



THE DANCE OF THE HORNNED

Éric Giraudet de Boudemange

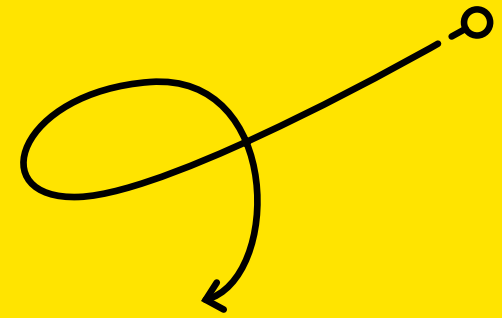
THE DANCE OF THE HORNED



and other hunting scenes
from the forest of Fontainebleau
(3 July – 13 September 2014
Spazioborgogno, Milano)

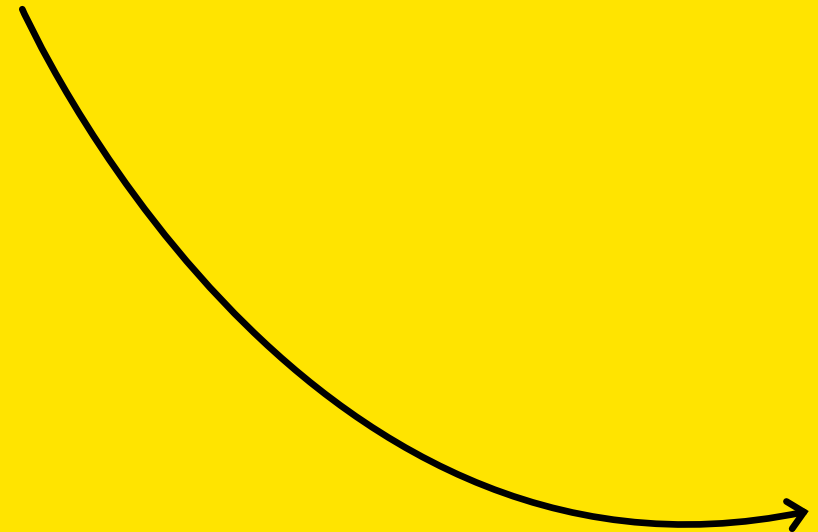
Q&A

between



Julia Geerlings
&

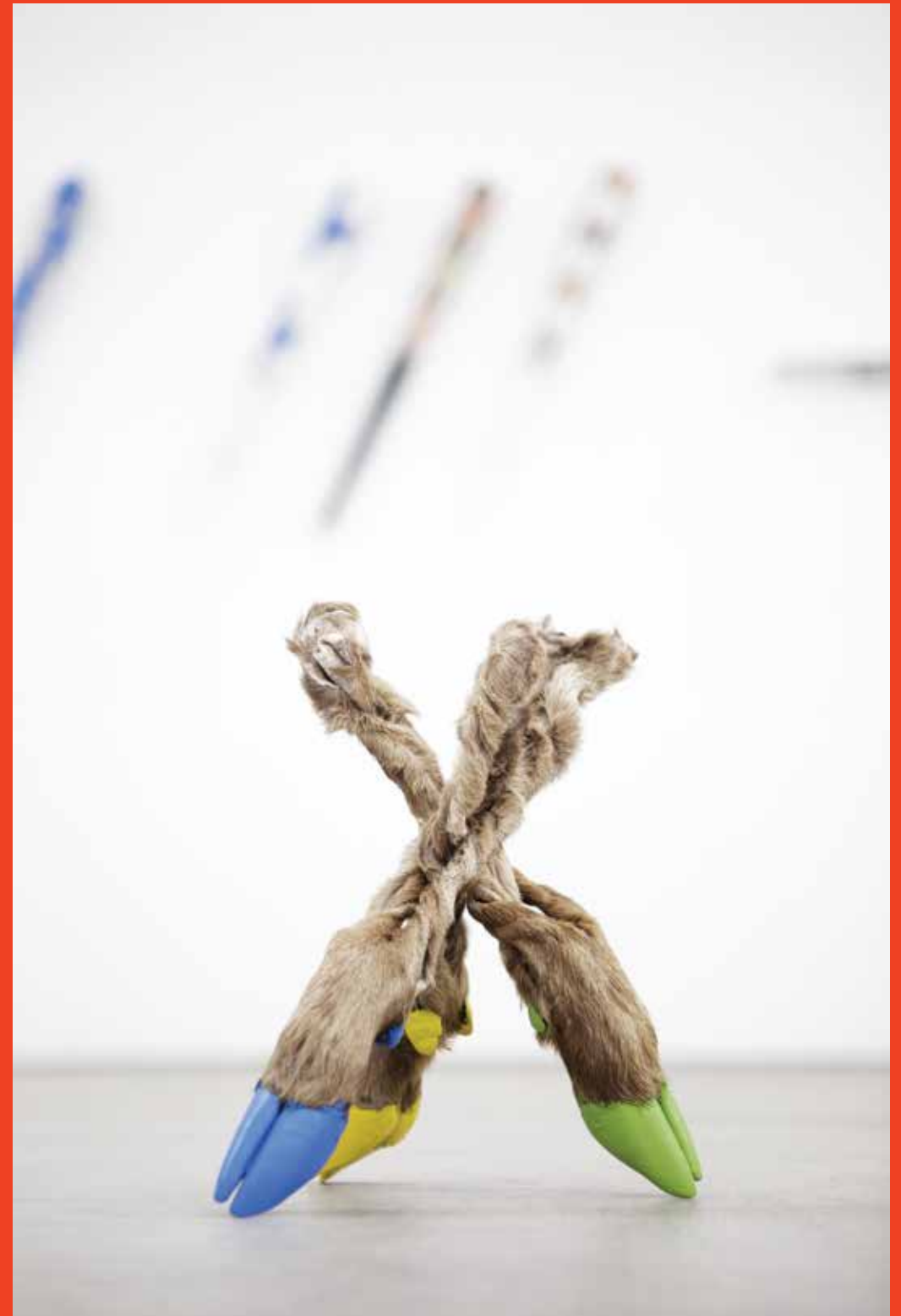
Éric Giraudet de Boudemange



On a beautiful bright day I find myself drinking Bloody Marys on a terrace in Milan to ask Éric Giraudet de Boudemange a few questions about his exhibition in Spazioborgogno. The artist is well known for seducing his