



LA SYNAGOGUE DE DELME  
CONTEMPORARY ART CENTRE

Press kit

# LA PART ABYSSAL / LA PART ABYSSALE

*THE UNFATHOMABLE PART*  
**ERICK BELTRÁN**

EXHIBITION  
2 JUNE-30 SEPTEMBER 2012

OPENING SATURDAY 2 JUNE AT 11:00 AM  
IN THE PRESENCE OF THE ARTIST



CENTRE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN LA SYNAGOGUE DE DELME / LA PART ABYSSALE ERICK BELTRÁN / 02.06.2012-30.09.2012  
33 rue Poincaré F - 57590 Delme / +33 (0)3 87 01 43 42 / [www.cac-synagoguedelme.org](http://www.cac-synagoguedelme.org) / [cac.delme@wanadoo.fr](mailto:cac.delme@wanadoo.fr)

**ERICK BELTRÁN**

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**EXHIBITION 2 JUNE - 30 SEPTEMBER 2012**

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Erick Beltrán's work often takes the form of printouts, newspapers, leaflets, publications and more recently sculptures—text and image structures that spread throughout the exhibition spaces... He is fascinated by how information circulates and is organised, as it conditions how we understand the world.

More broadly, at the heart of his approach are language and our relationship with knowledge: his diagrams, plans and graphical systems are so many attempts to explain the world. Their diverse formulations produce labyrinthine visual effects.

Penetrating Erick Beltrán's work means venturing into a mental cartography that unfolds at the scale of a building, and you have to let yourself get lost in it. Like philosophical machines, his works crystallize ideas that proliferate like a forest of signs, where science and the supposed objectivity of demonstration are tinged with an element of irrationality.

For the Synagogue de Delme, Erick Beltrán is producing a new installation that fills the art centre's main architectural void, and plunges the viewer's eyes and body into an abyss of mingled texts and images. The structure designed by Beltrán takes on two different appearances depending on the point of view: from the ground floor, it is a pyramidal tree, growing and reaching up into the air; from upstairs, it is an abyss, a plunge into the innermost depths of the human psyche.

And that, indeed, is what it is really all about: the pyramidal tree condenses the artist's most recent investigations into notions of individual and collective consciousness, starting from the premise that the Self does not exist, that it is a purely ideological construct, a scale of values on which modern Western society has based a very complacent interpretation of the world.

Eric Beltrán does not believe in a unity of the Self locked in a constant struggle against collectivity. This tension between group and individual gives rise to the illusion that human beings channel a collection of multiple, fragmentary voices. It is an image such as this that makes us what we are, and at the same time pushes us towards that "unfathomable part", that abstract, infinite black hole of consciousness, into which we will never be finished falling.

Erick Beltrán explores anomalies, strange and unexplainable facts of human behaviour, asking who is speaking in a Man when he sinks into madness or collective hysteria. What new consciousness is interfering with consciousness, when this seems to be obliterating itself to the benefit of humanity's darkest inclinations?

Beyond the project's metaphysical aspect, what Erick Beltrán is offering is an eminently visual installation. Both body and spirit are engaged in a structure that must be approached as a navigational tool. This tool enables us to reconsider the nature of the prevailing ideologies, and to propose new systems of values and relationships.

Marie Cozette



## BIOGRAPHY

Erick Beltrán was born in 1974 à Mexico city, Mexico.

He is represented Joan Prats (Barcelone, Spain), Labor gallery (Mexico city, Mexico), and Luisa Strina (São Paulo, Brazil).

### Selected Solo Exhibitions

- 2011 *Declaration of War Against the World*, LABOR, Mexico city, Mexico  
*The World Explained*, Tropen Museum, Amsterdam, Netherlands
- 2010 *Modelling Standard*, with Jorge Satorre, FormContent, London, United-Kingdom
- 2008 *Calculus Series*, Joan Prats Gallery, Barcelona, Spain  
*Efecto Rashomon/Bolivar*, Matucana 100, Santiago Chile, Chile  
*Tolv/Zeigarnik effect*, Malmö Konsthall, Malmö, Sweden
- 2007 *Universo en expansión*, Luisa Strina Gallery, São Paulo, Brazil  
*Diagram Expansion*, Tranzitdisplay, Prague, Czech Republic

### Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2012 *Mapas*, Fundacion La Caixa, Spain  
Taipei Biennial, Taiwan, China  
*Gestures in Time*, Qalandia international, Palestine  
*On Apology*, CCA Wattis Institute, San Fransisco, U.S.A.  
*Atlas Critique*, Parc Saint Léger, Pougues-les-eaux, France  
*Resisting the present*, Musée d'Art Moderne de la ville de Paris, France  
*Ocio Negro*, Museo Tamayo, Mexico city, Mexico
- 2011 Biennale de Lyon, Lyon, France  
*Itinerarios 2009/2010*, Botin Foundation, Santander, Spain  
*Songs of the Swamp*, Kunsthalle Exnergasse, Vienna, Austria  
*Tiempo de sospecha*, Museo de Arte Moderno, Mexico city, Mexico  
*Never odd or even*, Grimmuseum, Berlin, Germany  
*Fronteras en Mutación*, CCEBA, Buenos Aires, Argentina
- 2010 *Learning Machines*, NABA, Milano, Italy  
*Manifesta 8*, Murcia, Spain  
*La fuerza de la palabra*, Instituto Cultural Cabañas, Guadalajara, Mexico  
*Smooth Structures*, Smart Project Place, Amsterdam, Netherlands  
*Modelos para armar*, MUSAC, León, Spain  
*Double Blind / Arrêtez d'essayer de me comprendre*, Villa Arson, Nice, France  
*Philagraphica*, The Print Center, Philadelphia, U.S.A.  
*Monument of Transformation*, Galerie Miroslav Krajevic, Zagreb, Croatia
- 2009 *Labor, Labor. 7 | 11 | 2009*, LABOR, Mexico city, Mexico  
*Heaven*, Athens Biennial, Greece  
*Mal de Escritura*, MACBA, Barcelona, Spain
- 2007 Biennale de Lyon, Lyon, France

## RELATED EVENTS

### OPENING > SATURDAY 2 JUNE AT 11 am

With MONO, free shuttle bus travel : departure 10:15 am from Metz, to Delme.

Booking: bus@mono2012.eu.

### GUIDED TOUR WITH ERICK BELTRÁN > SUNDAY 9 SEPTEMBER AT 4:pm

### GUIDED TOURS > EVERY SUNDAY AT 4:pm

### MONO > FROM 1 JUNE TO 2 SEPTEMBER / LORRAINE-SAARLAND-LUXEMBOURG

From 1 June to 2 September, a total of 20 monographs by modern and contemporary artists will be on show in Lorraine, the Saarland and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

Free shuttles towards the synagogue de Delme :

- 4 August from Sarrebrück, departing at 10:am : Centre Pompidou-Metz, guided tour of Metz, Synagogue de Delme

- 25 August from Luxembourg at 10:am : Centre Pompidou-Metz, guided tour of Metz, Synagogue de Delme

Booking : bus@mono2012.eu / +800 5700 1057

More information : www.mono2012.eu

## PRACTICAL DETAILS

Exhibition open 2 June-30 September 2012

Wednesday-Saturday: 2-6pm

Sundays : 11am-6pm

The Art Center will be closed on 15th August.

Admission free.

## MEDIA RELATION OFFICER

Agathe Borgne

communication@cac-synagoguedelme.org

+33(0)3 87 01 43 42

Visuals available on request

## LOCATION AND ACCESS

Centre d'art contemporain

la synagogue de Delme

33 rue Poincaré 57590 Delme

+33(0)3 87 01 43 42

cac.delme@wanadoo.fr

www.cac-synagoguedelme.org



From Paris (by train 90 mins) :

TGV Est, get off at Metz or Nancy

From Metz (by car, 30 mins):

D955, formerly route de Strasbourg

From Nancy (by car, 30 mins):N74 towards Château-Salins then D955 towards Metz





## MONO

**20 MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ART MONOGRAPHS  
15 LOCATIONS / LORRAINE LUXEMBOURG SAARLAND  
LAUNCH WEEK END : 1-2-3 JUNE 2012**

This summer, 15 cultural institutions in the Grand Region are offering an unprecedented approach to modern and contemporary art in the form of the MONO project. From 1 June to 2 September, a total of 20 monographs by modern and contemporary artists will be on show in Lorraine, the Saarland and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. This will represent a unique opportunity to (re) discover 15 exceptional locations on a tour of this territory.



