ATELIER REFLEXE (1995 - 2016)

A constellation of artists, photographers, historians, managers of museums or galleries, experts or historians in art and photography, directors, etc., known or unknown, of various origins and nationalities, have contributed to the fields of activities and experiences of *The Atelier Reflexe*, a school which questioned, from the first half of the 1990s the place of photography in contemporary art, in society and in education, and who defended the medium of photography in contemporary creation through various projects in which photography is mixed up with other art practices such as performance, installation, film and artist's books.

Origins and historical context

Its founders, Véronique Bourgoin¹ and Juli Susin² studied between 1986 and 1991 at the *Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris*. Their photographic works were presented for the first time at the exhibition *State of Siege, Photography and its Use* in 1988 at the Chapelle des Petits Augustins³, an exhibition curated by Lesly Hamilton, who had created the department of *Fine Art Photography* at the Beaux-arts de Paris⁴. This exhibition showed photographic works for the first time at the School of Fine Arts, and was supported by Jean-Claude Lemagny, curator at the cabinet des Estampes de la BNF (Bibliothèque Nationale de France)⁵ and manager of its' contemporary photography collection. "Apparently paradoxically, photography, this art focused on recording, showed them that light isn't only something to reproduce, welcome or hint at like in a painting, but something that should be worked on and manipulated, like a carver works with clay."⁶

¹ Véronique Bourgoin is a visual artist from Marseille, which she left in 1985 to study at the Beaux-arts in Paris. She lives in Montreuil (Paris).

² Juli Susin is a visual artist from the Soviet Union which he left in the early 1980s. He lives in Montreuil (Paris).

 $^{^3}$ The Chapelle des Petits Augustins was reopened after 200 years for the occasion at the request of Lesly Hamilton.

⁴ Lesly Hamilton became a professor at the Beaux-arts in Paris in 1983. She was both a photographer and a female teacher at the school – one of the first ones, with the drawing teacher.

⁵ He supported the work of Bourgoin and Susin very early on and he was the first to buy their artist's books for the BNF fund, as well as photographic prints, unique pieces, by Bourgoin made in the late 1980s. "Jean-Claude Lemagny had taken the head of the photography service at the BNF in 1968, he considered photography to be the *Eighth Art*. He participated in the creation of the Rencontres d'Arles, co-founded The Photography Notebooks and fought to open, within the BNF buildings, the Photography gallery" (extract from the article *The drunkenness of a Great Depth*, Elodie Cabrera, for Télérama, 05/12/2021).

⁶ An extract of the presentation text Jean-Claude Lemagny wrote for the exhibition which was published in the catalog *State of Siege*, p.10, ENSBA edition, 1988.

"At that time, at the end of the 1980s, the photography of Bourgoin and Susin focused largely on laboratory experiments, questioning the materiality of the photosensitive layer. They used unstable or poorly fixed photographic supports, elements of industrial compost, invented techniques, and experimented with mechanical and chemical transformations. For Susin this means pushing the images towards anonymity and dysfunction, and for Bourgoin, strengthening them as ramparts against the toxic aspects of contemporary life⁷. At that time, the activity of taking pictures was little more than a pretext to take fragments or "specimens" of reality which would be subjected to various forms of modification. And it is the materiality of the surface that becomes a leading indicator of interventions (...)"⁸, a "battlefield where materials and dangerous subjects clash" that can be found in Sigmar Polke's photographs.

While still studying at the Beaux-Arts, in 1989 they set up a house / workshop in Montreuil, on the outskirts of Paris, where they came to meet artist friends from different countries in both Eastern and Western Europe, the former USSR, and later on other continents, and where many collaborations and projects have emerged – including *The Atelier Reflexe* in 1995.

The creation of *The Atelier Reflexe* is rooted in a changing contemporary context: the emergence of post-Soviet Eastern Europe, and an apprehension of the body modified by AIDS, a crisis of representation, the foreshadowing of a technological revolution of the image and of a future change in the status of photography in contemporary art. Within this transition, photography was the medium and the privileged witness.

[&]quot;(...) like *Three Standards (1988),* which assembles the photograph taken in 1/1 scale of three gas cylinders, with a black plastic on which is glued the image of a deserted railway line; or glass pots filled with concrete powder with photographs on lith films listing organic and inorganic elements (1988), or the photograph of a fishbone drawn on lith film assembled on a gasoline can with a broken thermometer (1987), or yet again *The silence (1986)*, a photograph documenting pears that I had encased in concrete. (...)"extract from a text by Véronique Bourgoin on her work.

This quote is an excerpt from the book *Royal Book Lodge* by John C. Welchman, éd. Hatje Cantz October 2022, which presents for the first time this project of 30 years of activities and artistic collaborations, initiated by Juli Susin and Véronique Bourgoin in 1989. John C. Welchman is a historian and professor in the Department of Visual Art at the University of California San Diego, specializing in modern and contemporary art history and critical theory. He is notably the author of a monograph by Mike Kelley, whose writings he also edited (MIT Press, Les presses du réel / JRP | Ringier). Many of his essays are published by Sternberg Press.

⁹ Bernard Marcadé, extract from the text "Les infamies photographiques de Sigmar Polke", published at Bal, 2019.

Manifesto To begin with...

The photographer is as much an explorer, a hunter and a zoo keeper. By that, I mean that before everything, he is a man. By that, I mean that before everything, she is a woman. Lost because of their sensitivity in the jungle of physical phenomena, they are the one who wander, capture and transform. Each of their movements must be made with the greatest purity possible.

This is through this lens that The Atelier wants to shed light on its' actions. Rather than providing a thorough technical class (for, in this domain, the fields of study are so large that each student should explore them according to their evolution), although providing a fair basis, The Atelier focuses its' work on all the activities related to photography. Only a relentless confrontation between sensitivity, means and results bestows true knowledge, mastered and thorough, and also lets the student grow within it.

(R. Fabibi, extract of the speech given in 1989 for the first meeting of the *Centre d'Information Reflexe*)

Teaching, methods and context

The Greek word "scholê" meant leisure, the right time for the mind's activity, for reading, arts, and studies. Basing itself on this, *The Atelier Reflexe* is the only "independent school" of France at that time, initiated by artists, a space of study, exchanges and learning with at its core, photography. It proposes an education around photography through a program of practical and theoretical courses: studio work, field photography based on topics, maps and throughout the course, meetings and collaborations with professional artist photographers within the framework of workshops, conferences, or lectures. The program ends with the creation and organization of exhibitions or events and creating a post to be shared on the professional partner networks.

