



Arthur Debert  
selected works - 2023

(short-bio 173 words 1108 car.)

Arthur Debert \*1990 in Paris, lives and works in Paris and Berlin. His work takes shape in collaboration and exchange, questions the transmission and the survival of knowledge, that are inscribed in individual anecdotes, collective memories and technology. The performative aspects of objects bearing knowledge and their transitioning processes are transcribed into installations, videos and editions.

Debert participated in the postgraduate program Ecole Offshore with ENSAD-Nancy in Shanghai (2014-15), which focused on the influences of globalisation on artistic ecosystems and co-directed the project space Babel in Berlin (2017-18). He is involved in multiple interdisciplinary collectives such as WMAN, a research group on art and video-games and Wuthering, a radiophonic theatre duo. His work was presented at various international occasions such as the Triennale of Young Creation (Luxembourg, 2021 & 2013), Regionale (Strasbourg, 2017 - Mulhouse, 2020 - Freiburg, 2023) or the Printemps de Septembre (Toulouse, 2016). His work was shortlisted and exhibited for the Berlin Art Prize in 2018 and was part of the video festivals rencontres internationales Paris/Berlin 2021, Ann Arbor Film Festival (Michigan, 2022) and awarded in Berlin Independent Film Festival (Berlin, 2023).

*«I am an interface, the place where the elements are catalyzed,  
where the transitions are activated.»*

Arthur Debert develops a proteiform practice that finds its origin in collective work and exchange. Constantly in dialogue with others, his work takes shape in displacements, multiple meetings and collaborations. In the center of these exchanges is the question of the transmission and survival of knowledge, both as well subjective as anecdotal and memorable. The transitions and different states of thought or objects bearing knowledge are then transcribed by means of installations, videos and editions - supports on which the artist comes to fix the indeterminate state of things and his experience.

*Licia Demuro*

## Stones & Stones Ltd.

Solo show, 8 weeks residency, 2023.

The exhibition *Stones & Stones Ltd.* at Korai in Nicosia opens conversations about the influences of scientific discoveries and storytelling on our interaction with nature. The magical fibers between stones in the village of Amiantos, Cyprus, where the largest asbestos mine in Europe was located, inspired games and imaginative dialogues about geological time, the transmission of knowledge and threats to human health.

Two stones, the protagonists in the animated 2-channel video, tell stories and share moments of solidarity. They are riddled with layers of asbestos and wear archival number plates. Listening to their interactions, the audience is invited to play The Game. Based on board games such as *Backgammon* (popular in Cyprus) it was originally inspired by the Egyptian *Royal Game of Ur* (3000 BC). Touching snail shells, asbestos stones, and fruit pods, mixed feelings about the usage of natural materials become most tangible.

Can it be that those in power are on the verge of repeating a senseless and deadly mistake? sits on takeaway glass bottles, which can be filled with drinkable water directly from the former mine in Amiantos. The quote is from the video game *Final Fantasy 6* (1994), where players are immersed in a world in which the ruling entity profits from the extraction of a mineral called «magic». Asbestos was used for magic tricks over and over, for example in ancient rome: In the shape of tablecloths it was pushed into open fires, which magically made red wine stains disappear in seconds.

In cinema, the mineral was sometimes used to create snow effects, as for example in the cult movie *The Wizard of Oz*. In the film from 1939 the song "*If I only had a brain*" is sung by a scarecrow who wants to become human. Performed in the video by the stone protagonists it echoes dramatically, yet thoroughly through the exhibition space.

Metal skeletons of decaying billboards are etched into the landscape like projection screens whose products have long expired. The spatial sculpture *The Message* refers to the dusty memories and vague promises of the future that emanate from the advertising and housing industry placed across the highways in Cyprus. While the audience is invited to play, the deep scars in the former mine in the Troodos Mountains are cared for by reforestation projects which, enhanced by the absence of humans, are slowly turning the area into the most biodiverse ecosystem of the island.

