



michèle didier

PRESS RELEASE

...et avec cela?

MUNTADAS

Exhibition from November 7 to December 13, 2014
Opening on Thursday November 6, 2014 from 6 to 9 pm, in presence of the artist

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MUNTADAS

We Are Fantastic

2005

Silkscreen on rag paper

70 x 100 cm

Limited edition of 42 copies

« We often come across colloquial expressions, the true meaning of which is quite inconspicuous at first. The time and place in which they are pronounced are the only indications that reveal the speaker's hidden intentions.

The expression «...et avec cela? (...anything else?) », however benevolent it may seem, is an invitation to consumerism for it makes us wonder whether we need something else, thus making us buy more. Those who are around are all made to witness this, in one way or another and they too, are made to take part in the ritual of the financial transaction that takes place then and there.

The world of art, its market, the galleries and the collectors use similar rules and its transactions are executed according to the same principles.

The customer, whether it is the client in a conventional business context or of an art gallery, is considered the same way in both cases, because the desire to sell and the contingency of buying, two essential elements of any transaction, inevitably come to merge.

Words, expressions and images all possess a practical meaning of everyday use behind which a whole new meaning lies hidden, only to be unveiled at a close observation and analysis. »

MUNTADAS, 2014

...et avec cela?, a Muntadas exhibition

A new Muntadas exhibition in Paris, following his most recent significant retrospective *Entre / Between* at the Jeu de Paume in 2012, *...et avec cela?* belongs to a set of two exhibitions imagined by the artist. The other exhibition of the set is entitled *...et avec ceci?* and will be presented simultaneously at the galerie Gabrielle Maubrie.

The work of Muntadas takes after the historical conceptual art, this being how he identifies with today's contemporary art world. The shapes and contents of his work, however, tends to bring him closer to pop, at times. The proposition *...et avec cela?* is, indeed, an example, made up of silkscreens or prints, posters. This significant ensemble – counting 25 pieces – questions the use of language in our globalized society and, most of all, its use in a commercial context.

The artist's made the choice for this exhibition, in view of tackling the subject of consumerism and its linguistic codes, to saturate the space, thus reaching a generally simplified white cube of a traditional shop in which the lines of the layout must be optimized.

The artist's foreword, written above, announces the questions that are inherent to his double proposition: the question of consumerism at the heart of the art market.

How much?, written in white capital letters on a pale pink monochrome background, announces the tone: an art gallery is a place of business like any other in which the « desire to sell and the eventuality of sales » converge, to quote the artist. The print is part of a series on the five 'W's we all know so well: Who? What? Why? Where? When? to which it is recommended to add How? and For whom?. By asking these questions, an empirical method of questioning at the early stages of any developing project, Muntadas seeks to understand the way in which the world functions and especially the way the art world is organized. *How much?* comes to conclude this preliminary inspection and underlines the numerous constraints imposed on art by its own environment.

Dealings, a set of eight prints, illustrates, with eight scenes sketched in white lines, different transactional situations in a variety of contexts during which the use of the verb becomes a science, that of the rhetoric, an art of the effect of speech on the mind.

Language and its use in a context that is strictly commercial is transposed to that of a larger context of globalization.

Five pieces come from the series *On Translation*. This work is now one of the most important series by Muntadas. *On Translation* explores the questions of transcription, interpretation and translation: from language to codes, from science to technology, from subjectivity to objectivity, from peace to war, from private to public, from semiology to technology. *On Translation* reflects upon the role of translation / translators being the visible matter / that is invisible. From this famous series are presented four version of *Warning: perception requires involvement* declined in Portuguese *Atenção*, Russian **ВНИМАНИЕ** and Chinese **警告**. Is there a specific way for each nation to warn people about the constraints of perception? Whatever the context, red seems to remain the color of warning. A fifth piece from *On Translation* entitled *The Bookstore* questions the labeling of shelves in public libraries all over the world.

