

Special Edition

ART

H A B E N S

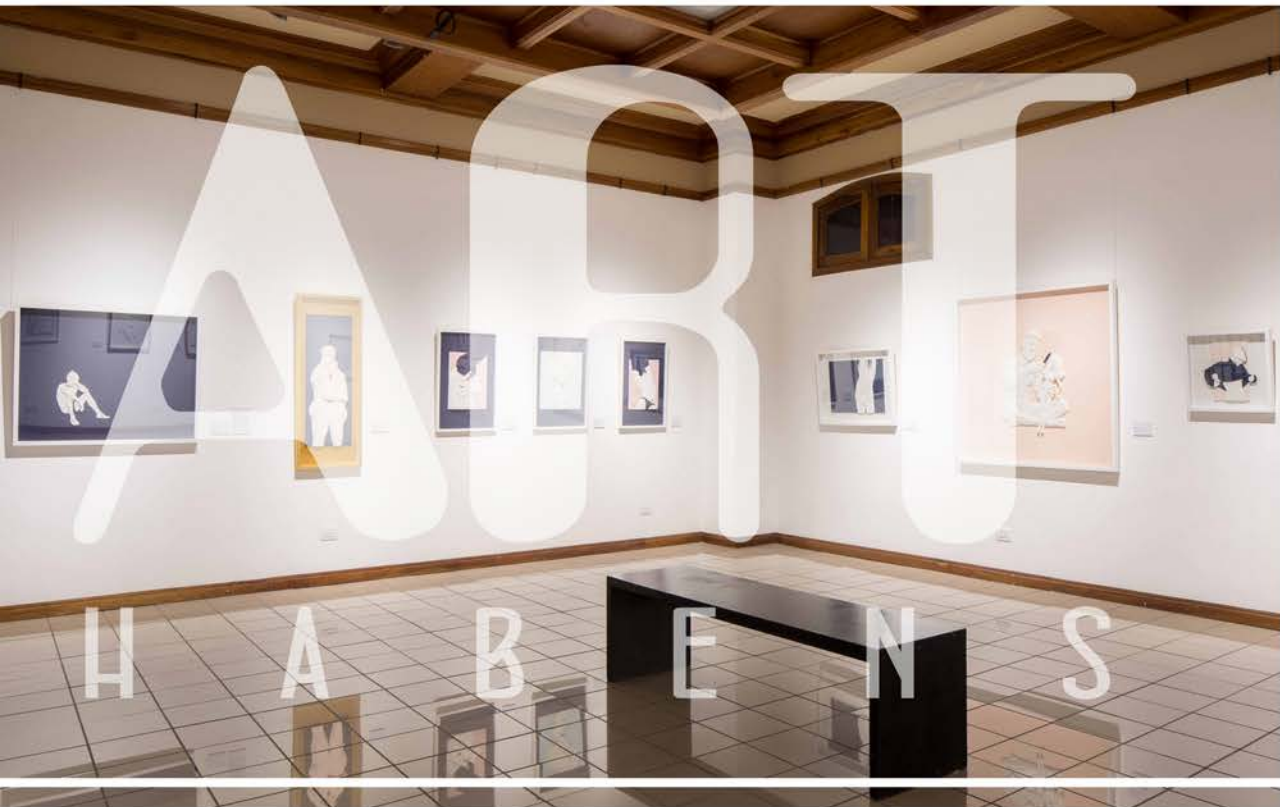
CONTEMPORARY ART REVIEW

ZITA VILUTYTE
STEPHEN L. MAULDIN
YE CHAN CHEONG
JASPER GALLOWAY
ALEJANDRO RAMBAR
CLARA LARATTA
BRIGITTE AMARGER
MUYUAN HE
AZERI AGHAYEVA

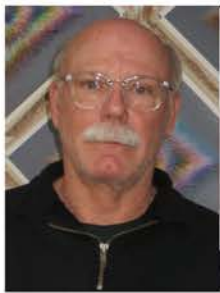
ART
Contemporary Art Press

Homo Algorithmus, a work by Brigitte Amarger

*Installation of 45 bodies for Biennale Hors Normes "Le jour d'après"
and conference "De la cellule au savoir"*



CONTEMPORARY ART REVIEW



Stephen L. Mauldin

USA

From the day I stepped out of undergraduate school in 1974 until the present day, I have always worked almost exclusively with acrylic on canvas, or occasionally on masonite or paper. I have always worked using unconventional methods, as well. This has not been for purposes of being different's sake, but in order to express what I want (need?) to express. Somehow, applying paint to canvas with a brush has never been adequate to express what I want to express.