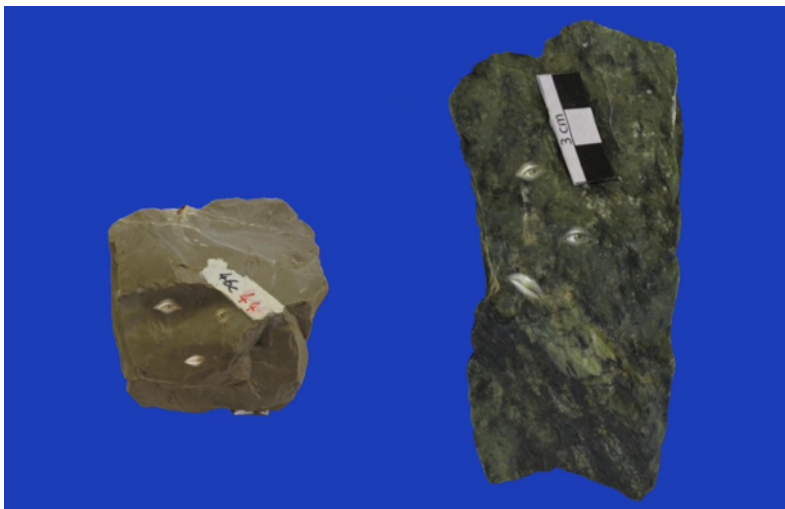
- text written by Carola Uehlken

*Stones & Stones Ltd.* marks the culmination of an 8-week residency at Korai Project Space in mars, april and mai 2023.



*Stones & Stones Ltd.*, 2023, exhibition views  
Korai Art Space, Nicosia, Cyprus.





**Stones & Stones Ltd.**, 2023, 2-channel video,  
computer animation, HD, color, sound, 13'09'.

**The Mistake**, 2023, art edition, glass container,  
sticker, water sourced at the former asbestos mine  
of Amiandos, dimensions variable.

**The Message**, 2023, iron, wood, 300x200x50cm.

**The Game**, 2023, laser engraved wood, cotton, asbestiform stones,  
snail shells, limestone, fruit pods, polymer resin, 66x66cm.

## Ντάμα (dama)

2 weeks residency, 2023.

This game have been realised with wood, copper, brass and stones collected at the ancient copper mine of Mathiatis. The pawn/checkers are 2 colors, represented by 2 metals that can be mined in Cyprus. They are made from cents of € coins from various provenance.

The board, similar to a topographic map is held together by tension. The colors get closer to the those who can be found in the former copper mine of Mathiatis next to Kornos, Cyprus.

*This game was devellopped in a 2-week residency and played at the coffee place of Kornos village at the occasion of the weekend of Xarkis festival 2023.*



*Vue of Mathiatis former mine, 2023  
Ντάμα (dama), Xarkis Festival, 2023, Kornos, Chypre.*





**Installation shot - *Dusty Dub* and detail of *The Old Mills (1937)*,  
Am Lagerfeuer, group show, Kunsthaus L6, Freiburg, Germany, 2022.**

## The New Mills

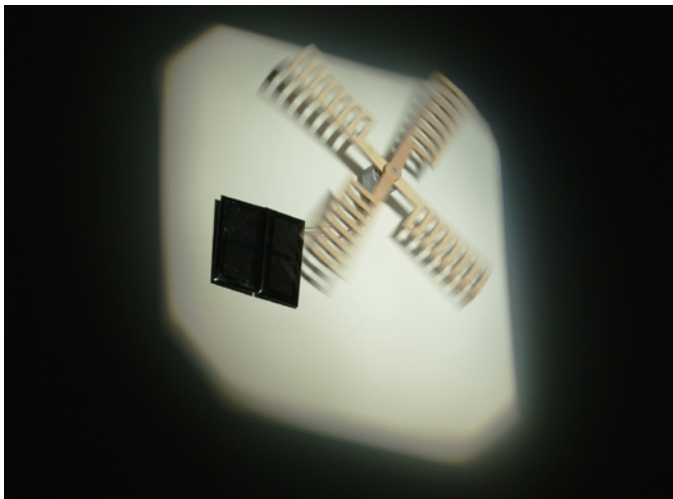
*series of work, installation, 2022*

This body of work is based on a research around the animated film *The Old Mill* produced by Walter Disney production and directed by Wilfred Jackson in 1937 in the collection «*Silly Symphonies*». It marks a radical change in the history of cinema by being the first animated film to use the new possibilities of the «multiplane» camera, a technic imagined by Walter Disney was then still in the state of prototype, built with parts of engines of recovery of 3 old Chevrolet cars.