Another series deals with national expressions and what they mean in terms of identity and representation of the whole nation. For Brazil, for instance, Muntadas has chosen the expression *Tudo bem, Tudo Bom!* applied onto a background image of a tropical forest that the collective imagination would assume to be the Amazon forest. Uruguay is met with a somewhat presumptuous *We are Fantastic*, while the image that goes with these words are less flattering – that of a balding man whose face is cut at the forehead. France is brought to life through the famous *Tout va bien* over a view of an explosion, which is perhaps a symbolic implosion or a documentary of one of the numerous wars that the country has engaged in.

A last series, *Close up*, deals with typographic accidents in the written media: spaces left by mistake after making quick corrections just before printing the article. Muntadas made it his job to hunt them down and collect them, especially in *Le Monde* and *El País*. These blank spaces are meant to convey governmental censorship over the media in the past. Could it be a form of self-imposed censorship today ?

One of the leading pieces of the exhibition, *Ordeal of Picasso's heirs* adds to this rich collection. The work is made entirely of the illustration of a newspaper article with a provocative title : *Ordeal of Picasso's heirs*. This picture was published in *The New York Times Magazine* on April 20, 1980. Here, Muntadas is intrigued by the correlation between image copyright and the author's copyright in producing a work entirely based on reproduction (copies). Indeed, the photograph sold by the artist comes with a certificate of authenticity. Muntadas chose not to diffuse them in the form of a developed photograph but as a digital file engraved on a DVD. Its reproduction is then infinite and can be blown up to a considerable extent, thus making it possible to produce a four-meter large wallpaper with the image. Muntadas goes on to mention the following: « the author made his best efforts to study the legal rights of this work. If you believe that any part of the content of this work is a violation of your copyright, the author is willing to respect all rights issues and will reply fully when notified. The author reserves the right to verify your identity and to obtain further information to shed further light on the basis of the claim. »

...et avec cela? (...anything else?)

This will be all for the moment, concerning the exhibition at mfc-michèle didier.

One last thing, perhaps... in the end, isn't it the artist, the main actor of this art market? Muntadas' text does not mention this, but the exhibition at the mfc-michèle didier gallery would not have seen the day without his intervention.

Now, let's go do business.

Muntadas' biographical references

A historical figure of critical art and a pioneer in the use of multimedia art, Antoni Muntadas, most often identified simply by his family name Muntadas, questions, ever since the mid-70's, the places of expression of power, whether it is architecture of an urban space, of a show staged by the media or by multiple forms of culture.

Most of his projects take many years to complete because each of his exhibitions is a fruit of numerous on-site inquiries and a slow but gradual collecting of documents. Making it his goal to reveal rites, codes and hidden aspects of communication systems, he makes use of all the means he has in his disposition: video, text, photography, sound, posters, books, installations, etc. Muntadas represented Spain at the Venice Biennale for contemporary art in 2005 with a solo exhibition in the Spanish pavilion.

An important retrospective *Entre / Between* has recently drawn a line in the artist's career – 40 years of work. The exhibition was held at the end of 2011 at Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid, then in 2012 at the Fundação Gulbenkian of Lisbon and at the Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume in Paris and finally, in 2013, at the Vancouver Art Gallery.

Presentation of the artist by Catherine Francblin during the conference *Antoni Muntadas, « L'art comme dispositif de connaissances »* which took place in 2007 at the Fondation d'entreprise Ricard:

"Born in Barcelona in 1942, based in New York since 1971, Antoni Muntadas is a tireless traveller. He has taught all over the world, held workshops in numerous universities.

His working process is perhaps close to the post-conceptual movement; he produces his major pieces from the 80's. He was one of the first artists to be critically interested in television. Indeed, he produced three major artworks on this subject: *The Board Room*, dedicated to the phenomenon of American televangelism. He is intrigued by cultural phenomenon, their codes, rites and hidden meanings. He has worked on the relationship between public and private spaces, on architecture and urbanism as a show business at the service of power, on space and how it is related to memory, in general.

Pioneer in the use of video and multimedia, he uses every kind of tool at his disposal: video, text, photography, sound, posters, books, installations. Most of his projects take many years to complete because each of his exhibitions is a fruit of numerous on-site inquiries and a slow but gradual collecting of documents.

