every problematic that is centred upon not only the urban biosphere, uncovering the latter's fragility and ephemerality and evoking its limits, but also the social condition itself, which can be realised only in the relationship with the natural force which, in turn, remains in permanent actualisation. Plus: when Missika does not explore it via a desirably laudatory gesture, he does so in a profoundly ironic way.

Because *Jardin d'Hiver* can also exist in a synthetic version, wherein every single plant, among fibreglass and epoxy, is artificial. Yet, *Jardin d'Hiver (version synthétique)* (2015) is but another example of this Missikian dramatic comedy. We could go back to works such as *A Dying Generation* (2011), made up of updated records of the first palm trees that were planted in LA and had already been photographed by Ed Ruscha (1937) in 1971⁸. Today, having grown enormously, their sunburnt leaves mirror the decline of an Anthropocenic apogee that aspires even to predetermine the places where nature should exercise and extol its splendour, invariably with the purpose of glorifying human greatness. And so, in these b&w pictures' melancholy parody, we are given the confirmation that nature is the sovereign one—it is nature that establishes laws, even when we are led to believe otherwise. The same happens with the Saguaro cacti that pop up in *We Didn't Cross the Border, the Border Crossed Us* (2014). When Missika photographs the oldest specimens in Arizona and titles them as such, using a quote from Robert Rodriguez's (1968) film *Machete* (2010), which addresses the deportation of illegal immigrants from Mexico, he ironises the fact that even a cactus, upon the motionless shifting of borders, may no longer belong to the territory where it sprouted. However, in some way, no matter its current location on American soil and not in Mexico, this cactus ignores all borderly impositions⁹. And that, more than an elegy to the fate human force imposes on them, is because Saguaros stay where they stand, beyond territorial designation, with their superhuman





lifespan (they can live for more than 150 years), against all mortal political catastrophes, which they so brilliantly ignore as they go on growing far taller than men, serving as sustenance and shelter for those passing by.

So there seems to be no doubt that Missika is aware that it is nature who makes everything work, and that it is through her that all is activated and defined. And that is thus to say that man irrevocably lives from nature; he cannot deny that, at the extreme, “nature is his body—and he must maintain a continuing dialogue with it if he is not

to die,” quoting K. Marx once more¹⁰. This fact pulsates shimmeringly throughout his body of work, which is consistently provocative in its proposal for a paradigm change while pointing out that it had been Natur that had naturalised the social being, much before it was ever humanised by the latter. Furthermore, if it is indeed true that nature is what defines us as beings and allows us to exist as social beings, then a certainty also prevails that nature is the ultimate institution, the one that will remain, observing, determining, and balancing our passage. Hers is another time, far from being understood as a cultural fact, much beyond ours, for we will never be able to watch the movement of

stones, for too ponderous it is for our fleeting existence. To it attests the video *Sailing Stones* (2011), where Missika records the tracks that trace the movement, unperceivable and enigmatic to our temporality, which some stones inscribe across the Racetrack Playa dry lake, located in the Death Valley National Park (California). This impossibility ironises and contradicts the human will to control time, as it opposes the Anthropocentric productivism that, as Bourriaud states, has from the outset dug an abyss with the natural rhythms, determining schedules and paces and mythicising acceleration¹¹.

I remember the first Missika exhibition I went to: *Demain Stabilisation* (2017), at Galeria Francisco Fino, Lisbon, which included *Better Safe than Sorry* (2017), an installation that was made up of about thirty concrete-canvas bags. Almost all of them held soil; one, however, contained a variety of open-pollinated seeds— seeds, therefore, unfettered by the industries that usually sell them, by the privatisation “that renders our time a cousin of the Neolithic period.”¹² At first glance, these bags, placed upon shelves or on the floor, seemed to have just been left there; yet, one quickly understood they were self-sufficient, able to live and answer for themselves, protected from any external adversities, and, as such, from certain human laws, as they took on the places they occupied in a growing position that relieved them of categorisation and opened them up to a potential future. For not only were the visitors allowed to collect some of those unpatented seeds and plant them wherever they wanted, the open bags, the fertile soil, and the unsprouted seeds also confirmed the idea that everything is always in the process of being; everything is ever-developing. As such, this work, like the ones that have been mentioned here and even the ones that have not, sustains the idea of movement, of transition, that constituent, fundamental flux of existence, as it also sums up one of the artist’s essential ideas: forms, whether inorganic, vegetal, or

human, exist in a cycle of eternal impermanence, in a constant state of transformation, or rather in permanent metamorphosis— the “key to all of Nature’s signs,” as Goethe (1749 – 1832) would say¹³. From *Better Safe than Sorry* (2017) remain a handful of open-pollinated seeds and the sound of the hoe that meets the stones in the soil, which Thoreau so brilliantly describes. The poetics within Missika’s works is one that makes this music resonate not only through the woods but also across the city’s spaces, which welcome the magnetism of the land and, at last, open up to the latter’s power and virtue, where even the unpredictability of weeds finds its place—whether it be among paving stones, like in *Pioneer’s Treat* (2020), or in *Ilha de Ervas* (2020), a two-square-metre islet inside Estufa Fria that the artist fertilised with his own homemade compost. There, only spontaneous vegetation can grow; and Missika, with his every gesture, shows that art shall oppose the “tentacular monster” that is the Anthropocene, towards “a potential future” free from the accelerated temporal dimension of human space¹⁴.

1 – Cf. Thoreau, Henry David (2004),

Walden or, Life in the Woods, The Internet Bookmobile, pp. 123 – 124.

2 – Cf. Sebald, W. G. (2003), *After Nature* (trans. Michael Hamburger), New York: The Modern Library, p. 65.

3 – Cf. Bourriaud, Nicolas (2021), *Inclusions — Esthétique Du Capitalocene*, Paris: Presses universitaires de France (PUF).

4 – For German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk (1947), such a balance can be achieved in a state of “homeotechnology,” a word that sums up his anthropotechnological proposal and which addresses the aforementioned problematics, obviously related to the Anthropocene topic. This expression was mentioned during the public debate between himself and French philosopher Bernard Stiegler (1952 – 2020) which took place in Nijmegen (The Netherlands) in 2016. This word was recently reintroduced by Nicolas Bourriaud in *Inclusions — Esthétique*

Du Capitalocene. Bourriaud states that “the rise of homeotechnology, however, ought to entail a new holism, an inclusive approach to the world, a thought that is immersed in this natural environment we have learnt to understand as an ‘environment.’” Cf. Bourriaud, Nicolas (2021), *Inclusions — Esthétique Du Capitalocene*, Paris: Presses universitaires de France (PUF), p. 6.

5 – Cf. Missika, Adrien, “Ontake-san (Ash Paintings),” in Adrien Missika.

6 – Caetano Veloso, *Tigresa* (1977).

7 – «Der Arbeiter kann nichts schaffen ohne die Natur, ohne die sinnliche Außenwelt». Cf. Marx, K. (1968), “Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844”, in *Marx Engels Werke*, 40, Berlin: Dietz Verlag Berlin, p. 512.

8 – Ed Ruscha presented this photographic series in *A Few Palm Trees* (1971), a book where we can see the artist’s b&w pictures of the respective palm trees.

9 – The saguaro is a rare species that can be found in few areas in the United States—especially near the US-Mexican border. Adrien Missika photographed the oldest specimens in Arizona, near the border that, in 1854, after the end of the Mexican-American War (1846 – 1848), was shifted following the Gadsden Purchase, when the United States acquired thousands of square kilometers of land which, up until then, had belonged to the Mexicans. The purpose was to build a railroad that would connect Arizona to California.

10 – Cf. Marx, K. (1968), «Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844», in *Marx Engels Werke*, 40, Berlin: Dietz Verlag Berlin, p. 516.

11 – Cf. Bourriaud, Nicolas (2021), *Inclusions — Esthétique Du Capitalocene*, Paris: Presses universitaires de France (PUF), p. 19.

12 – Cf. Bourriaud, Nicolas (2021), *Inclusions — Esthétique Du Capitalocene*, Paris: Presses universitaires de France (PUF), p. 4.

13 – Cf. Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von, Kuhn, Dorothea (ed.) (1964),

Leopoldina-Ausgabe. *Goethe. Die Schriften zur Naturwissenschaft* (LA I 10). Aufsätze, Fragmente, Studien zur Morphologie, VII, Weimar: Hermann Böhlaus Nachf, p. 128.

14 – «L’histoire de l’art est l’histoire d’une sémiotique, c’est-à-dire, pour reprendre Eduardo Kohn, ‘le nom de ce processus vivant de signe, par lequel une pensée en fait émerger une autre, et ainsi de suite, vers un futur potentiel.’” Cf. Kohn, Eduardo, apud Bourriaud, Nicolas (2021), *Inclusions - Esthétique Du Capitalocene*, Paris: Presses universitaires de France (PUF), p. 142. Bourriaud uses the phrase “tentacular monster,” stressing that, in K. Marx’s version, the monster would correspond to the term “automaton.” Cf. Bourriaud, Nicolas (2021), *Inclusions — Esthétique Du Capitalocene*, Paris: Presses universitaires de France (PUF), p. 14.

March 2022, in [Contemporânea](#)

Pour Agnès

2019

Heart-shaped potato, handcrafted jewellery box
17 x 17 x 8 cm (box closed)

The potato, looked on as a treasure, lives its potato life – turns green, germinates or roots depending on its mood. According to the manual accompanying the piece, the potato should go back to earth before it decays. The box is then to remain closed, awaiting for the next heart to activate it. *Pour Agnès* is a tribute work to the late french artist and filmmaker Agnès Varda, who had a fascination for heart-shaped potatoes.

Pour Agnès owner's manual:

- The piece is composed of a jewellery box and a heart shaped potato together.
- The owner acquires the jewellery box only.
- The owner activates the piece by placing a heart-shaped potato in the jewellery box.
- The owner must find the potato by their own means.
- When on display, the jewellery box must be open with the heart-shaped potato in it.
- While being dormant (potatoless), the jewellery box must remain closed if in private space.
- While being dormant (potatoless), the jewellery box must not be displayed at all if in public space.
- The heart-shaped potato must be placed back into the earth before it decays.



***The Sea of Carson*, 2019**

2019w

Framed colour photograph

51,8 x 76,8 x 3,3 cm

In between the southern shores of Baja California and the mainland of Mexico, stands the island formerly known as Isla Cerralvo which, despite protests from local communities, was renamed into Isla Jacques Cousteau in 2009. An official homage to the marine life filmmaker and explorer, this renaming operation was a diplomatic gesture aimed at France. Notwithstanding the light shed on the petroleum explorations of Jacques-Yves Cousteau, the name change was approved by the Mexican government. To this day, more than a decade after the decision ruling, the island is still commonly called Isla Cerralvo.

The Sea of Carson by Adrien Missika is a tribute to marine biologist Rachel Carlson, the visionary and avant-guard ecologist. In her book *The Sea Around Us* (1951), Carlson reveals the magic and the science of the sea. The blue, sun bleached cover of the 1952 French edition held by Missika, sways a mise-en- abîme: the waves breaking in the cover embrace the real sea in the back - the Gulf of California, formerly known as *The Sea of Cortez* and named the aquarium of the world by Cousteau.

This work was renamed by Adrien Missika in 2020. The original title was *Isla Jacques Cousteau*.





Aquí Allá Ahí, 2020

Solo exhibition at Proyectos Monclova, Mexico City

08.11.2018 – 22.12.2018

Aquí Allá Ahí (engl. “here”, “there”, “yonder”) suggests places that feel as tangible and close as they are abstract and far. Demonstrative indications such as here and there can only be comprehended when they are expressed by ourselves or a person who we have in plain sight indicating directions. They only exist in relation to an observer in a reference frame. This is what makes these linguistic structures so intriguing and complex, as they are entirely referential and can mean an infinity of things depending on who is talking and where that particular person is in that very moment. They are vessels that can be filled with one meaning at a time, but whose meaning can change entirely the next second as we move.

As we know from Special Relativity in Physics, an event is an occurrence that can only be assigned a single unique time and location in space, relative to a reference frame. Since there is no absolute reference frame, a concept of moving doesn't strictly exist, as everything is always moving with respect to some other observer. It is curious that the Spanish language offers us almost twice as many options and nuances of such demonstrative spatial indications than for instance English. The distinction between here and there which seems very determined – one can almost feel the abyss between those two – gets some gradients within the Spanish; the distance appears softer and the difference between me, here and the other, there less: it's almost political.

Aquí Allá Ahí in fact makes me think about space and me inhabiting and moving through it. It makes me think about proximity and distance and my understanding of it, which cannot be merely geographical or geometrical. How can we think about distance without considering temporality, ideology and psychology? We always talk about the “felt” distance. Heidegger comes to mind: “All distances in time and space are shrinking. [...] Yet the frantic abolition of all distances brings no nearness; for nearness does not consist in shortness of distance.





What is least remote from us in point of distance, by virtue of its picture on film or its sound on radio, can remain far from us. What is incalculably far from us in point of distance can be near to us. [...] Everything gets lumped together into uniform distanceless. [...] What is it that unsettles and thus terrifies? It shows itself and hides itself in the way in which everything presences, namely, in the fact that despite all conquest of distances the nearness of things remains absent”.¹

I feel that it is exactly that omnipresent and unforgiving distanceless and the total absence of empathic nearness that defines our current condition. *Aquí Allá Ahí* plants this quick thought into my mind...