While the name "Reflex" does refer to cameras, in terms of teaching methods it designs one that must always "adapt itself to its' surroundings", encouraging trial-and-error through the "workshop". A teaching that values and bases itself on the students' creativity,

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¹⁰ Until 2003 *The Atelier Reflexe* operated with an independent economy, without any subvention. The registration was annual: 4000 francs per annum and then after the year 2000, 1000 euros, with a weekly meeting, and, starting in 2005, a fixed enrolment by workshop. This registration included a program of creations in the workshop and meetings with speakers, an access to the film laboratory, the production of an edition, the distribution and promotion of works produced with travelling exhibitions. The first financial support from the *European Commission* was received for the cooperation project *Ex-In* (2003-2004); then a second with the project *EU Women*, in 2006-2007; and a third with the project *True or False?* in 2009-2013. These supports have allowed *The Atelier Reflexe* to spread out further in Europe and beyond the European borders with projects in China, the United States, Turkey, etc., and also to widen its' program and develop partnerships with regional governments.

their desire to discover, to communicate, to express themselves, accepting mistakes all the while offering a context which supports a cooperative approach.

The Atelier Reflexe echoes North American tendencies for alternative teachings that had their equivalent in Europe in the last century, and that disrupt the expectations of an academic education and of the hierarchy of institutional schools.

From 1995 to 2016, The Atelier Reflexe has carried out more than 20¹¹ projects, under the direction of Bourgoin and also of Susin until 2001 when he began to focus on the editorial aspects of the Workshop.

From the beginning, the activities of The Atelier Reflexe, have been supported by a core of friends, such as Dirk Bakker, 12 who co-edited and distributed the 18 editions of the Atelier Reflexe¹³ and contributed to the dissemination of annual exhibitions. Jean-Louis Leibovitch¹⁴ provided the Atelier Reflexe with a former washhouse building in Montreuil, between 1999 and 2003, directed the studio photography and attended to each workshop. Adolfo Kaminsky, famous chemist and forger involved in the resistance¹⁵, taught laboratory work at the Atelier Reflexe from 2000. By passing on his formulas developed and previously used for great photographers like Man Ray, Kaminsky has contributed to the production of many prints of unique photographic quality. Since 1999, Antoine d'Agata¹⁶ has regularly directed workshops at The Atelier Reflexe, and, for three months in autumn 2004, took over

¹¹ http://atelier-reflexe.org/atelier.html

 $^{^{12}}$ Dirk Bakker, book dealer but also a discoverer of photographers, was one of the pioneers to promote and affirm the photo book as a "work of art". In the 1990s in Paris he conducted In the Bookshop, an avant-garde bookshop where he regularly organized expositions of photographers like Antoine d'Agata's first exposition in Paris (1996), the first expositions of the Atelier Reflex (1995, 1996), that he promoted each year during the Photograph Meetings, Bourgoin and Susin met Dirk Bakker in 1993 during the Photography Festivals of Arles, when they had just published their book 1929, Royal Book Lodge Editions, (Cosa Nostra Experimental).

 $^{^{13}}$ The workshops and projects which were carried out have led to the realization of 18 publications, most of which were developed by Juli Susin with Veronique Bourgoin and since 2002 with an artistic director, and associate lecturer. These editions were co-edited by Dirk Bakker, and some by Royal Book Lodge and Fotohof. All 18 editions have been acquired by the Kandinsky Library (Beaubourg, Paris).

¹⁴ Jean-Louis Leibovitch is a visual photographer, living in Montreuil. He met Bourgoin and Susin in Paris, in 1993, during the production of the 1929 edition.

 $^{^{15}}$ "Adolfo Kaminsky, a life of a forger", biography of Sarah Kaminsky, published in 2009, editions *Calmann-Lévy*. "The Forger, Times Documentaries", The New York Times: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dup6KOoaAUc

 $^{^{16}}$ Véronique Bourgoin and Juli Susin met Antoine d'Agata in Arles in the summer of 1995, when he returned to France after a decade of travelling in Mexico and Chiapas. Bourgoin and Susin presented their artist's edition "Les Fables d'une étrange Lucarne" at the gallery Point de vue and at the bookshop Au Fil du Temps. Antoine d'Agata exhibited his images of Mexico with Bourgoin and Susin. When d'Agata joined the Vu gallery and moved to Paris, Véronique Bourgoin asked him to work at the Atelier Reflexe. In 1999, he directed his very first workshop there, the beginning of a series that they conduct to this day across the world. D'Agata has from 1999 until the closing regularly taught and participated in projects of The Atelier Reflexe.

the direction of the *Workshop*, after which the teaching on an annual curriculum was replaced by a regular program of Workshops until *The Atelier Reflexe*'s closing in 2016.

The Atelier Reflexe was also in contact with the Situationist International, incuding the friendship and collaboration between Juli Susin, Véronique Bourgoin and ex-members of the SI such as Gianfranco Sanguinetti, key member of the SI between 1969 and its' official dissolution in 1972, or Ralph Rumney, one of the first members with whom Juli Susin and Véronique Bourgoin edited the book *The Leaning Tower of Venice*¹⁷. The psycho-geographic outings and the derivation and diversion practices of the SI have also been tools for projects and topics directed by the Atelier Reflexe.

With regard to other institutional contexts, *The Atelier Reflexe* offered its participants, both teachers and students, conditions that were at the same time more experimental and more collaborative, softening the boundaries between teaching, artistic production and daily life: nocturnal strolls in Montreuil that often ended in bars and strange places, exceeding class time, festive meals...

The Atelier Reflexe has brought together many diverse participants, including some who made up a reliable and active core by renewing their inscription over several years such as, like in the beginning, Michaël Eveno (aka Grems), Nicolas Delbard, Margot Wallard, Christine Bréchemier, Suzanna Pozzoli, Julia Collaro, Mathieu Saura (aka Vincent Moon), or later Sophie Carlier, Josquin Gouilly Frossard, Sylva Bingaz,... The participants' diversity and their various parallel activities to the Atelier – they could be engineers, graphic designers, architects, doctors, directors, musicians, scholars or even students preparing an Art School, photographers – professional or changing careers – gave way to dynamic exchanges, rich in resources and perspective¹⁸. Over time, *The Atelier Reflexe* has brought together a vast network of photographers, international artists and art professionals, such as Friedl Kubelka, Morten Andersen, Linda Bilda, Anders Petersen, Nina Korhonen, Boris Mikhailov, the Gelatin, Jochen Lempert and many others¹⁹. Like for an edition's artistic direction, their

¹⁷ Editions *Royal Book Lodge* (*Silverbridge*), 2002. This book contains the very first integral reproduction of a legendary work of art by Ralph Rumney made in Venise in 1957, which should have been published in the first edition of the situationist international's journal.

