

GUY DE COINETET

JUMEX FOUNDATION / COLLECTION - MEXICO CITY

Guy de Cointet (1934-1983) was a French-born artist, based in California, who explored the links between language, narrative, representation and performance. His first museum retrospective, held at MAMCO in Geneva in 2004, was curated by Marie de Brugerolle. "Tempo Rubato," curated by Magali Arriola, includes 55 pieces and is the first solo exhibition of the artist's work ever mounted in Mexico.

De Cointet dislodged the immovable meanings that we usually give to language or visual signs in everyday life. To this end he made publications, coded drawings, prints, paintings and theatrical monologues that lack a narrative plot. Once redefined, language and signs are used as objectified scenic props. Rather than a chronological retrospective, the exhibition is an invitation to establish random connections between its various references to fashion, advertising, everyday conversations and even Mexican radio soap operas.

De Cointet developed his work in Los Angeles surrounded by like-minded artists such as John Baldessari, Paul McCarthy and Mike Kelley — creators who were never considered

a movement or group as such. A small room organized by Arriola with the work of other L.A. artists — including Allen Ruppersberg, Bas Jan Ader and Jack Goldstein — becomes a footnote in the contextualization of de Cointet. This approach similarly suggests that the dismantling of media images and signs that we associate with the Pictures Generation prompted by Douglas Crimp (Goldstein, Prince, Sherman, Levine, et al.) is actually a complex cultural phenomenon that elides any categorization by group.

Unfortunately, like the recent first retrospective of Ernesto Neto held at MARCO in Monterrey, this exhibition of Guy de Cointet won't travel to any European or North American institution, thus diluting its global interaction; still, the show is a curatorial project with a strong potential for intercultural dialogue abroad, particularly in light of the increasing relevance of de Cointet's oeuvre to contemporary art practice.

Eduardo Egea



GUY DE COINETET and ROBERT WILHITE, *Iglú (detail)*, 1977.
Mixed media, dimension variable. Courtesy Air de Paris, Paris.
Photo: Marc Damage.