

### **Séripop: “Deux temps, trois mouvements, sans doute”**

“Séripop” stands for a group of artists based in Montreal and which is composed by Yannick Desranleau and Chloe Lum. They started to work together in the context of music with the noise band AIDS Wolf in 2000, and expanded their collaboration in 2002 also to a visual level under the label of Séripop. Since then, they elaborated a rich body of work which explores such complex and simultaneously exciting notions as the public sphere, the history of urbanism, the emancipation of the audience, flatness versus plasticity, to mention only a few. For this exhibition, the Séripop members show two installations which play a decisive role in their artistic carrier. A recurrent formal element is their obsessive interest in the endlessly varied declination of the poster medium, which they reinvent on all levels of production, starting from the content and design going through the printing process until the genuinely original and singular installation modes both in the public and the gallery space. Chloe and Yannick see the strength of the poster medium in its multiplication, that as multiples they are “topographical markers . . . the only medium that people can use on a legal base to express themselves in an urban public context.” And as for their creative constellation, they see a big advantage in that “the amalgamation of ideas is inevitable because of the collaborative work situation we are in.”

*Chandigarh Is One* is an installation by Séripop dealing with the significant and at the same time problematic heritage of the famous architect Le Corbusier (born as Charles Edouard Jeanneret 1887 in La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland). After the partition of British India into India and Pakistan in 1947, Punjab was also split between India and Pakistan, and Lahore on Pakistan territory couldn't function anymore as capital. Therefore, Chandigarh was commissioned by Nehru to reflect the new nation's progressive prospect. This brand new city was designed by the Le Corbusier and established in 1953. The world-wide influence of Le Corbusier both on architecture and design is so strong nowadays, that it seems hardly impossible to question him without questioning Modernism in general—this seems also to be a reason why we actually still find hardly any critical voices against him. The programmatic presence and authority of Le Corbusier goes so far as to the portrait of the famous architect to be found on the 10 francs banknote of Swiss currency, a design introduced in 1997 and still in use since Switzerland isn't part of the Eurozone. The other persons represented on the banknotes are also attributed to the cultural field, that is the composer Arthur Honegger, the painter Sophie Taeuber-Arp, the sculptor Alberto Giacometti, the writer Charles Ferdinand Ramuz, and the art historian Jacob Burckhardt—all of whom are well-known but not to an equal degree as Le Corbusier, which might be the reason why he ended up to be on the most used bill. More recently, however, the (essentially from a political point of view) problematic standpoint of Le Corbusier—which is his close relationship to the Nazi-friendly Vichy regime that he abruptly ceased in 1942 though—has been critically analyzed by his best connoisseurs

such as the scholar Stanislaus von Moos, including the question if it would be adequate to take the banknote out of circulation (which apparently didn't happen since it still is in circulation, refer f. e. the article "The nasty Le Corbusier" in *Tages-Anzeiger*, 23 September 2010). Von Moos points out that it is interesting enough to observe the paradox that even though some of Le Corbusier's city planning solutions were inclined to be dictatorial in their radicalism, they were the least accepted in the very same context of authoritarian regimes of his time. As for Séripop's *Chandigarh Is One*, they fuse formal elements of Pop and Minimal Art: Crumbled paper balls leading to an ornamental abstraction surprisingly reminiscent of Richard Long, but vertical instead of horizontal, made out of soft and malleable instead of hard and heavy material. This association might sound strange at first but all makes sense when you have a closer look at the installation. It is first of all a visual analogy, but in a typically "pop artistic" way with an ironic undertone both towards form and material: Crumbled paper balls and large natural stones do formally look somehow similar. Then, the physical immersive moment in the process of the viewer's reception as well as the notion of the sublime both in a literal and metaphorical landscape can also be paralleled. As for the Pop Art elements, we are inclined to think of Claes Oldenburg's soft sculptures series. And where lies the link between Le Corbusier's Chandigarh, Richard Long, Pop Art...? In the challenging of these specific frames of references which often have become authoritarian when growing so important. Questions such as following rise up: Why do we refer to this and not to something else when looking at something, who and which circumstances made this reference system possible, or who and which circumstances perpetuate a paradigm? And what is it that ostensibly makes some aesthetic paradigm look important in a certain time and context, in contrast to a sustainable aesthetic discourse that has difficulties to impose itself?

*More Time Than Space* is a three-dimensional tableau, a participative sculpture in terms of its accessibility to the viewer. It clearly distances itself from an approach as we can find in *Chandigarh Is One* in terms of the latter's programmatic agenda. *More Time Than Space* is an openly visual arousal, immersive environment, art as a phenomenological moment of immediacy rather than intellectual exclusion. When describing this project, the artists speak of "saccades, visual rhythm, and a clear evolution." This work isn't so much reflection upon architecture as it has become an epitomized utopian scheme of a such one. It makes curious what the role of colors plays here, which organization—or all on the contrary chaos rules—apply to them? It is certainly not the simple logic of a visually strong signalization system similar to the one we meet on the streets (all sectors from traffic regulation to advertisement confounded) that Séripop are interested in here. As the artist and theoretician David Batchelor brilliantly pointed out, "chromophobia" is an omnipresent, almost neurotic state of mind in cultural production since several decades—with recurrent breaks and exceptions though. Séripop seems to be one of those exceptions, which is utterly refreshing in its promptness. And what has the title of the exhibition to do in all that? "Deux temps, trois mouvements, sans doute" means "two times, three movements, beyond doubt"—at first hand may be a rather cryptic, elusive access proposal, but which also suggests how it actually

should be: that the viewer also is in the position to individually interpret what he or she stands in front of.

—Catherine Hug, curator KUNSTHALLE Wien, Vienna (Austria)