The film tells the story of a community of diverse animals enjoying the protection of an old mill. A sudden storm breaks the tranquility and starts up the machine which, without a second thought, crushes or at least threatens everything in its path. A symbolic reading of the situation could see it as a representation of the installation in power of a totalitarian government and the consequences on the population.

The installation consist in a reinterpretation of the original poster of the movie, shearching for its undercoat - a 9min long «dub» version of the music score - a solar powered windmill turning slowly in the light of a projector - and a drawing in several layers of the main scene.

**listen an extract of the audio track here**  
>> [https://arthurdebert.fr/Dusty-Dub\\_2022\\_extract\\_1min.mp3](https://arthurdebert.fr/Dusty-Dub_2022_extract_1min.mp3)



**The New Mills**, 2022, Projector, solar panel, motorised wood  
Habiter le désordre, Cryogénie, Strasbourg, 2023



**66**, 2022, 120x160 cm, Quadrichromic poster print  
Habiter le désordre, Cryogénie, Strasbourg, 2023





on the right, **une planche et on met ses pieds dessus**, wood, shoes & audio tape  
on the left, **un oiseau aux ailes bleues et blanches**, paragliding fabric



**une mains sans doigts**, vase in 3D printed wood, mountain house-leek

## Habiter

*Solo show, in collaboration with  
Les Hauts Plateaux Festival, 2021*

In 2020, the organizers of the "Les Hauts Plateaux" theater festival have launched an artistic project dedicated to the commune of Passy in the French Alps, the region and its people. They created an initiative for and with the inhabitants, and whose objective is to draw a sensitive and humanistic portrait of the Arve Valley. These interviews give us stories, slices of life, a look at the region.

For the exhibition «HABITER», Debert recomposed a representation of the inhabitants of Passy thanks to the interviews collected in 2020. In his installation he gathered sculptures, gestures and images resulting from meetings with the inhabitants whose stories the artist had listened to carefully, and whose voices can be heard echoing throughout the space of the Municipal Cultural Center of Passy.



**le bruit des glaciers qui fondent**, audio piece,  
stereo, audio transducers on glass, 5 min  
exhibition views, *Habiter*, Passy, 2021



left, **un oiseau aux ailles bleues et blanches**, detail  
**cinq levers de soleil par jour**, the old projector of the movie-theatre of Passy  
exhibition views, *Habiter*, Passy, 2021





## Transporter

*artwork to activate by transport, 2021*

In December 2020, Debert took a small boat to visit the Channel Islands off the Californian coast. There were about twenty people on the boat. As a storm warning had been issued they quickly arrived at the port being no more than a metal bridge between two cliffs. They had to quickly unload the luggage from the hold of the boat on the beach. Following the advice of the sailors, they formed a human chain. In about fifteen minutes, they unloaded their belongings and those of other travelers by passing them from hand to hand: items in the most diverse shapes, colors and weights were connected by a rhythmic movement directed by the first person in the line, who intuitively decided how the loads should be moved – by the handles, upright, or by rolling them. This person's gesture was often imitated or interrupted by the others. After a while, a certain routine set in, as people familiarized with the different types of objects and adapted to the rhythm of their fellow travelers who handed over the items and those to whom they passed them on – all complete strangers up to that point.

*Transporter* was born from this experience. It is a collection of sculptures devised to be passed on from hand to hand. The objects were made using various three-dimensional reproduction techniques, from traditional casting method to 3D printing. Each sculpture refers to a real object that exists elsewhere, and therefore carries a dual narrative – its own and that of its model. A sculpture in the shape of a walking stick hides silkworm cocoons in its middle. It refers to the story of two monks sent by the emperor of Byzantium to steal the secret of silk production, a Chinese monopoly in the 6th century. Other examples include a turned wood reproduction of a 16mm film cartridge, the resonance chamber of an extinct dinosaur, and a miniature late 19th century travel trunk saved from destruction by movers emptying the apartment of an elderly piano teacher in Shanghai's former «French Concession». In the exhibition, the installation travels from one wall to another as visitors form chains and pass them on. Each new movement follows the rhythm of the objects in an order determined by the visitors. Together the gestures and shapes produce an original sequence, like a sentence in which the words are interchangeable, telling a story in perpetual motion.



