

Fouler Mars with Flavien Théry

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His works are so many snippets of this particular poetry that takes source at the crossroads of art and science. Born in Paris in 1973, graduated from the Higher School of Decorative Arts in Strasbourg, Flavien Théry lives and works today in Rennes. His research is part of the legacy of optical and kinetic art, which is particularly evidenced by a particular interest in light, while exploiting the advantages of digital and new media. The place of man in space and his (vain) attempts to leave traces are at the heart of the exhibition *Here begin the heavens* , presented until January 18 by the gallery Charlot in Paris.

Placed on the floor, an urinal bar, a symbolic meter long, flashes at irregular intervals. The impulses of fluorescent green light - color due to the injection of a low dose of uranium during the manufacture of glass - which emanate from it are the transcription of very particular sound frequencies. *"This is a selection made among the sounds engraved on the Golden Records, these disks embedded in 1977 aboard the Voyager probes **, says Flavien Théry. *The files contain recordings of music from all over the world, greetings in 55 languages, speeches, everyday sounds of life on Earth, etc. It is a kind of testimony of humanity thrown like a bottle to the sea through space. "* With *The last trip (last trip)* , the artist welcomes the inclusive nature of the project for human civilization and likes to imagine the probes involved in a potentially infinite journey, as bearers of *" the last trace of our existence "* .

Opposite this piece, two round-shaped planispheres are displayed facing each other, representing, by a drawing of magnets, the main stars and constellations respectively seen from the southern hemisphere and the northern hemisphere of our planet. Each disc slowly rotates on itself, surmounted on its radius by a motionless "arm", equipped with a magnetic sensor that transmits the collected data to a small box fixed on the wall serving as both synthesizer and amplifier . The visitor is invited to manipulate two-three adjustment buttons to vary the music broadcast as part of the installation *Messenger*. *"It's as if we were trying to listen to a message sent to us by the stars, in a completely geocentric way: the universe is made for us, it wants to tell us something, listen! "* Glides Flavien Théry a smile. The multiplicity of possible musical interpretations refers, in turn, to the diversity of definitions of constellations proposed by cosmogonies over time and according to cultures.

Not far away, a large format cyanotype catches the eye with the brightness of its palette of blues; you can see the contours of a screen. *" 143 light minutes is a double nod ,"* says the artist. *In Kubrick first of all, the piece being as completely hermetic as 2001, the Space Odyssey, as well as Hiroshi Sugimoto*

and his series Theaters, where each shot is the recording of the entirety of a film session, the photographer opening the room at the beginning and closing it at the end of the film. " Flavien Théry for its part used a liquid crystal panel, placed as a negative plate to the paper, and exposed to the sun throughout the diffusion of 2 hours 23 minutes the film Kubrick. "The final image is the addition of all the photograms of 2001, the Space Odyssey. They are really there, but completely imperceptible; it's a bit like what you can feel watching the movie. This is also why it is a cult film: there is a very abundant literature on the subject, with a multitude of different opinions. Moreover, it is probably the feat of strength: to create a film in the form of questioning, which we will always talk about. "

It is yet another type of spatial and sensory exploration that is invited to the visitor, at the lower level of the gallery. Immersed in a new sound atmosphere, composed by [Thomas Poli](#) , he is offered to wear over-shoes and get a pair of 3D glasses before treading ... the soil of Mars! *Inverted relief (Candor Chasma's flying carpet)* - Candor Chasma is the name given to one of the Martian valleys - takes the form of a tapestry made from an anaglyph satellite image of Mars by an Aubusson workshop using a digital technique. *"The particularity of this image lies in its ability to turn around , explains Flavien Théry. The perception of the relief can completely be reversed - which is salient becoming hollow, and vice versa -, the brain being unable to thwart the artifice because of the type of motive and the absence of any cultural reference. "* Presented here in the manner of a carpet - *" I do not want there to be reading direction; she could not be hung on the wall. "* -, the piece also evokes by its title the inverted relief, expression which designates a geological phenomenon having led to a landscape where the parts in elevation correspond to those which were formerly hollow. And the trip to take a dizzying turn of time.

Recurrent in his work, the artist's dialogue with science is based on a long-standing attraction for science fiction. *"Which is probably a common point with a lot of scientists ,"* he says. *In the United States, in particular, there is a real influence of science fiction on science. I've always been interested in this type of research, born at the end of the XIXth century and that led to today's media: sound recording, being able to capture light in photography, film etc. "* A mixture of invention and applied sciences that echoes the creation of many devices and machines that characterizes his practice. *"Decorative Arts of Strasbourg, I kept a taste for the workshop, the material, the concrete, which was associated with a fascination for the artists engineers, such as the representatives of kinetic art. I also like the idea, very present in Bachelard, according to which we can connect science and poetry. "* What certainly reflect his proposals.

** Today, billions of kilometers from Earth, the two probes continue to send information. In August 2012, Voyager 1 became the first ship of terrestrial origin to enter interstellar space.*