

INTERVIEW

NONO YEAHYEAH

MICHALIS PICHLER IN CONVERSATION WITH JOHN STEZAKER

CONFRONTING A SORT OF ABSENCE

JS Yeah, one of the questions I wanted to ask you, actually... two of your most famous series of work, the *migration* series, and the *Airplanes & Sky*, or *Clouds & Sky* feature flying things. And in a way, flying things are most difficult to pin down, they are so transient, like the clouds behind them. And with the birds one's very aware of the impossibility of delineating these tiny forms, the cuts become like wounds, holes within the picture, violent holes. And they become murmurations of these holes/wounds, and I was curious to know, what made you highlight flying things as a central image, do you have any thoughts on that?

MP It probably was not a conscious decision. I started cutting out things in the winter of 2002–03, when I just had moved to New York in terms of an academic exchange program. At the time I was more consciously working on American flags, which I was both finding and collecting on the streets, and I had also started counting their appearance in newspapers, cutting them out, and eventually also creating blank newspaper dummies that featured only the flags and nothing else, but..

JS Ok, flags fly, dont they? [laughs]

MP ... right...

JS Another flying object.

MP Yeah, you can look at it like that.. and, they certainly were kind of flying on the page, because I removed them from their original context and put them on a blank page – or rather, into a blank page, because the procedure was rather like surgery, cutting them out of something, and cutting them into something else. And in a similar approach to those



April 19 2003 (2:09pm), 300 Lincoln Place (Brooklyn), from stars & stripes

Newspaper flag profiles I also cut out, or you could say took out things from the urban context: when I found objects that would meet my searching criteria, I would photograph them on the street, take them with me, and I would also photograph what was left behind – and later, I figured, that the absence of the piece was for me more interesting than the object, which I initially had collected to make an installation with (with the mass of objects), and I figured that this focus could constitute an evidence that could be termed *objet perdu*. So while those projects were going on, I started doodling around in a book on animal migration, and that was never really a planned project.

JS Hmm!

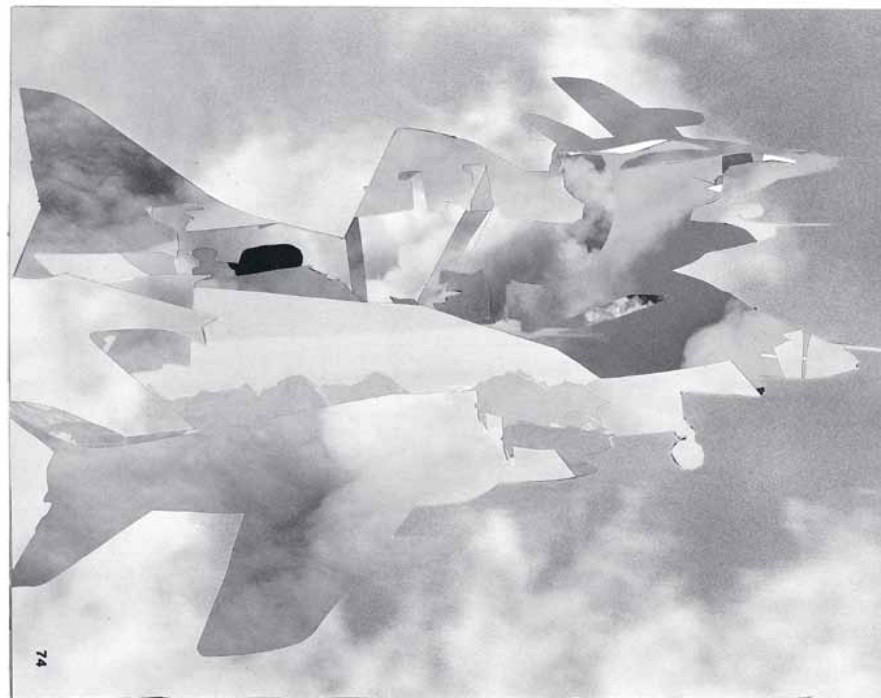
MP But over the years it turned out that I quite enjoyed doing these cutouts. In the beginning I cut out the birds, also other animals, and had put a blank page under the page I was cutting them from – so, the first series of collages with these materials were the cutout animals on a blank page with the cutting marks of the knife, and then, as they fell, I would fix them with scotch tape. Only later, I would start using the surrounding material, where I had cut them out, which eventually became the *migration* series.