audiences with colourful collections of objects, stories and interpretations of traditional games. In these collections he interweaves studies on animal behaviour and mythology. The exhibition *The Dance of the Horned* revolves around hunting and love trajectories and can be seen as a meditation on his sculptural projects of the past three years. Equipped with my notebook and a damn good Bloody Mary close at hand, I am ready to enter the forest of ideas and stories behind this intriguingly titled show.

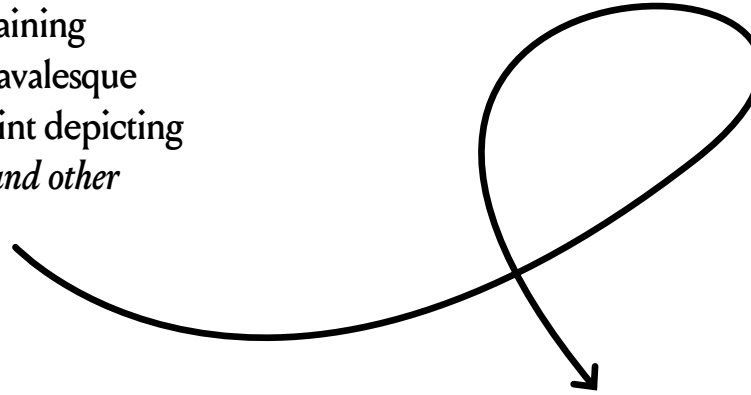


Honors of the feet, 2014.
Painted stag hooves, 20 cm.