 $^{^{18}}$ The participants for the *Atelier Reflexe* were selected during a meeting with Véronique Bourgoin or sometimes Juli Susin for the first few years.

¹⁹ See list of speakers: http://atelier-reflexe.org/credits/index.html

interventions often happened over several days or a year²⁰. Each contributor provides portfolio readings, common exercises and directs the projects according to each person's approach. These meetings happen in Montreuil, in the *Atelier Reflexe*'s premises or sometimes in specific places or sites. From 2005 onward, the Workshops could take place within partner or institutional structures such as the *Institut français de Thessalonique*, *Le Bal* (Paris),...

Aesthetic and topic

If the beginnings of the *Atelier Reflexe* are marked by the experimental aesthetics of its founders, over time the programs of the workshop agree with the themes and approaches of the intervening artists, as well as questions addressed by Bourgoin in her personal artistic approach that she wanted to extend to a collective reflection, such as *Magic Trick* (2009-2010) in connection with the polaroid project *Ship High In Transit* (2008)²¹, or the project *True or False?* (2010-2013)²². This research program raises the question of living things, the exchange and the future of art in the face of the emergence of new communication interfaces.

"During the second half of the 1990s and early 2000s, *The Atelier Reflexe* explicitly blurred the line between 'artistic' photography and 'documentary' photography (...). The general production ethic of *The Atelier Reflexe* at this time was a mode of 'close-up photography', a language which reflected not only the workshops but also the wanderings and journeys of the affiliates. It was based on a kind of drift, especially in suburban or indefinite urban areas, and aimed at generating mixed perspectives and confusing the perception of near and far. This orientation is particularly associated with the practice of Marseillais Antoine D'Agata, who studied in New York with Larry Clark and Nan Goldin and who animated *the Atelier Reflexe* for several years starting in 1999. In an interview with Dirk Bakker and Bourgoin in 2005, d'Agata commented on the experimental nature of *The Reflex Workshop*, noting how it seemed to deliver a "permanent tension between concepts and an

 $^{^{20}}$ The Atelier Reflexe invited artists and paid for the stay of those coming from abroad, who could stay between 4 and 8 days in Montreuil, Paris.

This project was carried out as part of a grant awarded to 10 international photographers, including Véronique Bourgoin and Boris Mikhaïlov, by *Impossible Project* (Vienna, Austria) in 2008 to support Polaroid which was being threatened with closure.

http://vraioufaux.name/

authenticity of experience"²³. Another affiliate, Anders Petersen, remarked that "the fantastic fixed atmosphere of developer, duotone and creativity (...) reminded me of Christer Strömholm's school."²⁴

Certain themes addressed by *the Atelier Reflexe* were recurring: questions of the identity - that one finds in the projects *Auto portrait for all (2000)* or *Ain't you (2011);* the representation of the "Woman" - around the eroticization and control of the body, and the construction of new social relations of gender and identity, studied in the projects *Self Woman (2002)* and more fully in *EU Women* (2007-2011)²⁵. The concept of the off-screen, the strange, the offbeat vision is found in several series such as *Psychobuilding* (2000) inspired by Kippenberger's book²⁶ or later *Outsiderland* (2010)²⁷ which "explores the subversions of social standardization in the photographs of the Los Angeles punk scene, by Bruce Kalberg, as well as the portraits of Charles Bukowsky by the photographer Joan Gannij or the works of Jochen Lempert, Miroslav Tichý and others"²⁸.

The project *Ex In* (2003-2004)²⁹ attempts to show the complex and mysterious relationship between the exterior and the interior, or rather the moments in which one appears in the other, is reversed or becomes lost. The text that Frank Horstmann wrote in the introduction to the book serves as a point of reflection and discusses the first signs of a culture and art form in prehistoric times.

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²³ Interview with Antoine d'Agata and Anders Petersen, by Dirk Bakker and Véronique Bourgoin in Marseille and Stockholm in 2005. The interview is part of a series made in 2005 with the main protagonists of The *Atelier Reflexe* and intended to be published by Patrick Le Bescont, a contributor that year, as part of a story of The *Atelier Reflexe*. Véronique Bourgoin had planned to close The *Atelier Reflexe* but ended up continuing as a travelling workshop until the end of 2016, postponing the idea of a publication.

See reference note 7.

²⁵ EU Women is a project which is part of Bourgoin's artistic concerns. <u>http://fabriquedesillusions.com/Eu%20women.html</u>

Susin and Bourgoin had met Martin Kippenberger in 1993, on the occasion of the exhibition *Candidature for a retrospective* in Beaubourg curated by the historian Roberto Ohrt and Fabrice Hergott. Martin Kippenberger had borrowed editions of *Royal Book Lodge* to display as part of his exhibition. The book *Psychobuilding*, Martin Kippenberger was edited by Walther König, Köln, in 1988.

Véronique Bourgoin created this project which puts together pictures of d'Antoine d'Agata, Véronique Bourgoin, Joan Gannij, The Hole Garden, Bruce Kalberg, Anne Lefèbvre, Jochen Lempert, Boris Michaïlov, Juli Susin, Miroslav Tichy, members of the *Atelier Reflexe*: Thomas Brosset Manuela Böhme, Sophie Carlier, Philippe Gerlach, Josquin Gouilly, Frossard, Sandra Schmalz, Sarah Toumayan, Margot Wallard, and Spanish correspondents: Rodrigo Gomez Reina, Agustin Hurtado, Antonio Perez and Alberto Rojas Maza.

http://fabriquedesillusions.com/expos/dossiers%20de%20presse/NYPH10English.pdf

²⁸ See reference note 7

²⁹ EX IN is the first project supported by the European Commission. Véronique Bourgoin assured the commission with the German historian Roberto Ohrt for a program of travelling workshops and exhibitions as well as a co-edition with Fotohof (Austria). http://atelier-reflexe.org/editionreflexe9.html, http://fabriquedesillusions.com/expos/popUpExInInfo.html