The desert seems to be a place where notions of time and space become obsolete. The borders between past, present and future blur and distance is no more. It is a no-place that terrifies us and provides relief at ones. In a desert here and there don't shift meaning, they collide and suspend themselves in equalness.

The desert as metaphor allows for beautiful readings and images: the post-apocalyptic landscape, the utopic mirage, the timeless resort for reflection, the ultimate manifestation of existentialism. Maybe, if we had the chance, we could measure our feelings in this time-suspended zone? Since nothing else seems to be measurable here... There is a desperate need for emotional orientation: Confusion, Anxiety, Hope For some reason there is no sign of human in *Aquí Allá Ahí*, as if someone would point their finger outside the time spiral and say, "I come from there". (2)

Polina Stroganova, Mexico City, 2018

1 – Martin Heidegger, *The thing*, in “Poetry, Language, Thought”, Perennial Classics, 2001.

2 – Chris Marker, *La Jetée*, 1962



The Thickness of Time (Puebla), 2018

Recovered clay roof tiles from the city of Puebla, Mexico

Ø 400 cm x 40 cm

The Thickness of Time is a series of sculptures produced with clay roof tiles recovered from the surroundings of where the piece is first shown.

Shaped as our galaxy, the work questions the conception of home. The roof tiles reflect on the understanding of their initial position and function. Intuitively waved in a form of a spiral, tiles travel on spacetime. Avoiding the space of all 3-geometries, *The Thickness of Time* bypasses causality and manifests itself as a symbol of wholeness, a portal to new beginnings. It is a time lapse and a time loop.



The Thickness of Time (Évora), 2020, recovered clay roof tiles from the city of Évora, Portugal, Ø 320 cm x 40 cm | Installation view at *HOMEBOUND*, Galeria Francisco Fino, Lisbon, 2020

Shelfter (A Brief History of Time), 2018

Concrete filled fabric, bolts, Stephen Hawking *A Brief History of Time* book
30,3 x 39,5 x 11,3 cm

Shelfter (Cien Años de Soledad), 2018

Concrete filled fabric, bolts, Gabriel Garcia Marquez
Cien Años de Soledad book
67,7 x 51,9 x 11,3 cm

Shelfter (L'Étranger), 2018

Concrete filled fabric, bolts, Albert Camus *L'Étranger*
book
30 x 32,9 x 10 cm

Shelfter (secret book), 2018

Concrete filled fabric, bolts, book
31 x 33 x 1 cm

Shelfter is a series of wall mounted hybrid objects standing somewhere between sculpture, shrine, bookshelf and bunker. Made of hard concrete filled fabric, they are water resistant and fireproof. Each one is a vault-shelf for a single book.

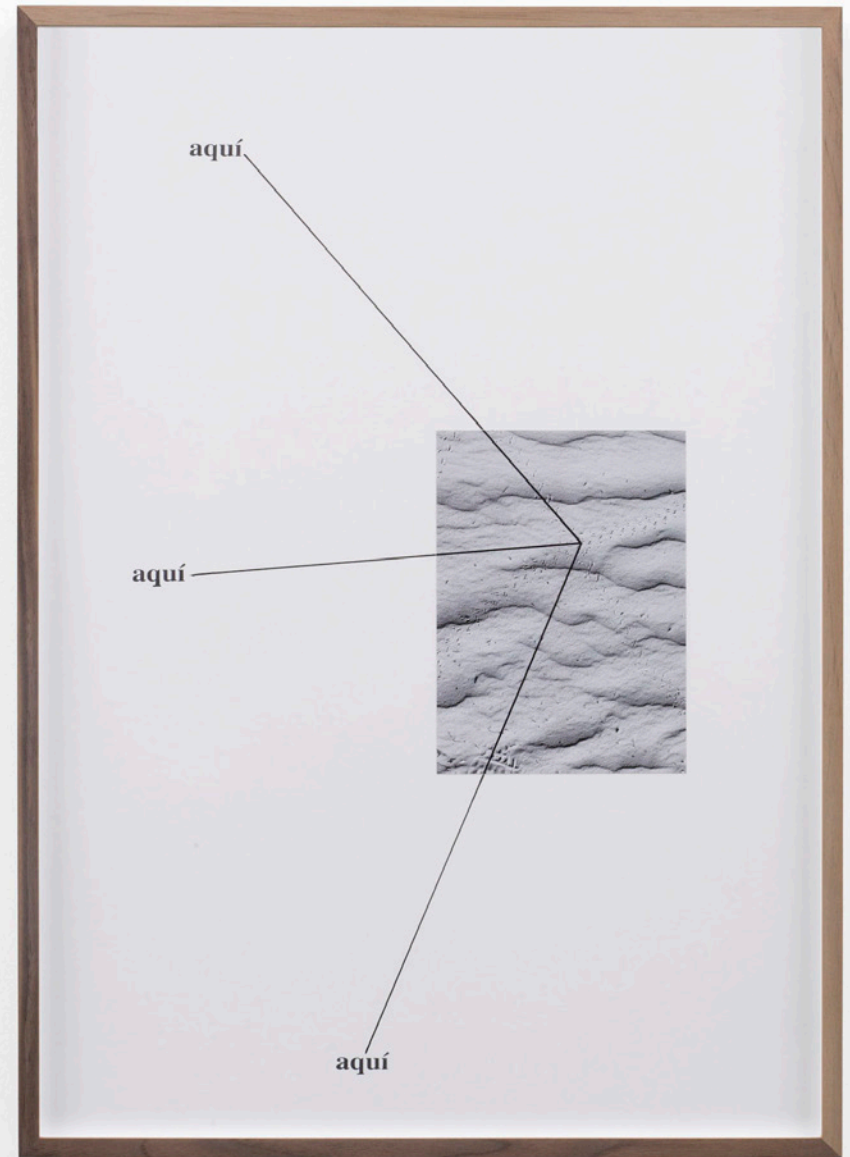


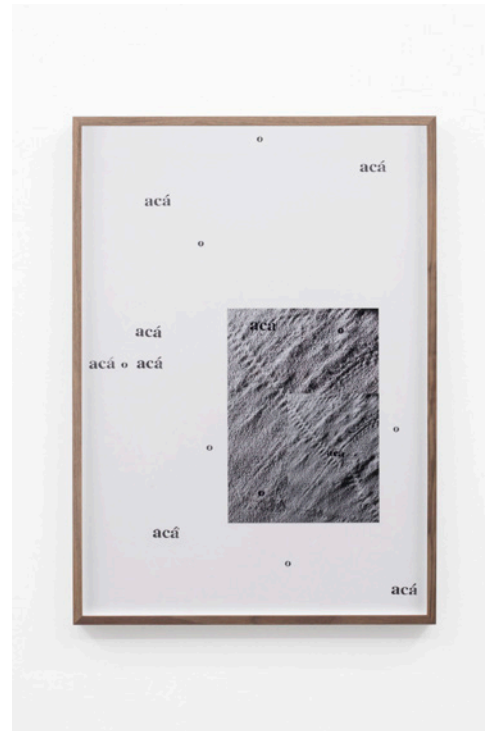


***Camino por Desierto* 2018**

Photograph, acid free carton, ink, artist frame made half of American walnut, half of European walnut

70 x 50 x 3,2 cm each



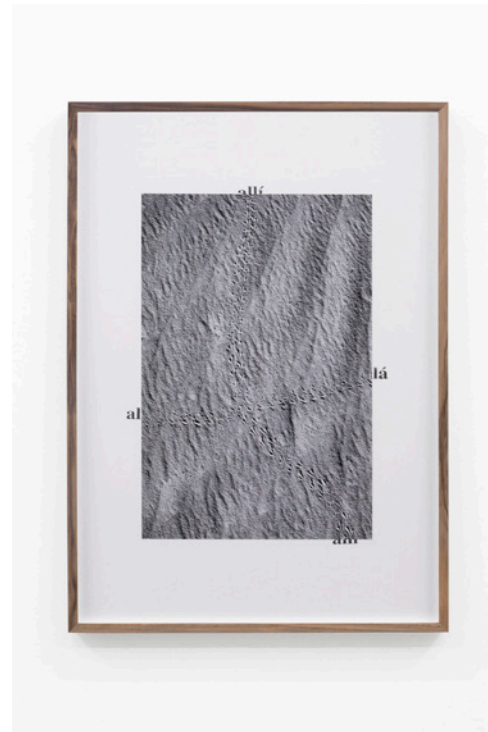


Camino por Desierto, which stands for “I walk Through the Desert” or “Road Through the Desert”, is a series of 10 collages. Each includes a different black and white photograph of crossing beetle tracks in the Sahara sand, stamped words and wood both from Europe and America.

The work is accompanied by the following text:

“On March 13th, 2018 I took a walk in the Sahara Desert close to the Oasis town of Timimoun, Algeria, where I was tracking back my ancestor’s migrations on a genetic memory trip in Maghreb. The landscape was exclusively of sand dunes, at all the coordinates until my eyes could see. An ocean of dry orange sand agitated with hard waves of slow-moving sand dunes. There seemed to be no possible life around,

temperature was close to 40 degrees Celsius, no trees were allowed to grow deprived of water or soil. No shadow was provided for animals to shelter from the punishing heat. This absence-of-life-moment had an anxiety effect on me. Perhaps it was precisely this I was looking for, going to the deep Sahara. Some hope raised suddenly when I spotted tiny tracks on the sand down my feet. A closer look had convinced me that some life was happening. A bug had been walking right where I stood, just a short moment before me. Its tiny legs would leave precise but delicate imprints on the thin sand. I took a photograph and started following the trail. Every few steps I took a photograph not to lose myself. After a brief moment of trailing I encountered a trail cross, a meeting that might have never happened. I took a photograph of the



crossing paths and continued on the first trail until another crossing appeared, where I took another shot. I followed the tracks for almost an hour until I had mapped all of them. One long track reached a palm shade where the remnants of some animal dung stood. My mystery trail eventually led me to find shit.”

***Palazzo delle Api*, 2018**

Luserna granite

160 x 144 x 144cm

Palazzo delle Api is an autonomous object on the crossroads of art, architecture and ecology. It can be seen as a public sculpture, a monument, as well as an architectural solution for insects.

Palazzo delle Api reflects the principles of Metabolism, the Japanese architectural movement of the 60s, which combined the ideas of urban megastructures with the concepts of organic biological growth. Inverting the principles of Metabolism, Adrien Missika is giving them back to fauna.

Made solely out of Luserna granite, locally sourced in Piedmont, this insect-scaled architecture satisfies the housing needs for thousands of pollinating insects. About 2000 holes drilled on the edges of the stone slabs allow the accommodation for different insect species.

Erected like a spaceship in the middle of a biodynamic agricultural complex, *Palazzo delle Api* unites the notions that might be perceived as extremely different and stands as an example of the harmonious existence of nature and humankind.

Palazzo delle Api is located in La Raia, a wine yard and biodynamic agricultural complex in the heart of Gavi, it was commissioned by Fondazione La Raia and curated by Ilaria Bonacossa.





Installation view at Fondazione La Raia, Novi Ligure, 2018



[ham-uh k], 2017

Cowhides, stainless steel, rope
800 x 300 cm

[ham-uh k], (noun), a hanging bed or couch made of canvas, netted cord, or the like, with cords attached to supports at each end.

In his acclaimed opus *Species of Spaces*, Georges Perec describes the bed as “the individual space par excellence, the elementary area of the body”.

Adrien Missika played on the lines and paradoxes of an anthropometric space becoming the site of a collective experience, of an oneiric invitation to live together. [ham-uh k] is an oversized hammock made of six full cowhides that can host people on top and underneath its surface. The cloudy surface creates a swiny float experience while the underneath is more like a cave.



Demain, Stabilisation, 2017

Solo exhibition at Galeria Francisco Fino, Lisbon

11.11.2017 - 11.01.2018

Adrien Missika's *Demain, Stabilisation* presents a body of work that draws on the artist's continuous reflections on ecology, metabolism and our relationship with the environment. The exhibition includes a series of sculptural works that operate as narrative structures, combining diverse artistic strategies that explore humour within conceptual art perimeters, the subtlety of existential poetics through diagrammatic sculptures of light and a performative revision of archival practices as an open form. The very promise of the title, *Demain, Stabilisation* (engl. Tomorrow, Stabilisation), announces a state of deferred accomplishment, implicating the present as an entropic zone where homeostasis is possible, yet always postponed, evoking the denialist responses to the current climate crisis.

On the occasion of this exhibition, an essay was written by Margarida Mendes. [Read here](#)





Installation view at *Demain, Stabilisation*, Galeria Francisco Fino, Lisbon, 2017



Plus ou Moins, 2017
Modified hygrometer, Indian ink
Ø 10,3 x 2,5 cm



Plus ou Moins (engl. Psychometric Portrait) includes 12 wall sculptures of modified hygrometers inscribed with different personal emotions: from delusion, anxiety and belief to serenity and empathy. Switching psychometrics – the measurement of humidity – with psychometrics – the categorisation of mental capacities and processes – we are taken through a survey of one's mood swings and fragilities, and their fluctuations with the changing weather. These words can be read in the calligraphic inscriptions traced on the frontal parts of the hygrometers, leaving a subtle imprint of a human hand in this piece of industrial technology, where the measurements' results depend, as if by magic, on the reaction of a hidden human hair. The perfected quality of the professional calligrapher mirrors that of an enchanted printer, or an industrial foreteller. We are introduced to a bionic gesture that appeals, as well, to a machinic subjectivisation of the viewer.