Julia Geerlings

Your exhibition feels like a symbolic puzzle containing elements that relate to hunting and obscure carnivalesque rituals. It starts for example with a 19th century print depicting men and women wear *The Dance of the Horned and other hunting scenes from the forest of Fontainebleau*?



Hourvari, the hectic sounds of feelings, 2014.
Performance at Le Cyclop de Jean Tinguely, Milly-la-Forêt.

The title plays with the idea of hunting as choreography. The trajectory of the prey serves as a guide for performing a ritual dance in the picturesque scenery of the forest of Fontainebleau, 60 km south of Paris where I learned the basics of the “art” of stag hunting. The show follows my recent performance *Hourvari, le charivari des sentiments (the hectic sound of feelings)* in May 2014 at *Le Cyclop de Jean Tinguely* in the woods of Milly-La-Forêt.

The inspiration for the project came from a specific ethnographic experience; hunting with the horse riders of Rallye Fontainebleau. I mixed this experience with literature about the origins of the hunt in pre-Christian rituals. I also focused my research on the tales of Gargantua, the famous giant from renaissance writer François Rabelais, in which deer hunting is linked to the carnival as practiced in the 16th century. I discovered that cuckolds were “judged” at fake trials because the loose manner of their wives jeopardized the clear genealogy of the community. They were publicly humiliated and sometimes even hunted like deer. The performance became a carnivalesque tribute to these men as well as a musical hunt. In French, Italian and other Latin languages “cornu” or “cornuto” means horned and cuckold at the same time.

Éric Giraudet de Boudemange



≥ Cupid, 2014.
Installation of feathered
darts mounted on modular
steel structures, variable size.



On the wall,
Diana & Actaeon, 2014
Wall drawing,
variable size

Hourvari, 2014.
Painted antler on
coloured pedestal,
40×80×40 cm

J.G

It reminds me of the movie the Wicker Man (1973) directed
by Robin Hardy where pagan rituals were performed and men
were wearing horns.

Indeed! I love the Wicker
Man. A fellow Rijksakademie
resident, Dan Walwin,
recommended it to me.
The film actually features
several Celtic rituals that
have survived the centuries.
The scenario climaxes with a
loose reinterpretation of the
Abbot Bromley horn dance
with Christopher Lloyd as
the crazy bourgeois shaman.

E.G.D.B



The dance of the horned and other hunting scenes from the forest of Fontainebleau, 2014. Exhibition view.



Hourvari (2), 2014
Sound piece inside coloured
pedestal/deer antler, 20 min,
40×40×40 cm

≥ The thorn birds, 2013
Performance at Spazioborgogno
in July 2014

J.G

Was this an inspiration for your performance *Hourvari* as well?

Not at first, but the deer is a totemic animal for many pre-Christian cultures. It is directly connected to the stag hunting ritual as practiced today. The performance consisted of a night walk, accompanied by the songs of the *Les Echos de Franchard* trumpet players. As we walked through the forest the players unrolled the pursuit of a deer by mixing traditional songs describing each step of the hunt with their own bawdy sexual versions. At each consecutive stage of the hunt, while wearing a horned hat, I read an autobiographical text describing the day I discovered I was a cuckold.

In a real hunt, the horse riders play their trumpets during the pursuit of the prey. More than fifty songs describe possible behaviours of the stag or topographic elements like “deer is passing the railroad” or “is entering the water”. The hunters use the music for orientation purposes and each stage of the hunt is associated with a certain melody. At the end of the hunt the horsemen chop off the deer’s head and cut its body into pieces. They cover the meat with the skin of the stag and in front of the dogs play all the music that was performed during the five-hour stalk. When the horsemen finish playing their musical map/ scenario, the dogs devour their prey. In the show, the sound piece *Hourvari* recalls all the melodies in the performance, but now sung “a capella” by one trumpet player.

E.G.D.B



J.G

The way you describe the performance and the sound piece resembles the way the aboriginals map their territory by song lines. Did you not also use a mapping method in *The Thorn Birds* performances?



