

# *Simulacra*

Reflections on difference, repetition, and duration



*Simulacra (2022)*  
16 metronomes, wax

« Le simulacrum is true. »

Jean Baudrillard

That which has only the appearance of what it claims to be, appearance which gives itself for reality, insubstantial form or semblance of something, vain representation, phantasm, pretense, caricature: these are some definitions and synonyms of the word *simulacrum*. These have become the stereotypes of the disorientation of our time: the search for mastery and absolute knowledge that characterized modernity has been replaced, progressively since the end of the sixties, by the abandonment of this mastery, the proliferation of signs and the uncontrolled dissemination of postmodernity. The terms *simulacrum* and *concept* are contradictory; it is not surprising, therefore, that the objects and tautologies of conceptual art - the art which privileges the idea of art, whose works "are analytical propositions" (Joseph Kosuth) and where "the appearance of the work is secondary to the idea of the work" (Sol LeWitt) - did not resist very long to this chaotic surge of the real, the "objective real, the real of others, of the collectivity" so well captured by Bertrand Lavier, Guillaume Bijl or Philippe Cazal.

If one admits that the world of representation is that of the conformity of the concept and the thing, the contradiction between simulacrum and concept seems to point towards an aporia: is it possible to produce a conceptual artwork that is readable in the postmodern era? But are we dealing with an impossibility, or with a mere difficulty? To answer this question, we had to (temporarily) abandon Plato to venture into a field of thoughts that rehabilitates the simulacrum at the expense of the reign of resemblance, of the domination of the Same and of the representation. Such a speculative thought exists: it is the one described by Gilles Deleuze in *Difference and Repetition*.

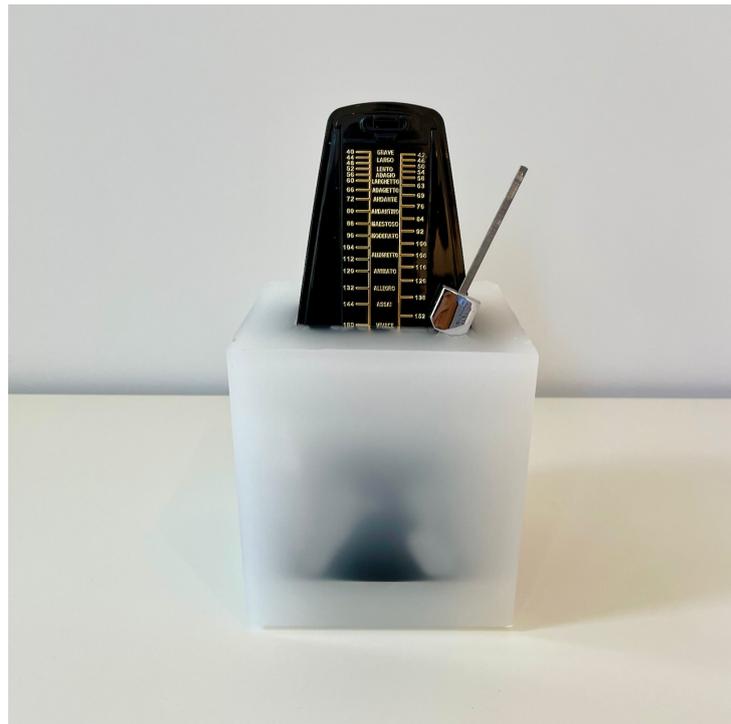


*Simulacres (2022) - détails*

Deleuze, the anti-dialectical philosopher of the "vital, Bergsonian paradigm of the open multiplicities", antonym of the "mathematized, stellar and Mallarmean paradigm" of Alain Badiou, introduced a thought where the categories of representation and identity are shattered to give way to those of "affirmative difference" and "creative repetition", enabling the rehabilitation of the simulacrum. It was while exploring Deleuze's text, seduced by the "alert sinuosity" and the "discontinuous scintillation" of this "joyful thinker of confusion", that the inspiration for *Simulacra* came.

In *Simulacra*, the waxed metronomes are not in the image of anything: they are freed from association to the Idea of the metronome, they deny the original, the copy, the model. It is the slight differences - the angles of the pendulums, the positions of the weights, the heights of the masses of wax, their opacity - which appear, *in themselves*, freed from the constraints of representation and of the concept. The tempo, the nominal function of a metronome, the sound mechanism that generates finitude, is frozen in *Simulacra*, so that the intuition of ordinary repetition - which, according to Deleuze, is

“hypothetical, material, in the effect” - disappears in favor of the one, remarkable and singular, which reveals *itself for itself* – “categorical, spiritual, in the cause”. These metronomes do not chant repetition, they chant duration. Deleuze has elaborated an intuitive thought, freed from the weights of representation and resemblance, a *thought without image*; I reciprocate with an artwork in the *image of his thought*. He said: "to think is to create"; *Simulacra* pays tribute to the thinker, silently, by affirming: "to create is to think".



*Simulacres (2022) - détails*

I would like to thank wax artist Yaël Ohayon, who waxed the sixteen metronomes. Without her perfect mastery of this fragile, sleek and translucent material, *Simulacra* would still be at the conceptual stage.

Michel Tombroff – September 2022

*Simulacra* will be exhibited at the LKFF Art Projects gallery, from September 25 to November 20, 2022.

Ouvrages cités :

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