

CHRISTIAN BOLTANSKI - *LES ARCHIVES*

September 5 - December 14, 2008

Curator: Tessa Praun

"I am interested in what I call 'little memory', an emotional memory, an everyday knowledge, the contrary of the Memory with a capital M that is preserved in history books. This little memory, which for me is what makes us unique, is extremely fragile, and it disappears with death. This loss of identity, this equalization in forgetting, is very difficult to accept". Christian Boltanski

*Entre temps (Meanwhile)*, 2004

*Le cœur (The Heart)*, 2005

*Être à nouveau (Being Anew)*, 2005

*Qui êtes-vous? (Who are you?)*, 2008

*Être et Avoir (To Be and To Have)*, 2008

*Les archives du cœur (The Heart Archive)*, 2008

People live out their individual lives and are after their deaths mostly reduced to anonymous statistics. Boltanski has through his work taken up the task of immortalizing not just himself but his fellow human beings, often by making use of archives as an artistic form.

The six works in the exhibition are installed according to a specific choreography that winds its way through the structure of Boltanski's blunt visual language. A slowly changing montage of images transforms Boltanski from a six year-old boy to a sixty year-old man. Aspects of the adult artist's face can be found in the serious expression on the face of the young boy, but it becomes all the more clear that the child within him no longer exists. In the same pitch-black room a naked light bulb pulsates to the rhythm of a recording of Boltanski's heartbeat. The sound is hypnotically beautiful and seems like the sound of drums. The constant shifting between light and dark reminds us of our own vulnerability and creates an atmosphere in which we find ourselves between life and death.

A video installation slices up portraits into strips and randomly mixes them together to form new faces. The images are taken from obituaries printed in Swiss newspapers. The installation plays with the idea that we all bear combinations of many other peoples' facial features. The physical multiplicity is endless. The origins of our own personal appearances are largely to be found in the faces of the departed, those who lived generations ago.

What seems at first to be a simple question binds together all the works in the exhibition and leads us further, into a crowd of figures making a variety of statements and proclamations. They reveal their innermost thoughts and feelings but the anonymity of the voices underlines the universality of the work and focus is placed on all of us. Who are we? How do we perceive ourselves?

Lastly, Christian Boltanski hopes that you the visitor will want to donate the sounds of your heartbeat to his archive. Starting with this exhibition at Magasin 3, Boltanski plans to spend the coming years collecting as many heartbeats as possible. The archive will find it's permanent home on the island of Ejima in Japan (see the exhibition poster) - an uninhabited island that belongs to the Benesse Art Site Naoshima. The work will be a collection of "portraits", a kind of monument that will allow our hearts to continue beating.

To donate your heartbeat, please read the instructions on the reverse side.

DONATE YOUR HEARTBEAT

The sound of your own heart will become an important part of the new work *Les archives du cœur* (2008).

Before you donate your heartbeat, we would like to ask you choose from between the following three alternatives:

1. I wish to donate my heartbeat to the archive.
2. I wish to donate my heartbeat and purchase an audio CD of the recording (30 kr).
3. I wish to donate my heartbeat and receive an audio CD of the recording when I purchase the exhibition publication (100 kr).

If you choose alternative 1, you may take a queue number in the waiting room and wait your turn.

If you choose alternative 2 or 3, please pay at the desk and then take a queue number.

The recording procedure will take approximately 5 minutes.

Please take note that recordings of heartbeats are only made during our regular opening hours. If you do not have enough time on this occasion, you are welcome back at another time. Entrance is free of charge with your season pass until December 14.

On behalf of the artist, we would like to thank you for your contribution to *Les archives du cœur*.

Magasin 3 supports the Heart-Lung Foundation.

For every Boltanski publication and CD-case sold, 20 kr respectively 5 kr will be donated to the Heart-Lung Foundation's research on heart, lung and vascular diseases.

Read more about the exhibition and the archives of the heart on the reverse side of this page.