## LAUNCH WEEK END 3 DAYS FOR DISCOVERING THE EXHIBITIONS

### FRIDAY 1ST JUNE > LUXEMBOURG\*

### SATURDAY 2 JUNE > LORRAINE & LUXEMBOURG\*

#### Centre d'art contemporain la synagogue de Delme

10:15 am Meeting at the Place d'Armes, in front of the Tourist Office (Metz)

Booking : bus@mono2012.eu / +800 5700 1057

11:00 am *La part abyssale* / *The unfathomable Part*, Erick Beltrán's Solo Exhibition, Opening in the presence of the artist

#### Faux Mouvement - Centre d'art contemporain

2:pm *Thanx 4 nothing*, John Giorno : guided tour of the exhibition in the presence of the artist

#### 46 nord 6 Est - Frac Lorraine, Metz

3:pm Doug Wheeler : guided tour of the exhibition

#### Château de Malbrouck, Manderen

4:pm Meeting at the Place d'Armes, in front of the Tourist Office (Metz)

Booking : bus@mono2012.eu / +800 5700 1057

5:pm *Être*, Ben : guided tour of the exhibition

#### Centre Pompidou-Metz

7:pm *Sol Lewitt, Wall Drawings from 1968 to 2007* : guided tour

8:pm Evening with John Giorno (performance)

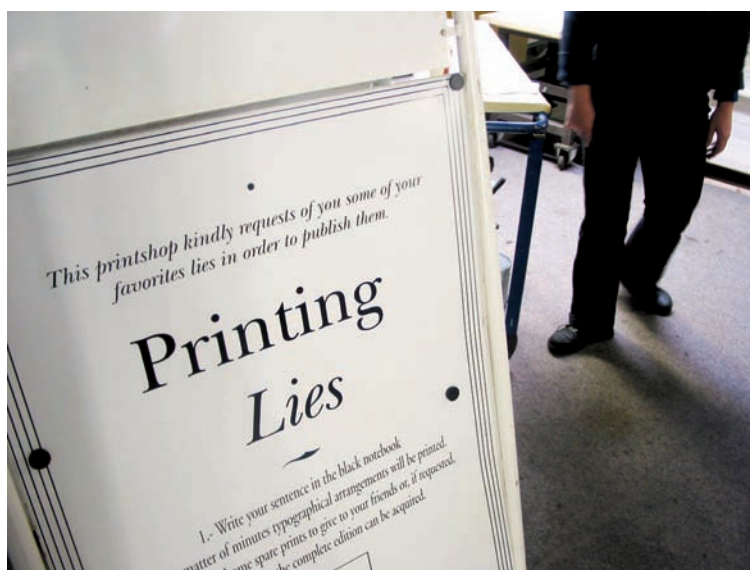
### SUNDAY 3 JUNE > SAARLAND\*

\* More informations about the launch in Luxembourg and Saarland : [www.mono2012.eu](http://www.mono2012.eu).



