

MARIE COOL FABIO BALDUCCI

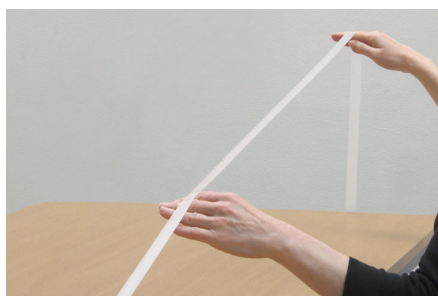
LA MIA MANO COME ORGANO

01 DECEMBER 2012 - 17 FEBRUARY 2013

49 NORD 6 EST - FRAC LORRAINE, METZ



OPENING: FRIDAY 30 NOVEMBER 2012 - 7PM



1-

ACCESS

Admission free

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Tuesday-Friday 2-7pm

Saturday & Sunday 11-7pm

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Open during Christmas holidays

(including December 25th and 26th

and January 1st)

Group visits in English on request
mediation@fraclorraine.org

A duo for two soli. Marie Cool and Fabio Balducci have accepted a joint invitation from 49 Nord 6 Est - Frac Lorraine and the Contemporary Art Centre - la synagogue de Delme. They will present complementary experiments that thwart the laws of physics.

The two exhibitions in Metz and Delme (drawings, installations, videos and actions) combine to form an echo chamber with an essential, existential approach, where continually repeated moments touch upon the ineffable.

The pieces created by Marie Cool and Fabio Balducci have a layout and spatial presence that give their appearance the semblance of "unstable sculptures with body." The peculiarity of their propositions and barely installed installations have a genuinely powerful strangeness.

These artists are ultimately aiming to give rise to thought rather than to a result. They attempt to break up the conflict of the material and the metaphysical. Following no track or trail, Marie Cool and Fabio Balducci are offering nothing less a renewal of the art experience. Using humble materials, simple gestures, a subtle temporality, they are reviving a universal language that everyone can understand.

They display a sensitive, critical rigour that enables them to engage in a questioning of certain behaviours, postures and normative values—particularly temporality—that no longer seems able to exist in the ordinary context of institutional spaces.

1- Marie Cool Fabio Balducci - *Untitled*, 2004.
Sellotape, table.
Courtesy Marcelle Alix, Paris © the artists



All of their internal dialogues, visions, incisions and apostrophes speak of a passionate desire to dig into representation in order to help make it more open. All of their work predisposes one to that impetus which makes art the most effective means of bringing the invisible, inaudible world into existence.

In Marie Cool's gestures, the hand becomes a life in itself, a multifaceted face, liable to caress or shatter. It is the site of an approaching rage, an evolving revolt, a human resistance to the dilution of a consumed, consumable world, governed by objects and all-powerful machines. The insurrection that the gestures contain becomes its own politics of life, a constant injunction to stay awake, alive, to be there but always in a precarious balance, at the edge of a secret.

MARIE COOL FABIO BALDUCCI
COME TAVOLO, COME LAGO, COME VIVO SPAZIO
27 October 2012 - 17 February 2013



CENTRE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN
LA SYNAGOGUE DE DELME

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Access : Admission free

33 rue Poincaré, 57590 Delme

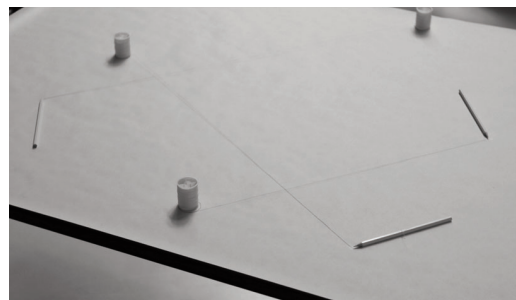
Wednesday-Saturday 2-6pm, Sunday 11am-6pm

Closed from 17 december 2012 until 8 January 2013

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www.cac-synagoguedelme.org



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affaires culturelles de Lorraine.

PARISart

www.paris-art.com

1- Marie Cool Fabio Balducci - *Untitled*,
2006. Cotton thread, table.
49 Nord 6 Est - Frac Lorraine Collection .

MARIE COOL FABIO BALDUCCI

Marie Cool was born in Valenciennes (France) in 1961 and Fabio Balducci was born in Ostra (Ancona, Italy) in 1964. They live and work between Paris and Pergola (Marche, Italy). The artists are represented by Marcelle Alix Gallery, Paris.