The Relative Naive, 2017 – 2019

Dehumidifier, humidifier, pet bottles

Variable dimensions

The *Relative Naive* is a mechanic device for climate stabilisation that works through condensation and mist dispersal. Water is contained in a bottle attached to an apparatus for humidity extraction, representing a closed circuit. This witty prototype geo-engineering scale model, while underlining the absurdity of climatized spaces, represents the artificial conditions of conservation archives. It leaves the space with 50% humidity, providing an atmospheric relief in the gallery given the arrival of the rainy season. Directly addressing the urban planning efficiency systems and new thermodynamic strategies of cities, *The Relative Naive* reminds us that climate control comes from a position of fake neutrality, a class discriminatory attempt to erase discomfort for some, while creating other sorts of entropic responses. At the same time, the state of cool naiveté whispered by the alpine landscape on the logo of the Evian bottles does not exclude the cruel economy of bottled natural resources in an era of increased nature patenting.



***Better Safe than Sorry*, 2017**

Concrete impregnated canvas, artist's studio soil, open pollinated seeds, bolts, steel shelves
Variable dimensions

The installation *Better Safe Than Sorry* takes the form of an open archive, including a series of custom-made soil bags shaped in concrete canvas, a patented material used for ditch lining and the construction of slopes or bunkers. Suggesting the form of a contaminated archive susceptible to mutation, each bag holds a rich quantity of soil, with one containing a variety of open pollinated seeds that can be collected by the visitor, inciting the cultivation and propagation of non-patented seeds. Treating soil as a rare earth material, each bag is unique in shape, some displaying cuts or intersections that allude to dissemination and potential accidental forms of fertilisation. At the same time, the work's title reminds us of the preventive acts needed in times of severe change – as an example, the creation of the first seed bank in northern Norway, Vault.





Installation view at *Demain, Stabilisation*, Galeria Francisco Fino, Lisbon, 2017



Colony Collapse Disorder, 2017

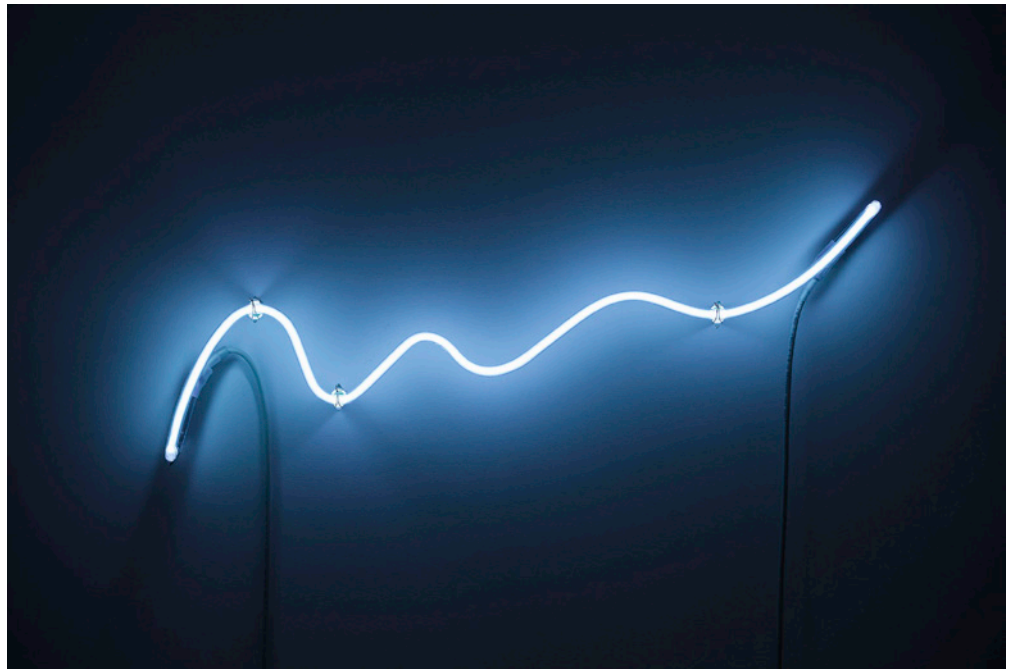
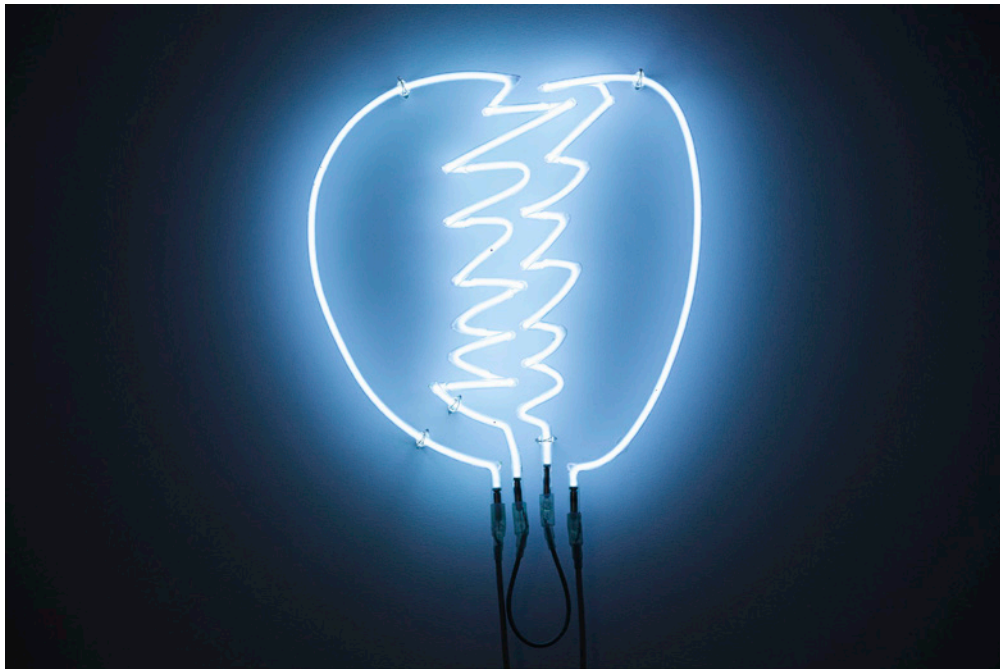
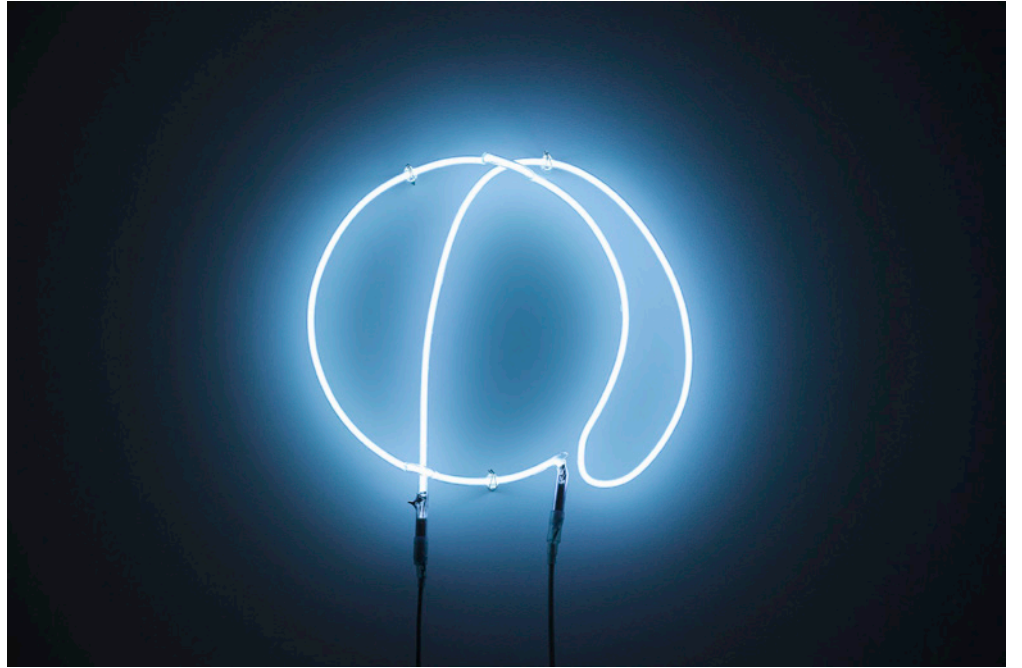
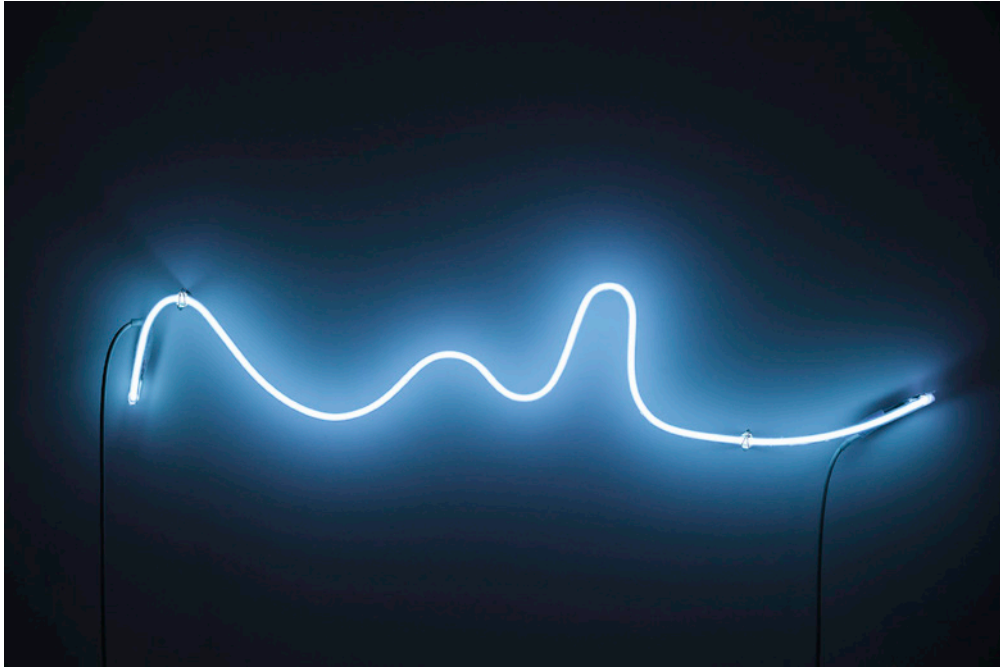
Wall mounted neon, argon, glass, transformer

35 x 33 x 1 cm | 35 x 60 x 1 cm 20 x 60 x 1 cm | 40 x 38 x 1 cm |

16 x 80 x 1 cm | 38 x 40 x 1 cm | 23 x 60 x 1 cm

Colony Collapse Disorder comprises a series of neon sculptures with wiggly drawings that represent the choreographic movements

bees enact while communicating the locations of their food supplies. However, in this series of irradiating light drawings, the diagrams are erratic and loose, representing shaky wavelengths and biased maps, suggesting that the species' social architecture might be falling apart. As a fact, Colony Collapse Disorder is the name of a syndrome that communities of bees are suffering worldwide, and one that is leading to the threat of their extinction vis a vis their disorientation.



Babylon (Wildlife Rehab Centre), 2016

Nylon, rope, soil, plants, grow lights

Variable dimensions

Babylon (Wildlife Rehab Centre) is a site-specific installation at Moscow Museum of Modern Art during Moscow Biennale for Young Art. With a bit of enchantment, the auratic set up of *Babylon* questions and centres on the Anthropocene and the impact it has made on the agriculture and the consumerist habits of the society.

Adrien Missika transformed the narrow corridors of the building into the spa centre for houseplants. Equipped with self-made hammocks using available fabric and luminous grow lights, the installation looks like a magical wildlife rehab.

The plants resting in the hammocks are common “office plants”, which are the product of mass consumption and are particularly easy to grow with the recent popularity of hydroponics. They can be found at any mass retail department stores, but usually do not survive long in the domestic or office conditions. Nevertheless, according to the tendencies of late capitalism, the plants can be easily replaced by newly grown and purchased ones.

Depoted and laid horizontally in the hammocks full of fresh soil, these personified plants are having a treatment in the nude, like one would have a resting day in the spa.





Installation view at *HYPERCONNECTED*, curated by João Laia, Moscow Biennale for Young Arte MMOMA, Moscow, 2016



Demain, Amélioration, 2016

Solo exhibition at Galerie Bugada & Cargnel, Paris

10.09.2016 – 12.10.2016

In *Demain Amélioration*, Adrien Missika presents a set of new sculptures combining technology and natural elements used to plot out a personal cosmogony. Resolutely optimistic, *Demain Amélioration*—its title borrowed from meteorological jargon—is an exhibition with broad and poetic propositions, combining humour and simplicity in an attempt to re-enchant the infinite scale of space and time.