Educational exchanges

To develop this project, Bourgoin's studio is partnering with another school, Die Schule für künstlerische Fotografie, led by Austrian artist Friedl Kubelka³⁰. Many meetings between Kubelka's studio and the Atelier Reflexe had taken place in Paris, as soon as 1999 when Kubelka and Bourgoin first met. They share the same taste for experimentation with photography, especially film photography, to measure the level of pressure between the social and the individual. In 2003, each of them took charge of the other's workshop for two months: Kubelka in Paris, Bourgoin in Vienna. In addition to exchanges with Kubelka, Bourgoin created links with other alternative schools. Libuse Jarcovjakova's studio at the Prague School of Photography Nakladatelstvi Grafiké Skoly³¹ welcomed students from The Atelier Reflexe in 2002/2003, just as The Atelier Reflexe welcomed its students from Prague³². Between 2002 and 2004, exchanges between the class of Anders Petersen from the University of Gothenburg and The Atelier Reflexe made it possible to assess and experiment with creation and teaching between two different contexts: institutional and alternative. From 2010, as part of the True or False? Project, The Atelier Reflexe's pedagogy has been exported through numerous workshops such as in the ISSP summer academy, in Latvia, or the *Maison Populaire* in Montreuil, or other structures in Europe.

Diffusion and events

The exhibitions are an opportunity to compare the works produced at the Workshop with regard to a professional and amateur public, to measure the place they occupy in a collective context, to play with the displays and to challenge the different forms of presentation. One of the last projects of the workshop, the Journal *True or False*?³³, is one of the examples of radical scenography where the photographs of the participants in the

³⁰ Friedl Kubelka is an Austrian photographer, film-maker and visual artist. In 1990, she founded *Die Schule für künstlerische Fotografie in Vienna*, the first school in Austria exclusively devoted to artistic photography. It has been managed since 2010 by Anja Manfredi.

Libuse Jarcovjakova was introduced to Bourgoin and Susin by Monika Michalkova and Gianfranco Sanguinetti. From the end of the 1960s, she documented the underground of the Czech capital, from LGBT + bars to gypsy weddings, from the "spring" of 1968 to the "velvet revolution" of 1989. In 2000, she ran her workshop at the Prague school *Nakladatelstvi Grafiké Skoly*: http://www.itf.cz/dokumenty/fotografie-na-graficke-skole-v-praze.pdf

An exhibition *Nice to Meet you*, in 2003 at *Studio 14*, brings together the result of these exchanges carried out between *The Atelier Reflexe* and the schools of Prague and Vienna. *Studio 14* was an off space, 14 rue Paradis in Paris, where *The Atelier Reflexe* presented many projects between 2000 and 2003.

This journal is a reinterpretation of the daily journal Le Monde. Bourgoin put together the images of the participants in the workshops *True or False?* with current documents or anonymous images.

workshops are mixed with current images, and the entire thing is categorized by thematic headings.

The venue could be places off space as the Studio 14 and Confluences in Paris, or the bookshop Au fil du temps and Point of view, itinerant gallery in Arles, but also galleries, institutions or renowned festivals like Marion Meyer, Paris, 1999; Fotohof, Salzburg (2003, 2007) which also co-edited books of The Atelier Reflexe; International Festival of the Photography of Lodz (2007); Urgent Capsized, Montreuil (2007); Popular House, Montreuil (2007, 2014); Photo Biennial Thessalonique (2008); Central Andaluz of Fotografia, Almeria (2008); New York Photo Festival (2008, 2009, 2010); Caochangdi Photospring, Beijing (2010); Tütün Deposu ek bina, Istanbul (2011); Nederlands Foto Museum Rotterdam (2013); Centre of contemporary art Tignous (116), Montreuil (2014). Dirk Bakker was the first to show the work of The Atelier Reflexe in his avant-gardist bookshop A La Librairie, impasse Guéménée à Paris.

This is joined by a number of young female artist photographers³⁴ with whom Bourgoin has been very active since 1995, during the Photography Festivals of Arles, leading with the Atelier Reflexe many activities outside of the official program: showing outdoor movies projected on the city walls, inviting local or regional musicians such as Manu Théron or gipsy bands to improvise on the slide shows, with regular movie screenings on the wall facing the bookshop Au fil du temps³⁵, wandering exposures presented in off spaces open for the occasion. Dirk Bakker and the *Point de Vue gallery*³⁶ each year offered a kind of itinerant off-space in Arles for *The Atelier Reflexe* to present its annual projects. The last of the series of the projects of *The Atelier Reflexe* took place in 2012 in an old supermarket in the Rocket district in Arles with a retrospective installation entitled Another French School, the Atelier

³⁴ The beginnings of *Atelier Reflexe* welcomed a number of participating photographers such as Christine Bréchemier, Margot Wallard, Julia Collaro, Suzana Pozzoli, later Sophie Carlier, Guillermina Ackerman, etc. who stayed for several years.

 $^{^{35}}$ The bookshop Au fil du temps was created by Philippe Chauvaux from Arles who had left Paris after 1968; although marginal, his bookshop had become, since its creation in 1985, a primary venue during at the Photography Festivals which joined together a Bohemian heteroclite, artists, photography professionals and revolutionary poets. The bookshop closed definitively in 2009. The bookshop's collection is composed of a large set of books ranging from libertarian writings to rare books of photographs or artist's books, documents, books and reviews of the historical avant-garde such as the International Situationist or the Surrealists, collections of poetry, etc. Part of it can now be viewed in the La Fontaine des Lunatiques bookshop run by Julien Goupil in Arles.

³⁶ The gallery *Point de vue* is a cultural association under the 1901 law founded by Sylvie d'Auvergne and Médéric Olivier, who left Paris for Arles in the early 1990s. They had founded, along with Remy Comment, the Pheromone editions, and also published the book Tendre Venin by Nicolas Arraitz (aka Bruno Le Dantec), a friend a coworker of Antoine d'Agata in Mexico. The Point de vue gallery organized Antoine d'Agata's first solo exhibition in Arles in February 1996. Antoine d'Agata had been welcomed by the Point de Vue gallery and Philippe Chauvaux on his return from Mexico and had exhibited a year earlier with Véronique Bourgoin and Juli Susin.