His works are the result of this enormous amount of time and knowledge gathered as one artwork. (...) These are references to value systems, which hold up social groups, as the one in *Between the Frames*, or to complex strategies that found different authorities. Antoni Muntadas belongs to a family of artists for whom art doesn't mean pure and simple delectation, but rather something that should provoke thought and questions. For him, art is an object of thought that serves to wake people's conscience: it is « an alarm system » as Émile Soulier had put it. He says: « I make an artwork to understand, because I am curious by nature ». This curiosity and the cognitive dimension that it adds to his work are inseparable from a critical point of view.

Antoni Muntadas belongs to a generation of artists for whom the artist's status is not only to produce art for a market of mere consumers. According to him, the artist's status is closer to the one of a researcher. In any case, art is for him a challenge. One of these challenges is to present a vision that resists to the harmonious image of culture provided by society, to allow contradictions and sticking points to emerge.

Ultimately, by refusing to be spectacular, his artworks manifest the artist's continuous concern of visual efficiency. As he says himself, he «emphasizes». Raymond Bellour talks about him of a "voluptuousness of demonstration": a sense of pedagogy doubled with the wish to seduce the spectator without manipulating him.

Press images



MUNTADAS
How much?
2013
Inkjet print
69 x 49.5 cm
Limited edition of 50 copies and 10 A.P.



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Dealings

2003

Set consisting of 8 prints

Variable dimensions

Limited edition of 50 copies and 1A.P.



MUNTADAS

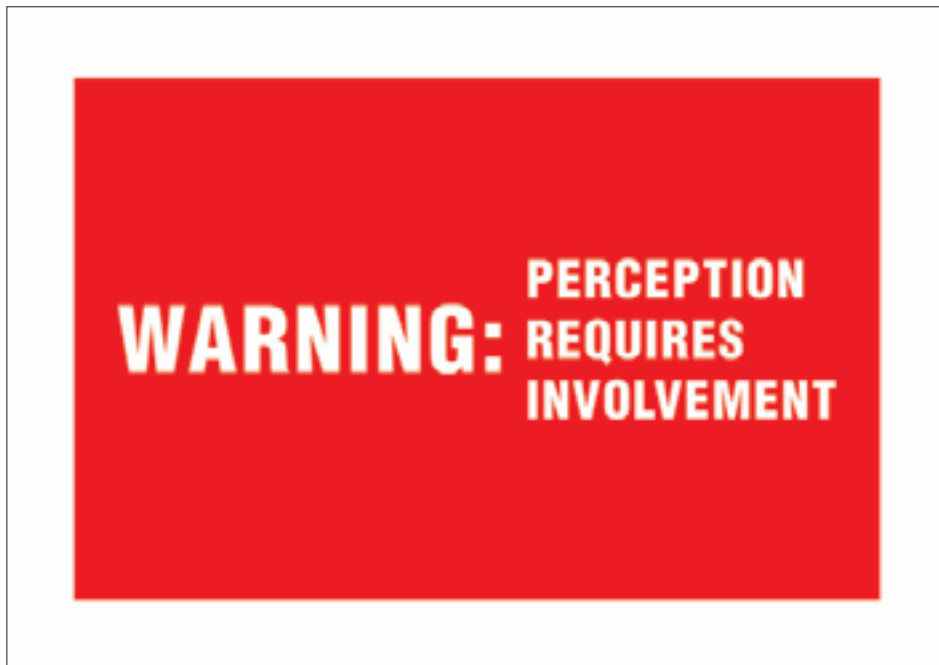
On Translation: 警告

2013

Digital Pigment Print Hahnemühle Photo Rag Bright White (310gr)

100 x 70 cm

Limited edition of 9 copies and 1 A.P.



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On Translation: Warning

2006

Inkjet Fine Art Print on Fotopapier

70 x 100 cm

Limited edition of 12 copies, 3 A.P. and 2 H.C.