JS Yeah. It occurred to me though, as you were talking there, that you have got an idea about why flight is so important: Because you referred to what's left behind – that moment of revelation where you were collecting the objects that you cut out for a newspaper, or whatever, and then you realized that what was more interesting was the remains, the residue, what's left behind. And in a way, that is very much, for me, the realization of collage.

It's the unconscious thing, you consciously try to do one thing, but your unconscious prompts a fascination in what remains, you could say, this is part of the condition of imagery in our culture, there is an element of imagery in our culture that circulates, that flies around the world, it is totally mobile, and there is another side of image that is what's left behind, and we deal, I think we as collageists, or whatever, or artists perhaps, deal with that residue. In a sense, what flies is unrepresentable. It reminds me of Milan Kundera in *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, in the beginning he said there were two ways that art manifests itself, one is through weight, or gravitas, like Beethoven's sonatas, he analogizes it with potatoes stored in the cellar. They are weighty, heavy, and there is art that flies free of the gravitational pull of the real, and maybe our culture emphasizes that pulling apart of the image. Perhaps (part of) what you are doing is one element which is flying away, and there is the other, which is returning and remaining.

MP It is not only about an abstract absence, it is also the very physicality of the traces, of the left-behinds, like there was some humidity under it, or in general, once you remove something you see something else that was behind it, either the pavement under a pizza box, or the text behind a cut-out animal from a book.

JS That's how, yeah, the tiny fragment of Marlboro there [points at *Floribundarosen*]... as a remnant, it just does something with



Clouds & Sky #74, 2005

that colour! I mean we are talking about a particular collage here, but the...

MP There are also the windows and frames, and looking through something onto something else which was maybe already there but...

JS ... but in the end maybe confronting a sort of absence. Funny, this is an idea that actually predates modernity, and it has nothing to do with the circulating image. There is a poem by Rumi I discovered, who is a 13th century poet...

MP ... a mysticist...

JS Well, yes, he was... He wrote a poem about people who dive for fish from the harbour wall. They dive, and yet it is just a meditation on their piles of clothes that are left by the fishermen. He addresses this pile of clothes. For him, the rest is unrepresentable; the movements of the fish and the naked fisherman. As a poet, he is able only to meditate on the remains, not on the vectors of the event. I think, it's been around a long time, this attachment to what remains, to the residue, the material world that resists the vectors of the images that we live within. And somehow, Rumi is saying the reality of the fisherman is un-representable, but what we can look at is what he leaves behind. I mean that's the feeling I get from your collages. The reason I love your collages.

The thing that is most embedded in my consciousness from your work are the *migration* series. One particular *migration*

piece, I think it is number 31, happens to be the one that I saw at a certain point, and it meant such a lot to me. Related to the absolute impossibility of cutting out those tiny birds so that in the end the cutting out becomes so crude, it's like a wound, you know, it's an annihilation of the subtlety of a bird, and yet in its multiplicity, the repetition of these wounds, they become like notes in music, or they become like perforations, like those in mechanical piano rolls. The series of punctuations of the paper seem to reveal something that's quite difficult to put into words, something of the unknowable. And the mystery of the original thing, when we looked at the flockings and murmurations of birds through the centuries, it is a mystery how they move in unity like this.

UNTITLING

MP You happened to see this, because, although I was not exhibiting the *migration* collage series for many years, at one point I made a postcard out of one. And that was this one, and only when I made the postcard I did cut out the collage from the book, but it occurred to me, that the pagination had to stay with it, because it somehow resonated with the text you were looking at behind it. In a way it is quite absurd to have a singular page on its own without the book, with pagination, but that also gives a hint to where it comes from, and it becomes part of the title. I have started titling all the *migration* collages according to the page number the material came from.

JS Oh I see. Just to be clear, there aren't 31 *migration* collages leading up to *migration* #31, it is just that number 31 is the page where they are coming from...