**Transporter**, exhibition views, SaarART2023  
Stadtgalerie Saarbrücken, 2023.





# Orbits, kiel edition

*workshop for a small group, 2020.*

*Orbits* is a workshop to be performed with a series of sculptures collected solely for the purpose of being passed from one hand to another. Each object has its own characteristics in the idea of creating specific handling situations.

Helped by the instructions given by the artist and/or a audio podcast, the participants are invited to make the sculptures circulate. In a second movement the artist and/or the audioguide enlightens to some of the foundations or stories carried by these objects.

The first edition in the botanical garden of Kiel, close to the harbour, was focussing on tools and props related to the travelling in the maritime context.



**Orbits**, performance for a small group, Old Botanical Garden, Kiel, Afloat Residency, 2020 © Christian Lübbert





Orbits, Berlin edition  
*performance for a small group, 2022.*







**Orbits**, camériste, wood, France, end XIXc.



**Orbits**, the objects in circulation,  
Les mains pures, Octopus cooperative, 2021



**Orbits**, reproduction of a chinese trunk, 3D printed bronze

## Orbits, Paris edition

*performance for a small group, 2021.*

For the occasion of the group show «Les mains pures» at Octopus Cooperative in Paris *Orbits* was performed by 14 people. There is no images of the handling of the objects as everyone who was present took part in it. The objects were this time collected around images of handcrafts and transmission of knowledge.



*Myst, screenshot, digital video, 2022.*

## Myst

*Video, loop, color, sound, 8'42', 2022.*

Through an interface which recalls navigation tools like «google street view», we are witnessing a wandering the empty streets of a strange city. Architecture and store names hints that we are somewhere in Vienna or perhaps Berlin. On the soundtrack a young man gives a rather insightful piano lesson on the variations of fingerings when playing Chopin's Nocturne in C sharp minor.

As the movie goes we get more and more clues about the reality of the place in which the film was shot : a virtual tour of the Babelsberg film studios in Potsdam. The historic studios are those in which most reconstructions of the Second World War were filmed.

<https://vimeo.com/785370702/1c806a7948>



*Myst, exhibition shot, Automaton:lab, group show  
Kleiner Wasserspeicher, Berlin 2022.*





Infinite Window, screenshot, web page, 2019.



exhibition view, group show «le moindre geste», Granit, Belfort, 2019.  
Next to Geta BRĂTESCU's artwork.

## Infinite Window

*video, live via internet, 2019.*

24/7 the camera provides access to a wide plan view of the Infinite Column of Constantine Brancusi in the center of the Romanian city of Targu Jiu. The installation consists of a web page giving stable access to the surveillance camera of the Column. It allows us at any time, day and night, to watch life bustling around. Like in a Jacques Tati film, one witnesses the tourist groups, the priest of the nearby church, the lawn mowers, the automatic watering system, birds and insects, lovers in the grass and the guards on the ale.

[http://arthurdebert.fr/infinite\\_window.html](http://arthurdebert.fr/infinite_window.html)



**Testamentul lui Orfeus**, wood, glass, 200 x 200 x 200 cm



**Lethean**, truck tarpoline, money coins, 14000 x 300 cm



**Folks**, digital print on PVC, 400 x 300 cm,  
mounted on a billboard on the road Târgu Jiu - Curtișoara.

## Faking it for Real

with *Andreea Medar*

Resulting from a duo residency in Targu Jiu, Romania, the project brings together multiple interventions by the two artists together or single works.

«It is an invitation to redefine the invisible boundaries between concrete and unreal, myth and history, ancient and new, in questioning progress just as much as conservation. All the works abstracted of historical times but each of them is thought to be seen at a specific moment of the day or night. As proposals for new delimitations, by blurring boundaries, these elements question the idea of collage and the opposition of antithetical notions.