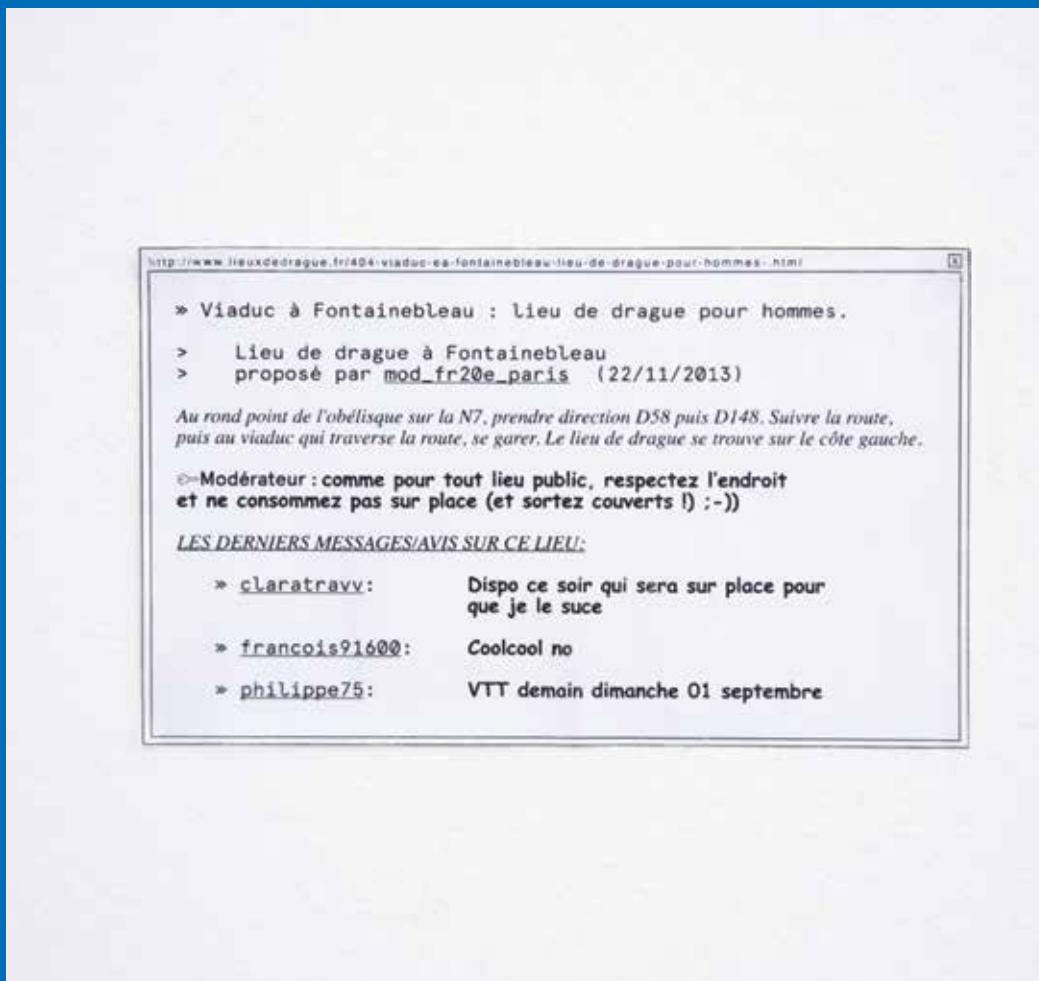
E.G.D.B

The Thorn Birds started like an ethnographic report on pigeon racing that eventually transforms into a procession focusing on the myth of Theseus and the Minotaur. As the pigeon is released at the end of the performance, the viewer has entered into a situation of empathy with the dove, questioning the destiny of the bird. Will it return home? Will it make it through the labyrinth? We could talk about a "mapping situation", as the viewer projects the trajectory of the pigeon.



The thorn birds, 2013
Performance at Spazioborgogno
in July 2014.