THE RELATIONSHIP WITH CHANGE

MP Yes, the other day we were talking about it; you compared it to some chance-operated music from John Cage.

JS Yes.

MP I get that reference a lot, also with *Un coup de dés j'amaris n'abolira le hazard* (*Musique*) — and it actually does sound a bit like chance music.

JS And there is a strong connection...

MP Even though I have to say that the chance is guided...

JS Oh yeah

MP And that is also maybe something that could be said: Even though there is a lot of intuition and also non-conscious searching around and playing, playing around — at some point when something works, when it becomes a series, I make up the rules, then I follow through with it, apply it onto a lot of different material, and only then later again I decide what works. But in between, there is a rather conceptual, serial approach of carrying through predetermined rules on certain material.

JS Yeah, I have done that also. It may be interesting to come back to the relationship with chance. Recently I came across something by Hans Arp, one of his earliest collages, which was *According to the rules of chance* (he always uses that subtitle!) It consisted of torn paper fragments arranged in rows.

When I was young, I came across one of those, and it really struck a chord in me, and I decided to do the reverse, which was to tear holes in a single page of a colour photographic reproduction. I was interested in seeing how Hans Arp arrived at his collages, how the came about them: immediately I realized that the torn fragments were not at all the product of chance.

MP ... were not from one paper!

JS No, and they were all torn very carefully as well, because you couldn't possibly make them into those fragments' shapes, they tended to always have the sides of the paper, if you tear them, very rarely do you get them like that. I realized to begin with, that it wasn't actually as chance-like as it seemed, and I began to realize that this was actually very controlled. So then I started to work, making holes, according roughly to those torn bits — I'd make a hole with a pair of scissors, and then I'd tear around, until I made that kind of torn shape.

MP ... in the page...

JS ... in the page, and I realized, I was getting much closer. And then I'd put it over adverts in magazines, and then you get, you know... you go from dark to light, and then the fragments did so. And so those were my earliest collages.

MP When was that?

JS I was a teenager, it was probably about just a year before I went to College. I went to college in '67, so maybe '66, when I was about 17. And that's when I first came across John Cage, and *Silence* I think was published that year. I remember reading that in the Public Library. So there was a lot of that in the air, and I of course, as any young artist, you want to be, you know, in the current flow of things, so you follow these things, and that was my first introduction to experimental art. But Hans Arp always remained this important figure for me. How about you, maybe not so much?

MP Maybe not so much. Maybe from Hans Arp I would have been rather interested in his sculptures — cause I started with sculpture...

SCULPTING

JS Did you? I didn't know about that! Alright! You did sculpture of collage, or what?

MP I did... eventually I would also do sculpture at art school, but... for quite a few years, a bit like the *migration* collages, it was more like a pleasure. I had only for myself. I was studying in Berlin, various things, changing studies all the time... from economics through ethnology, civil engineering, later architecture... and only in the summer was I working in Greece in a small village called Mesta on the island Chios with a good friend of mine, Sergios Patentas — great artist, actually — and I was in his workshop, doing my stuff. And he used to say, "Art can't be taught, just stolen."

JS [laughs]

MP "So, watch, and do what you understand and what you want to do." I worked a couple of summers in his studio, doing reliefs in chalkstone, and also portraiture. I did then 'tatile directe', directly into the stone, I did portraits of people from that village and from a harbour next to that village.

JS Really?

MP I also tried to create working conditions in Berlin, but I never had the time, and I never calmed down enough to do any sculpture there. And then, a few years later I came to a point where I thought that I have to decide what I was gonna do. In life [laughs], or if I really wanted to do sculpture or civil engineering or architecture, which were then the options at this point — and I went to Greece and I gave exams at a school of sculpting on the island Thnos, and I didn't pass the exams. But in context of those exams I met someone who knew someone in the workshop for Preservation of the Acropolis Monuments, she knew the sculpting master of the Propylaea at the Acropolis. And I met him, Giorgios Artilias, we immediately got along, and he said "If you ever wanna learn sculpting, you can come to me, and I'll teach you."

