

(...) With ***L'art de tourner en rond (The Art of Going Around in Circles)*** (2002) Pierre Courtois managed to evoke the roundabout without chasing his tail. Physically, it is composed of an old merry-go-round from a scrap metal dealer. The artist transformed it into a giant wheel that turns around indefinitely. On the flat edge of the circle, 150 mini cyclists are in fact condemned to cycle around until the end of time. But the work is misleading. In general, the artist had presented us with works that seemed very serious but were in fact comically foolish. Here this is the exact opposite. The work makes us laugh, but the message is dead serious. The work's true ambition is hidden beneath the faded finery of the comic. *L'art de tourner en rond* presents us with a philosophical debate on the ridiculous nature of habits. For Pierre Courtois, the myth of Sisyphus meets the Tour de France. At the same time, Pierre Courtois reminds us the extent to which the circle has always exercised a strong fascination on our minds. It calls for perfection, movement or the passing of time. It is also an instrument of measure, divided up graphically into 'degrees' or 'minutes'. The work cultivates subtle antinomies: the circle is imposing (six meters in diameter), but the cyclists are ridiculously small. Maybe *L'Art de tourner en rond* also reflects on the power of will. In fact, while 149 white sheep pedal in the same direction, a black one is going the other way. This work and its going around in circles do not lack direction, to say the least.

(...)

Olivier Duquenne, 2012

Extracted from the monograph *Traits d'union*, Pierre Courtois, Published(Edited) Luc Pire, on 201