

Correspondences

February 1 – May 5, 2013

The Espace culturel Louis Vuitton is pleased to announce the opening of its twentieth exhibition: *Correspondences*. The primary focus of the exhibition is Mail Art, and its aim is to bring together works by creators from different generations with different sensibilities who have all chosen to use the post as an artistic medium. Whereas from the 1950s to the 1970s this democratic "attitude" was part of a desire to circumvent the art market and distance oneself from institutions, artists from the generations that followed saw this media as a means to experiment with ways that would allow them to renegotiate both spatial and temporal references as they pertain to works of art that are frequently interactive in nature.

In this exhibition, several ramifications of Mail Art will be associated. The first is historical, and gives a major place to pioneering artist Ray Johnson whose work has rarely been shown in France. Johnson invented the *New York Correspondence School* and at the end of the 1950s began his body of work based on letters to which he asked friends to put finishing touches. Through this process, he gave a voice to artists such as Eleanor Antin, Alighiero Boetti and Jan Dibbets who took onboard this trend synonymous with a reproducible approach that was for the most part free-of-charge, thereby setting itself outside all traditional conventions. However, it was not only the art market and the exhibition venues that were hard hit by Mail Art. This was also true with regards to the status of creator, destined here to be shared (as incarnated by the work of Vittorio Santoro) or even wiped out all together (as seen in that of artist Danh Võ) within the network of simple or complex correspondence established by senders who were in reality dependent on addressees.

The art of correspondence is intimately connected to the idea of a *network*; a network comprised of artists, friends, or anonymous people whose members are brought together by a simple letter or package, the contents of which (occasionally veiled as in the case of Stephen Antonakos, or not) are often adapted to meet packaging constraints. Eugenio Dittborn and Walead Beshty displayed much inventiveness in this regard. The art of correspondence can also intersect with other activities, notably those of a professional nature, as demonstrated by Kurt Rylsavy, thereby allowing artists to bring art into daily life.

The Espace culturel Louis Vuitton sought to give carte blanche to two artists: videographer Clarisse Hahn and sculptor Guillaume Leblon, each of whom respond in their own way to the myriad facets and possibilities of an art form that, no matter what supporters of the digital era may say, is as relevant and original as ever.

Regardless of the reasons for writing the letters that form this correspondence, and the repercussions they may have had, they invite us to travel through time and space where senders and recipients, works of art and spectator/ readers, are united at the heart of a common creative dynamic.

Curator: Erik Verhagen

Selected artists: Eleanor Antin, Stephen Antonakos, Walead Beshty, Alighiero Boetti, Jan Dibbets, Eugenio Dittborn, Clarisse Hahn, Ray Johnson, Guillaume Leblon, Kurt Rylsavy, Vittorio Santoro, Danh Võ

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Since 2008, the Espace culturel Louis Vuitton has organized free access visits and creative workshops for children and young people.

These encounters allow schools, individuals and associations to experience contemporary art in an original way.

Open Monday to Saturday from 12pm to 7pm, Sunday from 11am to 7pm.

Open on public holidays, with the exception of 25th December, 1st January and 1st May.

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