**[WWW.MONO2012.EU](http://WWW.MONO2012.EU)**

## SELECTED WORKS

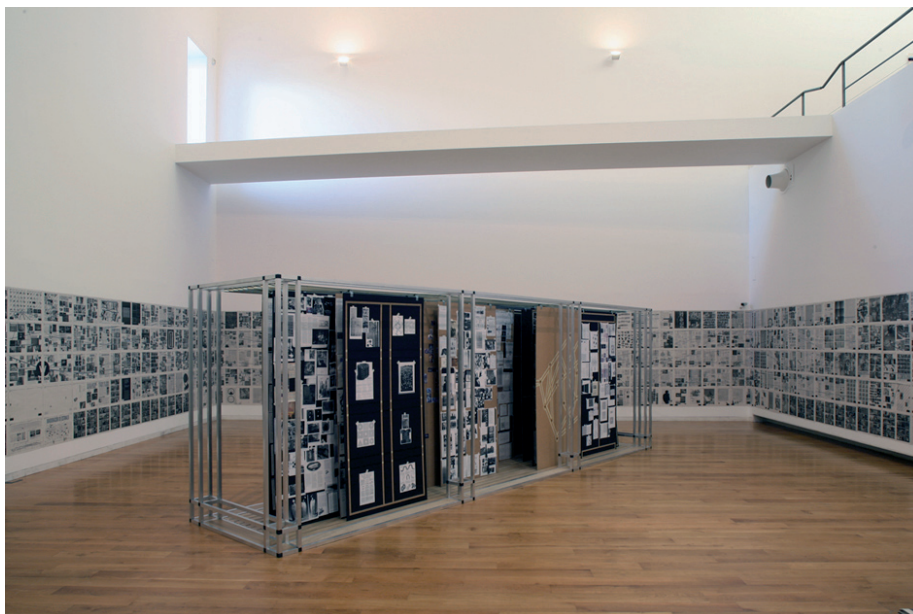


*Nothing but the truth (Rien que la vérité)*  
Public printing of lies,  
Amsterdam, 2003

