

OLAV WESTPHALEN «COOPÉRATIVE DE LA FERTILITÉ»

EXHIBITION FROM 12 MARCH TO 10 APRIL 2010

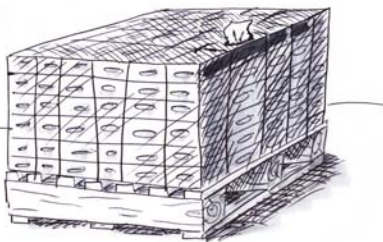
OPENING NIGHT THURSDAY 11 MARCH 2010



Michael Jackson and his three diaphanous children; Doctor Antinori whose experiments are enabling women to give birth at sixty; the mother of octuplets in Los Angeles; and twins born of different fathers: never have maternity and medically assisted procreation generated so many modern myths out of research sometimes pushed to extremes. The experiments are big business now and the operational fuel – sperm – has become a treasured item. And a luxury one as well, given the vertiginous drop in quality it's undergone in our supposedly advanced Western societies. Olav Westphalen has looked into the value of this «merchandise» and the legal and medical obstacles to obtaining the precious bodily fluid in some countries, notably France. This «natural» product has become a cultural commodity and a financial and moral issue of the first order; but Westphalen's concern is less with provoking political debate than with coming to grips with the mechanisms for defining and promoting raw materials.



Making formal play with an entrepreneurial strategy, the artist is turning the Galerie G-P & N Vallois into a cooperative, a sperm bank – for deposits and withdrawals – signified by communication equipment and a minimal sculpture: a refrigerator with a content as coveted as a river of diamonds, an altar containing a relic with a whiff of scandal about its mix of sex juice and promises of happiness. Ah, when the poetics of maternity starts flirting with medical reality, secrecy and financial wheeling and dealing! It's illegal to sell sperm, but what's the situation if it's sold in the form of a sculpture? And as if to express the tension between the «priorities», the exhibition also features illustrated advertisements for jewellery and precious stones. Power, potency, solitary pleasure and an overt display of virility: mixing bling, showing-off and the well-guarded secret of an assisted conception, FerCo™ delights in the cultivation of antinomies.



Out of this project also emerges a series of sculptures and drawings with no illustrative function at all. As so often in Westphalen's work, here we find him crossing swords with all sorts of Art History references and masters. *Kleenex* borrows equally from the range of paper tissues and Minimalist aesthetics for its absorption of the modular into a wooden monolith. *Drums*, a monstrous hybrid resulting from the union of a priapic fountain of youth and a totem pole commemorating a catastrophic oil slick, combines ultra-abundance and exhaustion of fossil energy resources, waste, overconsumption and rarity. *B-Movie*, its innocent pram coated with some gooey substance, suggests a bad screenplay, a kind of distant, degenerate relative of *The Exorcist* that hints at fearful, quasi-cannibalistic offspring.

FerCo™ is not a business, but a cooperative which in this instance puts the emphasis more on the «health» image of agriculture, reproduction and procreation – of breeding, in other words – than on a clinical context of genetic manipulation.

Bénédicte Ramade

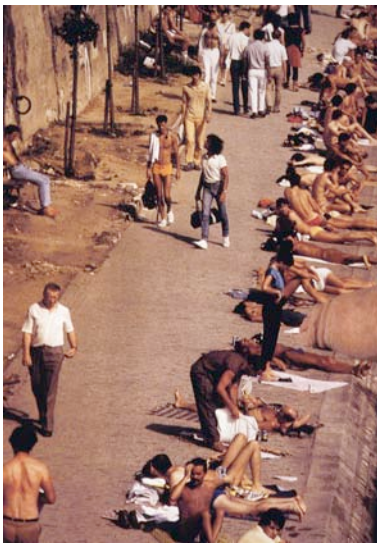
SAVERIO LUCARIELLO

«LES INFILTRÉS»

PROJECT ROOM

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IMMISCEOR ERGO SUM

L'Infiltré does not have its own light, but steals subtly into another's glow. It recuperates the light of images. It is not a quotationist, like something that follows a story. It is itself the principle of quotation, ever able to be a referential element. It arouses a strange attraction (as soon as it is spotted) for any kind of formal composition. Since it first appeared in 1995, there are countless images and aesthetic contexts that, although in possession of their own themes, have been influenced by *l'Infiltré*. It is itself the active and unexpected principle of quotation. It is quotation because it has no being of its own. *L'Infiltré* belongs to no one and to everyone. It is! Immisceor ergo sum! That is enough for it to be everywhere, because it can. It is a weapon, a soul, permanently present, needing no party, theory, ideology or religion to exhibit itself. *L'Infiltré* exhibits itself! *L'Infiltré* does not need to simplify or abound. It is a minimalist, a naturalist, a born simplifier. Perpetually present, it critiques everything, wherever it can insinuate itself. It is a substance that can be integrated into almost everything. I say almost everything, because *l'Infiltré* can, if it wants, operate even through strong discrimination. In spite of its irrationality and its total lack of balance, it does not infiltrate just anywhere, however. It can be seen as a presence that is rebellious as much as it is inflationist, but it can also be extremely selective, precisely because it enjoys the rare pleasure of being able to put in token appearances everywhere. *L'Infiltré* is a saprophyte that makes the most of it. What more can we say about it? What can be said has been said already and there is nothing to add since *l'Infiltré* itself keeps adding without letting on, so that we never even know it is adding. It is like art criticism. It adds itself like a neutral element that is in a different bed every night but never makes anyone come. It is better not to expect anything, not to hope for anything, or at the very most to watch out for *l'Infiltré* in the hope that it will show its little patch of pink flesh and perhaps arouse desire, even from those who were no longer hoping for it, caught up in their own disenchantment or their own unresolved ambitions.

Saverio LUCARIELLO, February 2010

(Excerpt from : *Pour une compréhension de l'Infiltré : le principe d'immanence et le principe d'actualité chez l'Infiltré*, Éditions Obscures et Ouvertes, Paris-Naples, 1995-2010).



FORTHCOMING EXHIBITIONS:

3 - 7 March: **ARMORY SHOW, PIER 94 / BOOTH 707**, New York, USA

16 April - 22 May (Opening Thursday 15 April): **MANGAKA** (curator: David Rosenberg)

23 - 26 April : **ART BRUSSELS, STAND 1D15**, Bruxelles, Belgium

28 May - 31 July (Opening Thursday 27 May): **GILLES BARBIER**

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