Two weeks later I moved to Athens. I stayed there for two years, we had a teaching relationship and I went up every day to the Acropolis and had my bench in the workshop of the Propylaea. That was from October '96, and then in the second year — I was still studying architecture — I got a grant from an exchange program to study architecture in Athens, but I barely did that. Basically I was doing sculpture. And when I came back to Berlin, I knew I wanted to do art and not to add more buildings to the world.



migration #115, 2014



John Stezaker, Blind No. 1, 1979

JS [laughs] Yeah. It would be very interesting to see how you might return to three-dimensional things in some point.

MP I think it can be found in some of the collages, because they are not posted on the paper like an image, but they are inserted. I mean, the physicality of the fragment, which has recto and verso, I don't see that around a lot in other people's work, if at all.

JS Nano. In a way, I was just going to say the same thing. That there is a strong sense you are using the classic two-dimensional image, which we take to be two-dimensional, and you are always revealing a third dimension there, by revealing a recto or a verso — a behind — and a space between. It may be incrementally small, but it is still there, the awareness of a third dimension.

MP I can tell you from marble-carving that when you do a relief, cutting out the outline is pretty much like you cut out something from a piece of paper.

JS That's right, yeah yeah.

MP Also, the very definition of sculpture, as opposed to modeling, is working in a subtractive way, and I tended to do that a lot, be it in the *objets perdus* in public space, be it with books that are assisted readymades by removal, like the *chamaisson* or the *butterfly* series, or be it with my *Coup de dés*, where text has been literally cut out and the resulting window frames not only reveal views on the page or even pages behind, but also orchestrate a light-and-shadow-play, enacted by the very act of reading.

JS Your work is a kind of carving. I was just reminded of the work of Jiri Kolar, to whom we are both indebted, actually, whether we knew it or not. He did so much of what we do, long before us, and he actually got into a sort of de-collage, in a big serious way, before the French gave it that name. He would paste hundreds of layers, one on top of the other, and he would gouge through them. I wonder whether you have seen those.

MP Oh — with woodcarving tools?

JS I don't know how, what instruments he actually used, it would be interesting to find out.



migration #31, 2002

MP This particular collage we are looking at has two or three layers, but the first layer was page 31. Many of the *migration* collages include the pagination, others don't. If the page number is close enough to the image, without a caption or something in between, it stays. If the image not next to the page number and there is other text in between on the first layer, it is cut away, but still stays with it, as a part of the title. So, for example *migration #88* will be from page 88, but it may not have a visible pagination.

JS Yeah, got you. It is always good to have a way of titling things. I find titles very difficult. They are necessary, so that you can refer to one thing as opposed to another, which is of course the origins of language [laughs]. But, they are irritating, because they then predetermine the reading.

MP Yeah.

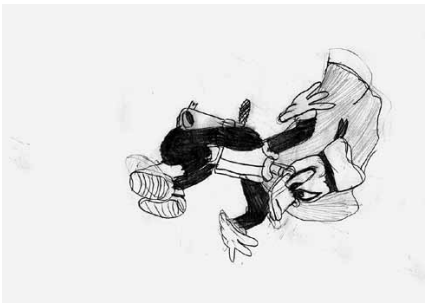
JS For example, my *Tabula Rasa* series. I am beginning to find the title limiting because it always makes people read the absence as an empty canvas, or whatever. Whereas, it could be a screen, or a number of things. Titles always force you into a singularity of reading, but then *Untitled* is deeply unhelpful, because it means it is impossible to distinguish one from another.

MP What I observe recently, many people use *Untitled*, and in brackets, they put the title

JS I know... I find that even more irritating, actually. [laughs]

MP I do that sometimes, even though — I mean, it shouldn't become a mnemonic of *Untitled*. [both laugh] Yeah I think a title should on the one hand relate to the work, but on the other hand I try to avoid being over-explaining or didactic.

JS The relationship with texts is important in your collages. The presence of words is part of it. There is something about the way that you use those tiny little cuts in the *migration* series that seems to return the photographic image to the flat plane of a typographic, musical notation, or little glimpses of words through the page return you to the space of the word and of notation.



Donald Duck as Phantomas, 1982

MP It reminds me a bit of the work of Gordon Matta-Clark, whose work I love.

