



michèle didier

PRESS RELEASE

UNTEL

LA BOÎTE UNTEL (archives 1975-1980)

The exhibition will open on Thursday May 23, 2013 from 6 pm to 9 pm, in presence of the artists.

The exhibition will take place from May 24 to August 31, 2013.

Summary

UNTEL - p. 2

LA BOÎTE UNTEL and its exhibition - p. 3

Images - p. 4 to 12

Biographical chronology - p. 13

Contact - p. 14

mfc-michèle didier

66, rue Notre-Dame de Nazareth, 75003 Paris

info@micheledidier.com - www.micheledidier.com

Phone +33 (0)1 71 97 49 13 - Mobile +33 (0)6 09 94 13 46 - Fax +32 (0)2 374 75 98



UNTEL

Happenings and joyful provocation are words that would quickly summarize UNTEL's actions. But what does this anonymous appellation refer to? (UNTEL is a French word that can't be translated into English, it means something like « unnamed, unidentified ».) Who are those people that can't be named?

UNTEL is a group of artists consisting originally of three French artists, Jean-Paul Albinet, Philippe Cazal and Alain Snyers. (Wilfrid Rouff replaces Alain Snyers when he leaves the group in 1978.) During its short but passionate existence, from 1975 to 1980, the group has led numerous actions in the public space: reconstitution of Manet's famous *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* at the Grand Palais for the Salon des Artistes français, or a fake fashion show at the Louvre showing "tourist" costumes, and many polemical interventions in urban environment through whole France. The common denominator of the group's actions is the examination of the day-to-day life, a social and political questioning, very close to the revolutionary ideas of May 1968 and situationism.

UNTEL leads these actions as if they are investigations, inspired by the day-to-day life, and exposes the banality and the insignificance of our every-day life together with our contradictions and alienations.

In order to express their ideas, UNTEL uses all possible supports and techniques they have access to: photography, film, sound, environments, gesture, corporal actions, objects, etc. Photography and video are two techniques they most appreciate and moreover, these are techniques that perfectly adapt to the nature of their work. Indeed, in order to be able to preserve their interventions, they systematically have to document them. The photo or film archive created during UNTEL's existence, offers a rich documentation that helps us recall their adventures, as concretely as necessary to understand their work. Therefore, UNTEL's work can be considered through their video, photo or sound archive, as well as through the "accessories" they imagined and produced in order to activate their urban adventures in the most relevant way.

Today, now that almost forty years have passed since their first projects, UNTEL's action still seems extremely contemporary and very relevant considering what the three fellows smilingly exposed about the present reality.

