

La mise en boîte (Set in a box) (1975) shows comical absurdity at various levels. A cosmonaut in a suit is covered with pockets curiously made of blue denim. The space voyager sees himself in direct connection with the giant overhanging denim pocket. With Pierre Courtois, visual jokes can be found everywhere. For example the mannequins piled up in a cage on the right visibly evoke the 'setting in a box' of the title. Below, a photograph of the surface of the moon traced with small crosses (common to this type of photograph) reminds us of the stitches of the giant jeans pocket. On the left, a highly ambiguous image evokes both a motorway and a stretch of cloth, or even a signpost. The title of this collage-drawing is particularly prophetic. 'Setting in a box' would soon become Pierre Courtois' most productive and monomaniac activity. On the other hand, the texts sprinkled throughout his works are only important from a graphic perspective. Placing too much importance on their 'meaning' will surely lead us to fall into the trap which had been set in the box!

Olivier Duquenne, 2012

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