MUNTADAS

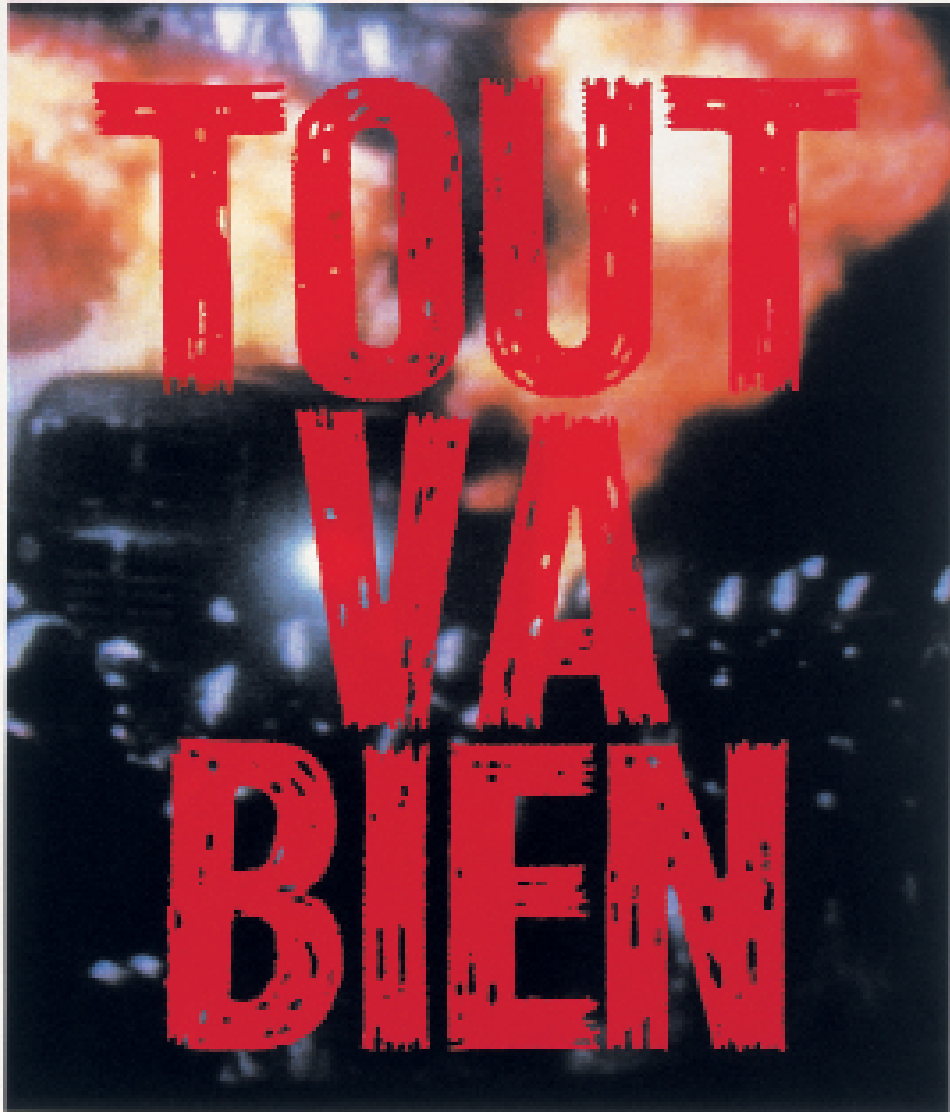
Brasil... Tudo bem, Tudo bom!

1999

Silkscreen on rag paper

48.5 x 100 cm

Limited edition of 70 signed and numbered by the artist



MUNTADAS

Tout va bien (excerpt)

2003

Triptych

Silkscreen on rag paper

76 x 56 cm

Limited edition of 75 copies



MUNTADAS

Close up

Triptych *Le Monde*

November 10, 1984

60 x 40 cm each

Digital print on paper

Limited edition of 9 copies



MUNTADAS

Ordeal of Picasso's heirs. The New York Times Magazine. April 20th 1980

2012

DVD in handmade box bound in black Frankonia and black velvet.

Silkscreen print and magnet closure, box: 26.5 x 18.5 x 5 cm

Photographic image manipulated by the artist and burned to DVD with a resolution of 575 MB, allowing it to be printed and mounted onto the wall up to a maximum size of 400 x 366 cm

Variable dimensions

Limited edition of 9 copies and 1 A.P.

Certificate numbered and signed by the artist



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