



michèle didier

PRESS RELEASE

ROBERT BARRY
SOMETHING IN A BOX

and some other things in boxes

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UNTEL

The exhibition will take place from January 10 to February 22, 2014

The opening will be held on Thursday January 9, 2014
from 6 to 9 pm, in presence of the artists

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SOMETHING IN A BOX

Robert Barry is one of the four artists who are considered by art history as the founders of conceptual art: Robert Barry, Douglas Huebler, Joseph Kosuth and Lawrence Weiner. Critic Gabriel Guerci even uses the acronym BHKW* to name the four artists together, the same as with the Paris-based art group BMPT.** More than the singularity of their works, it's perhaps the way they display them that distinguishes them from other artists from their time, for example through the catalog-exhibitions held by Seth Siegelaub such as the *January Show* in 1969: the dematerialisation of the exhibition, and thus of art, is one of these artists' main concerns.

Robert Barry's ambition to discard the object of art in order to concentrate on the idea is particularly strong. His interest for questions of perception bring him to the renouncement of visuality. He adopts a radical position, developing invisible works, in series such as *Inert Gas* in 1969, or conceiving mental works, which are based on thoughts, such as the series of *Psychic: All the things I know but of which I am not at the moment thinking: 1:36 pm; June 15, 1969*.

Hence, Robert Barry exclusively uses language to render his psychic works public. — *All the things I know but of which I am not at the moment thinking* — This is one of the most famous *Statements* made by Robert Barry on June 15, 1969 at 1:36 pm. This work only exists thanks to its formulation, its time frame is even recorded in the formulation itself to testify to its existence; later, the statement would be displayed on the gallery walls and materialized with vinyl letters. The exhibition *Live in your Head: When Attitudes Become Forms****, quickly appeared decisive, revealing the main questioning of contemporary art. (cf. Jack Burnham, *Alice's Head. Reflexions on Conceptual Art.*****)

SOMETHING IN A BOX gives the opportunity to replay on another scale — 10,2 x 15,2 cm — the measurements of the card — here 62 — that were distributed about forty years ago. We are confronted with a box made of walnut wood, containing 62 index cards. Each card of *SOMETHING IN A BOX* proposes a different statement by Robert Barry — 62 Statements. The first one introduces the 61 following: SOMETHING THAT ... and then 61 statements that are supposed to define SOMETHING which essence remains irrevocably unknown. Reading this new text by Robert Barry won't change that.

For the presentation of *SOMETHING IN A BOX* at mfc-michèle didier gallery, the 62 index cards will be presented out of their box, forming a wall frieze. This display calls to mind Barry's first studio in New York, which had been previously used by a religious group, that had left behind biblical quotes painted on the wall. Displayed this way, the artist's statements will be illegible. Present, but nonetheless invisible. Something in a box will remain something on the walls... Nothing more nothing less.

* Gabriel Guerci, «Formés dans la résistance: Barry, Huebler, Kosuth et Weiner contre la presse américaine», *L'art conceptuel, une perspective*, exhibition catalogue, Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris, 1989, p. 65-73.

** BMPT is the acronym of the name of the association Buren Mosset Parmentier Toroni created in December 1966 by the four artists: Daniel Buren, Olivier Mosset, Michel Parmentier and Niele Toroni.

*** Famous exhibition conceived by Harald Szeemann presented in 1969 in Bern and reconstituted at the Venice Prada Foundation in 2013 for the occasion of the International Biennale of Contemporary Art.

**** Jack Burnham, «Alice's head, Reflexions on Conceptual Art» in *Artforum*, Vol. 8, n°6 (February 1970), p. 40-43.

Robert Barry

Robert Barry (born 1936 in New York) is part of the first generation of conceptual artists, together with Lawrence Weiner, Joseph Kosuth, On Kawara, Douglas Huebler... In Europe, Robert Barry has taken part in major conceptual art exhibitions since the end of the sixties: in 1969 *Op losse schroeven* in Amsterdam, *When Attitudes Become Form* in Bern, *Konzeption* in Leverkusen and *Prospect 69* in Düsseldorf.