JS You are right, very similar, feeling of layers, yes. There is another artist, who did the same thing ten years earlier, he is closer in age to Jiri Kalfir, and that is John Latham. He was my introduction to avantgarde art in England, in London. Before Latham, I was much more interested in Frances Bacon and Lucian Freud... they were my heroes, at that time.

MP Well they are still the heroes of the auction houses today [both laugh], aren't they?

JS They certainly are.

MP But maybe not necessarily the first ones you would refer to when talking about your work.

JS I don't know – I was in conversation recently with somebody – he was actually talking about the influence of Bacon on my work, and that was the first time I've ever been asked that, but that was very interesting, because they had intuited that there was some sort of influence. Well, when I was young, Bacon probably more than anybody else made me into an artist. My first paintings were very influenced by Bacon.

MP Yes, I think also – and that may sound ridiculous – but I think you don't need to really like someone's work to be influenced by it. And just as you did imitations of Frances Bacon, when you were very young, I did a lot of imitations of – Walt Disney...

JS [laughs]

MP ... in my childhood, and I think, that that is quite a valid influence.

JS Yeah, yeah, actually a very good point. I had a push and pull, a bit like you, I was heading for university to study science at some point, and the pull was Bacon, for me... It was through Bacon that I discovered Picasso. However, Picasso made me feel it was pointless doing anything. He had done everything beforehand. I thought there was no point, Picasso remained there like a shadow, cast over the whole of 20th century art. But it is as

though we collectively decided to ignore him like the elephant in the room. I sometimes think that figures like Picasso can influence you more peripherally than if you spend a lot of time looking at them. In my opinion Walt Disney and Picasso are the two most important influences on visual art in the 20th century.

Things you take in, as you said, not being fully aware, but you are influenced by them, as they are probably much more important. I often used to say this to students when I was teaching: If you have an influence, if there is an influence on your work, and if you are in denial about it, then that influence would become more powerful, the only way you can contain that influence, and master it, is by confronting it, and being honest about it. And the person, who was most honest about this I think, was Picasso himself who was unashamed about stealing. It is as simple as that, if you see something in an artist's work you like, you just use it.

MP I think nowadays we steal much more openly... and in a much more refined way, in that regard I am quite embracing, as far as influence is concerned, even to a degree, that I redo other people's work, just with slight changes, and I think it is perfectly valid, to claim that as your own work.

JS Absolutely.

MP At some point I knew I was going to do a series of works, which I would call "greatest hits". And I call something a "greatest hit", if it is an explicit paraphrase of an existing work, one-on-one. It doesn't have to be an artwork, or a historical piece, it can also be contemporary, for example a filtered newspaper, if it is one particular edition of one particular day, and if you redo it slightly differently... the New York Times flag profile was maybe one of the first "greatest hits" I did. Later I went on to make my versions of *Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hazard*, of the Mallarmé poem and also, philosophical texts, like *Der Ertzige und sein Eigenum*, that I edited down to first-person-pronouns only.

JS Oh, yes.

MP So there, "the anxiety of influence" is not being afraid of being told that somebody had done something similar before, but quite the opposite – using finished art works as a starting point for something new, as material. And I think that is something what may separate nowadays appropriation strategies from the so-called first generation appropriation of the seventies, that it's also appropriating concepts, and redoing things with slight changes. I think that happens a lot these days, while then it was more either using images, or bluntly, like Sherrie Levine rehashing Walker Evans. Also, nowadays, it is not so much anymore about breaking a taboo, or pretending to break a taboo, killing the author or something. It has become not so much an if, but a how-question, about the witness of it, how one creates a labyrinth of inside jokes. But also how it relates to the "real world", after all.

JS Who would you give as an example outside yourself, as a second-generation appropriator, who make these subtle...

MP I am not sure if I would call myself a second-generation appropriator, but I can tell you a couple of people who employ similar strategies, both with books and with texts and with artworks, and that would be Michael Marando, Elisabeth Jannard, Eric Doeringer, Natalie Czech, Jonathan Monk and Claude Closely maybe – also a lot of the conceptual-writing-people. Craig Dworkin, Kenny Goldsmith, Rob Fitterman, Simon Morris, Jan Beavin, Christian Bök – now these people see themselves more as poets than as visual artists.