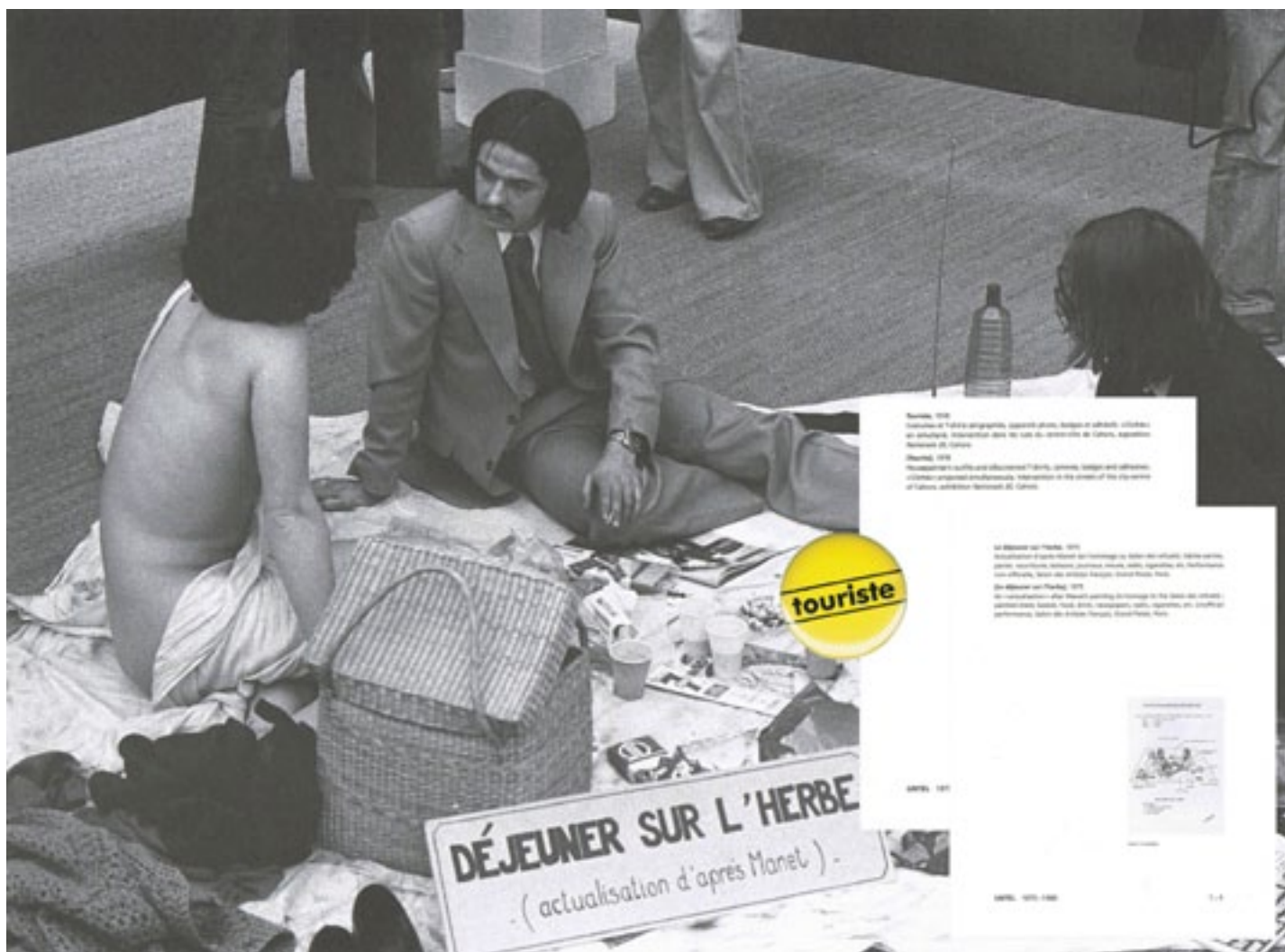
LA BOÎTE UNTEL and its exhibition

In close collaboration with UNTEL (Albinet, Cazal, Syners), mfc-michèle didier publishes today *LA BOÎTE UNTEL* (THE UNTEL BOX), a new edition limited to 24 copies. *LA BOÎTE UNTEL* compiles a series of testimonies of the group's actions led in the second half of the seventies, providing a coherent collection of objects and documents. Carefully collected in the box, there are: index cards, historical articles and critic's reviews, flyers, the famous inepad "PLUS RIEN À VENDRE TOUT À ÉCHANGER" (Nothing for sale any more, everything for trade), or the ironic "TOURISTE" badge, one of their favorite accessories. We can also find the soundtrack of the environment *Vie Quotidienne* (Everyday life), presented for the first time in 1977 at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris and today exhibited in the rooms dedicated to contemporary art of the Musée d'Art moderne et contemporain de Strasbourg; but also several videos testifying to a selection of the most striking interventions they made in the urban area, like the performance of *Le déjeuner sur l'herbe* in 1975. The last element that hasn't been mentioned until now is the paperweight that is produced exceptionally without an original prototype, unlike the other objects and documents of *LA BOÎTE UNTEL*. This object refers to a marble memorial that UNTEL placed in Le Jardin des poètes in Paris in May 1981, in order to signify the end of their activity. "UNTEL et pas d'autres" (literally: UNTEL and no other) was carved in it. It is the lost witness of the end of UNTEL's adventures, one of the rare undocumented actions of the group. But thanks to very strong memories, it was possible to reproduce it.

395 index cards are preserved in *LA BOÎTE UNTEL*. They come from the catalogue *UNTEL, 1975-1980 ARCHIVES* and propose, in a series of successive chapters, a photographic documentation for each intervention led during the group's existence. These 395 unbound cards, coming with an instruction sheet, provide an UNTEL retrospective, creating an "exhibition kit" the same way you have a furniture kit. The series of index cards, along with a "shelving kit", constitutes a special mfc-michèle didier edition limited to 8 copies.

It will be deployed in the whole space of the gallery during the exhibition of *LA BOÎTE UNTEL*. The index cards are installed on the shelves, following the instructions delivered with the box, the videos are played on loop, while the soundtrack of *Vie Quotidienne* brings the visitor to another time, the time of the seventies' artistic activism. Just the same way as every action led by the group, *LA BOÎTE UNTEL* comes to life every day of the exhibition.

This exhibition is also the occasion to show two historical installations by the group: *La ville 365 jours par an*, 1977 and *Faits divers*, 1979. The work *La ville 365 jours par an* (The city 365 days per year) consists of 56 ordinary urban photographs installed like in a patchwork, creating an impressive ensemble, associated with the following text: "Semaine calme et sans histoire à la bourse de paris, où les cours, d'un vendredi à l'autre, sont restés pratiquement stables." (Calm and uneventful week at the Paris stock market where the prices, from one Friday to another, remained almost stable.) *Faits divers* (literally: Trivia) gathers 44 photographs of the group's interventions, creating an iconographic memory of UNTEL's work. Each photograph reveals a note saying "Fait divers" and the title and the date of the action. Through this work, UNTEL tells its own story. UNTEL documents its own artistic activity and applies to himself the recurring modus operandi of their work: documenting, archiving, and describing the everyday experiences. The propinquity of UNTEL's creation process with this idea of experience has led Ben Vautier to include UNTEL in the program of La Maison du Douce in Blois, France, in the spring of 2013. This way, he historically designated UNTEL as post-Fluxus. The idea of an art that first and foremost has to be experienced and lived, seems indeed in line with UNTEL's considerations.



