

VALLOIS

36

GALERIE
Georges-Philippe
& Nathalie
Vallois

JACQUES VILLEGLÉ

Socio - political alphabets

33 & 36, rue de Seine
75006 Paris - FR
T. +33(0)1 46 34 61 07
F. +33(0)1 43 25 18 80
www.galerie-vallois.com
info@galerie-vallois.com

Pilar Albarracín **ES**
Gilles Barbier **FR**
Julien Berthier **FR**
Julien Bismuth **FR**
Alain Bublex **FR**
Robert Cottingham **US**
John DeAndrea **US**
Massimo Furlan **CH**
Taro Izumi **JP**
Richard Jackson **US**
Adam Janes **US**
Jean-Yves Jouannais **FR**
Martin Kersels **US**
Paul Kos **US**
Zhenya Machneva **RU**
Paul McCarthy **US**
Jeff Mills **US**
Arnold Odermatt **CH**
Henrique Oliveira **BR**
Peybak **FR**
Lucie Picandet **FR**
Niki de Saint Phalle **FR**
Lázaro Saavedra **CU**
Pierre Seinturier **FR**
Peter Stämpfli **CH**
Jean Tinguely **CH**
Keith Tyson **GB**
Tomi Ungerer **FR**
Jacques Villeglé **FR**
Winshluss **FR**
Virginie Yassef **FR**

C'EST QUI T'IMPORTÉ
DANS VIVE TECHNIQUE
C'EST DE ME PAS
LA MATRISER
JEAN DUPONT

It all began, as always, with an anonymous piece of graffiti that **Jacques Villeglé** discovered on February 28th 1969 exactly, on the wall of a corridor in the République metro station, representing the name of the American president Nixon, who was then visiting Paris, with the three arrows of the former Socialist party for the N, a Cross of Lorraine for the I, a swastika for the X and a Celtic cross inside the circle of the Jeune Nation movement for the O.

Jacques Villeglé memorised it, as he memorised all of the unique pieces of writing which he came upon subsequently (cultural, street, and writers' alphabets) and which, combined, became the source material for his constantly evolving socio-political alphabet, the matrix of drawings and writings to come.

"You can make a painting with a page of writing". Jacques Villeglé never forgot this phrase by Picasso which he read aged 21 and which has accompanied him ever since. With the socio-political alphabets, which he has been essentially focused on since 2000, the "father of graffiti artists" transforms writing into images, in his own way. His texts and alphabets are simultaneously graphic, poetic, and visual works. The sequences of signs and symbols are as important as the ensembles which they make up - ensembles that speak to all of the senses, left and right brain included. The reading of the phrases and aphorisms borrowed from others and drawn, transposed and transcribed on paper, canvas, etc, is a kind of decoding, or deciphering. Jacques Villeglé, an amateur of typography, graphism and cryptography (a term that featured in his agenda on February 21st 1958 exactly), takes pleasure, with the socio-political alphabet, in awakening our gaze. He teaches us how to see, how to read, how to grasp and consider the sum of urban traces and everyday signs in a new light, restoring their beauty and mystery. "Maybe I would like the graffiti of popular expression, those deviant phenomena that inspire disrespect, to compete with the hegemonic epigraphy of Western culture; for these signs drawn from the triviality of the everyday to be considered as the equals of formal inscriptions [...]", he wrote in 1995 in *Une épigraphie sauvage*.

"To be astonished is a pleasure". This phrase by Edgar Allen Poe, which gave rise to a large graphic stencil by the artist in the Jardin des Tuileries in Paris in 2009, summarises his approach and desire with regard to the reader-spectator. It does not feature in "Jacques Villeglé - Alphabets socio-politiques", his eleventh and penultimate exhibition at the Georges-Philippe & Nathalie Vallois gallery (in 1999, which marked the beginning of the collaboration with the artist, a programme of twelve exhibitions was developed, echoing the twelve themes of his catalogue raisonné).

Instead, we can find quotes by Wilde, Corot, Dubuffet, Cioran, Duchamp, Che, Kerouac, or more recently Tesson (Sylvain), written in the "villegléan alphabet" and drawn directly onto the gallery walls.

Or this not accidental phrase by Prévert, taken from the poetry collection *Fatras*: "Beautiful letters are not enough to make a real alphabet".

What else is needed?

The answer is on the walls.

Barbara Soyer



Mach
05

April
10
2021