



RUIZ STEPHINSON PLASTIC CONDITIONED

EXPOSITION 5 -25 SEPTEMBRE
EXHIBITION SEPTEMBER 5-25

Desktop wallpapers like postcards, detox tourism, and cut-price spirituality. For certain people, such as Michel Houellebecq in *Platform*, it is sexual tourism that interests them; in this, Coralie Ruiz and Anthony Stephinson's second exhibition at Gallery Nuke, however, it is spiritual tourism that is called into question.

Amongst the many options offered to Westerners in the summer break, there is but one that can give you every last joy: the detox retreat, cleansing you of all the hard work of the year gone by. An all-inclusive week of interior well-being. A complete package: a guaranteed return to happiness, with the aroma of jasmine tea, and an opening of your chakras. And when you return: one year of certified spirituality. When the world is proving too much for you, spirituality is there, through a course in tantric yoga or even qi-gong. Many ancient and exotic practices are on offer, appropriated for the West. Though the two artists seem focused on this phenomenon, it is above all the human condition that they call into question in the work. Here, spirituality is a way of escaping the machinations of society.

Today, spirituality is sold in newspaper kiosks, where you can pick up a colouring book of mandalas, the soothing act of colouring them enabling you to find inner serenity. During the summer, Coralie Ruiz and Anthony Stephinson engaged themselves in this practice, initially introduced in Europe by Carl Gustav Jung. For the psychoanalyst, the mandala assumed a fundamental importance, enabling us to connect with our inner selves. Even today, many psychoanalysts see mandalas as a way of finding a path towards the self. But it was also the democratic and accessible nature of the act that drew these artists to it. You don't need money or know-how to achieve these results.

In this exhibition, the coloured-in mandalas are scanned, enlarged, and printed on vinyl mounted on reconstituted wooden panels enveloped by a fine layer of plastic. They are both protected and constrained - mandalas under cellophane or the human condition wrapped in plastic - their cyclical forms, both open and closed at the same time, are echoed in the modernist towers that form a field of trees at the exhibition's entrance. Posters, placed in front of the mandalas, become the works' titles, handwritten elements sitting on backdrops of paradisiacal landscapes. The titles becoming works in themselves that can be taken away.

From public space, open to all, to more private, spiritual space, the exhibition maneuvers around and reveals the vestiges of spirituality and the different forms of the human condition in Western society. Though it seems to question, it does not say that everything is inevitable. Spirituality chewed up and spit out by capitalism? The question remains unanswered. But it is there that the work of Ruiz Stephinson can be found. In this strange blurred vision, it is no longer a question of expressing your doubts, but more so of beginning to believe.

Text by Marion Vasseur Raluy