Lieux de drague, 2014.
Collaboration with Vincent de Hoÿm
Digital print, 5×8 cm.

J.G

Other works in the exhibition like *Lieux de drague* and the wall drawings *Diana and Actaeon* use a mapping method as well and they both deal with courtship and love-making.

Exactly. *Lieux de drague* originated from something I experienced during a hunt in Fontainebleau. With a fellow hunting companion I was waiting in a car at dawn when a middle-aged jogger approached us with a hesitant step. My fellow hunting companion opened his window and said: "No, thank you, we are hunting". A few hours later, we were trotting through the same love bushes dressed as 16th century horsemen, following the track of a stag. Later on, I discovered the website lieuxdedrague.fr where people can find specific locations for sexual (mostly gay) encounters. I collected a few meeting points, which I reedited in collaboration with Vincent de Hoÿm. These places are discreetly spread throughout the exhibition space. The viewers can encounter these randomly as they wander through the show and jot down the directions in case they would one day like to pass by these sexy roads in the forest of Fontainebleau. It also metaphorically brings the forest into the space through the Greek mythological story of Diana and Actaeon. The young hunter Actaeon changed into a deer and was devoured by his own dogs after his encounter with the goddess Diana who was bathing in the middle of the forest with her nymphs. In the exhibition space the metamorphosis takes the shape of dancing instructions on the walls that read like a map of a love pursuit.

E.G.D.B



Lieux de drague, 2014.
Collaboration with Vincent de Hoÿm
Digital print, 5×8 cm.



The dance of the horned
and other hunting scenes
from the forest of Fontainebleau,
2014. Exhibition view.

J.G

So the *Diana and Actaeon* wall drawings are dance patterns, but they also resemble game instructions to me. In fact, the whole exhibition is full of references to traditional games. Does the visitor of the exhibition need to know the rules of the games?

Absolutely not. I'm mostly interested in the sculptural nature of games and the dynamic possibilities that they bring. That's why everything in the show is modular and movable, from the cubes to the javelot darts placed on metal structures. Nevertheless, the story of each game influenced me in placing it in the exhibition. For example, *Birds* is the reconstitution of a vertical bow arrow target, a sport from the Flanders region. The structures are usually installed on 30m high metallic poles and archers try to tear down the feathered objects, called "birds", mimicking a primitive hunt with their flat tip arrows. It could also be seen as a "tableau de chasse" or a primitive Brazilian fair target... I like the idea that the viewer thinks about the possible function of these objects as ethnographical artefacts.

E.G.D.B

Birds (detail), 2014.
Feathers, wood, steel,
120x425 cm





J.G

You are right in stating that the exhibition feels dynamic and active for the visitor. The coloured bats with their geometric patterns look especially dynamic to me. This feeling is enhanced by the way the bats are placed diagonally against the walls.

E.G.D.B

I had heraldic patterns in mind when designing the bats. One could be a deer or an arrow, the other one a snake... I'm looking for a code by bringing "symbolic" elements together that may create a phrase. Like the cubes or the metal structures that sustain the darts, the bats could be seen as modular elements to be exposed on the wall like mosaics or parts of a sequence. I use the heraldic colour chart that was current until Newton published his discoveries on the colour spectrum in the second half of the 17th century. The colours are arranged from bright to dark: white, yellow, green, red, blue, black. I like the idea of using a primitive colour range, a way of conceiving an image with an archaic protocol. The stories of colours are actually very interesting and they evolve. Kandinsky saw colours as universal and timeless. He was actually totally wrong when you follow the history of colours. Women used to marry in red, the devil was green and the sky was painted with gold in primitive paintings.