Reflexe 1994 - 2012³⁷, as a counterpoint to the festival which focused its program on Arles's École Nationale Supérieure de Photographie.

Each year, to conclude the annual program, *The Atelier Reflexe* leads a collective reflection around the design of an artist's book and questions the concept of serial reproduction, the construction of the story, the modes of printing and presentation. The editing work is done in close collaboration with the intervening artists. For most editions, the choice of photocopying printing, limiting the print run to 40 to 50, allows direct intervention on the page, which resonates with the culture of fanzines, independent editions, the postpunk period and also with a culture of Samizdat³⁸, inherited by Susin from his experience in the former USSR. Similarly to the *Royal Book Lodge* Editions³⁹, the thin, clandestine-looking printed notebooks are often set in luxurious bindings, as a sort of camouflage, to help circulate its "marginal" content. Some books, co-edited with *Fotohof*⁴⁰ and *Royal Book Lodge* were produced in larger runs (*EU Women, Ex.In* and *True or False?*) and made in offset, while all other books were co-edited with Dirk Bakker.

Building and mobility

The first idea of *The Atelier Reflexe* was supported from its' creation in 1995 by a partnership with the *Neufville* art school, situated in the middle of the 10th arrondissement in Paris, giving them the option to occupy the premises through daily meetups and a fully equipped analogue laboratory. However, this future which appeared so stable and sustainable was cut short by the brutal and definitive closing of the *Neufville* School, which made way for the *The Atelier Reflexe* to earn its' status of "nomad" in 1996. The *Atelier* was

³⁷ Dirk Bakker and *La galerie Point de vue* present a story of *L'Atelier Reflexe* in a space where publishers such as Fotohof, Kessels Kramer Publishing, Plac'Art Photo, Obiettivolibri, Rvb Books, Thinkings Hands, Royal Book Lodge have also been invited (Silverbridge), Le caillou bleu, White press (https://www.lemonde.fr/photo/article/2012/07/16/a-arles-il-y-a-une-vie-entre-le-in-et-le-off_5982270_4789037.html)

³⁸ Underground system that circulated dissident writings in the USSR and other countries of the Eastern Bloc, written by hand or typed by the many members of this unofficial network.

Juli Susin learned bookbinding from René Boré. For decades René Boré produced artists' books at *Arte*, the printing house created in Paris by Aimé Maeght, such as *Prière de Toucher* by Duchamp and many others. Bourgoin and Susin had met René Boré in 1992 while they were making *1929*, edition which was printed as a collotype at *Arte*. From this time, many books produced by *Royal Book Lodge* were printed or produced at *Arte*, such as Bourgoin and Susin's first artist's books *Willie ou pas Willie* and *Inukshuk* (1997), made by the master bookbinder of *Arte* himself who created the artist's books within the printing house like *Prière de Toucher* by Duchamp and many others.

⁴⁰ http://fotohof.net/

warmly welcomed two blocks away by Pascale Lecoq⁴¹ at the *LEM* space, within the *Jacques* Lecog International Theatre School, for the first trimester of 1996 and, now an ambulant school, offered sessions which looked like magic tricks with the moving laboratory which they set up and took away after every meeting. Eventually the Atelier settled in Véronique Bourgoin and Juli Susin's house, in Montreuil, for two years. From this temporary and marginal status, the Atelier Reflexe was anchored from the start of the 1998 school year to 2004 in former public baths in Montreuil thanks to the hospitality of Jean-Louis Leibovitch, a friend and photographer. His studio sometimes acted as a meeting room, a place to take pictures and lead experimentations, with two independent rooms in which a large analogue laboratory equipped with several enlargers⁴² was set up and could be used by both students and speakers. This stability led to an easier development of education, diversifying encounters by inviting artist friends to contribute and initiating exchanges with other schools in Europe. Starting from fall 2005, The Atelier Reflexe settles in Klein's former piano making building, Rue Robespierre in Montreuil, with a yearly program and then announces the beginning of a great travelling workshops program beyond the national borders for the following year.

Network and territorial grid

With Montreuil as *The Atelier Reflexe*'s focal point, Europe has become its' action and development playground. Its' founders' cultural diversity, Franco-Soviet with their network based on Paris-Marseille-Berlin-Eastern Europe and Montreuil as an anchor point, represents the future of Europe. An issue in the journal *Spasiba* by the Norwegian artist Guttorm Nordo and the photographer May-Irene Aasen, *Reflexe III*, is a testament to this cosmopolitan and collaborative engagement. This journal gathers reflections and illustrations on the theme of the city, with a blank map given to six groups of artists living in six metropolis: Oslo, Vienna, Hamburg, London, New York and Paris, which the *Atelier Reflexe* represented. As soon as it was created, *The Atelier Reflexe* was granted a wide network that went largely beyond national borders. Unofficial partnerships are very quickly

⁴¹ Pascale Lecoq, daughter of Jacques Lecoq, is an architect and currently is the director of the Jacques Lecoq International Theatre School with her two brothers François and. She created within the school the LEM, Laboratoire d'Etude du Mouvement (Laboratory of Movement Study).

⁴² The darkroom was equipped with six enlargers of which two were medium formats, with large trays which could be used to make large formats (up to 150cm).

created in France like in Paris with the prestigious *Jacques Lecoq International Theatre School* which has already been mentioned, or with *La Guillotine*, a free and multicultural project by Philippe Burin des Roziers set up in a former factory in Montreuil and where several sessions of picture taking were done; or in Arles, too, with inhabitants of the city like Sylvie d'Auvergne and Médéric Olivier with their *Galerie Point de vue*, which occupied spaces within the city for each photography festival to present the *Atelier Reflexe*'s projects, or like Philippe Chauveau and his staple bookshop *Au Fil du Temps*, or Ali and his bar in the la Roquette neighborhood⁴³.