FORTHCOMING EXHIBITIONS

April 2013, Marcelle Alix Gallery, Paris (FR)
February 2013, Le Consortium, Dijon (FR)

SOLO EXHIBITIONS (selection)

2011 *Live & Obscure*, Académie de France, Villa Médicis, Rome (IT)
2010 *Une vibration inaudible à l'oreille nue...**
**mais évidente en mathématiques*, CAC Brétigny, Brétigny-sur-Orge (FR)
2009 *Sans titre 2006-2009*, South London Gallery, Londres (GB)
Galerie Cent8 Serge Le Borgne, Paris (FR)
2008 *Sans titre 2005-2007*, attitudes, Genève (CH)
Site Gallery, Sheffield (GB)
Sans titre 2004-2008, La Maison Rouge Fondation Antoine de Galbert, Festival d'automne, Paris (FR)
2007 *Sans titre*, Mudam, Luxembourg (LU)

GROUP EXHIBITIONS (selection)

2012 *It's When It's Gone That You Really Notice It*, Simon Subal Gallery, New York (US)
Is Resistance Useless?, Marcelle Alix Gallery, Paris (FR)
2011 *Openings*, Louvre/Fiac, Paris (FR)
2010 *The Living Currency/La Monnaie vivante*, Biennale de Berlin (DE) / Musée d'art moderne de Varsovie (PL)
On Line: Drawing Through the Twentieth Century, MoMA, New York (US)
2009 *Whitworth Art Gallery*, Manchester (GB)
Where water comes together with other water, gb agency, Paris
2007 *Performa07/PSI* MoMA, New York (US)
2006 *Antipodes*, 49 Nord 6 Est - Frac Lorraine, Metz (FR)
2004 *Densité+-0*, École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Paris

BIBLIOGRAPHY (selection)

Catalogue *On Line: Drawing Through the Twentieth Century*, MoMA, New York (US), 2010
Catalogue 1994-2004, attitudes, Genève (CH), 2005
Catalogue *Densité +-0*, ENSBA, Paris, 2004

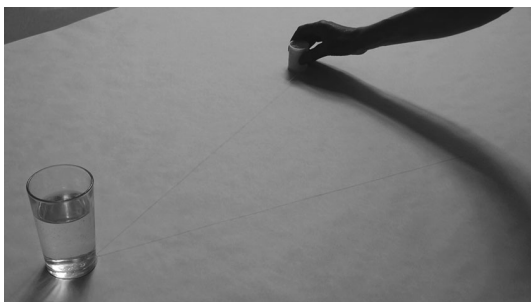
Images available for the press



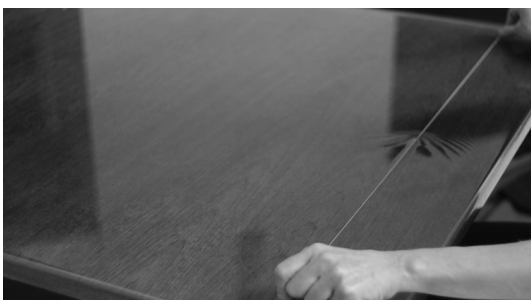
1- Marie Cool Fabio Balducci - *Untitled*, 2000.
Kleenex, table.
Courtesy Marcelle Alix, Paris.



2- Marie Cool Fabio Balducci - *Untitled*, 2009.
Paper, table (dimension: 220x100cm).
Courtesy Marcelle Alix, Paris.



3- Marie Cool Fabio Balducci - *Untitled*, 2011.
Spool, Cotton thread, glass, water, drawing, paper, table.
Courtesy Marcelle Alix, Paris.



4- Marie Cool Fabio Balducci - *Untitled*, 2011.
Water, Sellotape, cotton thread, table.
Courtesy Marcelle Alix, Paris.