Is progress the disappearance of tradition? Do you think it's better than the evolution of universal evolution? This unanswered interrogation crosses the works of a set defined by doubles, oppositions and absences presence at an imprecise time, stamped with mythological stories.»  
*Arthur & Andreea*





2 handfuls of rocks, detail, 2019

## 2 handfuls of rocks

*pink and green stones, wood and glass tablet,  
25 x 3cm, 2019*

Two handfuls of small colored stones are juxtaposed on a shelf. Both were collected at the exact same time on two small neighbour mountains of «The Artist Pallet» in the Death Valley, California.



Exhibition view, Tête, Berlin, 2019





Midnight movie, screenshots, 2018.

## Midnight movie

*animated video, 16/9, 4'', loop, 2018*

These short animation sequences replay animated logos of international production companies. Presented as a loop, the work creates a never ending prologue. By accumulation, the abstract logos refer the History of the industry of Cinema.

*extract : <https://vimeo.com/301461737>*





Deep blue, digital photography, China 2018.





## Empty forms (Deep Blue, Costume)

*digital photography on wind-proofed PVC,  
300x225 cm and 300x200 cm, 2018.*

«Deep Blue» and «Costume» are two digital photographs taken in China in 2015 and 2018, two landscapes lost in the middle of their gentrification. Both are printed on wind-proofed PVC tarp with the standard dimensions used to hide construction sites. Each work is shown with its own transportation box.

They can be presented rolled or unrolled on the floor on demand. «Empty forms» is a personal archive of forms, objects and images showing their own structure. Doing so they are visualising the disappearance of cultural formats and narrations.  
The research blog : <http://feudf.tumblr.com/>

**Empty forms**, installation, Berlin Art Prize Show, The Shelf, 2018.



**Costume**, digital photography, China 2015.



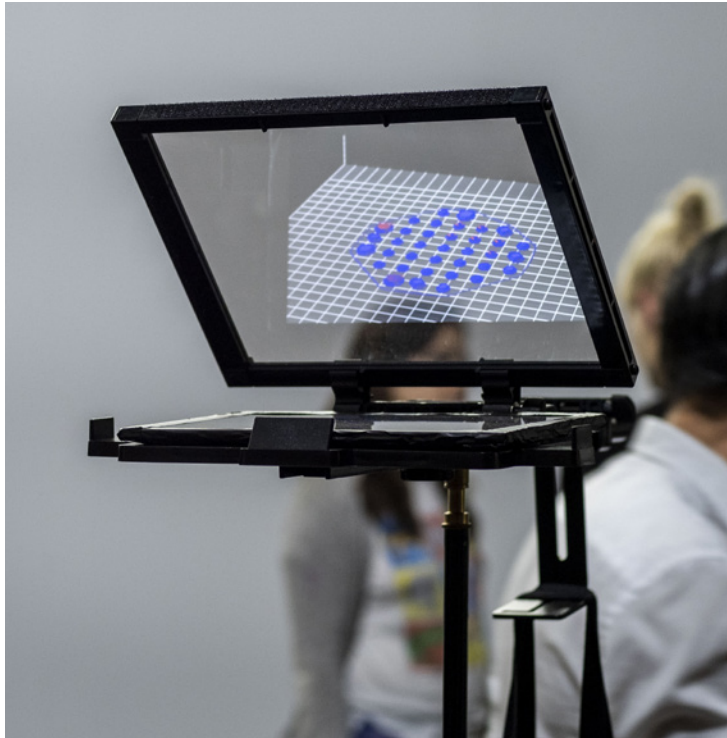


**Rifle**, fabric, metal, 30x10x110 cm, 2018.

## Empty forms (Rifle, Sasumanta)

*fabric, copper, polystyrene*  
30 x 10 x 110 cm and 250 x 70 x 30 cm, 2018

Both sculptures are realised after a fuzzy memory from China. «Sasumanta» results of my incomprehension regarding an object present in each of Shanghai's metro stations, an abstract long stick which turned out to be a weapon used by the police. «Rifle» refers to a global way of hanging old weapons on walls transforming them into decorative objects. Those two sculptures are part of the research project «Empty forms».



