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Michel de Broin
Courtesy of Michel de Broin



Michel de Broin
Braking Matter, 2006
Courtesy of Michel de Broin



Michel de Broin
Black Whole Conference, 2006
Courtesy of Michel de Broin



Michel de Broin
Keep on Smoking, 2006
Courtesy of Michel de Broin



Michel de Broin
Encircling, 2006
Auftragsarbeit für SCAPE, 2006
Courtesy of Michel de Broin

ARTNET QUESTIONNAIRE

WHERE IS MICHEL DE BROIN?

6th September 2007

(1) *Who are you?*

Michel de Broin. I am what I am concentrating on.

(2) *Why are you making art?*

To say "I make art", I should have a definite idea about what art is and be able to reproduce this idea – as if I was a machine with a specific purpose. I would rather say, "art is making me". Art affects and transforms me.

(3) *What does your art refer to?*

Each work is constructed in relation to its context. Since the context is always changing, I can't give a general answer to this question.

(4) *Who needs your art?*

There is no necessity. The conspiracy is to spread the doubt about what is established in order to create the necessity for this new thing and then make it to become real.

(5) *What is the purpose of your art?*

As a strategy, I often intensify the function to show its absurdity, but I see art as what frees itself from any function or intension.

(6) *Who is interested in your art?*

I find it difficult to talk about what I do as "my" art, generally said. If someone is interested in something, it belongs to him or her.

(7) *What does your art change?*

Change is understood as something positive, but we should consider that what we call change as a natural process participates in a progressive and irreversible degradation of resources, slowly forwarding us to an inexorable end. In that sense it is probably better to not be held responsible for too much change.

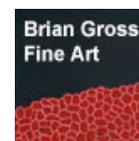
(8) *Is your art beautiful?*

Beauty is a difficult thing. People enjoy what they understand. The task is to share which I don't intend. The difficulty is to create a solitary instant of beauty and to communicate it.

(9) *Which question do you miss here?*

Art exists beyond the boundaries of the "individual"; it is always in a relation. I therefore miss sensible questions.

The site of one of **Jorges Luis Borges'** narratives from the early 1940ies is not an alternative and directly opposed version of our world, but some third universe. In the narrative a fantastic encyclopaedia lists the objects of this universe, but the occidental





Michel de Broin
Reparations, 2006
 Courtesy of Michel de Broin



Michel de Broin
Revolutions, 2003
 Auftragsarbeit für die Stadt
 Montréal, Parc Maisonneuve-
 Cartier, Montréal, Kanada, 2003
 Courtesy of Michel de Broin



Michel de Broin
Épater la Galerie, 2002
 Courtesy of Michel de Broin

concept of object is scarcely appropriate: everything is in motion; ever changing, volatile, and ephemeral. Every moment in this world is new and different. However, since there is no constancy in such a universe it also lacks reality, for how can any object in this world without comparison ever be deemed "real", if no regularity or similarity is experienced? This mere appearance without a field of reference is the very thing that Borges subsequently identifies as the poetic. The works of **Michel de Broin** (born 1970 in Montréal, Canada) recall this kind of fantastic universe. Admittedly, they never quite leave the realm of the recognisable, but they aim beyond it and this initiates certain transformations. *Dangerous Substances* (1999) is an attempt to rethink *Black Square* (1915) by Kazimir Malevich. It starts from a street sign at the entrance of a tunnel: the black square is crossed out, signifying a banned substance. In a sequence of de Broin's projects a culturally established sign cycles through a number of semantic processes – in one instance, the artist buckles a black cube to the roof of his car and is stopped by "truth seeking" police officers, in another instance the same cube threatens to break through the walls of an art gallery. The form is always the same, the content is scarcely alterable. *Reparations* (2004) deals with the waste littering the streets of Paris. Empty plastic bottles are recycled into skyrockets and "successfully" launched into the sky over Paris. *Keep on Smoking* (2006) is another work that de Broin designed for the public space. It consists of a bicycle with an engine operated by pedalling that produces exhaust fumes. De Broin built the bicycle during his stay as an artist in residence at the Künstlerhaus Bethanien in Berlin. One of his works from 2006 will be shown as part of the upcoming group exhibition "Neue Heimat - Berlin Contemporary" at the Berlinische Galerie starting September 13. *Black Whole Conference* is a sculpture out of chairs and a conference room without a central position – or an immune system, or to put it with the artist's words: "...the reorganization of matter that derives from a 'big bang' where the ancient order of the conference room has blown out and reconfigured into a 'utopic' geometrical endosystem." This year, de Broin has been shortlisted for Quebec for the Sobey Art Award 2007, the prize will be given to the artist on the October 15. Michel de Broin lives and works in Montréal and Berlin.

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