

## THOMAS DANE GALLERY

Jo-ey Tang, 'Jean-Luc Moulène', *ArtForum*, 4 November 2016



Left: Jean-Luc Moulène and Object Sens Function, *Bleu de costume*, 2016, cotton and polyester. Installation view at Bazar de l'Hotel de Ville, Paris.  
Right: Cover of Jean-Luc Moulène's *Quiconque*, 2016.

*The haunting photographs and sculptures of Paris-based artist Jean-Luc Moulène are material sleights of hand, vibrational time-space objects. Here, in a “discontinuous interview,” he speaks about inhabiting fields outside art as well as his “retrospective of protocols,” featuring thirty new pieces, which is on view at the Centre Pompidou in Paris through February 20, 2017.*

Sophie Duplaix, the curator of this show, has come to my studio every year for the past ten years. To answer the question of an institutional retrospective, I originally asked to do it anonymously. So, I did two things for culture and communication. One is *Bleu de costume*, a unisex suit, which is being sold at the department store BHV. The other is *Quiconque*, a newspaper that I produced with graphic designer Marc Touitou.

*Retro-Prospective / capital is attached to names / That was not possible / An agreement between states / customs and etiquette / a protocol is an abstraction, the speed of the thought looking for its material /*

The blue in *Bleu de costume* is derived from the traditional French worker's jacket. The suit is a link between the master who makes decisions and the workers—fit for business negotiations, as well as production in the factories. It is, however, not a political statement. *Quiconque* contains eighty-eight full-page images that I took over the past five years in different cities, from Paris to New York to Beirut to Mexico, printed on the same paper stock—eighty grams and white—as *Le Monde Diplomatique*, the monthly newspaper. One hundred thirty-one thousand copies are placed on eighty-one pallets outside the exhibition space.

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*I don't take pictures because I like this or that, but to know what it looks like / always out of territory, always migrant / solutions in the world. I observe, compare, and check. / an activity of knowledge, an exact chronology of something being known*

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In the exhibition there are two new big pieces: one that looks like concrete and the other made with automotive surfaces—like everywhere in the world. *Bi-face* is made out of two big surfaces with automotive finishes, one side red, the other side blue. *No, no, no* is an assemblage of three huge concrete objects: a tetrapod that has been used in seaside towns since the 1960s as a breakwater; a sixteen-foot-tall wall similar to the separation barrier in Palestine; and a barrier like the kind you can find along highways.

*Against sound / Against waves / Against entry / on pedestals almost twenty new artworks at body size / bones – cars – girls – Mr. Clean – coffee cups / Not belong. As a child, I also grew up in Spain and Morocco before returning to France. At that moment, I shared nothing with what it means to be French. I still don't. No belonging /*

Often I do things without any practical knowledge. I make one piece and move on to another one. I don't need to dominate over materials. My objects are surfaces, with no inside or outside, only holes. Through the holes there are other surfaces. I am more interested in the water running unstable at the peak of the mountains than in the brook. In the show, some objects are done really rough, others by the finest fabricators, such as from the Coubertin foundry or handmade ceramics from Guadalajara, Mexico. I abandoned early on the idea that art is a personal expression. I engage in *pression* (pressure), not expression.

*My objects block or guide you / point outward / the viewers find their way back / become aware of energy blocks as in butoh, to be conscious of their own condition / The world is going fast. Let's go slow. I will die, but I am not getting older / I am getting something else.*

— *As told to Jo-ey Tang*

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