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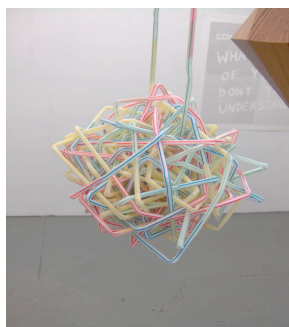
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3 MARCH - 29 APRIL 2006  
OPENING 2 MARCH 2006

# BORIS ACHOUR

« CONATUS (PILOT) »



In previous seasons we have seen Boris Achour out on the Russian steppe, using a megaphone to direct a poetical restoration job (*Operation Restore Poetry*, Moscow Biennial, 2005) and, before that, heading a horde of sculpture-profaners and asserting his desire to “play with dead things” (*Laboratoires d’Aubervilliers*, 2004). Now, in his new HQ on the Seine, he is finding new ways to organise chaos, unify heterogeneity and reanimate lifeless forms. A set of sculptures – crystalline, organic, formless or pseudo-kinetic, mixing Plexiglas, macramé, and some of them polyurethane stalactites or concretions – are hung in the space from rods made of neon tubes, chrome or plain pieces of wood. The image that immediately strikes us is one of a planetarium, a cosmic pandemonium, reminding us that Achour is less concerned with questions of old/new sculpture than with setting in motion autonomous production machines. In 2002, with *Cosmos*, he showed himself to be a maker of films, with no less than 200 cases lined up in his video club, their covers drawing on every conceivable genre from thrillers to porn, and even including hardware store demonstration videos: each genre is endlessly combinable with others, free of hierarchies and devoid of any apparent system of classification. These video cases provided fixed frames for the subjectively chosen permutation of motifs that were themselves in a process of exponential growth. Here, the principle of suspension refers, of course, to Calder’s mobiles and their endless movement, but it also evokes Maypoles and, above all, Robert Filliou’s way of hanging works in series using hooks, according to the visual principle of “permanent creation” and its system of equivalence. Balancing, defying once again the laws of form and ground, support and object, Achour’s sculptures sketch out a history of art that is like a constellation of stars, like so many parallel realities, a place where the world of Franz West cohabits with those of Yaacov Agam and Donald Judd. The meaning of the general title, *Pilote*, now becomes clear: this spaceship does indeed have a captain. And, if we refer to the vocabulary of the TV industry, a pilot is of course the prototype of a programme, the prologue to the full series – hence the empty supports, like skeletons waiting for new, as yet unidentified planets. The operation’s code name? *Conatus* – that is, the Spinozan principle of joy in action, the power of acting as a mode of individual self-realization. Well done, badly done, but done!

François Piron, January 2006

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NEXT ARTFAIRS : THE ARMORY SHOW, NEW YORK  
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20 - 25 APRIL 2006