He then participated in most of the conceptual art exhibitions and his work was shown at the most important international contemporary art exhibitions: the Paris Biennale in 1971, Documenta in Kassel in 1972, the Venice Biennale in 1972, Contemporanea in Rome in 1973.

Amongst the conceptual artists who work especially with the notion of language, Robert Barry holds an important place between visual art, poetry and philosophy. Conceptual art is – much more than a revolution of visual forms in modern art – a whole new thinking of the function of the art and the artists in an evolving cultural context. In the definition of this new apprehension of art that the ideas and the art works by Robert Barry bring an essential contribution.

After he has systematically examined various physical phenomena from 1968 and 1969, experimenting electromagnetic fields, inert gasses, ultrasound electromagnetic frequencies (*Inert Gas Series*, 1969), Robert Barry works since more than forty years with words and thoughts, that he spreads or screens methodically on various media and surfaces: paper, canvas, mirrors, walls, floor...

and some other things in boxes

Before Robert Barry's new publication, mfc-michèle didier has already published a series of artist's boxes. The display of *SOMETHING IN A BOX* is the perfect occasion for the publisher to present four of these boxes and their respective "things".

Philippe Cazal

Factice, 1995

Factice is a box designed for containing an assortment of «virgin» media: one virgin videoK7; one virgin CD; one virgin audioK7; one virgin ektachrome; one virgin floppy disk. The excerpt of this media objects - today almost all obsolete - appears as a programmed archeology of the press agency of the nineties.

Braco Dimitrijevic

Parc Event / P.P. Rubens - Gerda Bollen, 1992

The work *Parc Event / P.P. Rubens - Gerda Bollen* is contained in a slipcase, which is paperbound, embossed and lined with red silk. It contains two copperplates with the names of P.P. Rubens and Gerda Bollen. Inside the upper part of the box, a photograph is inlaid underneath the silk lining, showing an old man sitting on a bench somewhere in Parc Royal, Brussels. On the back of the bench, the two same copperplates are to be seen, as reminder of the presence of P.P. Rubens and Gerda Bollen, who got together on the occasion of a fictitious event whose circumstances remain mysterious.

Paul-Armand Gette

Nympha Nocturna ssp. Rosea P.-A. G., 1995

One sexy pink and black panties has been trapped into an insect box and gets the name of *Nympha Nocturna* as if it was a specimen of natural species. This work expresses both the artist's interest in nature and his fascination for erotic patterns.

UNTEL

LA BOÎTE UNTEL, 2013

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 A VENDRE TOUT A ECHANGER" (Nothing for sale any more, everything for trade), or the ironic "touriste" badge, one of their favorite accessories.

Images for the press



Robert Barry

SOMETHING IN A BOX (excerpt)

Wooden box containing 62 index cards (10,2 x 15,2 cm)

Limited edition of 24 numbered and signed copies and 6 artist's proofs

Produced and published in 2014 by mfc-michèle didier

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MAY CHANGE YOUR APPROACH TO LIFE

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Philippe Cazal

Factice

25 x 34,5 x 9 cm

Limited edition of 8 numbered and signed copies and 4 artist's proofs

Produced and published in 1995 by mfc-michèle didier

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Braco Dimitrijevic

Parc Event / P.P. Rubens - Gerda Bollen

20 x 28 x 4 cm

Limited edition of 8 numbered and signed copies and 4 artist's proofs

Produced and published in 1992 by mfc-michèle didier

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Paul-Armand Gette

Nympha Nocturna ssp. Rosea P-A. G.

26 x 39 x 5,5 cm

Limited edition of 8 numbered and signed copies and 4 artist's proofs

Produced and published in 1995 by mfc-michèle didier

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UNTEL (Albinet, Cazal, Snyers)

LA BOÎTE UNTEL

The box measures 365 x 300 x 240 mm

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

Produced and published in 2013 by mfc-michèle didier

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OR IMAGE REQUESTS
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