Demain Amélioration takes the viewer on a journey through science, poetry and futuristic narratives, exploring universal as well as personal themes and mythologies. To evoke humanity's place in the universe, the artist has devised a simple, pared-down system of production that becomes a vehicle for re-enchantment, where stones represent stars that elude human vision and control, and maps take on an interstellar scale. Here Adrien Missika thus envisions possible destinies for humanity where, in this age of GPS and digital technology, he gives prominence to a primitive notion of navigation and conquest.





Installation view at *Demain, Amélioration*, Galerie Bugada & Cargnel, Paris, 2016

***Navitech*, 2016**

Bamboo, magnet, needles, water, paint, plant, soil, tin backpack

Variable dimensions

Navitech is an installation of hand-crafted compasses made with bamboo, water, leaves and magnetic needles. The backgrounds of the compasses are painted black, thus reflecting the face of the viewer, lost in the darkness of this subtle mirror. The installation also presents a plant built onto a backpack that offers the raw materials for the compasses.



***Sundial*, 2016**

Cactus thorns, bamboo, lacquer
20 x 15 x 15 cm

Sundial is a clock whose hand is made of cactus thorns grafted onto a bamboo stalk. The angle of the main thorn corresponds to the latitude where the dial is located. First exhibited in Paris, at 48 degrees north, the thorn pointed towards the North Star, and the shadows projected local time.



Biosphere 5, 2016

Tin, foam, acrylic, plexiglas, clay, Selaginella Lepidophylla
42 x 24 x 24 cm

Biosphere 5 is yet another hypothesis proposed by the artist in his research and poetic conquest of new resources and new modes of existence. Inspired by the film *Silent Running* (Douglas Trumbull, 1972) in which humans, after Earth has been depleted of all plant life, send a forest contained in a giant geodesic glass dome into space, Adrien Missika devised a portable ecosystem made of tin and Plexiglas, built onto a backpack, that allows light to nourish a Selaginella Lepidophylla from Mexico (Chihuahua), a desert plant nicknamed locally "Siempre Viva" (still alive). The plant needs almost no water to survive, opening when it comes in contact with water, and closing back up again in order to preserve it.



***Planet Nursery*, 2016**

Concretions, bamboo, Plexiglas, water, water pump, sand
121 x 85 x 70 cm

Planet Nursery, an architectonic structure reminiscent of a fountain or an organ, combines Plexiglas tubes, bamboo stalks, sand, water and trovanti or “concretions”—remarkable rock formations found mainly in Romania that are the subject of mysterious tales and legends. Trovanti are said to have the power to grow, multiply, and even move around by themselves. Inspired by the stories surrounding them, Adrien Missika invented a machine to make planets on which humans could take refuge. The purpose of *Planet Nursery*, a closed circuit mixing sand, water and vegetation, is to make the stones sitting on top of each tube grow in volume until they become as big as stars. This micro ecosystem full of promise also serves as a temple, since the Plexiglas tubes are engraved with glyphs inspired by *The Maya Book of the Dead*.



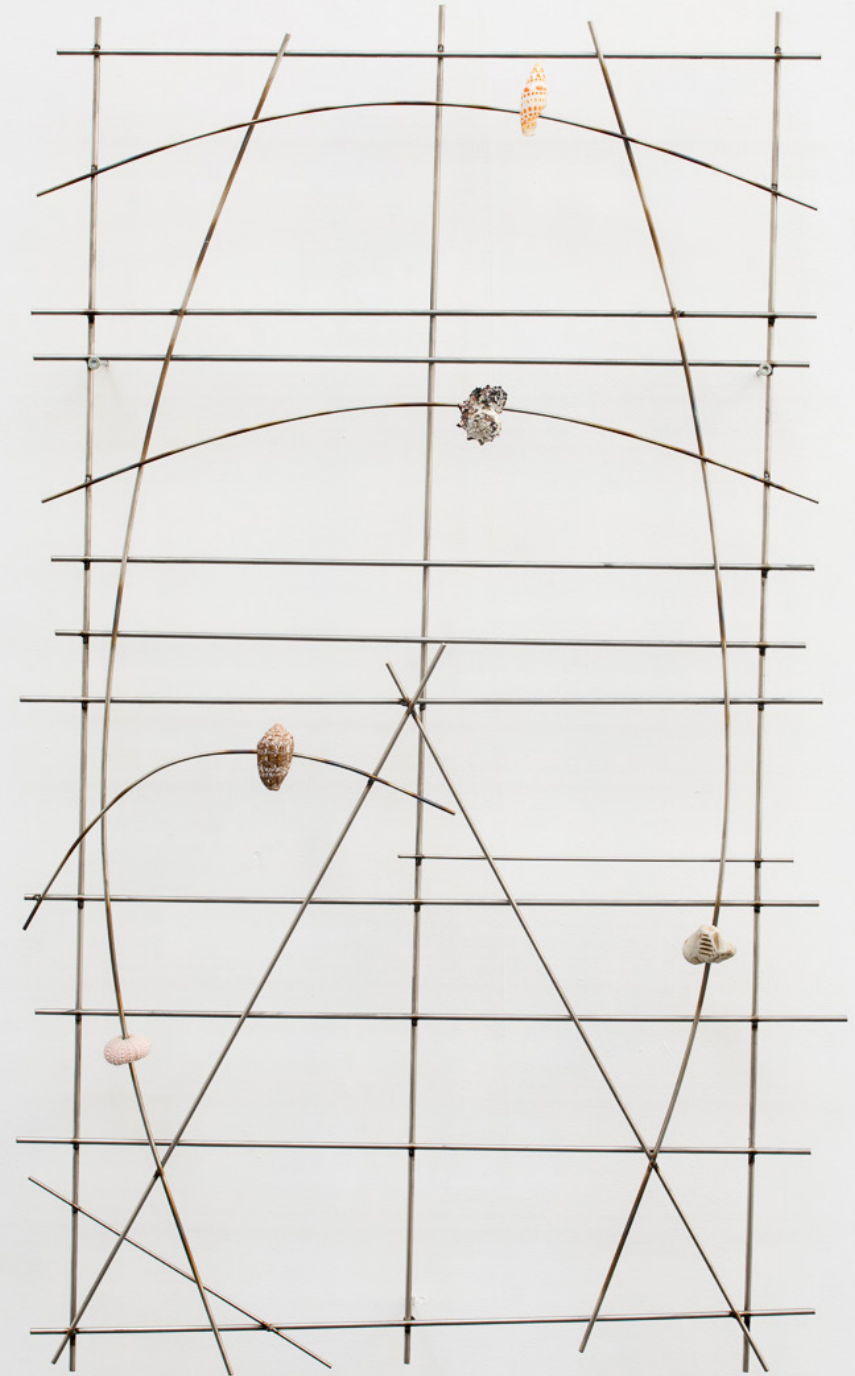
***Rho Cancri Atlanticus (Where to Go)*, 2016**

Where to Go Series

Stainless steel, shells

122 x 76 cm

The thirteen sculptures of the series *Where to Go* (2016) associate traditional Polynesian and Micronesian nautical charts with data from the Kepler telescope mission. On these stick charts created as early as 1000 B.C. and used to navigate the Pacific archipelagos, islands are represented by small shells at the intersections of sticks, and ocean swells by diagonal and curved sticks. The Kepler spacecraft, meanwhile, was launched in 2009 by NASA to discover and study exoplanets (planets outside our solar system) orbiting other stars in our galaxy. Inspired by its findings, with these thirteen sculptures Adrien Missika maps out not the sea, but the cosmos and the location of potentially habitable exoplanets, here represented by lava rocks, pieces of marble, and seashells that the artist has collected over the course of his travels; their orbits are represented by thin strips of stainless steel.



L'Échappée Belle, 2016

Wooden birdcage, mirror

75 x 32 x 32 cm

L'Échappée Belle is a constituent artwork, with an intention to change the perception of the environment it is situated in. The work was first produced in 2016 for the *Bois d'Amour* exhibition curated by Pier Paolo Pancotto.

Inspired by the historical and cultural context of Villa Medici, *L'Échappée Belle* found its location in La stanza degli uccelli (eng. The Bird Room) of the 16th century building Il Padiglione di Ferdinando de' Medici. The ceiling of La stanza degli uccelli, executed by Jacopo Zucchi in 1570s, pictures a pergola with a multitude of birds and animals, an encyclopedia of fauna and flora of the times. The wooden bird cage with mirror bottom serves as a mixing realities implement. Reflecting the environment, *L'Échappée Belle* allows room for a paradox, another perception of reality and potentiality of spaces, either inner or outer.

The inversion of the cage and the deconstruction of its initial purpose opens a door for the feathered inhabitants of La stanza degli uccelli, seemingly giving them the possibility to escape the building through the cage.



Maria Luisa (carrare), 2016
Marie-Louise Series (2010 – 2016)
Carrare marble
Diptych, 60 x 45 x 2 cm each

Marie-Louise is a slow growing series of carved stone slabs. Its production, which is the central constituent of the work, follows a systematic approach: each stone is endemic to the region of production and is being processed by a local carver according to the technical drawing provided by the artist.

Each rectangular slab replicates a passe-partout with a carved postcard-size area in its centre. The outer surface is polished while the postcard-size carved indent is left raw. The simple yet precise design doesn't allow a machine to carve the stone hence the result always varies according to the stone quality and technique used by the artisan.

Marie-Louise pieces are titled according to the country of production and the respective spelling (Maria Luisa, Marie Louise...) followed by the name of the stone under brackets.

Presented through multifaceted and sensorial nature of a single material, *Marie-Louise* depicts the confrontations which exist in one whole. The absence of the expected image calls for its memory, which has undergone petrification.





Maria-Louise (petit granit beige), 2016, carrare marble, diptych, 60 x 45 x 2 cm each



Partition Animale

A project by Sarah Schönfeld & Adrien Missika , ÆTHER, Sofia
11.12.2016 - 20.01.2017

For their exhibition in Aether, Sarah Ancelle Schönfeld and Adrien Missika connect to the spirits of a long extinct species by an embodiment seance. Their aim is to have a clearer vision of the future by gathering lost knowledge from the past. They merge scientific and spiritual approaches like palaeontology and seance for their purpose, using the spectator's body as a catalyst. For connecting to the deep past, they employ Coprolite: ca. 200 million years old, fossilizes dinosaur

excrement from the lower jurassic period. Guests are invited to ingest the fossilised excrements of ancient entities, to digest and decode the information stored in this fossil with their own bodies. The participants are then asked to examine the output for writing down their oracular interpretation of the demineralised organic dino-human hybrid matter. The collected interpretations will be printed and hung in the space for the rest of the exhibition time. *Partition Animale* is the first collaboration of Sarah Ancelle Schönfeld and Adrien Missika. It brings together Missika's interest in time-travel and reenchantment using simple technologies with natural materials such as stones or plants, and Schönfeld's engagement with oracular practices and alchemical experiments.



Intructions

Stage I

Enter the room, one or two people at a time. Meet the hosts.
Look around closely.
Touch the matter. Make first contact.
Choose to participate to this experiment or not.
Leave the room or stay for the next steps.
Pick one element from the Partition Animale. Ingest the chosen element.
Exit the room.

Stage II (if you participated to stage I)

Pay attention to your body and mind for the next 24h.
Take notes on any remarkable thoughts or feelings.
Pay attention to your next dreams.
Examine your next defecation.
Assemble all your notes.
Analyze what it could possibly represent.
Send your interpretation to: partitionanimale@mail.de

Stage III

An oracle is made from the shared interpretations



***Cactus Agapé*, 2016**

Full HD, no sound

1'21''

Video

Cactus Agapé is the second iteration of Missika's «vegetation Agapé» series. In this short video one can see a deserted landscape with an emblematic Saguaro cactus, native from southern Arizona (USA) and northern Sonora (Mexico) only. This particular cactus became the standard representation of a cactus, in advertising, movies, cartoons and therefore in the collective unconscious. The artist performs himself a comic, rather absurd flash action. He appears wearing what looks like a protection suit made of pillows, walking clumsily towards the cactus and hugging it firmly before leaving it alone again.

This work recalls trans-species communication in a comic way. On a metaphorical level, it can be read more dramatically as about otherness and loneliness.



***Agave Agapé*, 2015**

Full HD video with sound
21'39"

W

In *Agave Agapé*, we witness the artist cutting down the blossoming flower growing from an agave plant, which heralds its imminent death. Unstated symbol of Mexico, Agave plants are cultivated and exploited as a raw material for tequila and mezcal production. Regardless, they are left alone to die when they reach their majestic maturity.

However, according to the legend, it is believed that by cutting the stem of the blossoming plant might give it an opportunity to enter another life cycle. Here the artist acts as a metronomic Zeitgeber, rhythmically chopping the massive stem with machete captured in a cosmic and cosmetic performance.

The video documents the absurdist and contradictory action of an almost violent gesture of interrupting the reproductive process of Agave. However, it can be seen as an action of emancipation and reincarnation.