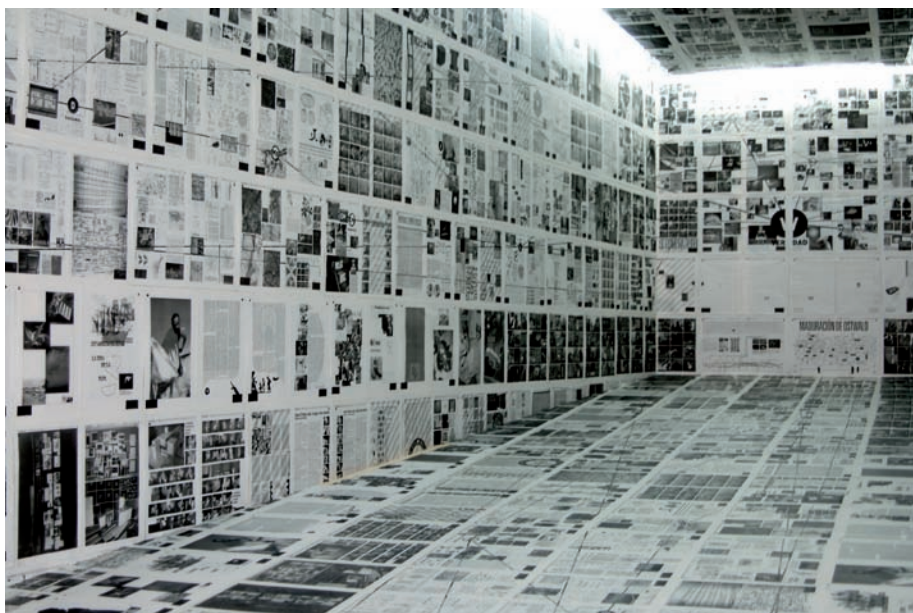




*TWIFJEL*  
Public intervention, Gent, 2005



*Ergo Sum / Archive*  
 Tapies Foundation, Barcelona, 2006

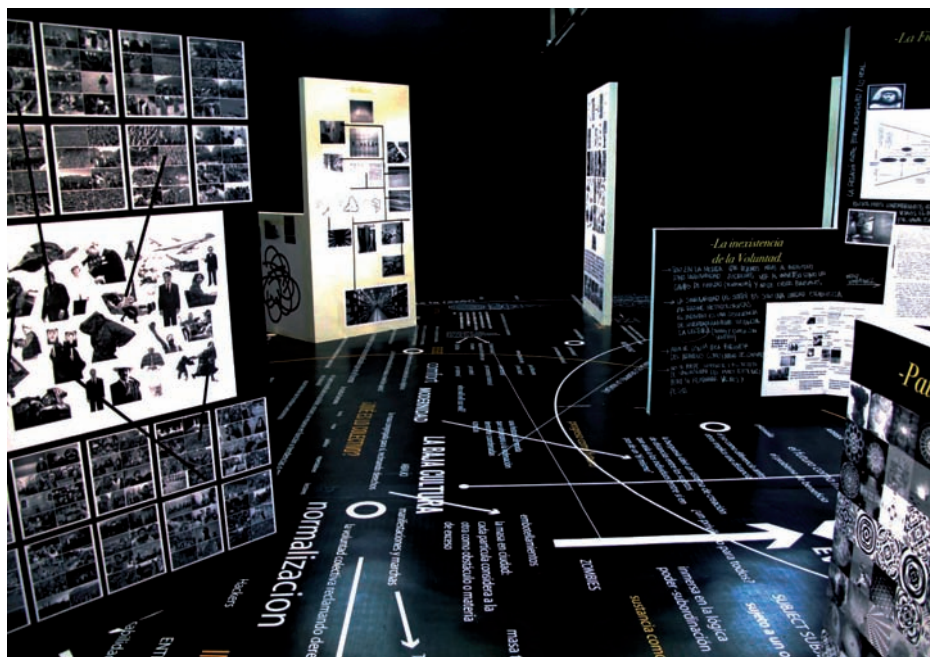


*La Maduración de Oswald*  
 Installation and newspapers  
 El Eco, Mexico DF, 2007





Strategy Counterstrategy  
Installation  
Print Center, Philadelphia, 2010



*Declaration of War against the World*  
Installation  
Labor Gallery, Mexico DF, 2011



*Noeud périkhorein*  
Biennale de Lyon, 2011





*Modelling Standard*  
With Jorge Satorre

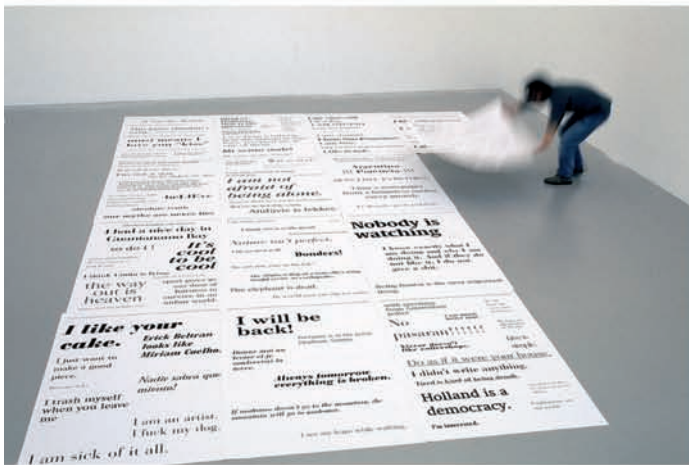
## Some Fundamental Postulates

Erick Beltrán

*interviewed by Max Andrews*

The attempt to create the terms that make up a dictionary of multiplicity is an ethical action the Mexican artist undertakes through a radical idea of subjectivity.

Il tentativo di creare i termini che compongono un dizionario della molteplicità è un'azione etica che l'artista messicano mette in atto tramite un'idea radicale di soggettività.



From top-left, clockwise:

- *Perikhórein Knot*, 2011, installation view, La Sucrière, Lyon, as part of "A Terrible Beauty is Born," 11th Biennale de Lyon. Courtesy: the artist
- "Declaración de guerra contra el mundo: Postulados fundamentales," installation view, LABOR, México City, 2011. Courtesy: LABOR, México City
- *Menzogna (Mentira / Lie)*, 2004, view of the intervention in the streets of Lucca, Italy. Courtesy: LABOR, México City
- *Efecto Rashomon*, 2008-2009. Courtesy: LABOR, México City
- *Nothing but the truth*, 2003. Courtesy: LABOR, México City



**Max Andrews** *In terms of your interest in the encyclopaedia and micro-history, could each of your projects be like a single page of a book?*

**Erick Beltrán** My work is about how to organise things, how to show the inner structures of something. It is not exactly a matter of sequential pages in a book, but more like three-dimensional layers through which you can jump really fast from place to place. It is transversal research in a Warburgian way – there is a way of connecting things that is not “beginning, middle, end”, but is more like “1, 7, 4, 8, 24...”. I attempt to reorganise and feel my way through a discourse as a space rather than a linear path on a surface.