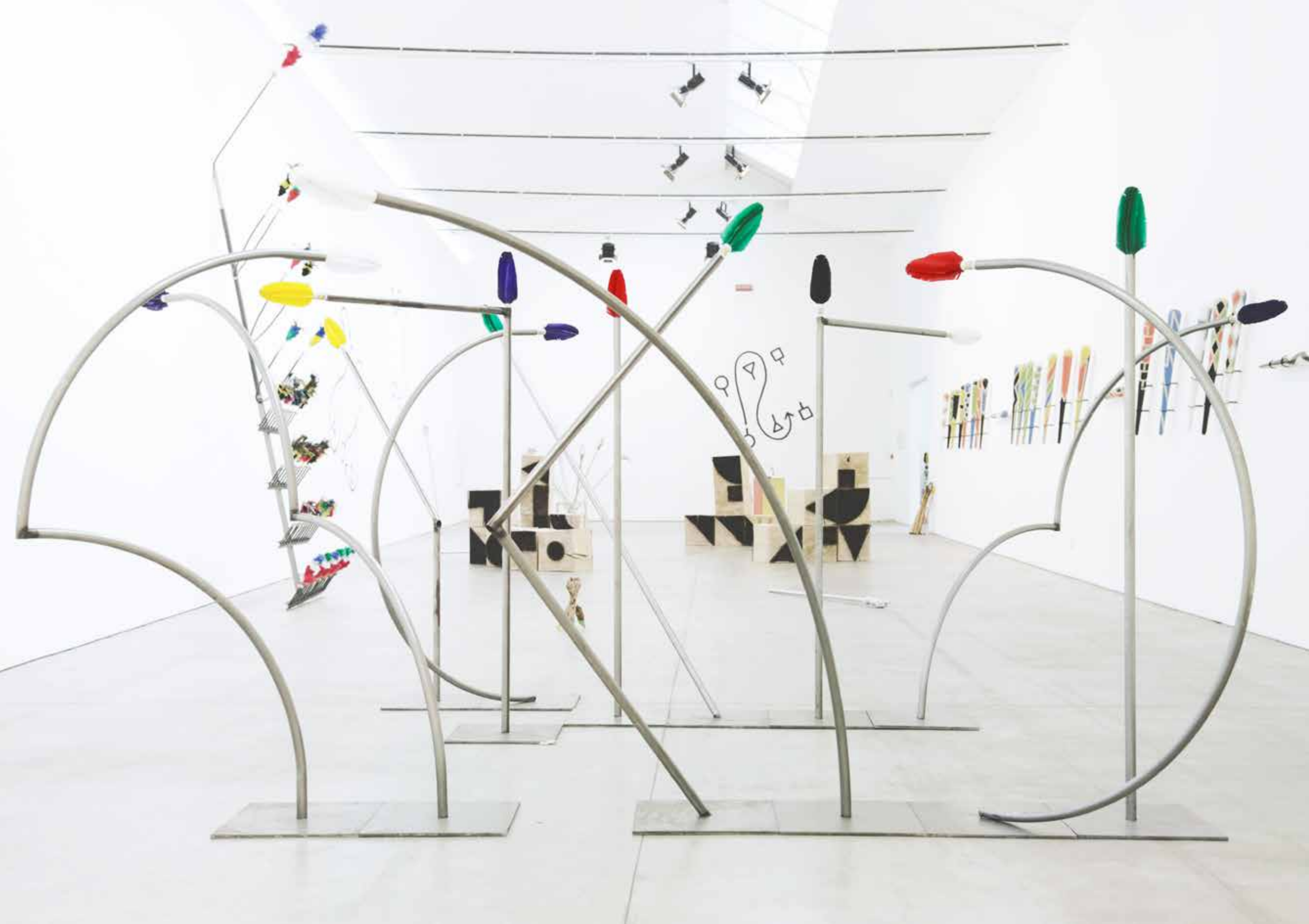
Mesnie Hellequin, 2014.
Wooden painted bat
on steel mounts, 95 cm.



Mesnie Hellequin, 2014.
Wooden painted bats
on steel mounts. 95 cm each.