Dirk Bakker played a capital role in the *Atelier Reflexe*'s networking. It was when Juli Susin and Véronique Bourgoin had just published the artist's book *1929* that they met Dirk Bakker, a bookseller and also photographer discoverer. He was one of the first to promote and affirm the photo book as a "work of art". He was the one to start the photo book fair during the Arles festival, which took place during many years in the espace *Van Gogh* and then moved into the *Ateliers SNCF*. During the 1990s, he kept an avant-gardist bookshop in Paris, *A La Librairie*, where he frequently organized expositions like the very first ones of the *Atelier Reflexe* (1995-1996), which he promoted each year during the *Photography Festival of Arles*. He also promotes other photographers like Antoine d'Agata, who had just exposed his work in Arles with Véronique Bourgoin and Juli Susin in the *Galerie Point de Vue* and *Au Fil du Temps*, of which he would show the first exhibition in Paris in 1996. Dirk Bakker has also played in part in getting the *Atelier Reflexe* known among collectors, some of whom the *Atelier Reflexe* kept privileged relationships with during its' entire adventure. Impassioned collectors, talent scouts – their reliable support shows a desire to belong and an acute awareness of a history of art currently unfolding.

Starting from the end of 1999, Antoine d'Agata's interventions in the *Atelier Reflexe* as well as meetings with other photographers like Anders Petersen or Michael Ackerman show a great closeness with the *Galerie Vu'*. Some students are sent there for internships (and later at *Magnum's*) while others are directed towards the Atelier Reflexe, such as the photographer Sophie Carlier, advised by Antoine d'Agatha. Mat Jacob, a photographer invited to take part in the project *EU Women* in 2006-2007, helps create a link with *Tendance Flou* based in Montreuil.

 $^{^{43}\} https://www.lemon\underline{de.fr/photo/article/2018/07/02/les-rencontres-d-arles-version-chapacan_5324745_4789037.html$

The first institutional support was a decisive driving force to widen the network of partners and field of action of the *Atelier Reflexe*. Helped by her friend Clothilde Walenne and encouraged by her Austrian partners from Fotohof who already supported her personal work, Véronique Bourgoin obtained a grant in 2003 for the project *Ex.In*, given by the program *Culture 2000 (Europe Créative)*, then in 2006 for the project *EU Women* and in 2009 for the project *True or False?*.

The European aspect of the Atelier Reflexe's activities was a solid basis to meet the requirements of wide-ranging projects of multicultural cooperation, mobility, transmission and creation supported by the European Commission. The strong concepts of each project, echoing current events, resonated with new partners in Europe but also internationally. While Ex.In stayed focused on exchanges between France, Berlin and Austria with one exhibition in Barcelona in the Gallery Maeght, EU Women resonated in Europe and internationally among many partners and festivals such as the International Festival of the Photography of Lodz in Poland, the New York Photo Festival, Dumbo, Brooklyn, the Photo Biennial Thessalonique in Greece or, for another project on the polaroid Magic Trick, with Caochangdi Photospring. This networking also extends its' branches to institutions like the Centro Andaluz de la Fotografia, Almeria in Spain or the art center Tütün Deposu Ek Bina of the philanthropist Osman Kavala, in Istanbul in Turkey. The last project, True or False?, best illustrates the size of the Atelier Reflexe's network through its' many workshops with the international partners already mentioned and new ones such as ISSP in Latvia or Ifsak in Turkey, but also through a partnership with many institutional structures in France like the Popular House and Urgent Capsized in Montreuil or Le Bal in the 18th arrondissement of Paris, in which the conferences program takes place and which lent a flat for meetings with the participants. Staged by Véronique Bourgoin, these expositions mix installations, performances and photographs. They were showcased in galleries of contemporary art such as the gallery Gaby Seen (Austria), 8th Salon in Hamburg (Germany) or institutions like the Netherland Fotomuseum (Netherlands) and the Centre Tignous of Contemporary Art of Montreuil (France).

Véronique Bourgoin concluded the Atelier Reflexe in 2016, with a masterclass Addiction à $l'\alpha uvre^{44}$ which was directed by the American filmmaker Abel Ferrara in

⁴⁴ Translator's note: this is a pun on "Addiction at work" and "addicted to the work of art".

partnership with the Marseillaise association *Dfilms*, the School of Fine Arts in Paris, the *Louvre*, the *Mélies*...⁴⁵ The last workshop, which for Bourgoin was rather an artistic gesture, was free for the participants. This workshop ended with the realization of an installation with the participants' works, created as a sort of labyrinth at the Théâtre des Roches⁴⁶, a utopian island in the middle of the suburbs, reminiscent of the building set up from Ferrara's film *Gogo Hotel*.

Experiences and transmissions

Crossing mediums, *The Atelier Reflexe* brought together people from different backgrounds to participate, whether speakers or participants. *The Atelier Reflexe* strove to allow all those who are eager and passionate to push the limits of creation and explore the medium of photography.

Some Workshop participants were involved for many years in the management of *The Atelier Reflexe* projects, such as Margot Wallard, Bourgoin's assistant between 2001 and 2008. In 2012, Margot Wallard founded her own photography school with JH Engström: the *Atelier Smesby*⁴⁷, located since 2017 in Montreuil. Stéfanie Gattlen, a friend, performer and model for Bourgoin's film and photography projects was Bourgoin's assistant between 2008 and 2016. She's been working since 2018 for the collector and ancient books seller Alain Sinibaldi. Josquin Gouilly-Frossard was Juli Susin and Véronique Bourgoin's assistant on many projects between 2010 and 2014, as well as Yanis Houssen also regularly assisted them for the sites and graphic works.

A number of former students have obtained, through their work as artists and photographers, recognition in France or abroad: Margot Wallard, Annegien van Doorn, Mathieu Saura - aka Vincent Moon, Suzanna Pozzoli, Josquin Gouilly-Frossard, Michael Eveno aka - Grems Super Micro, Michael Duperrin, Sophie Carlier, Christine Bréchemier, Silva Bingaz, Julian Baron, Milou Abel, and others.

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⁴⁵ This last workshop was carried out for the film festival *Addiction à l'œuvre* led by the Marseillaise association *Dfilms*. https://addiction-project.com/

⁴⁶ Place where the École de Théâtre de Montreuil (TEM) flourished for several decades, notably with the work of Jean Guerrin, director of TEM for thirty-five years until his death in 2012, who pursued a mode of theatre which has always sustained its link "with the life of the people of the city".

https://www.atelier-smedsby.com/

Archives and resources

The Atelier Reflexe's archives gathered more than twenty years of experience and show the precursor and innovative aspect of its' activity. They reflect a radical commitment to contemporary photography and a collective and supportive dynamic which stayed true through time as it spread across an international network. The sheer scope of the projects accomplished, the unique quality of the works realized, the originality of the exhibitions and editions have left a large volume of more than 4000 items gathering photographs, documents, films and artefacts. These archives are aesthetic, physical, theoretical and educational answers to the mutations of an image and of picture taking. They are a resource center – a research tool and a study topic – to question the complexity of physical, historical, social, geographical and technological transformations related to the stakes of our time.

