

CAC Brétigny

Contemporary Art Center
of National Interest
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The Weavers

Xavier Antin
With the collaboration of
Julien Jassaud and
Camille Pageard

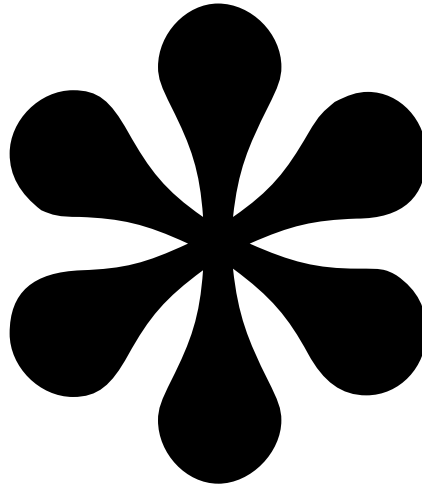
Curator: Céline Poulin

14.01—07.03.20

Opening
Saturday January 18th
from 5 pm

Press release [1–3]

Free shuttle is available. Pick
up at 5 pm at 104 avenue
de France, 75013 Paris
(the Bibliothèque François
Mitterrand metro stop).
Request at reservation@
cacbretigny.com



More than an exhibition, “The Weavers” is an experiment, the temporary outcome of a project launched almost a year ago by Xavier Antin, an artist-in-residence at CAC Brétigny. A text-producing machine, a political experiment, and an arrangement of sculptures in space at one and the same time, “The Weavers” reflects the turning point Antin’s work took several years ago. Fueled by a range of readings and the artist’s grounding in several disciplines, Antin’s practice initially grew along two lines of development, experiencing the production processes of visual and scriptural machines, while also reflecting on the narrative potential of forms. This latter aspect takes shape around a pre-existing story that is linked to the sociopolitical questions of production and is embodied in formal creations, whether images, sculptures, installations, or publications. Antin also began to produce objects, which spring from his research into the industrial manufacturing processes of images and writing, which become themselves the supports of a future story. The narrative is freed and left up to the viewer, the interpreter of the work.

Interpretation and authorship are patterns that run through Antin’s growing body of work and in “The Weavers” these recurrent themes are given a new development. Brought together in the CAC Brétigny exhibition venue, a group of sculptures equipped with AI forms a community that is both a political ecosystem and the site of an experiment in collective writing. The programmer Julien Jassaud, the art historian and publisher Camille Pageard, and the artist himself configured Antin’s sculptures to interact with each other according to preprogrammed scripts that are nevertheless fairly elliptical; the pieces will thus produce throughout the run of the show a narrative made up of several voices. The book that will result from the exhibition will be a transcription of these exchanges, that is, seven weeks of daily discussions between the sculptures, which are called *, **, /, ¶, {, ∞ and). The programming of the sculptures anticipates as far as possible the materiality of the text and the voices it represents. The intention of the writing dissolves and takes shape between what is determined by the tuning of the writing machines, the quotations they draw from a collection of works that allow them to learn French, and the language interactions taking place between them at that particular moment.

It is the group of works itself that answers to the name *The Weavers*, a reference to workers in the textile industry, who have historically been linked to the development of industrialization and the long struggle to improve society and the lot of the working class (the canuts in France, the Luddites in England, etc.). But it is also the name of the weaver bird, an avian species that lives in large groups and is innately able to weave an elaborate nest. Existing at the intersection of a working group and pseudo-organic entities, the sculptures converse by following several scripts that touch on such notions as empathy, memory, and the economy. While their collective and individual identity is a work in progress and will eventually be determined through writing and exchange, different programmatic and material elements serve to define them. Concretely, each sculpture is encoded to act according to philosophical as well as pragmatic directions, which are in a way, and only

partly, represented by the structures and materials making up the pieces. So it goes for a cast bell decorated with hands, a small conveyor belt enclosed in an aquarium, and a sham quantum computer. Thanks to the exhibition, viewers grasp the allegorical dimension of Xavier Antin's work along with how the artist articulates together the group of signifiers, signifieds, and referents he manipulates.