READING AND SEEING

JS That's the next thing I wanted to ask you. There is a strong connection, historically, between the emergence of collage, or images being merged and speculated upon, and poetry. The connections between Mallarmé and the origins of collage, etcetera, is clearly an important connection in your work, between collage and poetry. Could you talk about how you see the two connecting?

MP One thing, I found myself more and more working on both sides of the imaginary border between visual art and literature, and I like to think that to insist on the existence of this border is rather reactionary... it is not necessary for me. I like to explore the materiality of language and of text.

JS Well on a concrete or physical level I suppose there is a difference in procedure of pursuing a drawing or painting as a representation of something else, and the procedures – or even, how you orchestrate a painting, an abstract work, from writing. With collage, you do get closer to the process of preexisting components and bringing them together, which is similar to the process of collage. I mean, that's one very strong connection, but always, if you look at the origins of what we sometimes call concrete poetry, there is – say, in Apollinaire, or Mallarmé – a strong disconnection between the overall visual phenomenon, the *gestalt*, the visual unity which you take in at once, and some things which you read sequentially. And a lot of this work seems to play on the disparity, the gap, in a way, between the linear reading, the legibility of something and its overall *gestalt*.

MP Legibility is something, a very good term, and also strategic illegibility.

JS That's right. Take for example Simon Popper who did the *Ulysse*s in alphabetical order. Conceptual poetry, so to speak. I mean, that seems to me to be a gesture of opposition to legibility. And it seems to expose the gap in a way, the gulf between literature, or between a kind of linear legible reading, and sort of accumulations, that occur through the process of collecting, which is why I find that work quite interesting.

MP Yeah, there is a lot of people who reorder masterpieces in alphabetical order, or in chance order or filter through a text or employ other ordering criteria or translation, or rewriting criteria. If I'd employ such a very formalist strategy to existing material, I would always also look for a clue of why I would employ these ordering criteria. Like with *Der Ertzige und sein Eigenum*, where I filtered down Max Stirner's book of the same title to first person pronouns only, it was a formalist exercise to reprint the whole book with all the words on exactly the same page number on exactly the same position, but there was also a semantic connection, because this book of Stirner is often referred to as the bible of egotism. So to isolate the *I, me, myself and mine*, and print them on the page on the same position is also resonating with the supposed egocentrism of Stirner and revealing it in a very blunt way, maybe humorous way also. But it had to do with the content of the original text, it wasn't just a formalist thing. And I like to say, that everybody who has my book and reads it out loud, that constitutes his or her self-portrait.

JS [laughs] Yes. No, it's a lovely piece. The resonance for me is also about the relation with the third person – or the denial of the third person. And I think it was Kafka who said, that he became a writer when he moved from using the first person to using the third person. When he stopped writing letters and

started writing stories, he shifted from the first person to the third person. But of course there are a lot of people within literature in the late 20th and early 21st century especially, who have made the discovery the other way round, and they moved from the third, the convention of using the third person, to deliberately using the first person, to give it that confessional immediacy.

MP And my book looks like concrete poetry, but it probably isn't. I mean, it can be read as concrete poetry and I am very much a defender of the opinion, that everybody should always read things the way he or she likes and can attribute any meaning to it, but first of all, it's composed rather conceptually – in the way it was generated. And also, the concrete poets never used the first person. A friend of mine, Amelie, who is one of the editors of the catalogue, has showed *Der Ertzige und sein Eigenum* to Eugen Gomringer, and he said, what a wonderful piece, and it reminds me of my *Sunderbuch*, just the "I" is quite annoying. [both laugh]

THE SIGNATURE

JS Jasper Johns, he wanted get away from abstract expressionist painting with the stench of the artist's ego, the bad smell of the artist's ego, so the "I" is particularly objectionable to modernism, really, which has effaced the "I".

MP This may bring us to another topic, "the signature of the author". For many years, I had issues with signing, and I didn't want to sign until I made a couple of pieces, which were only signatures, like the tabloid newspaper *Pichler Pichler, the Beginning of the system of lies*, which takes its title from a wonderful statement Marcel Broodthaers once made: "It appears to me, that the signature of the author, be it an artist, cineast or poet, seems to be the beginning of the system of lies, that all poets, all artists try to establish, to defend themselves, I do not know exactly against what".

