

“The space odyssey”

The works of this decade invite us into a new 'space odyssey'. From that moment on, the spaces to be conquered would be imposing. As for the sites in which they were installed, they were sometimes monumental. The exhibition celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of the CAP group was a dream opportunity for Pierre Courtois to present a work which synthesised three decades of research. Imposing in size and complex in its resonances, **Nature-couture (Nature-Sewing)** ⁽²⁰⁰²⁾ is a utopian machine set in front of a giant sewing pattern. The background panel alone is two meters tall by seven meters thirty wide. The Maison de la Culture of the city of Namur immediately presented the fabulous device, doubled up as an imposing diorama. Was it an assault engine? Above all, *Nature-couture* led to a consideration on the 'trait d'union' (hyphen). Was it an agricultural tool? It essentially saw and reaped through thirty years of devotion to examining the measurable. But let us linger a moment on the work's title. Is the artist surreptitiously telling us that sewing is intimate even to our nature? A nature whose unpredictable destiny is reached at times in a continual line, and at others in a dotted one? A nature which leaves traces in order to cheat death and sews up seams to ward off solitude? For Pierre Courtois, the stars are like a paper milky way for the pattern of a dress. As for nature in its topographical sense, he can only conceive it as defined by the measurement of acres. The machine exhibited in the Maison de la Culture of the city of Namur was a horse in search for its Troy. The panel at the back contained both fabric and surveying marks. It was as much a giant airplane's wing as the mapping of a terrain. The machine, equipped with a sight, is therefore located at the incredible juncture between earth and sky.

(...)

Olivier Duquenne, 2012

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