

François Piquet
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"Utopia of liberation"

Communal, social and utopian Art



"I would have liked people to remove their skin, and that under their skin there would have been someone else. Obviously, it was difficult, thus I decided to use the metaphor of the straitjacket as a social skin."

"Utopie de la liberation" – Opus 1 : le pouvoir

<https://vimeo.com/114432996> (VidéoHD, 6min38)

"Utopie de la liberation" – Opus 2 : l'étranger

<https://vimeo.com/116570269> (VidéoHD, 4min56)

"Utopie de la liberation" – Opus 3 : la race

<https://vimeo.com/193448958> (VidéoHD, 8min02)

"Utopie de la liberation" – Opus 4 : la réparation

<https://vimeo.com/116570269> (VidéoHD, 9min55)

A chosen community

When he offers people he meets (during an exhibition, a party, or fortuitously) to participate in these videos, François Piquet offers them to join a community. Not a predetermined community (based on their origins, their skin colour, or any other communitarian eligibility criteria), but a chosen, desired community, based on one single criterion: formally those who participate in the video, and more broadly those who choose to take off the straitjacket. In full knowledge of the facts.

A utopian frame-within-the frame construction

To emancipate from any predetermined social suit or to accept more or less against one's will is, of course, a utopia. One can wish to free himself from the catalogue in which he was registered, the stereotypes of construction, the look of others, and the perception of one's self picture that they induce. But it is hard to imagine the reconstruction of the entire reading systems, vicious circle of social categorisation.

However, this utopia of release can be chosen, lived, practiced, and experienced locally for a while. "Think global, act local".

When they are wearing the straitjackets, the participants physically experience discomfort, constraint, hindrance. They also feel the huge relief following the end of this momentary oppression. They take part in the liberation. They remove their skin, publicly. They demonstrate it. And you can join them.

Then the performative process used for the framing is, of course, fragmented for the sake of communication, inevitably. The utopia is integrated in the catalogue of visible formats, of the choice of shape. But in a reversal of circumstances, the need for successful and standards compliant communication, finally serves utopia: the trick of a double straitjacket (a lie intended to serve the utopian message), the desired illusion of perfect link becomes a unique criterion for the editing. Therefore, the order of the participants (who is following who in the video) is merely dictated by their body movements, escaping from any communitarian classification (age, colour, place, etc.)

The taste for encounters. It is the impression given by this video. The curiosity to discover the next person, his behaviour, his personality, his peculiarity. The rest is soon disappearing.

The rest?

Trying to decipher the artist's classification system (predetermined or chosen), to see the staging, to trip up the utopia. The discourse, the interviews, the theories of sound tracks, end up to be nothing more than resonances, surprises, jokes.

The white background, the white clothes participants are taking off, in this constant round trip between utopia and standardized format.

Work in progress

This project is a work in progress aiming at integrating more and more people into "Utopia of liberation". Today, it includes at about 140 people for about 30 minutes.

During the shows, the videos are projected in a continuous loop.

The straitjackets are hanged next to the videos, on a white wall, some masks are available for those wishing to participate anonymously. People who want to participate in the video, this utopian community, can be recorded on the spot by the artist, or by a possible operator. They will be integrated later in the video, for the next presentations.

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