Ciudad Jardin, 2015

Replanted weeds from the streets of Paris, endemic repted plants,
soil, steel rebars, concrete, resin planters

3 pieces (350 x 60 x 60 cm | 300 x 60 x 60 cm | 250 x 60 x 60 cm)



Zeitgeber, 2020

Solo exhibition at Galerie Bugada & Cargnel, Paris

18.09.2015 – 07.11.2015



Adrien Missika's exhibition *Zeitgeber* will give you time. It will take you into the deep, uncertain time of dark caves and the beige infinity of outer space. *Zeitgeber*, German for "time giver", is a concept describing environmental signs, such as sunset, sunrise and air temperature that synchronise the inner clock of either human or animal to the Earth's 24-hours and 12 month cycle. Our biological rhythms are thus influenced by such external cues affecting not only our physis but also our psyche. The term was first employed by Jürgen Aschoff—one of the founders of Chronobiology—in the early 1950s when the University of Freiburg—Aschoff's alma mater—was heavily dominated by Martin Heidegger and his philosophy of Being and Time. Interestingly enough, it was around that same time, that air travel created the phenomenon of jetlag.

The central works in the show are a set of specially designed hammocks, which form a fleet of nomadic biotopes, carrying water, sand, Zen objects, and written records of experiences in altered states. Like ships, they are suspended in the "somewhere" rather than simply connecting two dots, and resonate with their dynamic and unstable environment.

Paul Feigelfeld



Installation view at *Zeitgeber*, Proyectos Monclova, Mexico City, 2015

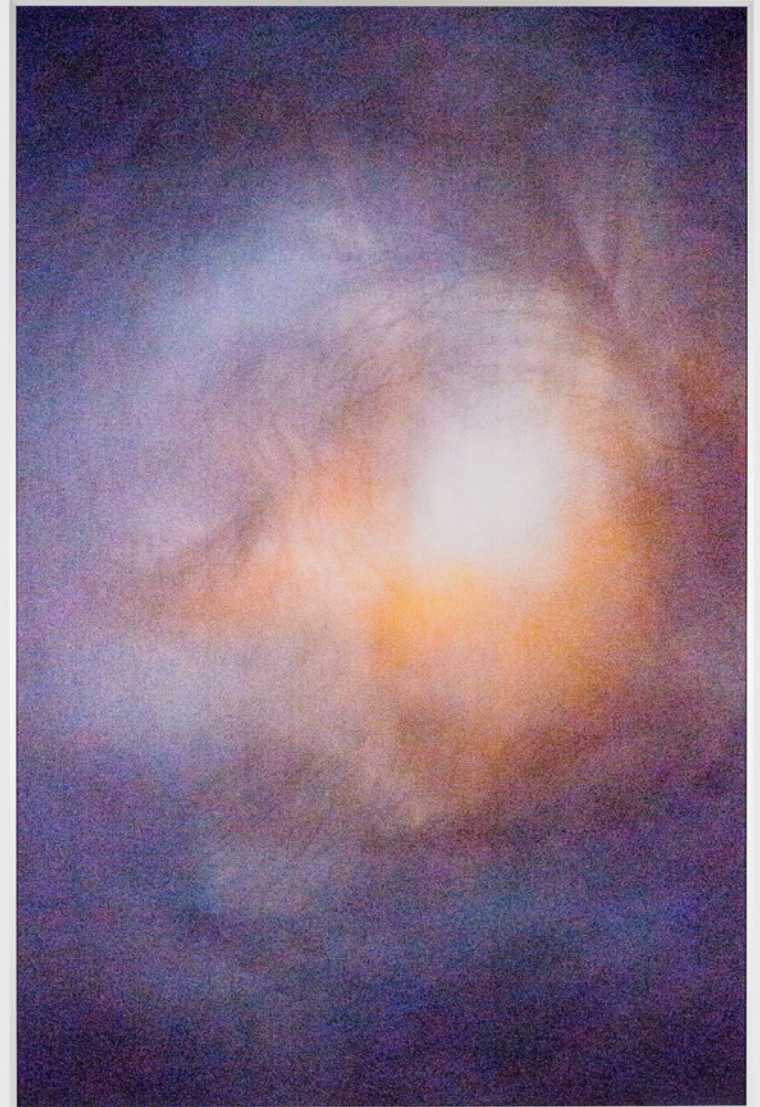
***Yautepec 3 (Stargazer)*, 2015**

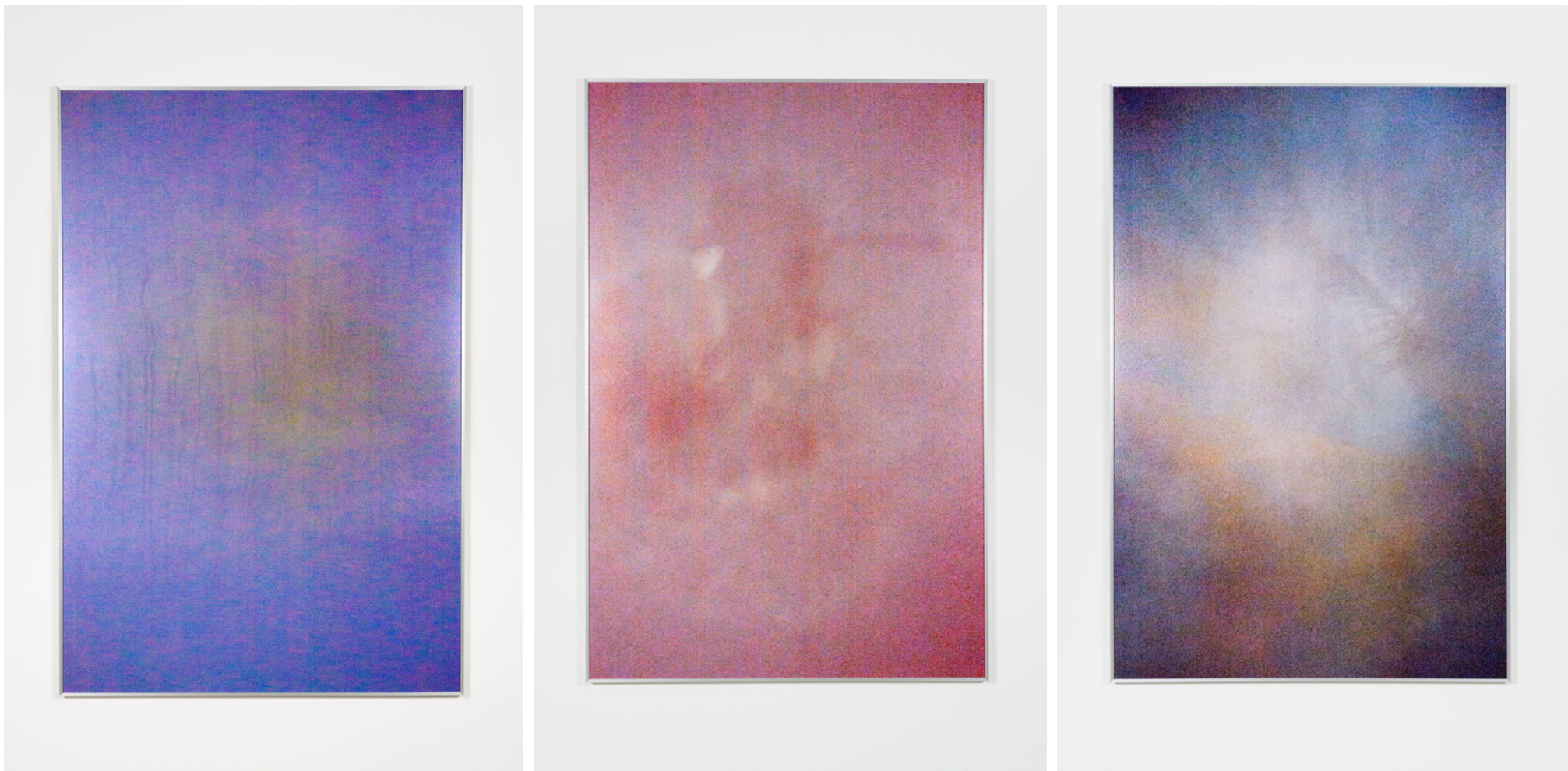
Stargazer Series

Light-jet print on metallic paper, resin coating

123,4 x 185,3 cm

The photographic works *Stargazer* are taken while Missika swings in his hammock, searching the sky. They show the repeated attempt at capturing the moon breaking through the clouds and trees. Yet the limited sensitivity of the camera's digital sensor creates a blurry imagery, which entirely abstracts the original view. What emerge are forays both into the inner workings of digital image objects—showing the imprecision of contemporary photography—and into outer space, reminding us of the Hubble telescope imagery. Missika's simple photographs could, in all their colorful blurriness, also see distant constellations, like Roy Batty does in *Blade Runner*: «I've... seen things... you people wouldn't believe. Attack ships on fire off the shoulder of Orion; I watched c-beams glitter in the dark near the Tannhäuser Gate... All those... moments... will be lost, in time, like tears... in... rain. Time... to die».





Yautepec 2 (Stargazer), Yautepec 1 (Stargazer), Sian Ka'an 1 (Stargazer), 2015, light-jet print on metallic paper, resin coating, 185,3 x 123,4 cm

Higher Future (Maguey), 2015

Higher Future Series

Concrete, steel, Comex paint pots, paint, wood, sealer, plants, soil
339 x 65 x 65 cm

The work *Higher Future*—concrete columns with their steel nerves sprawling skywards—contemplate architectural and urban temporality and incompleteness. Building regulations in many countries get circumvented by homeowners by leaving the mainstays of their houses unfinished. What may seem like structural decay is actually temporal—and legal—corruption, allowing them to maybe build more floors in the future. Often, however, the inner clock of architecture doesn't make buildings, but plants and vines grow on them.



***Capuccino Cosmico*, 2014**

Wall painting, with the color “Cosmic Latte”, the average color of the universe

Variable dimensions

“Cosmic Latte” is the name given to the average color of the universe. This color emerged as a side result to a study of the light spectrum of different galaxies run by a team of astronomers, a sort of beigeish white that resembles a glass of milk tinted with a drop of coffee. After an error occurred in their calculation, the team first announced the color to be a greenish-blue baptized “cosmic turquoise”, that was later found to be incorrect.





Installation view at *Zeitgeber*, Proyectos Monclova, Mexico City, 2015

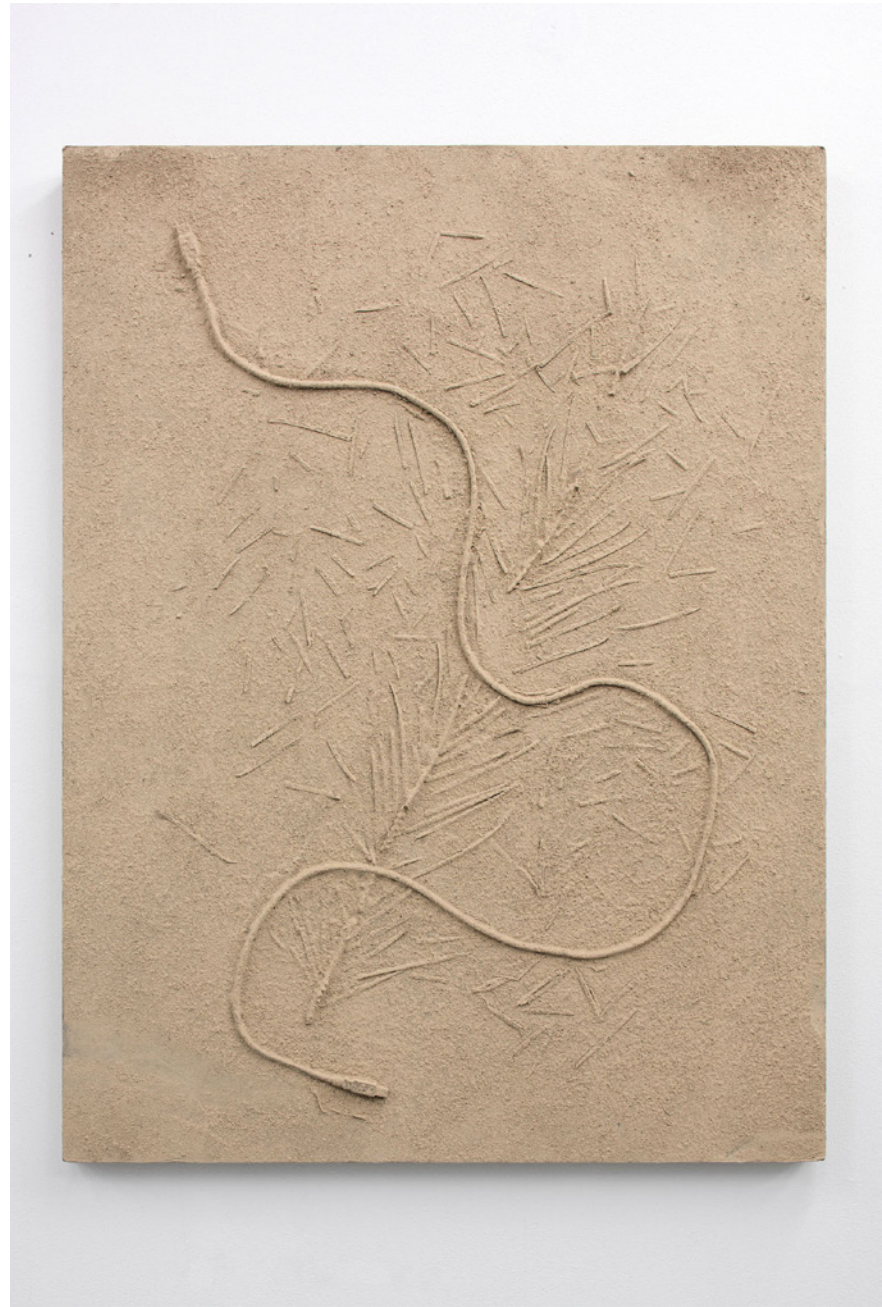
***Ash Paintings*, 2014**

Volcano ash, ethernet cable, Japanese syca leaf, glue, lacquer,
honeycomb cardboard
100 x 75 x 5 cm