**MA** *And hence Perikhórein Knot, your work for the 2011 Lyon Biennial, goes beyond an editing or printing process which you have used before, into a third dimension...*

**EB** Yes. It's a wooden globe that needs an audience in order to turn itself into a recognisable icon: the heavy load of Atlas. While spinning it you turn into Atlas, part of the world as an image. You can read the diagram on the outside of the sphere, and enter inside it. I'm interested in cohabitation theory, and philosophies concerned with spheres as places you inhabit. The globe tattoo is a diagram that attempts to divide the world along four axes: people who move, people who don't move, objects that move, and objects that don't move. I think these are the main political divisions in the world today. If you are able to move things you have political power, you are privileged. If you can't move yourself, you are part of “the masses”. If we think in such terms we can easily explain, for example, why we cannot get away from a colonial mentality. I'm trying to imply that the thing we call “object” is not really an object, it's more about the surplus value it has acquired through these processes of movement, and that's political power.

For example Coltan [columbite–tantalite] is a material used in electronic devices – computers, cell phones, and so on – a basic material of microcircuits. It's moved from Congo into laptops and communication devices. And then you have a maximum surplus, and most of it becomes technological garbage within a few years, which then is dumped in the very same place the Coltan was taken from. So you have a complete circle, where a whole set of things are happening: how do you steal an object from a place? What are the consequences of the mining for conflict in Congo?

**MA** *Would you describe your practice as political?*

**EB** It's politics in the sense that I think politics is about trying to give value and meaning to things and actions. A key question on this subject is how we define the “unit” in our relationship with the universe. The unit has been colonised by the self in Occidental thought, and therefore the notion of scale is almost nonexistent. This huge event created capitalism and the organisation of society as we know it. “Declaration of War Against the World: Fundamental Postulates”, my exhibition at LABOR, was an attempt to address that. The dominant discourse says that

all units of measurement must refer to the “self”: whenever you think about scale it is about “you”. Of course this is a fallacy, and I try to exchange these terms for multiplicity, to regain the possibility of seeing things on different scales.

**MA** *To attempt a kind of multiplicity dictionary, a Theory of Everything?*

**EB** Yes, and I feel it is a possible and useful thing to try to do. Creating certain terminology is one of the most ethical things you can do – new concepts that re-establish one's sense of relations, cohabitations and methodologies. I have an advantage over science, in that I don't have to follow a bureaucratic and academic system. I can be more daring and I can make mistakes. I'm trying to prove what I think is the most radical idea, that the self is fiction, that there is no “me” – it's just a discursive technique.

**MA** *Do you consider language and images as your primary concern, rather than form?*

**EB** Yes, but some linguists say that images only exist on behalf of language, and I don't believe that. My investigations on synaesthesia and the phantom limb have led me to believe that there is something irreducible about the image. With synaesthesia, what can it mean to say that something represents something else, without a meaning? And the phantom limb – where you have an image independent of its own reference – what the hell is that? The brain always seems to want reason, and that's a problem as it also creates a lot of fantasies. You can see this with optical illusions: the brain can't understand them so it bends reality in a certain way. That gap between the brain and the universe is what I'm interested in. There are two ways of thinking about this: reading the universe or acting upon it. If I have to choose, I believe that everything is written, everything is already there, but we have to understand it, to read it.

**MA** *Who do you think has come closest in such a pursuit?*

**EB** That's difficult to answer, but there are some people who were heading in the right direction. Ramon Llull is for me one of the key figures. Or another example: Robert Filio. In terms of trying to define things in politics: Öyvind Fahlström.

**MA** *What role does truth have? You've made an encyclopaedia of lies [Nothing but the truth, 2003], and an encyclopaedia based on personal theories [The World Explained, 2008]...*

**EB** Truth is something that is expendable because there is no need for “I”, it's more a need for mechanisms, movements, organisation, rules and so on. That's why my work is about multiplicity, I need lots of things, many examples, and I try to be as detailed as possible. In the end, truth is just a system that manages to control a territory for a certain period of time.

**MA** *Was there a particular point in your work as an artist when you realised this?*

**EB** Absolutely. In 1997 I was asked to define my work in ten lines, and I realised it was impossible. So I said to myself, okay, let's just make it one word! So that word was “edition” and from there everything expanded and exploded, as I realised my work was about the question of how you select things – what is a choice? And that is a really difficult question.