Texts / articles



Marie Cool Fabio Balducci

**The Revolt of Matter and the
Insurrection of Forms**

The Revolt of Matter and the Insurrection of Forms

If the sheet of paper on which this text is printed is the product of an industry, its format is thus the expression of a standard that is defined according to its common use. If the door frame that leads to the exhibition space delimits a width and height in order to pass through it, or alternatively to pass something through it, it thus demonstrates a public (domestic or technical) use of space. Furthermore, if in its measurements the space itself places the visitor's body in relation to a proportionate or disproportionate scale relative to his or her height and size, this is because architecture is a language that conditions various modes of behaviour. Certain members of society invest themselves in the service of material and formal order; they define, for example, the format of a standard A4 sheet of paper, the geometry of doors or the architecture of physical spaces. Others such as Marie Cool Fabio Balducci aim at a revolt of matter and form. The former conform to a regime of visibility that underscores the determined character of things; they contribute to the reign of products that are offered as an irreversible totality without limits. The latter work at the occluded margins of finished products in order to give their depreciated contours a presence. What is rendered visible in Marie Cool Fabio Balducci's exhibition is not confined to what is present, as is the case with demonstrators of home or DIY appliances in department stores. The act of infinite repetition as it is applied to an object is not simply undertaken in order to confine it to a single use. Indeed, if Marie Cool's precise and calculated actions refer as much to the movements of a dancer as they do to that of a worker on an assembly line, they are therefore intended to express the dissonance and familiarity of both. The difference between the physical activity of an artist and that of a worker can be seen in the insubordination of an activity in relation to a determined use. However, it would be too simple to leave it at that; and, in truth, if the work of Marie Cool Fabio Balducci could be reduced to the distinction between artist and worker, they would henceforth merely have to repeat and continue their past activities. Indeed, what characterises the work of these two artists is their aim of pursuing an alternative strategy of use, which imprints itself on matter and, in turn, leaves an imprint on the body, as is the case, for example, in the series *Werksatz* (1963-1969) by Franz Erhard Walther. What is also distinct in their work is the way in which they reinvest, at another level, the repetition, characteristic of such painters as Niele Toroni, which weighs on painting as a practice; or, again, the ways in which they redistribute, to other parts of the body, the elementary physical act of a pedestrian in movement, associated with the work of Stanley Brouwn. However, these references no longer suffice in affirming any solidarity with either a worker on an assembly line in the 1970s or today's call centre worker. For above all what

distinguishes the work of Marie Cool Fabio Balducci from a previous generation, and thus what links them to their contemporaries (Santiago Sierra, Prinz Gholam, Vigier & Apertet ou François Laroche-Valière), is the way in which they undo the illusion of a delimited and accessible body as a totality: the way in which they underscore a dependency that is both mental and physical and, again, the way in which they reveal the reciprocity between the human body and matter. The sheet of paper, the table, the thread, the doorframe, the borders of a room and, at times, the edges of a window delimit Marie Cool's body in action. Her body is often divided vertically and symmetrically, although never in a systematic way; it is sometimes horizontally cut in two by the top of a table that delimits the use of her legs. This work of dividing the limbs in action, the reversibility between a hand and a sheet of A4 paper underscores interdependency. The doubt that is brought about by the length of the action and the multiplication of the sequences opens up a reversal of matter. Is it the hand that grasps the sheet of paper in movement or follows the thread of cotton as it is used up? Or is it the other way around? The duration of the exhibition dissolves Marie Cool's body in a material environment, in that her body can no longer be associated with the role of a fictional character on a stage. Fabio Balducci's physical withdrawal reveals the empty presence that haunts and controls the objects and the movements of each of Marie Cool's gestures. The action is undertaken in the absence of the visitor after he or she has come and gone. It is not the deconstruction of various physical acts in their work that leads to a revolt of matter and an insurrection of forms, but rather their reiteration in absolute apathy. The negation of the spectator, Fabio Balducci's exposed absence, and Marie Cool's absorption in each of her activities, recalls the anti-theatrical strategies adopted by French painters in the eighteenth century as they are described in detail by Diderot in his Salon writings: the absorption of the human figure, figures placed with their backs to the spectator, or the de-centering of the depicted scene can be understood as so many anti-theatrical tactics designed to negate the presence of the spectator standing in front of the canvas. Marie Cool's actions equally evoke the notion of "task based movements" as defined by Anna Halprin, who, at the end of the 1950s, introduced daily physical activities repeated on a dance platform. Or, again, they recall Odile Duboc who in her work *Entreacte*, from the 1970s, inversely immersed such simple gestures, repeated endlessly by her dancers, within the urban realm. In the case of painting, eighteenth century painters in neglecting the presence of the spectator, wished, according to Diderot, to show at once the subject painted and the subject of painting. In the case of dance, the choreographers of the 1960s and 1970s aimed at both presenting the social body and dance. Marie Cool Fabio Balducci look to these two traditions in order to reactualise the stakes involved. They just as much present a living form and matter as they do the life of both form and matter. This tradition aims at de-conditioning the gaze of the spectator and turning it around, in the hope that out of this gaze, even its name will disappear in favour of a new name which, as history shows us, remains endlessly deferred. Pierre Bal-Blanc, April 2009.