JS [laughs]

John Stezaker, *Mad XXV*, 2007

MP The newspaper features a couple thousand handwritten signatures and was later posted around in the streets, which makes me probably the first “street artist”, who is using his real signature in real size even. Another project is *Pichler (Pichler)*, an ongoing long-term series, where I ask people to sign a print in my name, but in their hand.

Also I read other peoples’ signature pieces, like Richter’s *Blattdecke*, which is more or less a facsimile of his piece, newly dited, numbered and signed. And instead of the fragmented “chier”, as he has it, you have the signature “chier”. So there is this one three missing, which also makes it readable as erasure poetry. Or *Une Seconde d’Éternité*, a Broodthaers 35mm film, one second of 24 frames which make his initials, transferred to 8mm. By the media transfer one second becomes 18 frames; instead of 24, and 18 frames is exactly my initials, in his writing though.

J5 Oh that’s rather nice, yeah. So, it is an arrested Broodthaers.

MP An arrested Broodthaers, or an assisted Broodthaers. Or again, erasure poetry, or a sculpture in the classical sense, where the MB is like a block from which the MP is carved out of, by omitting 6 frames.

J5 Oh yeah! I have some thoughts about the signature, too. I do sign my work on the back. I have from the very beginning always felt very uncomfortable about signing work, but in a way I have gone along – it becomes so complicated, if you don’t sign it, you end up signing a certificate....

MP Exactly, yeah.

J5 ... of the authenticity. And so it becomes a kind of circular thing. In the end, the signature, I have given in on this. But at least, I hate it being visible, I can’t bear the signature being visible.

MP Unless, it is really about the signature.

J5 I’ve never been interested. I had actually more of a kind of physical aversion to the signature than perhaps you do, but to me, that’s what started me in appropriation. I had become interested in found images, even when I was young, as a source for my drawings and paintings. But when I arrived at the Städe School of Arts, I think through the teaching and influence of Ewan Uglow, I gradually started to get an extreme aversion to the visual look of my hand-style of drawing, which became an almost pathological dislike of my own mark-making. And the signature, I suppose, is the embodiment of that automatic gesture. The found object was a way of avoiding that, and I think perhaps the reason a signature sits so uncomfortably on works that are appropriations is because of that effortment of the self that’s required in terms of being open to what’s out there in the world, the preexisting image. I always found it really uncomfortable, when I look at a Rauschenberg for example, with the signature.

MP Yeah!

J5 The funniest for me, are the Barnett Newman ones. You have these completely empty canvases [laughs] and this huge great gesture of the signature in the corner. It seems to me, to deny the whole experience of their material presence.

MP Certainly. I have a similar feeling about editions of the Mallarmé which are paginated.

J5 Are you talking about the original Mallarmé, or your own?

MP I am talking about the many manifestation it has taken in the meantime. Most of the times on *Un coup de dés* is printed in an orthology or somewhere, it is paginated, and... it becomes really a different piece through that. It also keeps it alive in a way, that there are different manifestations... but it changes the balances on the page.

To get back to what you said about using other people’s images: I had that also from pretty early on, and I even liked to use other people’s texts, also in pursuit of laziness. I thought it would be cooler using someone else’s words instead of making up new ones, and that was also a form of being lazy. But it turned out, that to find the really right words of other people, was actually more work.

J5 Much more work, yeah. Walter Benjamin talks about that, doesn’t he. His idea of creding an essay out of the quotes from another person.

MP Yeah.

J5 The only person I know who ever tried to do that, was Norman O. Brown in *Love’s Body*.

MP Guy Debord did that, too.

J5 Yeah, but not as... he used them, yes, but he didn’t actually make essays out of the quotations that I am aware of.

MP Heinrich Bell’s *Doktor Murke* comes to mind, who created a soundtrack out of other people’s silences in *Doktor Murkes gesammeltes Schweigen/Doctor Murke’s Collected Silences*.

The conversation took place on November 23rd 2014 in London.

SELECTED WRITINGS
BY MICHAELIS PICHLER