## Erick Beltrán

GALERÍA JOAN PRATS

Erick Beltrán's "*Serie Calculum*" (Calculus Series)—"an essay about the concentration, the density and the creation of value," as he puts it in the gallery press release—is a curio collection, compiled by the artist between 2006 and 2008. Because it refers back to idiosyncratic and arbitrary findings, a *Wunderkammer* such as this is meant to produce amazing and surprising effects. And since its premise is one of subjective categorization, it is also a way of actively generating provisional theories about our classification of the world and our writing of history.

Apart from a few large maps and a slide show, all the works in Beltrán's series are small objects, semantic machines of a sort that develop narratives about the construction of value. One of the most striking is *Plusvalía* (Surplus Value), 2008, a diminutive die fabricated in Barcelona that, we discover, is actually made of human bone found in Colombia—perhaps belonging to a victim of guerillas, the mafia, or paramilitaries, one might speculate. A color photo shows the bone that is the origin of the die, and a text in two parts explains how a Colombian NGO is working on having the remains of unidentified people declared cultural heritage, and gives the definition of the word *player* while raising questions (in Spanish) such as "Can cheating become the game in itself?" and "How do you rig a die?" In spite of its unassuming appearance, the bone die belongs to a class of transgressive works that looks at us from the other side of death. The work is tiny but so laden with fateful significance that it seems impossible to roll. Yet its shock effect is complicated by its dissection of the logic of surplus value as a fatal game.

Other works also reflect Beltrán's life as an itinerant artist, each being a spin-off of a journey or a previous project. *Concentración* (Concentration), 2008, a photo of the artist's finger and a finger-shaped bar of Chinese ink from Beijing, refers to the myth of King Midas, but could also be read as the artist's implicit acknowledgment of his indexical powers. At the end of the gallery, three blackboards with flowcharts and diagrams traced semiotic spheres of exchange, alluding to an economy of collective objects of knowledge rather than a market governed by the fetishization of artistic intentionality.

The show's semantic busyness was something you had to take or leave. It was an excess of sources and references that were not meant to gel into a whole, and it further connected—among other things—rare New Zealand stamps, the French Situationists, iron branding in the Old West, Confucianism, and binary codes. Beltrán's condensed narratives make for a Benjaminian social history that shows how words and things are connected in images that are at the same time playful and political—that is, subject to historical incompleteness. "*Serie Calculum*" is not a Marxist take on history, then, because it clearly transgresses economic value and operates with a much more inclusive concept of production. Thus *Oráculo* (Oracle), 2008, presents nail clippings that ostensibly belonged to Rasputin, were "borrowed" by the artist from an exhibition in London, and are now displayed as a poor and appalling relic underneath the Russian monk's photo and farewell letter. Here, what is being allegorized—religious or mystical valorization—is almost overpowered by the indexical signifier, the physical remains of the infamous monk. When Beltrán leaves things open or opaque in this way, lack seeps in, absurdity overturns pathos, and reality collapses like a deck of cards.