CAC
BRETIGNY

The Revolt of Matter and the Insurrection of Forms

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www.marcellealix.com***Is Resistance Useless ?***Varda Caivano, Marie Cool Fabio Balducci**

2.02 – 17.03.2012

The reader will have to negotiate with a non-exhaustive series of figures that we use as projection spaces when approaching the works of Marie Cool Fabio Balducci and Varda Caivano. The beautiful opacity of their respective work has made us wish to describe nuances. In this apparent discontinuity, our thoughts - and those of authors dear to us - meet to express the pleasure we find in these fixed and mobile images, which fight petrification. The abstraction at play in Varda Caivano's paintings and drawings and that of Marie Cool's filmed gestures at precarious objects, isn't fake. It is an abstraction that literally falls out of language.

Resistance

What position does interior life occupy today? The relationship between a repressive society and the melancholic flight from it has always been a worthwhile subject. In her book about acedia, the art historian Anne Larue explains that its origin is to be found with the solitary monks in the Egyptian deserts at the end of the third and beginning of the fourth century of the Christian era. This form of melancholia reduced to its essence was replaced by the noble melancholia of the Renaissance: the melancholia generosa, associated with the painful condition of the genius. It's the radical acedia, this "obliquely subversive force", found in the medieval monastic texts, which interests us, as a response to an incredible oppression. The Fathers of the Church (and in particular the bishops who contributed to establish and defend the Christian doctrine) fought against the ghost of interior life, in order to exterminate intellectual life. The monastic texts of the time display plenty of allusions to the necessity to remain in one's cell. There are numerous examples of monks who developed-through acedia-the possibility to represent themselves in their mind, and to free their desire and their boredom of any limit. To prefer oneself to one's nation or to the State, to be more than a simple cell in a collective body: melancholia will always be an essential force of opposition.

Action

A fire-raiser, this is how I represent the role of Marie Cool within the duo Marie Cool Fabio Balducci to myself. Literally, a female activist. An arsonist. Of course we can evoke the delicacy and care with which Cool seizes the objects and manipulates them, but it would not be totally fair to miss the violence contained in these gestures. This repetition of gestures means: not to think, to block speech, a moment in which only action will be efficient. Against discourse and virtuosity, the artist positions herself next to the worker, the doer, the resistant. The action exists in opposition to what we would like to do with it, to the way we could appropriate it. The repetition is a closed time which imposes itself on the spectator. A sort of hostage-taking.

Hand

"Five bony branches. They tightly clasp to form a compact block, a real bone rock" (Henri Focillon, *Eloge de la main*, Quadrige/ Presses Universitaires de France, 1996, p. 104/105)

Eroticism - ritual

Marie Cool's body adopts the shape of manipulated objects: thread, pencils, folded paper tissues, sheet. These very simple processes, presented as short films, belong to a system that could be defined as erotic. The body and the objects become one. This series of renewed, hypnotic gestures express a wish for continuity (the continuity that lies at the core of the erotic relationship, according to Georges Bataille), as social relations and constituted beings dissolve to form a continuous loop. Objects are used for their intrinsic properties and thus appear as mere body extensions.

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Moving forward from the eroticism of the body, to that of the heart, then to sacred eroticism. Rituals help human beings prove their potential continuity and ward off their discontinuity. This closed loop-body-object-is like a mantra, which leads us up to infinity. The sacred at stake here is closer to Durkheim's concept developed in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* than to Buddha's. It is an expression of our society. Marie Cool then appears as a modern prophetess, trained to express the essence of our world. Through skilled worker's gestures, she expresses a kind of contemporary, universal and essential truth.

Arte Povera

Poverty must be understood as Franciscan simplicity (Luciano Fabro)

Poetry

Poetry as an expression of a desired continuity (again, Bataille's concept of eroticism) is at play in Varda Caivano's paintings. Rimbaud's words 'It is the sea / Fled away with the sun' find their equivalent in her motifs which cover up other abstract motifs. 'It has been found again. What? Eternity! Caivano's canvases conceal many mysteries, which only the initiates to an unknown cult can decipher. If Cool Balducci's work resembles rituals of pagan origins, Caivano's painting seems closer to Orphic mysteries cults, in which initiation leads to an ever-increasing perceptiveness, maybe that of Rimbaud's "visionary" poet. "There is a sense in Caivano's paintings of something searched for and not quite found" (Jennifer Higgie, Frieze, 2005): like an initiatory process in which the artist acts as a guide.