Céline Poulin

Notes

1 Co-edition Tombolo Presses and CAC Brétigny, with the support of the Centre national des arts plastiques.

Xavier Antin (1981, Paris) works and lives in Paris. He studied graphic design at the École nationale supérieure des Arts Décoratifs in Paris and the Royal College of London, he first worked as an independent graphic designer, and then progressively moved to an exclusively plastic practice. His work has been showed in many places among which: the Salon de Montrouge, Résonance Biennale of Lyon, the Triennial of Milan, the Cneai (Chatou), the Parc Saint Léger (Pougues-les-Eaux) as part of Hors les Murs/Extramural program, FRAC Île-de-France, Villa Arson (Nice), La Halle des bouchers (Vienne) and CAPC (Bordeaux). In 2012, he presented "Learning with errors", his first solo exhibition at the Crèvecœur gallery, followed in 2014 by "News from Nowhere" and "An Epoch of Rest" at MABA (Nogent-sur-Marne) and at the isdaT—Institut supérieur des arts of Toulouse, where he was interested in the heritage of the writer, designer and utopian William Morris. His last solo exhibitions in France and abroad include the Crèvecœur Gallery, BF15 (Lyon), Spike Island Art Center (Bristol) and Aloft-Fondation Hermès (Singapore). He is represented by the Crèvecœur Gallery, Paris.

Camille Pageard is an art historian and teacher at Ensba Lyon. His teaching focuses on the history of art, edition and contemporary poetry. His research is currently focused on poetic writing and politics. He has published several texts in journals and collective publications. After being a member of <0> future <0> (www.f-u-t-u-r-e.org) from 2014 to 2018, now, he co-directs the publishing house, *Même pas l'Hiver* with François Aubart. He was co-publisher of the Liverpool Biennial Contemporary Art Catalog, *A Needle Walks into a Haystack*, with Mai Abu El Dahab and Anthony Huberman (2014) and collaborated on *Intrus sympathiques* with Urs Leni and Olivier Lebrun. He has worked with Jean-François Caro on translation of two books of David Antin, *Essais sur l'art et la littérature* and *parler aux frontières*, respectively published in <0> future <0> and *Vies Parallèles* in 2017. A European Research Fellowship allows him, until 2021, to work on the sociologist, activist and writer Sicilian Danilo Dolci.

Julien Jassaud is an artist and programmer. After the ESTP, he studied at the École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts in Paris and the Advanced Institute of Art Media and Sciences (IAMAS) in Japan. He mainly works in the design of games, their rules and their parts, and toys with which he tries to articulate the infinitely small and the infinitely large. As a programmer and technician, he collaborated with many artists such as Christophe Lemaitre for CNEAI and Confort moderne, Aurélien Mole for Passerelle Centre d'art contemporain, Marlies Pöschl for CAC Brétigny, Fayçale Baghriche for MAGCP, and Mercedes Azpilicueta for CentroCentro in Madrid, Museion in Bolzano (Italy) and CAC Brétigny.

CAC Brétigny, Contemporary art center of national interest, is a facility of Cœur d'Essonne Agglomération. It enjoys the support of the Ministry of Culture—Drac Île-de-France, the Île-de-France Region, and the Departmental Council of the Essonne, with additional support by the Ville de Brétigny-sur-Orge. It is a member of the TRAM and d.c.a networks. This exhibition is produced with the support of Némobienial of digital arts of Île-de-France, the Departmental council of the Essonne, the Fondation des Artistes and in partnership with the Paris-Saclay University within the framework of Exoplanète Terre, an Arts & Sciences program bringing together nine cultural partners in Île-de-France Region. This exhibition has the support of the patronage committee of the Fondation des Artistes.