—Lars Bang Larsen

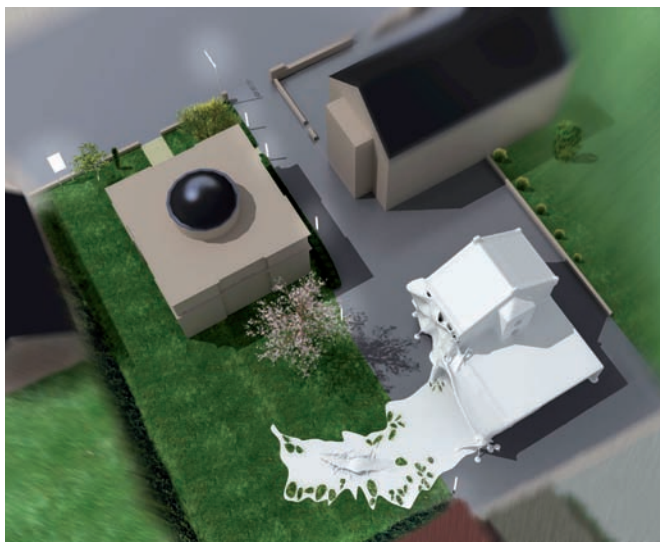


Erick Beltrán  
*Concei*  
(Concei  
(detail)  
media

## COMING UP IN 2012

### PUBLIC COMMISSION

#### *Gue(ho)st House, by Berdaguer & Péjus in Delme*



#### **The Delme art centre is growing...**

The area surrounding the contemporary art centre is currently undergoing redevelopment in the context of a public commission, a program of Ministry of Culture and Communication, which is giving artists Christophe Berdaguer and Marie Péjus the means to produce an exceptional work in the form of architecture-sculpture. The artists have been commissioned to create new spaces for welcoming visitors, as well as new signage and lighting for the premises. The building behind the art centre—once a prison, then a shop, then a school, then a funeral home—is being restored and completely transformed.

#### **An architecture-sculpture to experience, in connection with the building's memory**

The artists wanted to work with the building's successive past uses; they are literally transforming it into a ghost house, a veritable architectural phantasmagoria, or "the art of making ghosts speak in public".

The title of the show borrows Marcel Duchamp's wordplay: A Guest + A Host = A Ghost. This was the trigger of the work, for a place that is destined to become an interface between hosts (the art centre, the commune) and guests (visitors and artists).

This house has particularly strong emotional associations in the collective imagination, and the artists wanted to work with its memory, by giving it a form that looks just as much to the past as it does to the future.

Christophe Berdaguer and Marie Péjus are covering the original house in a white polystyrene and resin coating, which drips down, creating a kind of living, moving body on one of the facades.

#### **Future uses**

The ground floor of the building will contain a reception centre (for groups and schoolchildren, and for the art centre's educational events), an information office and a documentation centre. The upper floor will be transformed into a studio that will occasionally provide accommodation to artists, students, interns and other art world professionals.

*Inauguration : September 2012*

### MARIE COOL FABIO BALDUCCI

#### **Solo Exhibition**

**October 2012 - February 2013**



## LA SYNAGOGUE DE DELME CONTEMPORARY ART CENTRE



Photo : O.H.Dancy

**Jacques Wermuth**  
President

**Marie Cozette**  
Director

**Laurène Macé**  
Visitor Service Officer

**Agathe Borgne**  
Administrator and Media Relations  
Officer

**Alain Colardelle**  
Registrar

The Centre for contemporary Art in Delme is located in a former synagogue, built in an Oriental style in the late nineteenth century. Not least among its special features are a dome, an arcaded entryway decorated with latticework, and windows with geometric stained glass.

The synagogue was partly destroyed during the Second World War. The outer walls survived, but the interior was rebuilt along stricter lines after the war. The synagogue was permanently de-consecrated in the early 1980s for lack of sufficient numbers of worshippers. The first art exhibition was held in 1993.

The many artists who have exhibited in this unusual venue in the past fifteen years, generating an identity and reputation for the art center both locally and internationally, include: Daniel Buren, Ann Veronica Janssens, Jean-Marc Bustamante, François Morellet, Tadashi Kawamata, Stéphane Dafflon, Delphine Coindet, Jeppe Hein, Jugnet & Clairet, Peter Downsbrough and, more recently, Katinka Bock, Julien Prévieux, Gianni Motti, Yona Friedman... All have developed a special view of the venue by creating site specific works. In addition to three or four temporary shows presented in the former synagogue every year, the Delme art center manages an artist-in-residence program in the village of Lindre-Basse in the heart of the Lorraine regional park area.

The Delme synagogue, of modest size and located in a rural region of Lorraine, has always positioned itself as an art lab, a site of artistic exploration and production. The art center makes a concerted effort to establish a dialogue with all potential audiences, focusing on the local area.



La synagogue de Delme Centre for Contemporary Art is a member of DCA-Association pour le Développement des Centres d'Art.

La synagogue de Delme Centre for Contemporary Art is grateful for support from the French Ministry of Culture and Communication, the Lorraine contemporary art authority (DRAC), the regional and departmental governments of Lorraine and Moselle, and the municipality of Delme.



Erick Beltrán's exhibition is presented the context of MONO, 20 monographs by modern and contemporary artists from Grande Région/ Groß Region, from 1 June to 2 September 2012.