This resource represents the living history of *The Atelier Reflexe*, that of an audacious and groundbreaking education which lived through millennia. The inventory of these archives has been made so that it would be available for future generations through an acquisition by an institution.

In 2016, the full collection of the *Atelier Reflexe* editions have been acquired by the *Kandinsky Library* of Beaubourg, in Paris.

Direction: Véronique Bourgoin, FR and Juli Susin, RU (from 1994 to 2001)

Executive assistant: Margot Wallard, FR (2002 - 2008), Stéfanie Gattlen, CH, (2009 - 2016)

Coordinator: 2002-2007: Clothilde Walenne *Partner:* Jean-Louis Leibovitch, FR (1998-2004)

Co-editors: Dirk Bakker, NL, (1996-2013), Fotohof, AT (2004, 2007 and 2013), Royal Book

Lodge (1996 - 2013)

Participants between 1995 and 2016:

Participants entre 1995 et 2016: Milou Abel NL, Guillermina Ackerman AR, Bogdan Adrian RO, Begüm Alaybeyoglu TR, Michel Alfonso FR, Guilhem Amesland FR, David Ameye FR, Christine André FR, Barni Andreas Huber AT, Maria Aya ES, Julian Baron ES, Flore Baudelot FR, Ulrike Baumann DE, Agnès Belbezet FR, Rose Benbouaou Warda DZ, Silva Bingaz TR, Didier Bodelot FR, Louise Boghossian FR, Nicolas Boisseau FR, Manuela Böhme DE, Neva Bonachera FR, Karine Bonjour FR, Marguerite Bourgoin FR, Christine Bréchemier FR, Kaspars Breidaks LV, Thomas Brizard FR, Thomas Brosset FR, Dariana Bucur RO, Sophie Carlier FR, Valentine Carlier FR, Lilas Carpentier FR, Constance Chambersfarah FR, Laeticia Chauvin FR, Gaëtan Chevrier FR, Julia Collaro FR, Jérôme Corgier FR, Etienne Cottereau FR, Margherita

Crocco IT, Ysabelle Daniel FR, Vanessa Deflache ! FR, Nicolas Delbard FR, Annegien Van Doorn NL, Laure Dreau FR, France Dubois FR, Sylvain Duffard FR, Michael Duperrin FR, Philippe Dürr FR, Inga Erdmane NL, Michael Eveno (Grems supermicro) FR, Laïla Escartin Hamarinen ES, Marie Eschenbrenner FR, Pauline Fargue FR, Faustine Ferhmin FR, Bernhard Füreder AT, Séfanie Gattlen CH, Alexandre Garrabos FR, Elodie Gay FR, Philippe Gerlach AT, Josquin Gouilly-Frossard FR, Anila Gill FR, Thomas Glänzel AT, Katinka Goldberg NO, Evita Goze LV, Ruben Garcia Gomez ES, Rodrigo Gomez-Reina ES, Victor Gomez PT, Dana Grigore FR-RO, Benoit Gros FR, Claude Grunspan AT, Elodie Guignard FR, German Gutiérrez ES, Nicolas Haro F. Cordoba ES, Aurélie Heck DE, Anders Hellfeldt SE, Mona Hermann AT, Charlotte Hjorth-Rohde DK, Yanis Houssen FR, Nadira Hussein IR, Max Iglesias ES, Mirona Ioana Tatu RO, Valérie Jaudon FR, Frédérique Jousse FR, Kumral Kepkep TR, Janis Klimanovs LV, Bernhard Koller FR, Dimitris Koromilas GR, Quang Lama VN, Nanda Lavaquarie DK, Hélène Le Gac FR, Ghislaine Léger FR, Thomas Léonard FR, Julien Leslé FR, Pierre-André Lestocart FR, Michel Lièvre FR, Frederik Linander AT, Elias Linden SE, Anita Ljung Oden NL, Raymond Loewenthal FR, Valérie Loron FR, Marine Luszpinski FR, Kazué Makimura JP, Frédéric Margot FR, Christophe Marcel FR, Chryssoula Mamoglou GR, Léo Mauger FR, Christopher Mavric AT, Myriam Mazières FR, Tamara Mc Koy US, Sophie Meingassner AT, Julia Mejnertsen DK, Catherine Merdy FR, Silvia Micheli IT, Marketa Michalkova CZ, Martina Mikulka CZ, Julien Monténéro FR, Dominique Moreau FR, Efthimis Mouratidis GR, Petra Mühlmann AT, Francis Munka HU, Tomas Murube ES, Rieko Nakamura JP, Bjargey Olafsdottir IS, Tato Olivas ES, Christina Papafragou GR, Constantin Paschou FR, Alexandra Pazgu RO, Marine Petit FR, Florinela Petrescu RO, Thomas Poisson FR, Sophie Pölzl AT, Marius Popa RO, Susanna Pozzoli IT, Phila Primus CZ, Thanassis Raptis GR, Anne Rehbinder FR, Marjolijn Rijks NL, Birgit Rinagl! AT, Gaëlle Riou-Kerangal FR, Alexis Robin FR, Bénédicte Ronayette FR, Yvette Rotscheid FR, Gwénaelle Sachet FR, Ilke Sahin TR, Laeticia Sanchez ES, Marie-Hélène Sauner FR, Mathieu Saura FR, Olivier Schlegelmilch FR, Sandra Schmalz DE, Loïc Seguin FR, Natascha Siegert NO, Markus Sigl AT, Judith Stehlik AT, Jeanne Susin FR, Elif Temizer TR, Suzy Théobald FR, Laurence Théodoly FR, Thomas Thomell GR, Fumie Tokki JP, Sarah Toumayan FR, Çaglar Tozluoglu TR, Gamze Tozun TR, Vela Trajkovska SI, Jean-Guy Ubiergo FR, Esra Ural TR, Lisa Vapné RU, Yedra Vargas ES, Margot Wallard FR, Thilbauld Watripont FR, Nicole Weniger AT, Lee Wing Ki Cl, Hakan Yasar TR, Elif YilmazTR, Antoinette Zwirchmayr AT