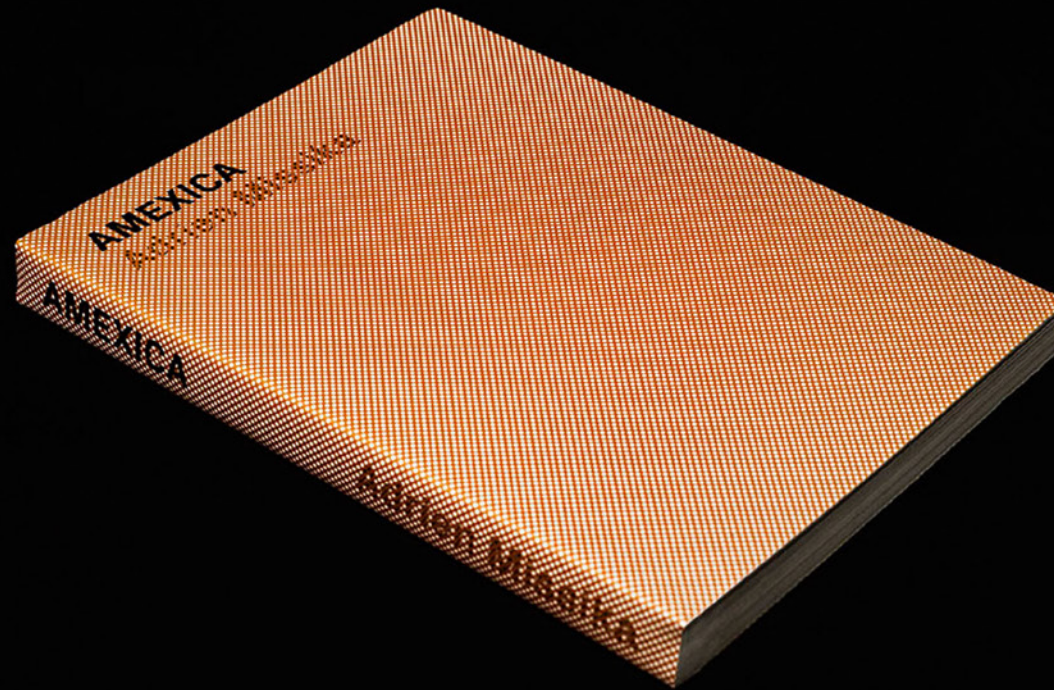
The *Ash Paintings* are «volcanic natures mortes» composed of computer cables, dried Japanese syca leaves and covered in ashes collected from the mount Ontake in Japan (erupting since September 2014).

Adrien Missika recomposes fragments of post-eruption land as fossils of the future evoking two extremes of Japanese culture, the natural and the technological.





Ontake-san 1 (Ash Paintings), Ontake-san 2 (Ash Paintings)



Amexica

2014

Artist book

Trilingual edition (English / Spanish / French)

14 x 18,5 cm (softcover, dust jacket)

260 pages (color ill.)

ISBN: 978 - 2-909230 - 16 - 0

Published by Centre Culturel Suisse, Paris and Edizione Periferia

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If Coyotes Could Fly

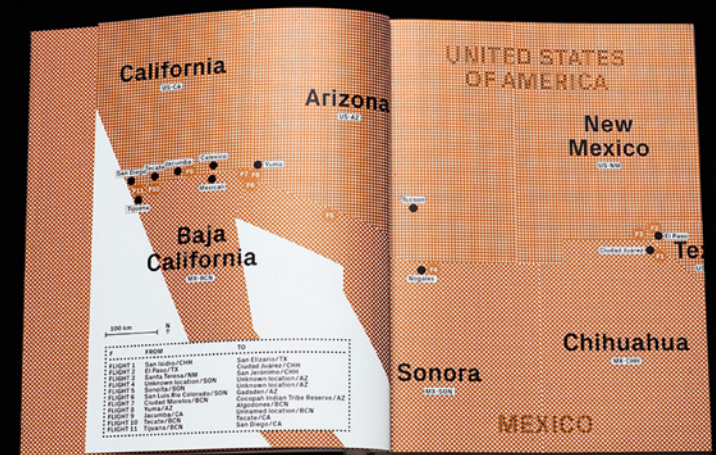
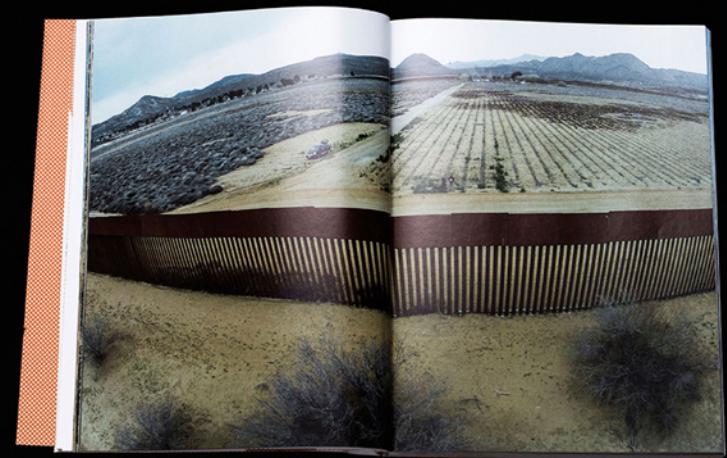
Every year the monarch butterfly migrates from Canada to Mexico flying over and back across the United States. The butterflies know neither walls nor obstacles. They fly oblivious and indifferent to any kind of structure and border. This book recounts a journey from Ciudad Juárez to Tijuana, from Rio Bravo to the Pacific. Like the migratory patterns of the monarchs or other species in the Americas, the trip snaked back and forth across the United States-Mexico border.

“Amexica” designates a rectangular geographic area of thousands of square kilometers that spans from East to West across an area where the population speaks mostly Spanish. Here, the landscape pivots between desert plains and arid mountains; from urban areas huddled against the borderline to white sand dunes; and then it all stops abruptly at the (Pacific) Ocean. The territory belonged to Mexico until the United States bought it in 1854. Since then, the border shifted southwards, and the United States has constructed a wall from the river to the Ocean.

The aim at the beginning of my trip was to look at this landscape, with specific attention to this absurd, hauntingly powerful barrier. I placed a camera on a small drone that I operated by remote control. It was a flying prosthetic eye. This controversial technology comes from the military, which uses it for remote surveillance and killing operations. I wanted to turn this technology against the authorities that brought it to bear – the northern side of the border – so my drone became a smuggler or, as they say south of the border, a “coyote.” As the drone flew freely back and forth, an airborne trailblazer, it allowed me to draw an aerial map of this shared area. And, more importantly, it allowed me to develop an unprecedented sensual experience, to look from and at previously unreachable locations, composing an amateur cartography with the help of remote vision technology.

Like a flying coyote, the drone filmed and photographed its own flights over that allegedly insurmountable wall. The video *As the Coyote Flies* comprises the 11 flight attempts with a soundtrack by Victor Tricard, and the present book documents these flights with pictures taken in the air and from the ground throughout the journey.

Adrien Missika





As the Coyote Flies

2014

Color HD video with sound

14'35''

Directed, filmed and edited by Adrien Missika

Music by Victor Tricard

Produced by Centre Culturel Suisse Paris

Video



***We Didn't Cross the Border, the Border Crossed Us* , 2014**

Series of 16 black and white laser prints in black painted oak frames
49 x 34,2 x 3 cm

Although the Saguaro cactus is very rare and only grows in a border area between Mexico and the United States, it is the archetypal cactus –which can be found in Tex Avery movies. Missika photographed the oldest specimens in Arizona, close to the American-Mexican border that was displaced in 1854, following the war. They are decontextualised on a white background, like uprooted. The title *We Didn't Cross The Border, The Border Crossed Us*, a quote from the movie *Machete* by Robert Rodriguez, evokes the migrations that don't stem from fluxes of populations, but from the displacements of borders. These cacti, which live more than 150 years, grew on Mexican territories and became American.







A Walk in the Park

2013

Solo exhibition at Kunsthaus Glarus, Switzerland

10.02.2013 – 05.05.2013

For his first institutional solo exhibition in the German part of Switzerland, Adrien Missika developed new works specially for the spaces of Kunsthaus Glarus. To this end he followed the traces of the Brazilian landscape architect and artist Roberto Burle Marx (1909 – 1994), a designer of gardens, parks and promenades. Apart from numerous designs for public and private gardens and squares, such as the promenade in Copacabana or several public gardens in Brasilia and São Paulo Burle Marx also designed six patios for the UNESCO building and sketched the terraces of the Centre Pompidou in Paris (not realised). He is seen as the founder of modern garden architecture, and worked often with the architects Lucio Costa, Le Corbusier and Oscar Niemeyer. His gardens are characterised by curved organic forms, creating the overall impression of an abstract painting. In Brazil, Burle Marx used native plants. A total of 33 species were named after him. He cultivated the tropical plants that he collected on his expeditions and then used them for his gardens. The use of native plants was an innovation in Brazil at the time – until then Brazilian gardens had followed the European model, and European plants were used, gestures of cultural colonialism, but also exotic symbols in the tropical context.

For the skylight room of Kunsthaus Glarus, Missika used a design featuring plants and sculptural flower-tower constructions. He transported Burle Marx's codes of garden design into the museum space, and transformed the Kunsthaus into a walk-through tropical conservatory. For the construction of the bamboo towers, he used the Asian knot technique of scaffolding, expanding the architectural space into a vertical dimension. This formal element is often used in compacted city planning as well as utopian concepts of vertical gardens and green cities. Further reminiscences to architecture are made with discarded, mirrored window panes from a modernist building, forming the horizon of the exhibition space. The introduction of disused





architectural elements in new contexts is a gesture Missika borrows from Burle Marx reflecting on the temporality and transience of architecture and civilisation.

In the side-light room Missika showed photographs of plants and gardens which were shown on a display system of sculptural elements in the form of metal panels. Missika adapted this form of presentation from a system used in the botanical department of the Indian Museum in Calcutta. In their function, the elements are hybrid and variable. In Glarus they served as autonomous sculptures as well as frames for large format photography and have also served as picture supports or even as screens for video works before. With these sculptural elements, autonomous mini-exhibitions are produced within the exhibition space. Another series of

discarded window panes – again variable in their function as autonomous sculpture and projection screen for more research images – provided references to modernist architecture.

Missika collected his extensive pictorial material during a journey through Brazil on the trail of the landscape designer in the manner of a Grand Tour like the ones that travellers took towards the end of the 19th century. He is particularly interested in the legacy of European modernism outside of Europe. He documents the contemporary state of the projects of the landscape architect in Brazil, who are part of the country's national inheritance, while being at the same time subject to a certain temporariness, instability and disorganisation. He also focuses upon tropical plants and the concept of the conservatory,



the European model of cultivation and museification of the exotic and the different. Glazed annexes to grand houses and greenhouses were developed in England in the 18th century, and served both as social meeting points and as exotic presentations of cultural treasures from colonial territories in palm houses and botanical gardens. But they also have a lasting influence on modern architecture, with its glass and steel constructions. Missika is basically concerned with the confrontation between nature and cultural construction, old and new, décor and <fake>, and the concept of the ruin, to which Burle Marx himself repeatedly returned.