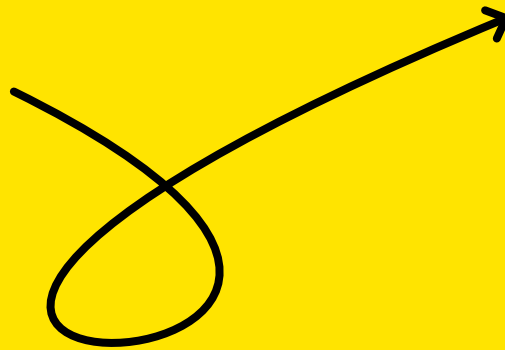




≥ The dance of the horned
and other hunting scenes
from the forest of Fontainebleau,
2014. Exhibition view.

J.G

You also use an inverted image of
your family coat of arms in the show.



Family jewel is an ironic reference to a courtship tradition that my father told me about. [He shows me the golden ring on his left hand]. Here, you see, I'm not married so my ring is positioned so I can point the crest to you to "seduce you". When someone with a signet ring marries, he has to turn his ring upside down to keep the crest to himself and he can no longer show the ring to court someone. It's also a sexual and carnivalesque reference. During the carnival, everything is upside down, inverted.

E.G.D.B



Scepters (series of 12), 2014.
Aluminium, 160 cm.



J.G

I have a final question about the sceptres. How do they relate to the hunt and to courtship?

→ *Sceptres* are more closely linked to courtship than to hunting. I got the idea of making the hands after seeing “La Fistinière”, a quite famous documentary about a fist-fucking hostel in Bretagne. Apart from this very particular reference, I consider the hands as tools that the viewer can use for whatever he/she wants. The visitor can point, pick, throw, penetrate, protest, slap... Every hand, right or left, carries the family ring as a stamp, a clue that the hands are lifelike casts of my own hands. The previous *sceptres* I created were made of silicone, but the ones in the show are made of aluminium. The metal versions look stronger and more like objects or instruments. The gesture of every hand implies a way to carry the stick to use it as a tool. In the space the hands also have a great dynamic value. Like the arrows in the wall drawing, they can point in specific directions. *Sceptres* are also caricatures of the hand of justice, a short sceptre that was given to French kings on their coronation. It symbolized the judicial power of the king. Like wearing a cardboard crown, carrying a sceptre is a way of enacting the role of power, of turning everything topsy-turvy. Would you care for another Bloody Mary? ♥

E.G.D.B

OF THE HORNE THE DANCE

Eric Giraudet de Boudemange (1983) graduated in 2007 from the National School of Fine Arts in Paris (ENSB-A) and extended his studies at Le Fresnoy, Studio national des arts contemporains until 2011. He went on to spend a two-year residency at the Rijksakademie from 2012 to 2014. His work was shown in various institutions and art spaces such as Centre Pompidou, Fondation Ricard and Fondation Calouste Gulbenkian in Paris, Jean Tinguely's Cyclop in Milly la Forêt, De Appel and Galerie Van Gelder in Amsterdam, Kunsthuis SYB in Beetsterzwaag and Galerie Walburger/Wouters in Brussels.

Julia Geerlings (1985) is a freelance curator and writer based in Amsterdam and Paris. As an Art History student, Geerlings completed a Bachelor's degree at the Freie Universität Berlin in 2010, and a Master's degree at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam in 2012. She worked from 2011 to 2014 as an assistant director for Jeanine Hofland Contemporary Art. Geerlings writes for Metropolis M, Tubelight and Museumtijdschrift on a regular basis. She recently finished a series of exhibitions at Galerie van Gelder and is currently curating the performance program *Nachtelijke Dwalingen* at the Oude Kerk. Geerlings is also a curator and member of Thomas Open, the art committee at the Thomaskerk.

T&D, is a Paris based design studio created by Delhia Dondain and Tom Bücher in 2014. Surrounded by artist friends, they soon started to collaborate with numerous art spaces such as Moinsun (artist-run space in Paris), La Biennale de Paris, Le Quartier, Quimpert, La Villa Arson, Nice. T&D also specializes in art direction and editorial design for various press groups: Condé Nast, Prisma Media, MK2 Trois Couleurs...

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TEXT Julia Geerlings

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chez ton père.
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Dépot légal?