Speakers between 1995 and 2016: May Irene Aasen NO, Michael Ackerman US, Antoine d'Agata FR, Michel et Michèle Auer CH, Sandy Amerio FR, Reza Azard FR/IR, Dirk Bakker NL, Evgen Bavcar SI, Linda Bilda AT, Henrich Berinson DE, Philippe Bérard FR, Jérémie Bonachera, FR, Fabrizio Bonachera R, Lazare Boghossian FR, Philippe Bourgoin FR, Philippe, Burin des Roziers FR, André Butzer DE, Adam Cohen USA, Rémy Comment FR, Emmanuelle Costantin FR, Katrina Daschne DE, Peter Dressler AT, Astrid Dupont-Fauville FR, J.H. Engström SE, R. Fabibi IT, Abel Ferrara US, Joan Fontcuberta ES, Gamlet & Bob Basset UA, Alberto Garcia Alix ES, Les Gelitin AT, Eric Giraud FR, Frits Gierstberg DE, Mona Hahn AT, Tobias Hauser DE, Alberto GarciacAlix ES, The Hole Garden EU, Frank Horstmann DE, Rainer Iglar AT, Mat Jacob FR, Alison Jackson UK, Libuse Jarcovjakova CZ, Bruce Kalberg US, Adolfo Kaminsky FR/ AR, Erik Kessels NL, Nina Korhonen FI, Friedl Kubelka AT, Charlet Kugel CZ, Lutz Kruger DE, Gilles Lacombe FR, Christophe Laloi FR, Jean-Pierre Lambert FR, Hélène Lamy-au-Rousseau BE, Patrick Lebescont FR, François Lecoq FR, Pascale Lecoq FR, Richard Lecoq FR, Jérôme Lefdup FR, Jochen Lempert DE, Jean-Louis Leibovitch FR, Jules Maeght FR, Dolorès Marat FR, Giorgio

Maria Pauen DE, Marion Meyer DE, Boris Mikhaïlov RU, Monika Michakova CZ, Guttorm Nordo NO, Roberto Ohrt DE, Ursula Panhaus-Bülher DE, Anders Petersen SE, Marc Räder DE, Karima Rekhamdji FR, Dick Rooster GB, Hubert Saupert AT, Gianfranco Sanguinetti IT, Martin Scorsese US, Deborah Schamoni DE, Albano Silva Pereira PT, Anatoli Susin RU, Nicola Torke DE, Fethi Traore DZ, Bastiaan Van der Velden NL, Maria Ziegelboeck AT

Partners between 1995 and 2016: France: Les Roches (Montreuil), Le Melies (Montreuil), Le 116 (Montreuil), Instants Chavirés (Montreuil), Maison Populaire (Montreuil), Le Snark (Montreuil), Chez Higgins (Montreuil), La Guillotine (Montreuil), Lumière des Roses (Montreuil), Les Démons (Montreuil / Bagnolet), Le Cinoche (Bagnolet), Eric Dahyot (Aincourt) ENSBA (Paris), the Louvre (Paris), Musée de la vie Romantique (Paris), Artists Book International (Paris), Le Bal (Paris), Francis Fichot (Paris), Galerie Florence Loewy (Paris), Un livre une image (Paris), Galerie Marion and Eva Meyer (Paris), Atelier du LEM / Ecole Jacques Lecoq (Paris), Clam Magazine (Paris), Yola Noujaim (Paris), Movistone (Paris), Inedit sound (Paris), Jean-Pierre Lambert (Paris), A la librairie (Paris), Ecole Neuville (Paris), Plug Arts (Paris), Filigranes (Paris), dfilms (Marseille), CIPM & Vieille Charité (Marseille), Atelier de Visu (Marseille), Horizon (Marseille), Backstage (Ensues), Keraunos (Fontarêche), Point de Vue Gallery (Arles), Bookshop Au fil du temps (Arles), Laure Otherwise (Arles), Voies Off (Arles), Nissan (France) - Germany: Isotrop (Hamburg), Niklas Schechinger Fine Art (Hamburg), Raum linksrechts (Hamburg), Loge (Hamburg), Support Agentur (Berlin), Art Semens Club (Hamburg), Galerie Marion Meyer (Cologne / Paris), Smozeck Polichek (Berlin) - Austria: Fotohof (Salzburg), Gartengasse (Vienna), Esteban (Vienna), Galerie Gaby Senn (Vienna), Rema Print (Vienna), Ventilazione (Vienna) - Belgium: H.Lamy in Rousseau (Brussels), Abilene (Brussels) - Greece: Photography Biennial (Thessaloniki), Kalamitsi Foundation (Athens), French Institute of Thessaloniki (Thessaloniki), Thessaloniki Museum of Photography (Thessaloniki) - Spain: Centro Andaluz De La Fotografia (Almeria), Le Hangar (Barcelona), Galerie Maeght (Barcelona) - Italy: Fagiolino (Tuscany) - Ireland: Chlotilde Walenne (Dublin) -Latvia: Alliance Française (Riga), ISSP (Ludza) - Norway: El Djarida (Oslo) - Netherlands: Dirk Bakker Boeken (Amsterdam), Netherland Foto Museum, (Rotterdam), Kessels Kramer (Amsterdam) Portugal: Encontros Fotografica (Coimbra), Contentores / P28 (Lisbon) - Czech Republic: Agence Editoriale Internationale (Prague), The School for Photographic Studies (Prague), Suzanne Pastor (Prague) - Romania: Sibiu Arterapie (Sibiu), Fotoclub Orizont (Sibiu), University of Film and Photography of Götteborg Switzerland: Auer photo Foundation (Hermance) - Turkey: Tutün Deposu Ek bina (Istanbul), IFSAK (Istanbul) - China: Caochangdi Photospring (Pekin), Art Channel Gallery (Pekin) - USA: Ewa Worcjack (Los Angeles), Ideal Glass Gallery (New York)

Project support between 2003 and 2016: Montreuil Town Hall, Département de la Seine-Saint-Denis Council, Région Ile-de-France Council, French Institute, European Commission (Culture 2000/ Europe créative).

Some links:

Atelier Reflexe: http://www.atelier-reflexe.org/

Royal Book Lodge: http://www.royalbooklodge.com/en

'True or False?': http://vraioufaux.name/

EU Women: http://fabriquedesillusions.com/Eu%20women.html

'Addiction at work': https://addiction-project.com/

Fabrique des Illusions: http://fabriquedesillusions.com/

Juli Susin: http://magnetriver.com/