Golden Horizon, 2013

Installation, 6 vintage aluminium windows with gold half-way mirror glass

200 x 960 cm

Botanica, 2013

Artist book

Essay by Saâdane Afif

Poems and songs by Mathis Collins, Quinn Latimer, Vanessa Safavi,
Jerszy Seymour, Benjamin Valenza, Rebecca Zlotowski

Designed by Maximage (Julien Tavelli, David Keshavjee)

Concept by Adrien Missika & Maximage

Photos by Maximage

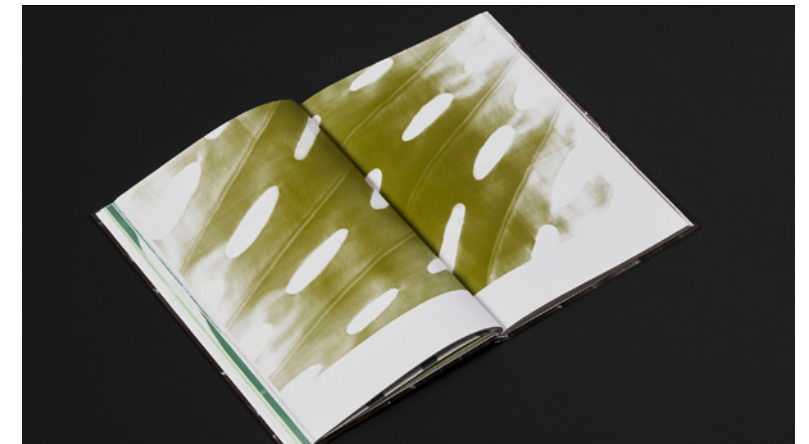
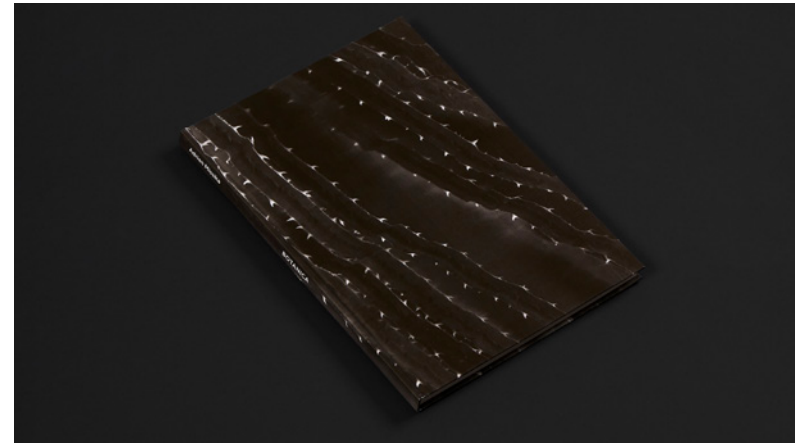
Ateliers Berlin Editions / Fond cantonal d'art contemporain, Geneva

Edition: 800

Hardcover, 25,5 x 17,9 cm

128 pages

French / English



***Alien Verein*, 2013**

Solo exhibition at Der Würfel c/o Neumeister Bar Am, Berlin

Alien Verein is a filmic landscape, a stage set dominated by an abstract life-form. The growing lithops (a genus of succulent plant native to southern Africa), are chosen for both their stone and face-like appearances (from which their name is derived; Ancient Greek words λίθος (lithos), meaning “stone,” and ὄψ (ops), meaning “face”, as well as their resilience, while the surface the lithops emerge from is lava-like, made from black capa resin, it is synthetic and smothering.

In a (nightmarish) reoccurring dream, Missika witnesses a rapid germination of a community of cartoonish botanical characters from a seemingly uninhabitable terrain. The transformative and apocalyptic landscape could be related to the 1965 sci-fi ‘The Day of the Triffids’ in which the “plants pull themselves out of the ground and chase you!” following a meteor shower that results in chaos on earth.

Similarly to a dream, or a film, we are distanced in our vantage point of *Alien Verein*. Through the vitrine, we see the plants grow from an extraterrestrial landscape and become animated (assisted by a grow lamp they transform quickly). This perspective is typical of Missika’s practice, which has a somewhat photographic framework, what he has described as ‘image-centered’, often unified with an exploration of fictional and literal borders. The aliens, in this case becoming specimens brought back from a far-away land—or maybe dimension.



Installation view at *Alien Verein*, Der Würfel, Berlin, 2013





Impressions Botaniques

Solo exhibition at Bugada & Cargnel, Paris

05.06.2013 – 27.07.2013



If Adrien Missika follows the tradition of traveling artists, it is to better question the meaning and concept of travel, at a time when the vast and almost instantaneous distribution of images – from tourist guides to channels specialised on the subject, from Google Earth to overloaded amateurs tumbler blogs –, has profoundly changed its terms and meaning. Through a wide range of mediums, from photography to video, sculpture to installation, Adrien Missika explores the issues of elsewhere and its representation, of exoticism and the production made out of it by the tourism industry.

Botanical impressions is Adrien Missika's first solo exhibition at the gallery, its name was inspired by the book *Impressions of Africa* by Raymond Roussel, written from the boat before its author even set foot on the continent. Unlike the writer, Adrien Missika has indeed made the trip he is talking about, namely Brazil, following the traces of the Brazilian landscape architect Roberto Burle Marx (1909 – 1994). Having designed many gardens, parks and walks – including one iconic promenade, bordering the Copacabana beach in Rio de Janeiro - and collaborated regularly with architects such as Lucio Costa, Le Corbusier and Oscar Niemeyer collaborator, he is considered the founder of the modernist landscape architecture. Also a naturalist, Burle Marx had a special interest in Brazilian native plants; a total of 33 species were named after him. He cultivated the tropical plants that he collected on his expeditions and then used them in the composition of his gardens. Whereas before the gardens created in Brazil gathered only European plants, following the European model- gestures of cultural colonialism, but also exotic symbols in the tropical context – Burle Marx innovated by using native plants.

In the centre of the exhibition, are three vertical structures inspired by the towers of planters designed by Burle Marx for his property in

Guaratiba. Creations unknown and poorly documented, now abandoned, these real hanging gardens, all-metal, black for the support posts against bright and contrasting colours for the planters, brought together the verticality of the architecture and the lushness of the vegetation. Adrien Missika replaced the metal in the structures with bamboo used as construction material in developing countries for scaffolding – providing the striking contrast of contemporary buildings built by an ancient technique with elements taken from nature – by assembling the pieces with strings tied in a traditional technique. The coloured resin planters were handmade by the artist in his studio. As for the plants, Adrien Missika adopted the same approach as Burle Marx, by choosing native plants only, mostly some common species of ferns in the Ile- de-France. These plant towers summon the more or less utopian concepts of vertical gardens and green cities.

Around, large mirror glass windows reflect the central structures and define the horizon of the exhibition. Like Burle Marx who, sensitive to the temporal and ephemeral nature of architecture and civilisations, readily recycled architectural elements for his creations, Adrien Missika recovered the windows of a Geneva 1960s building to be demolished and used them in a new context. On some of them enlarged images of palm, banana and pineapple leaves were placed, the artist had scanned them with a hand scanner, as a radical way, both hyper- technological and manual, to record the reality and to bring back images from his travels.





Jardin d'Hiver, 2013

Bamboo, thread, epoxy, fiberglass, plants

250 x 130 x 130 cm | 300 x 130 x 130 cm | 350 x 130 x 130 cm

Botanical Frottage (Natacha), 2017

Botanical Frottage Series

Crystal clear foil print mounted on found windows (glass, aluminium)

200 x 160 x 13 cm





Tephra, 2013

Solo exhibition at Galerie Edouard Manet, centre d'art contemporain de
Gennevilliers



Titled *Tephra*, a term which designates the ash and the fragments of rock expelled into the air at the time of a volcanic eruption, the exhibition brings together a set of pieces produced, for the most part, at the end of a recent stay on Réunion Island. This destination, motivated by the desire to draw a portrait of Piton de la Fournaise, is a continuation of a “world volcano tour” which, for 2 years, has taken Adrien Missika to the Kilauea volcano in Hawaii, to the crater from Ubehebe in California and on Stromboli in the Aeolian Islands.

‘a‘ā clone, an aluminum cast of a fragment of igneous rock, taken from Piton de la Fournaise, opens the exhibition. This indexical presence which, in its presentation, takes up the museographic rules of natural history museums, is doubly significant. It literally replays through its manufacturing process, that of the lava, its matrix. It also evokes, in a more metaphorical way, the post-production work undertaken by Adrien Missika, on returning from his trip, based on the materials and impressions collected.

In the video *Tephra Horizon*, the diversity of points of view, alternately aerial, camera in hand, panoramic, static shots, like the multiplicity of framings, from high angle or high angle shots, from near or far, are as much means of translating a subjective and panoptic vision, a physiological relationship with Piton de la Fournaise. Adrien Missika sublimates here, in an elliptical succession of contemplative plans, the attraction and the paradoxical beauty of a landscape, lunar and desert, calm in appearance and always threatening which, in a process of reversibility, evokes both the origin and apocalypse, becoming and ruin. This environment is the decorum of a fictional story. A man, looking like a city dweller, seems to be on a quest. He scrutinizes, walks and picks up a fragment of lava which he swirls around in his hand to observe all its facets and rough edges. This disconcerting presence

takes up, not without humour, the clichés of romanticism, of man facing nature. The “sound track” —a commissioned work by Victor Tricard, with whom Missika is collaborating for the fourth time— creates a sound atmosphere whose dissonances respond to the jitters of the image. While spatializing the video, it contributes to its sensitive apprehension by the viewer.

The series of images *Cactus Frottage*, as well as the wall installation *Puddle Planters*, constitutes the second part of the exhibition. Their “pop” aesthetic contrasts with the images of Piton de la Fournaise. They also oppose the plant kingdom to the minerality of *Tephra Horizon*. However, his works, intimately linked, are part of the same project.

On the slopes of Stromboli, using a book scanner, a gadget designed to scan pages of books in the library, Adrien Missika scanned, directly on the ground, the *Opuntia Ficus Indica* (prickly pears) that make up the *Cactus Frottage* series. The registration process is important. Without any possibility of visual control of the capture, the hand sweeps up and down the cacti. The “book scanner” retains only the contact points. The result is images with a fragmentary and residual aspect that maintain a kinship with surrealist rubbings. They function as so many other reminiscences of arid vegetation.

The *Puddle Planters* wall installation, hung in a staggered pattern, is made up of around thirty puddles of black resin, all containing a similar plant, a *Tillandsia Cyanea*. The repetition of the pattern, with a touch of mischief, develops three dimensionally on the wall, according to an ornamental principle of wallpaper. *Puddle Planters* corresponds to the sculptural transcription of a visual impression, of an image perceived on the slopes of surveyed volcanoes. It declines in another form, the plan of *Tephra Horizon* where a tuft of grass, pushed into the lava, sways





in the wind. *Puddle planters* also replays, in a new configuration, the installation *Archipel*, presented this winter at the Salle de Bain in Lyon. Images of volcanic flora were retro-projected on broken glass stelae, planted in mounds of resin placed on the ground. Through the diversity of the mediums used and the forms employed —photography, printing, video and installation—, Adrien Missika transcribes into images the physical and multi-sensory experience of the landscapes he travels through. He thus draws up, without sinking into sentimentality, the

subjective portrait of an original and primitive nature, often hostile but always attractive. Beyond the transcription of a personal experience, his works offer the viewer a space to question his relationship to the world, to nature and to temporality. They also question, and all the more so in a contemporary era, where the world is within easy reach and sight, where the population is largely urban, where the original relationship is withering away, the fantasy of an elsewhere promoted by the industry of dreams and tourism.

On the work of Adrien Missika

Rebecca Lamarche Vadel

When all territories are made accessible by images, from google maps to endless amateur tumblr blogs, from tourist guides to nature TV programs, traveling is accessing a new status. In 1984, Paul Virilio was already depicting what he described as a 'transparent world', as humanity was reaching a state where the visible was becoming equal with visibility, every part of this planet being recorded in worldwide data, providing a metaphysic situation that would allow men to get an endless access to everywhere when every territory has been mapped and rendered visible. How to encounter the 'elsewhere' in these circumstances, and is the concept of 'elsewhere' still relevant today?

The work by Adrien Missika is to be found at the meeting point of travel experience and exotic representation, advertising iconography and subjective involvement. Through a wide range of media, from photography, video, to sculpture and installation, the artist records

his finds encountered during travels to the USA, Hawaii, Turkmenistan, India, Egypt, Russia, Lebanon, Brazil, to name a few. The work by Missika challenges, as much as it plays with, the vocabulary of advertising and visual systems developed by the travel industry. Advertising is nourished by fetishes and totems encouraging exotic perceptions and reducing this sought-after unknown to a certain number of timeless signs like palm trees, waves, sun, that form caricatural, partial, if not populist items. Traveling, for Adrien Missika, is rather a way to somehow resist to these flat perspectives and representations. The artist inscribes his scenarios in the timeline of this elsewhere, inducing subjectivity and strangeness into these territories, temporarily perverting their state and our space representations. When the world has become 'transparent', a way to reappropriate it would be to inject new layers of perceptions, blur their immediate lecture and reinject forms and shapes. The use of video recording challenges the still perception of this elsewhere and highlights its moving and evasive nature.

Ruins, moving stones, a lonely palm tree, an abandoned race track, a flea, or the wander of a lost soul in Niemeyer's dome, a form of the absurd genre seem to be at stake in the work of the artist. The images are cold, distant, and build a scenario thanks to what has been found on site, away from any kind of advertising strategy and efficiency. The artist's work presents liminal subjects that sit between two times, in an almost anachronic state.

Adrien Missika's work doesn't verify, validate, or witness. It reincarnates the elsewhere with subjectivity and singularity, playing with the traditional techniques of recording. In the studio his work would be about reinterpretation and attempting to catch forms and logics of this elsewhere. Far away from transparency, Adrien Missika skews visions, degrades passive contemplation, and naturally deforms perception.