## Souffleur

*animated video, teleprompter, 50 x 50 x 170 cm, 2018*

«Souffleur» is a teleprompter equipped with a video player ; it shows a moving text reflected into glass. The text is a visual description of the movements in the library scene in «Wings of Desire» from Wim Wenders. The text alternates with an animation showing the 3D printing process of a chess game.

**Souffleur**, animated video, teleprompter, tripod,  
Berlin Art Prize Show, The Shelf, 2018





## Impressions (k5e3)

with Luc Debert

*Installation, sound piece 5", drawings,  
Ink prints, 3D prints, 1989-2017.*

This project is a collaboration with Luc Debert, my father. I realised a chess game that he modeled 25 years earlier. The installation combines 3D models, drawings from 1993 and a sound piece referring to the first chess game won by the computer Deeper Blue on world chess champion Garry Kasparov.

*1989: L.D realizes a synthetic image in 3 dimensions of a chess game.*

*1993: L.D models in 3D all the parts of the game.*

*1997: DeeBlue IBM super computer wins first match against Russian chess champion G.K.*

*2017: A.D, son of L.D, translates the 1993 synthesis volumes into «printable» objects and then prints the chess game in 3D.*



detail, the knight and the queen





**Impressions (k5e3)**, exhibition view, Arkad art center, Auville, France, 2017  
up left to down right : detail from the print (1989), sound piece, 3D printed chess game, rendered images and sketches (1989/1993)





recording studio/theatre set, for the live at RAMDAM Art Center



live recording, Wuthering 1 - FANTOME

## Wuthering

avec Marion Aeschlimann

*serie of radiophonic emissions, 15'' each*

«Wuthering» is presented as a performance for two voices. Each episode is a 15 minutes long internet broadcast in which we use film extracts invisible to the public. Creating our own fictional film club on air, our two «geeks» draw a tinkered portrait of their video library mixing disasters, declarations of love, extraterrestrial invasions and triangle concerts.

Each program is thematise. #1 is about ghosts, #2 is about the weather. Playing on several layers of narration, re-interpreting or dubbing their sounds, we propose a new imaginary for well known story lines.

<https://wuthering.hotglue.me/archive/>



live recording of Wuthering 2 - ORAGE



## Dubbing bar

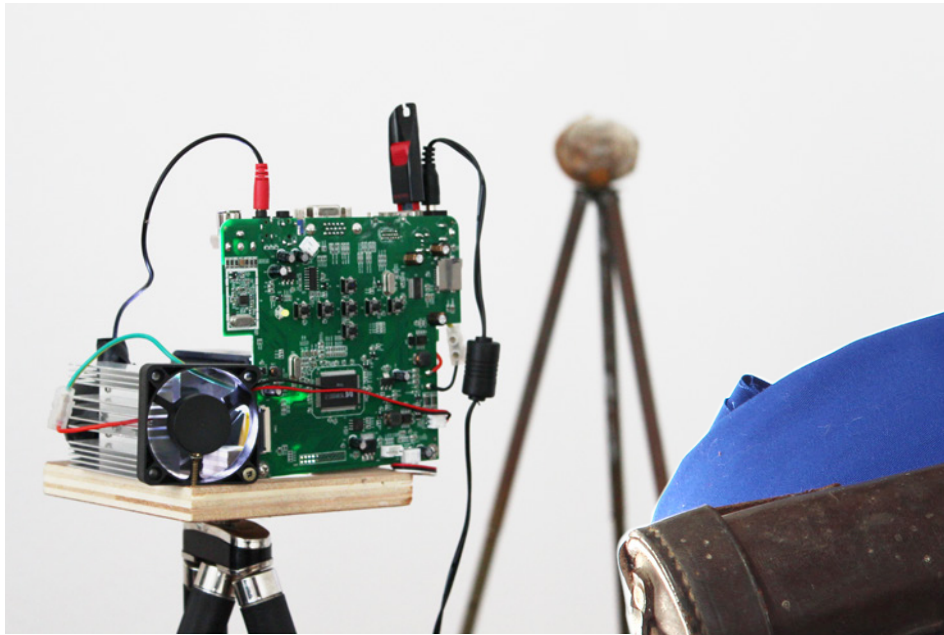
*non-treater steel bar, 70's connectos  
110 x 200 x 70 cm, 2018*

Dubbing bar refers to a tool that is never shown and has no name, a hip-height bar that is used by movie dubbers to place their hands as well as to help them place their voices.