LA BOÎTE UNTEL

UNTEL

1975-2013

Excerpts of the box' content (3 index cards *UNTEL*, 1975-1980, *ARCHIVES* and "TOURISTE" badge)

Limited edition of 24 numbered and signed copies and 10 artist proofs

Produced and published by mfc-michèle didier in 2013

©2013 UNTEL and mfc-michèle didier



LE BONHEUR pour vous, qu'est-ce que c'est?, 1975
Banner and survey

Performance *Registre des utopies* with the Mike Westbrook Brass Band
Intervention in the streets of the city centre of Bordeaux, exhibition Sigma 11, Bordeaux



350 m d'informations, 1976
 Roll of blank newspaper. Intervention at rue de la Barre, Mâcon



350 m d'images, 1976

Roll of blank newspaper, silkscreened in one piece, graphic material made available to the public.

Développement/Arrêt/Fixation

Urban intervention involving the public, during the 7th Edition of the Rencontres internationales de la photographie, Arles



Touriste, 1978

Dyptich of photographs.

Costumes and silkscreened T-shirts, photo camera, badges and tape.

Clichés en simultané

Intervention in the city centre of Cahors, Exhibition by Nationale 20, Cahors



Fashion Show, 1978

Costumes and silkscreened T-shirts, badges, presentation and commenting of the *Collection Touriste*

Performance, Grande galerie, Musée du Louvre, Paris

Presentation text of the *Collection Touriste*:

In preview / UNTEL presents today / in the Grande Galerie at the Musée du Louvre / his very colorful collection / « TOURIST » /
 JEAN-PAUL / N°1 / white jacket / fitted pair of white pants / repetitive pattern / carefully composed graphic design / cherry undershirt / close-fitted neckline / harmonised with the costume /
 N°2 / PHILIPPE / wears a beige ensemble / very comfortable / printed with bright and dynamic colors / casual vest / with buttons on the front / straight fit pants / T-shirt, apricot color /
 Le 3 / WILFRID / is wearing a very simple white suit / vest with side seam pockets / sport pants / a polo shirt 100% cotton / short sleeves / polychrome prints / the piece stays very young and original /
 In the city and during week ends / these very light outfits / wearable at any time / remain nonetheless very classical /
 The badges and accessories / are also a creation by UNTEL



Socles, 1978

Three actions (10 min each),
with the complicity of Nadine Alcan,
Painted plywood pedestals, UNTEL markings on 4 sides.

Changement de direction

Performance in a pedestrian street of the city centre of Chalon-sur-Saône.



La ville 365 jours par an, 1977

56 black & white photographs on galvanized steel

495 x 335 x 1,2 mm each

Text associated with the photographs:

Semaine calme et sans histoire à la bourse de paris , où les cours, d'un vendredi à l'autre, sont restés pratiquement stables.
(Calm and uneventful week at the Paris stock market where the prices, from one Friday to another, remained almost stable.)



Faits divers, 1979
 44 photographs, plastification
 390 x 550 x 1,2 mm each

Biographical Chronology

1948 - Birth of Philippe Cazal in La Redorte, town located in the department l'Aude (France).

1951 - Birth of Alain Snyers in Bukavu (Democratic republic of Congo).

1951 - Birth of Wilfrid Rouff in Paris (France).

1954 - Birth of Jean-Paul Albinet in Albi (France).

1969 - Cazal enters ENSAD (École nationale supérieure des arts décoratifs de Paris), (department of visual communication).

1972 - Snyers enters ENSAD (department of painting).

1973 - Albinet enters ENSAD (department of sculpture).

1974 - Jean-Paul Albinet introduces the idea of a artistic group and starts thinking about the project with a few friends from ENSAD. He meets Alain Snyers and together they define a group that they name UNTEL.

1975 - First appearance of the group under name UNTEL at the salon de la Jeune Peinture in May 1975 (5 students of ENSAD, including Albinet and Snyers). During this year, Philippe Cazal joins them. The group formalize as UNTEL, group of 3 members, during the Sigma 11 Festival in Bordeaux.

1978 - Alain Snyers leaves UNTEL and develops a work based on urban interventions and sociological art, in solo or in duo with Hervé Fischer in the Netherlands, in Germany and in Québec. Wilfrid Rouff, who initially was the photographer of the group, becomes a regular member of the group.

1980 - As curator, Philippe Cazal presents the exhibition Une idée en l'air in New York. This was the group's last exhibition held during its activity. UNTEL officially declares the dissolution of the group.

1981 - The group places a memorial plate with inscription « UNTEL et pas d'autres » in the jardin des Poètes in Paris to signify the end of UNTEL's activity.



For any further information, please contact:

mfc-michèle didier

info@micheledidier.com

+33 (0)1 71 97 49 13

www.micheledidier.com

66 rue Notre-Dame de Nazareth, 75003 Paris

Open from Tuesday to Saturday from 12 am to 7 pm

Subway: République, Strasbourg Saint-Denis, Arts et Métiers