Archipel

Solo exhibition at La Salle de Bains, Lyon, France

20.11.2012 - 12.01.2013



Archipel (Archipelago) is the title chosen by Adrien Missika for his solo show at La Salle de Bains in Lyon, and for the new video installation produced for this exhibition. Well removed from any technological fetishism and any display-related sophistication, it is by way of a decidedly 'low-fi' style that Missika has physically and metaphorically re-created this discontinuous network of islands typical of the archipelago. The artist's conception of *Archipelago* comes in the wake of several journeys and as a result of the images he filmed at the Kilauea volcano in Hawaii, at the Ubehebe crater in California, and on the Aeolian island of Stromboli. Five videos using static shots, kinds of same level and life-size portraits of almost motionless plants, sometimes swaying with the wind, are overhead-projected on stelae of broken glass. These translucent projection screens are affixed to the ground by heaps of black resin thus imitating bits of lava lying no longer in the middle of the sea but actually on the concrete floor of the exhibition venue. Like an orchestra performing a random composition, these five videos form a set, and each plant is accompanied by its own sound track which wavers between concrete music, ambient music, exotica, and synthesised seaside resort music made up in the main of marimba and conga samples, for example. The videos, each of a slightly different length, are looped and thus offkilter in relation to each other. It is also the order in which the projectors start working which determines the audio-visual combination played throughout the exhibition day. Starting out from volcanic landscape that are life-hostile and cold in terms of colour, Missika has nevertheless produced funny images referring more to the absurdity of a stage set or an advertising spot than to any romantic, symbolist or nostalgic scene. What drives Missika's art praxis is undoubtedly the idea of distancing (which he stresses here by preventing visitors from entering into the installation, forcing them to observe it from a limited viewpoint), the idea of framing, the process of capturing reality (be it filmic or photographic) and the construction of an image as much as the

fiction stemming therefrom. To be sure, Missika sidesteps the pitfalls of any grandiloquent and sentimentalist relation to nature, but his approach, which consists in criss-crossing, compressing and interpreting the landscape, and encompassing the notion of entropy, nevertheless, and in many aspects, conjures up the world of Robert Smithson, or the methods adopted by landscape painters between the 17th and 19th centuries, who re-invented the pictorial connection to the landscape by way of the veduta, for example, the whim—namely the recomposition of the scape in the studio—and, later on, outdoor studies and works, live, on the spot. Missika is perhaps a contemporary version of the image reporter or conveyor in the broad sense of the term, thoroughly enjoying the advantages of our age and access to old, rare or even obsolete technologies, as much as to state-of-the-art gadgets and technologies which, barely invented, see their use simplified in order to be applied to mass products. His oeuvre has also become adapted to possible work conditions in the studio, and it is with the circumstances of his technical wherewithal that he invariably composes and complements the formal rendering of these traveller's experiences. Since the early days of his career, this inquisitive artist, absorbing what surrounds him and alert to whatever is quite simply available, has been quite straightforwardly permitting himself to get away from the field of photography (his initial training) in order to embark on joint projects (as with Victor Tricard for the acoustic environment created for the installation) and spill over into disciplines connected with contemporary art, such as design, from which he borrows display solutions for images, as much as playful uses of material. What is also involved for Missika is underscoring the deliberate absence of any protocol or system which might inform his output, and reiterating an intentional absence of structure, be it narrative, linked to the art medium, or linked to the sculpted material.

Caroline Soyez-Petithomme

***Regarde les Mouches Voler*, 2012**

Video Sculpture

Steel, glass, halfway mirrored glass, video, 1 channel b&w silent SD video
6'06"

The video sculpture *Regarde Les Mouches Voler* opens up temporal levels of perception and asynchronism. The staged video of a housefly (*Musca domestica*) crossing the field of view is recorded with a high speed imaging technique, widely used in the field of science.

In exaggerated slow motion and constant anticipation, the work depicts a movement that is normally invisible to a naked eye. Each individual wing-beat becomes cumbersome and monumental. The resulting film duration is diametrically opposed to the actual flight duration. Tethered to a toothpick, yet another common technique used in entomology, the fly's movement across the frame is conducted by a human hand.

In the spirit of the French expression "Regarde Les Mouches Voler" (engl. "to stare into space" or literally "to watch the flies fly"), stasis and motion collide, creating a timeless zone in the realm of idleness and boredom.

The work consists of a video projected on a screen applied on transparent glass, framed in a paravent type steel structure. This display refers to the vitrines that can be usually found in museums of Natural History. The video is visible from both sides of the glass screen yet the flight is mirrored. The second paravent screen is made with a halfway mirror, adding to the strangeness of the reflection game.





Sailing Stones

2011

HD colour video with sound

11'04"

Edition of 5

Video



Sailing Stones is a video about a moving image that you cannot see move, moving stones that you cannot see move. Filmed on location at Racetrack Playa, California, within the boundaries of Death Valley National Park, Racetrack Playa is perfectly flat dry lake surrounded by domineering dolomite cliffs. On the floor of the ancient cracked white clay bed rest several pebble to boulder-sized rocks which appear to have broken off the cliffs on the south end. Each rock seems to have traveled along the bed, leaving behind a mysterious path. According to NASA description, « some rocks travel in pairs, their two tracks so perfectly in synch along straight stretches and around curves that they seem to be made by a car. Others go freewheeling, wandering back and forth alone and sometimes traveling the length of several football fields. In many cases, the trails lead right to resting rocks, but in others, the joyriders have vanished ». Adrien Missika's portrayal of this geological site focuses on a particular temporality, a *longue durée*, a slowness that is given by the changing land, one that we can never witness in our lifetime. Captured with several lengthy fixed shots, initially one has the impression of being faced with photographs transferred to video, given their dominant sense of stasis. In this work, Missika takes painting as the horizon for the images construction (by way of the eminently Friedrichian subject of the great expanse, the fixed picture plane, still composition and reduced internal action) but uses film to add to its perception, which is one where the viewer regains a particular awareness of time and (indirect) motion. If photography condenses time, capturing the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent, the instantaneous, film can be defined as a succession of moments or instants that replace one another. In film, each shot can potentially replace the other or each shot can accrue, as with *Sailing Stones* and its distention of time experienced. Here, each cut from one shot to the next is abrupt, but rather than disappear in montage, the video remains sutured, bringing the now of the disruption, which is the time-space of the viewer, into the realm of the work.

***A Dying Generation*, 2011**

Black and white laser print

49 x 39 x 3 cm

Edition of 5

A Dying Generation revisits the iconic first generation Los Angeles palm trees photographed by Ed Ruscha in his seminal artist's book *A Few Palm Trees* (1971). Missika shoots them in the same deadpan, repetitious fashion, but in the 40 years that have elapsed between the two bodies of work, the palms have grown huge, and will soon dry out beneath the burning California sun. Through them Missika presents us a typology of urban biosphere as fragile and temporary as Bernd and Hilla Bechers industrial ruins. Looking at Missika's series, we get to thinking not only about how representations may outlive the things they represent, but also how, over time, all images rot down into the general mulch of our visual culture.





***Black Sand Beach*, 2011**

1 channel color HD video with sound

4'34"

Edition of 5

Video

In Adrien Missika's film *Black Sand Beach* (2011), a dead tree stands upright on a Hawaiian shore, supported by a tangle of roots some two metres tall. The base of the tree's trunk appears to hover just above the blue line of the horizon, as though the Pacific archipelago were retreating towards the Earth's core, leaving the plant's hidden parts exposed. To the lulling melody of Hui Ohana's slack-key guitar classic *Sweet Lei Mokihana* (1973), we see a pair of dogs trotting across the black sands, where they are soon joined by a couple of ageing guys who resemble Lawrence Weiner and Jeff Bridges, were they to wave their respective goodbyes to the art world and Hollywood stardom and spend their remaining days as surf bums. The Jeff Bridges guy pats the caramel Labrador, the Lawrence Weiner guy swings gently from the tree's upper roots, and then they wander out of frame, followed by the dogs. *Black Sand Beach* is, by any measure, a film in which very little happens, but its air of honeyed melancholy is oddly affecting. On the shore, in their board shorts and beards, the two men seem to patiently await the end of the world. — Tom Morton



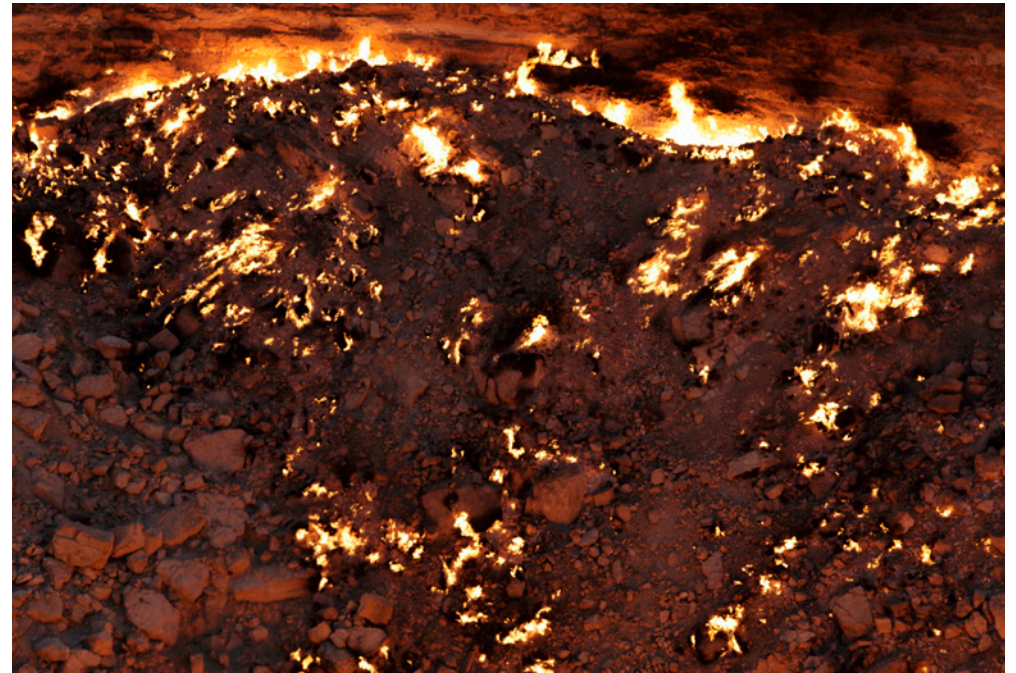
Darvaza, 2011

1 channel color HD video with sound

8'30"

Video

In Turkmenistan in 1971, Soviet geologists accidentally exposed a cavern of natural gas when a mining platform collapsed. Loathe to release the toxic emissions to the atmosphere, they set it aflame; and there it has burned ever since, nicknamed by locals 'the door to hell'. Missika's film explores this infernal portal through a series of long, slow takes, each around a minute in length, in reverse progression from a close-up of sulphurous clouds to a final shot of the barren surroundings – the pit a thick, red scar on a dead world. For Menegoi, these images recalled the apocalyptic sublime of early-19th-century painter John Martin (recently celebrated with an exhibition at Tate Britain). Inverting the usual trend of Missika's work (for example his 2009 photomontage series, *Tueur du Monde*, also exhibited, which are mock-ups that seem to show construction workers aboard a space station, a flying saucer taking off over a forest, etc.), the film presents something so Biblical in its horror that we assume it must somehow be a fake, a miniature, a mock-up or some other special effect, but in fact it is terrifyingly real: an everyday, man-made Armageddon. — Robert Barry



Dome, 2011

Super 8 film with sound transferred to BluRay

09'07''

[Video](#)

Here, an anonymous young man explores a vast domed structure built by Oscar Niemeyer on the site of the Tripoli International Fair in Lebanon. Its construction was halted in 1975 at the outbreak of the Lebanese Civil War, and it has stood incomplete and inaccessible to the public ever since. As the camera follows the man through the building's shadowy interior, we see him slapping at the steel tendrils that hang from its concrete walls and beams as though they were piano keys or guitar strings. His actions slowly transform Niemeyer's cupola into a gigantic musical instrument, filling it with an echoing composition of rattles, clunks and clangs. In the film's final frames, we see him clamber up the dome's exterior, like an astronaut about to plant a flag on an unblemished Martian peak, or the last inhabitant of a blasted Earth attempting to hail a passing starship. Is this a beginning, or an end? In Missika's work, both possibilities walk hand in hand. — Tom Morton





Daily Archeology, 2010
Antibacterial soap leftover
5 x 110 cm

With *Daily Archeology* (2010), Adrien Missika reverses and accelerates the aging process of an unlikely archaeological object. Common soaps are subjected to a relatively long period of inactivity, during which they are

turned into unique archaeological objects. In order to preserve, protect and defend them from the wear of time, as if they were real historical artifacts, these everyday objects are paradoxically museified. Through the idea of Bunker4, a ruin in cement of a recent past, the idea of the museum is questioned in an era where conservation seems to be in contradiction with the dromologic spirit of the contemporary era.





HMI, 2006

1 channel color video installation with sound, DV transferred to DVD,
1'33"

[Video](#)

HMI (Hydragyrum Mittlere Bogenlänge Iod) is the German term used to designate “mercury medium-arc iodides lamps”, a high-intensity lighting system employed on stages where films are shot. Adrien Missika films a wall illuminated by this type of lamp, so turning the instrumentation of cinema back on itself.

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