

ARTFORUM

Guy de Cointet

JUMEX FOUNDATION

Vía Morelos 272, Colonia Santa María Tulpetlac

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A potential game changer, this solo survey of Guy de Cointet presents a rare opportunity to comprehensively consider the French artist's graphic production. Active in the Los Angeles art scene during the 1970s and early '80s, de Cointet, who passed away in 1983 at the age of forty-nine, has recently experienced a resurgence of interest, primarily for his theatrical works and the sculptural stage sets, which have always struck this writer as little more than charming semiotic artifacts of the era. "Tempo Rubato" tips the balance, however, toward something more sustainable by featuring more than forty works on paper, alongside the stage set from *Iglú*, 1977, videos and photographs of his theatrical works, and books and related ephemera.

These highly graphic works revolve around the encryption of language and fragmented, nonlinear narrative. Incomplete phrases, often culled from the books of the experimental French writer Raymond Roussel are exquisitely crafted predominantly in ink on paper, in modes variously reminiscent of corporate advertising of the time, wonky board-game patterns, a disco-fied cuneiform, and a backward cursive so elaborate as to resemble a Semitic language. Although pre-Colombian codices are an oft-cited influence, the work inevitably brings to mind Leonardo's penchant for reverse writing, while evoking an unexpectedly pleasant marriage of the graphic cool of Ed Ruscha and the literary, non-sequitur playfulness of Joe Brainard. Stretched beyond the limits of legibility, language in this exhibition enjoys a peculiarly Mallarmean pictorial virtuosity that feels as fresh as the day it was originally depicted.

— Chris Sharp



View of "Guy de Cointet - Tempo Rubato," 2013.

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