

THIERRY FONTAINE

LES JOUEURS

7 – 19 OCTOBER 2015

Somewhere, there is a need to photograph one's dreams... or dream one's photographs.

Making the world of the unreal tangible, materialising it and fixing it, is precisely what Thierry Fontaine achieves in his work. For nearly twenty years, mainly through his camera, the artist has been creating images with all the complexity, power and density of dreams.

His very latest series, *Les Joueurs* [The Players], was produced for the PMU Carte blanche programme, the founding partner of the Centre Pompidou's Galerie de photographies.

The Carte blanche is designed to promote contemporary photographic creation and the talents behind it, whether emerging or more established. The winner is chosen by a panel of experts, and receives a cash prize to fund a project based on the gaming world. *Les Joueurs*, presented for the first time at the Centre Pompidou, is a series that certainly explores this world. In twenty-odd new pictures, the artist shows us the inner mechanisms of those who bet. For Thierry Fontaine, the player is an alchemist whose imagination has the power to change lead into gold.

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While many of Thierry Fontaine's works reflect his familiarity with Biblical culture, in the series *Les Joueurs*, he makes particularly explicit use of typically Christian references. For example, we find the theme of the fish, which appears constantly in multiple numbers. Evoking the miraculous catch of fish recounted in St Luke's Gospel, the fish in these pictures, with their subtle gold reflections, are also a metaphor for the fortune players' dream of winning. For gold, symbolising the most precious thing owned by the faithful in the Biblical mind, is central to this series, where virtually everything has the precious metal's iridescent reflection: fish, bushes, bottles, buttons, nuts and bolts – even drops of water. For Thierry Fontaine, gold is a promise: it does not symbolise gain, but the hope of gain. The golden shimmer of the objects thus represents the precise state of mind of a player when he is about to make a bet, or later, when he is feverishly awaiting its results.

To describe the visual treatment he has used in this series and more largely in his work of the last twenty years, Thierry Fontaine cites three concepts that run through the strategies of 20th and 21st century art: "I like to *displace* objects; this leads to a *meeting*, which itself gives rise to an *exchange*."

By covering extremely mundane consumer objects (battered plastic bottles, half-burnt matches) with a fine layer of gold, Thierry Fontaine *displaces* them by transforming them. He changes lead into gold. This meeting of ill-assorted objects – gold and bottles, gold and matches – operates in an integrational rather than confrontational mode: the gold that covers the objects divides their appearance and meaning, in a two-in-one approach. The plastic rubbish makes us think of treasure immersed in a river. And yet this *exchange*, born of the displacement and the meeting, does not have the effect of merging the elements represented, or even of dissolving them. Each of the elements brought into play retains its own power of evocation. Although reminiscent of treasure, the plastic bottles are still refuse.

EXHIBITION

CURATOR

Clément Chéroux
assisted by
Emmanuelle Etchecopar-Etchart
and Françoise Vogt

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Véronique Labelle

Exhibition staged as part of the PMU
Carte blanche programme



www.cartelblanchepmu.fr

CATALOGUE

Les joueurs
Filigranes Éditions
25 €

INFORMATION

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www.centrepompidou.fr

EXHIBITION OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

7 to 19 October 2015
Galerie de Photographies, Forum -1
Every day except Tuesdays
from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.
Free entry

TWITTER

#ThierryFontaine
www.twitter.com/centrepompidou

NEXT EXHIBITION

Varda / Cuba
11 November 2015 – 1 February 2016

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MODULE

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