



CENTRE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN
LA SYNAGOGUE DE DELME



BRICE DELLSPERGER Futurs intérieurs

Exhibition from July 5th to December 14th 2025

Curator: Benoît Lamy de La Chapelle

The first time I was able to penetrate the world of Brice Dellsperger, was on the occasion of the exhibition *Sociétés secrètes* at the CAPC in Bordeaux¹, for which he was presenting *Body Double 22*. Following his usual working method, it was a remake of the film *Eyes Wide Shut* by Stanley Kubrick (1999) projected in a space surrounded by red curtains, recreating the atmosphere of the film in the exhibition room. The visitor thus found themselves immersed in the film's unsettling occult dramaturgy. I hold an indelible memory of this moment, including the idea that Brice Dellsperger's work was not limited to the particularity of his films and was activated as a form of total art, in which the soundtrack, decor and staging implicated the viewer in his films, forming a coherent and bewitching whole.

From the method of his films to their staging in exhibition rooms stems an uncanniness that no one can avoid. Passionate about the role of heroines in cult cinema, behind the make-up and wigs, it is often a man who plays a woman's role in his remakes. And when a woman does play a woman's role, we lose ourselves and wonder if it really is a woman... Since the mid-nineties, well before trans identity attained the current level of media coverage, Brice Dellsperger was developing a form of gender representation that did away with norms, by reproducing, on a shoestring budget, a filmic dimension full of androgynous bodies, excessively made-up, cross-dressing, freed of all shackles, enabling female and male clichés to be pushed to their paroxysm. To do this, what could be better than pinching from the codes of cult cinema, such as the horrors or thrillers of the seventies, or bygone sci-fi films, whose themes like the mutant body, impulses and sexual desires, violence, mystery or the occult were already present. Although he could simply use these as inspiration for his own scenarios, he prefers to extract scenes from them – sometimes very short ones – to remake in his own way.

¹ Exhibition *Sociétés Secrètes, Savoir, oser, vouloir, garder le silence* [Secret Societies: Knowing, Daring, Desiring, Keeping Quiet], exhibition curators Alexis Vaillant and Cristina Ricupero, CAPC, Bordeaux, 09.11.2011–26.02.2012

Faithful to the originals, despite their “homemade” production values, with low budgets contrasting with those of the Hollywood machine, his films result in a style that is now very recognisable. He names each of his creations *Body Double* followed by a number. The concept of the “double” is a cornerstone of his art, deployed in various forms, from the actor standing in for the other, to the overdubbing of language, to dual identity, to film as the double of reality... His whole œuvre aims to introduce the double not just as a representation but as an essential part of reality. While he takes sincere pleasure in drawing inspiration from burlesque theatre or drag performances, with their glamour and dazzling artifices, we also observe a reaction of nightmarish repression in the face of our society’s dominant norms. As Antonin Artaud wrote in *The Theatre and Its Double*, “In life I don’t feel myself living. But on the stage, I feel that I exist,”² Brice Dellsperger also seems to invite his doubles to blast their context of representation to smithereens. Hence the uneasiness that can be felt when watching these *Body Doubles*, which genuinely disrupt our cognitive and interpretative habits, by causing us to stray into a parallel reality.

Psychological drama or melodrama, as an outlet for an extremely rigid modern society, serves as a tool for its patchwork of fictions. We are immersed in emotions such as melancholy, anxiety or empathy more than we laugh when we watch *Body Doubles*. While the trashy humour of John Waters’ films has profoundly influenced the artist, his art contains a morbid fascination for this moment when the glitter and glory turn out to be the flipside of a dark and monstrous world, like the one depicted in Kenneth Anger’s *Hollywood Babylon*³, this terrifying litany of news items on the hidden face of the American film industry, with its abuses, rapes, murders, drugs and suicides... It is also this dark truth that agitates and reveals itself in Brice Dellsperger’s films – a truth that’s often hard to take, despite its concealment behind the imaginary constructs of the West.

Within the architectural context of the old synagogue of Delme – which was also devised as a kind of fantasised Oriental decor – it seemed only natural to invite Brice Dellsperger to occupy the premises. Entitled *Futurs intérieurs* [Interior Futures], his exhibition presents one of his last productions and has never been shown before in France: *Body Double 39* was exhibited for the first time at the Kunstverein in Dortmund in 2024. In a triple-screen installation, surrounded by stage curtains recalling the atmosphere of burlesque theatres, this creation is the triple remake of an excerpt from *Dead Ringers* (1988), a psychological drama by David Cronenberg. It stages the gradual degradation of gynæcologist twins, who regularly trade places in life, both professional and sentimental. In *Body Double 39*, the fragile equilibrium of the twins is threatened and takes a dramatic turn, thanks to the appearance of Cary. The twins play with mirror-masks while the role of Cary is interpreted differently on each of the three screens. *Body Double 39* transforms this scene into a silent movie scene, by exchanging the soundtrack for *Seeland* (1975) by Krautrock band NEU! The four-minute-long narrative is repeated three times on the twelve-minute loop, each time

2 Antonin Artaud, quoted in ed. Claude Schumacher, *Artaud on Theatre* (London: Methuen, 1989), XXIV.

3 Kenneth Anger, *Hollywood Babylon* (Paris: J.J. Pauvert, 1959).

with slightly different editing. Upstairs, a different atmosphere reveals the artist's figurative paintings and drawings: another way of expressing the depth of his world, populated with pop references derived from counterculture. *Futurs intérieurs* will be expanded to include other works by the artist, with the exhibition *Quitte ou double* [Double or Nothing] running from 20 September at the Centre d'art contemporain Passages in Troyes, as part of a partnership between the two art centres.

Translated by Anna Knight.

This exhibition is produced in partnership with Passages centre d'art contemporain in Troyes, as part of the French Ministry of Culture's *Mieux Produire Mieux Diffuser* program. The Passages art center presents the second part of this project with Brice Dellsperger, the exhibition *Quitte ou double*, from September 20th to December 13th, 2025.



A new monograph by Brice Dellsperger will be published in autumn 2025 by Mousse Publishing in co-edition with Passages, center for contemporary art in Troyes, the Musée Régional d'Art Contemporain Occitanie in Sérignan and in partnership with Galerie Air de Paris.

The video *Body Double 39* was produced by the Dortmunder Kunstverein in 2024 for Brice Dellsperger's exhibition *Jalousies*, and was supported by the Fondation des Artistes, the CNAP, Panavision France and the association Trampoline.



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