**Dubbing bar**, Berlin Art Prize, The Shelf, Berlin, 2018

**Dubbing bar**, detail, oxydation by the hand prints of the visitors.



## Yojimbo

*multimedia installation & lecture 2016.*

Yojimbo is a nomadic display to be transported and activated anywhere. During the presentation I unpack a few unconnected objects and create a projection situation. While doing so I remember and describe the first sequence of Akira Kurosawa's film Yojimbo. In the movie we follow the sinuous path of an actor whose role becomes increasingly blurred in a world of war, where globalisation tends to spirit away intermediate roles.





Yojimbo, detail from the old canon ball (18/19th c.?)  
Yojimbo, screenshot, A.Kurosawa, 1961



the arrival in Toulouse, c. Etienne Cliquet, Printemps de septembre, 2016

## Contrebande

*action, publication, 2017.*

On September 23rd I started from my apartment in Berlin, taking sand with me from a construction site close by. I carried it in the plane to Toulouse for 8 hours in my closed hand.





**the publication**, pigment print, unique



**exhibition view**, danse sur le fil regard terre à terre,  
Ateliers du vent, Rennes, 2018





hanging the work of Charlotte Sivrière, with the two neighbors, screenshot from the video documentation

## Bande passante

*collaborative project, mixed media,  
variable dimensions, 2015 and 2017.*

*Bande passante* is a collaborative project that took place in the Bazaar Compatible Program in a public market in Shanghai. I contacted some artists I had fun to work with in the past. I asked them to send an artwork I could realize for them in China. During two weeks I realised a choreography activating the proposals sent by the participants one day after another. These interactions and the objects involved created a particular variety regarding ideas of movement and transfer.

*with Alain Colardelle & Guillaume Lemuhot, Pauline de Chalendar, Jean-jacques Dumont, Marine Froeliger, Marco Godinho, Olivier Jonvaux, François Martig, Marianne Mispelaëre, Emma Perrochon, Louis Picard, Charlotte Sivrière, Jade Tang, Carola Uehlken, interpreted by Arthur Debert at the Bazaar Compatible Programm, Shanghai, 2015.*





detail from the binding

The publication version «*Bande passante*», consist in 72 pages combining materials and images taken while producing the projects send by the artists. The publication is optimized to be sharable online and printable on a standard office printer.



**Bande passante**, 3 prints realised with the printers of the inviting structure, a print shop from the neighborhood, and a neighbor art collectif. exhibition view, éditer\_exposer•exposer\_éditer, group show, Ateliers Bonus, MPVite, Nantes.





screenshots of the video

## Nouvelle Histoire de la Révolution Française

*Video, 4/3, 4''30, loop, 2013*

Frame by frame, the ball from the final match of the Soccer World Cup in 1998 was erased. The simple gesture transforms players into dancers and facts into fictions.

