

The aerial sculpture **Le grand vol (The Great Flight)** (1989) is of a similar register, in which sublimation and strangeness are joint sources of fascination. The work was created with tightly stretched pieces of military tarpaulin. The unusual material appealed to the artist because of its natural connection to cloth; the corset, the trace and the surface. This strange bat suspended in the air could also suggest the flight of a bird of prey. The aerial aspect is fundamental to Pierre Courtois, and even on ground level his art points to the stars. The outside of the sculpture also reminds of the Renaissance treaties, in which mechanics and biology were appropriated to give birth mad utopias. It is probably for this reason that *Le grand vol* is so similar to Leonardo Da Vinci's famous flying machine. For the artist, this sculpture symbolises the 'liberated' content of his boxes. As such, it creates a synthesis of all the systems of correspondence found in his preceding boxes. Emancipated to the very limit, freed from any frame, the sculpture throws itself into the air like a hyphen (a trait d'union) between the earth and the sky.

In the second half of the 1980s, the farm at Sorinne-la-Longue began to take a more important place in the artist's work. It would soon reach a point where it became inseparable from his creations. It is as though the soul of the house pushed the man to experience the mysteries of its stones, as if it had led him towards the quivers of its walls and the secrets of its gardens. From that moment, Pierre Courtois' boxes would become increasingly 'totemic'.

**Olivier Duquenne, 2012**

Extracted from the monograph *Traits d'union*, Pierre Courtois, Published(Edited) Luc Pire, on 2012