Form

How can we speak about form without evoking things outside of it? Isn't the autonomy of the artwork a despicable thing? Doesn't it amount to talk about its "power" or about the timeless "genius" of the artist? Or do we mix up different things? In fact, some works exist that speak for themselves, that don't need to be told, and that simultaneously carry a political thought. They are monolithic and non-narrative. It is the exact impossibility to translate them into speech that makes them the best political tools and the expression of absolute freedom: to be exactly oneself, to feel no need for self-justification, to have no wish to follow a role model. Caivano's and Cool Balducci's works display the same capacity to be themselves outside of any social idea of art or of the artist, and that is what brought them together in this show. It seems to me that what we want today and what seems so difficult to us lies exactly here: how do we live in the world while letting the absurdity of our idea of it impose on us as little as possible? How to be free and become oneself when entire nations are bound to death to such immaterial and abstruse structures as the "financial markets"? How to position oneself outside of the system in order to reconsider it or, how to "change the world" without creating a new one? Caivano's and Cool Balducci's closed systems constitute brand new worlds, without a program. They make radical choices that bar any wish to communicate outside of a form that imposes itself on us.

MA



Marie Cool Fabio Balducci, [Untitled], 2008.
photo : courtesy of the artists and Serge le Borgne Gallery, Paris

Marie Cool Fabio Balducci, *Untitled 2006-2009*

South London Gallery, London, May 15–June 28, 2009

The six-week-long South London Gallery show by the Italian-French duo Marie Cool and Fabio Balducci consisted of Cool performing six hours a day on six days a week inside the exhibition space. Surrounded by carefully staged (and rather conceptually referenced) props—A4 paper sheets, a series of trapezoid tables, several geometric volumes in cotton wool, a mirror, strings of thread, and adhesive tape—she continuously acted out a random suite of nine sculptural exercises lasting from one to nine minutes each.

In *Untitled*, 2004, for instance, she used two sheets of paper, which she pressed against each other between the palms of her hands. Facing the main entrance of the white cube, she then slowly began to move her hands apart, with the sheets sticking to them as though by magic. *Untitled*, 2006, involved four standardized sheets of paper which lay side by side on a table. Cool slowly shoved them together until the edges of the two central sheets came up against each other and started to rise, before the ephemeral construction eventually collapsed under the weight of the paper.

Minor incidents, which could potentially have spoiled the performance, seemed on the contrary to reinforce it: when things weren't working as planned (for example, when the edges overlapped and therefore failed to rise), Cool (in keeping with her name) never lost her calm and started the exercise over and over again until she eventually succeeded. Failure, it appears, was an integral part of the process.

Much against my latent scepticism as to performance art's capacity to renew itself since its heyday in the 1960s, Marie Cool Fabio Balducci's proposition effectively managed to grip my attention. Far from parodic, it was subtle and deep at once—despite the obvious fact that such tireless repetition necessarily induces lengths, putting the spectator's tenacity, concentration and endurance to test.

Yet the performance never did become tiresome, a circumstance which must at least partly be ascribed to the fascinating, ageless figure of Marie Cool, who at times resembled a dowser and at others looked like a character from a Tarkovsky film. When Cool performs, you can hear a pin drop. Another reason for the work's success might lie in its radicalness and precision in staging "experiments" that were at once fragile and solid, vain and essential, and thus seemed to epitomise the finiteness of life. But its appeal may just as well have resulted from the intricate relationship between performer and object, or body and matter: performing tirelessly and regardless of whether she has an audience or not, Cool literally subjects herself to the same constraints than those she imposes on the objects she manipulates. In this regard she exerts as much control over the props as they do over her, both entangled in a permanent negation of the spectator—a feature which is strikingly mirrored by the systematic absence of her partner Fabio Balducci.

[Alice Motard]

Review of the exhibition
*Marie Cool Fabio Balducci:
Untitled 2006-2009* (South
London Gallery, London, 15
May-28 June 2009) published
in *Killjoy 67 (Fall 09)*,
esse arts + opinions,
Montreal, p. 109.