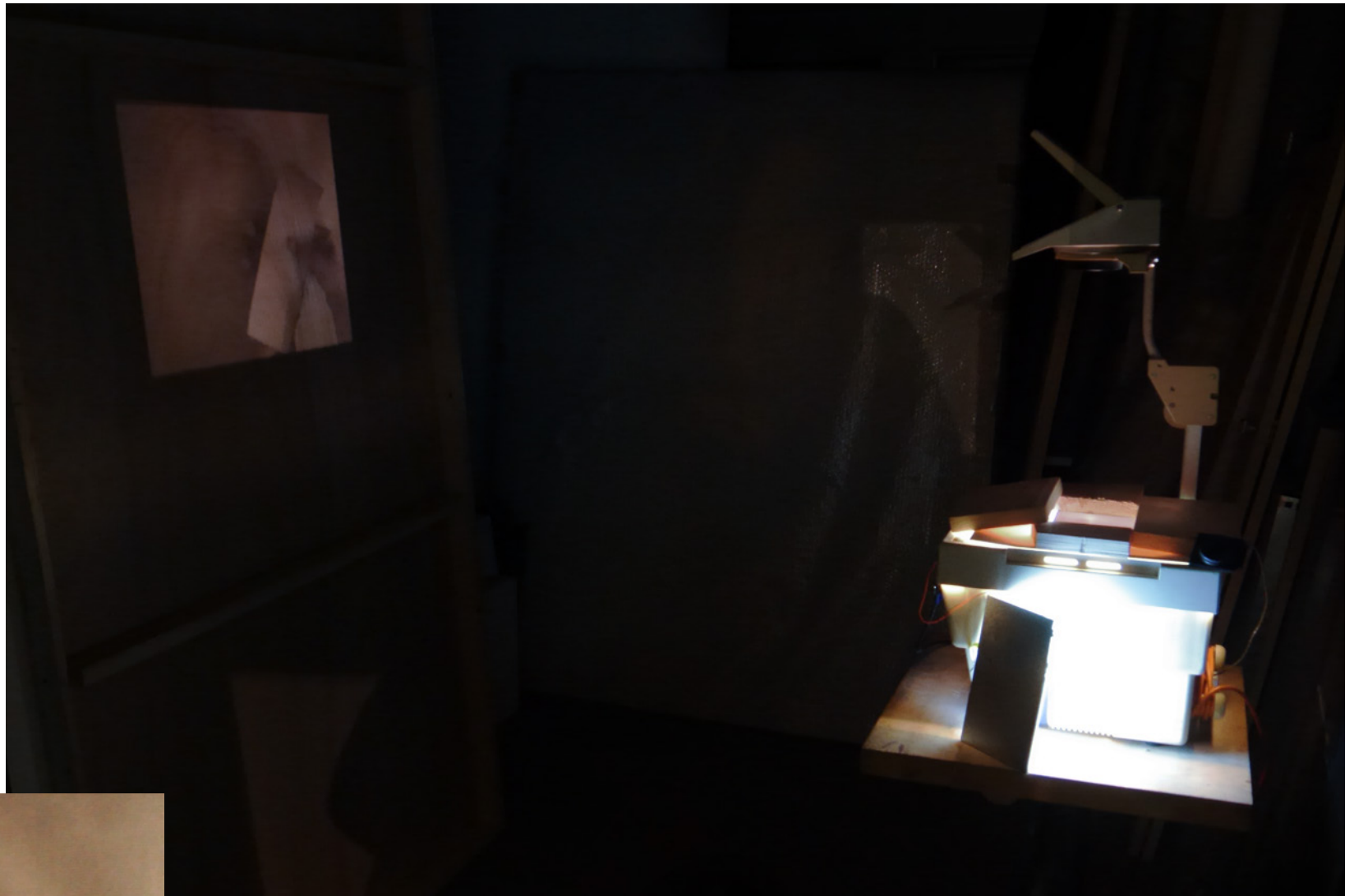
*extract: <https://vimeo.com/163992698>*

## Strict nécessaire

*multimedia installation, video,  
Lcd screen, overhead-projector  
25", 2013 and 2017.*

The video is an inventory of everything  
that I carried during a travel.

The creation of this «survival kit»  
was projected in a hotel room in which  
I previously packed all the furniture,  
surfaces and objects which were  
impersonal, found in this space of transitions.



screenshot of the video.

«Placed in the storage room of the exhibition hall - transit space where various materials and objects are stored - the recording of the compulsive packaging of each element resulting from this «Survival kit» inspires the erasure of a distinction between utility object and artistic object.» L. Demuro in 2017, Presentation text for Tutoriality at 6B, Paris.





**Le strict nécessaire, une nuit/ein Nacht, Forbach, France, 2013**  
the video was presented in a hotel room fully packed in bubble wrap and brown paper





digital photography, 2 months after the intervention



video documentation of the walk

## Galerie des espaces disparus

*pine wood, okoumé, exotic wood, handles,  
vidéo 19", 2014*

An exhibition is being transported into the forest by a group of artists. Abandoned for some months there, the wooden boxes served as shelter for animals and insects.

*Realized in the Heidenkirch forest in 2014.*