Brigitte Amarger

France

I create mural or sculptural achievements, interior and in situ installations that explore themes of nature, light, memory and human being.

My practice includes textile and numerical techniques, laser cutting and engraving, photography, painting. I work predominantly with the mediums of medical imagery, handmade paper, hot glue, textile, luminescent and reflective materials.

These last years, I wonder about the traces left by time, engraving in filigree texts or laces on X Ray film and paper.



Alejandro Rambar

Costa Rica

Ale Rambar is a Costa Rican artist who's work is based on the topographic analysis of the human form through three dimensional compositions made with layers of paper. Rambar's pieces are created by analyzing human bodies topographically, just like a topographer would analyze mountains, valleys or rivers. Each piece is cut separately, layer by layer and then assembled by hand to create "human topographies". This technique was developed by Rambar throughout his career as an architect.



Jasper Galloway

France

I feel we all perceive things differently, a colour, a sound, an object.

She wont fly was me initially experimenting with different tools, with the object of manipulating the paint and making patterns, lines in it.

Some might see a bird in the composition, some might see just blocks of colour but some will hopefully see something completely different, that's the beauty of art, it touches us all in different ways.



Ye Chan Cheong

South Korea

I am fascinated with colour, with the diverse and rich history of how colours can be spiritual and symbolic but also how they came to have commercial names.

For me a colour can be meditative in the same way a bible story can be.

Using magazines was a way to bring both of these aspects together to visualize colours on different backgrounds of colour, shape, hue and tone. By applying each colour in diverse locations I hope to find a harmonious space.



Zita Vilutyte

Lithuania

We are going through a very exciting, broad and fundamental time of transformation, where everything is changing, from lifestyle to technology. Although it is a time of great opportunities, it is still full of dangers. Now is the moment when we have to make a decision and become responsible for our own lives, and not just for our own, but for our live in general. For thoughts, words, every action and everything we do. To think that changes in the consciousness of all mankind will be easy and fast is a utopia. But those who realize - they must act. Where is the artist's place in this period of changes? Being an artist in today's world requires a lot of effort.



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Azeri Aghayeva

United Kingdom

'Residue of the Unspoken' records the intimate moment where objects meet at one point, a bedside table; objects whom outside this point hold their own identity but here and only here form the information of a moment, immortalised into a picture, like a 'visual encyclopaedia of everyday life' (Marianne Dobner).

When removed from their original setting the relationship between the objects with one another become peculiar, and one begins to wonder how they met, though we know their relationship is merely a result of a man who drove them together. Their relationship seems so peculiar yet is so real for a moment.

Clara Laratta

Canada

Clara Laratta received her BFA from McMaster University, where she graduated with distinction, specializing in photography and printmaking. Recent solo exhibitions include *Relational Affects*, Rotunda Gallery, Kitchener, ON, *Unleashed*, Gallery 4, Hamilton, ON and *Liminality*, O Gallery, Kitchener, ON. Recent group exhibitions include *Dying*, Toronto, ON, *A Book About Death: The Last Waltz*, Islip, NY, and *Manthan: Exhibition of Prints*, Kala Srot Art Gallery, Lucknow, India. She participated in *Residencies and artist talks in Chelsea*, Quebec (Biophony), Toronto, ON (*Awakening*, Artscape Gibraltar Point), Dundas, ON (DVSA).

Muyuan He

United Kingdom

I am a researcher and educator based in New York City. My work focuses on improving people's learning experience through fun activities. Growing up in an urban city in China, I learned how daily products can make an educational impact. By folding garbage boxes out of old junk mail to collect fish bones at the dining table, I unconsciously learned the basics of paper engineering. Meanwhile, I was also learning Chinese characters, mathematics and English grammar through memorization, repetition and examination at school. The curiosity for alternative schooling has grown in my mind.

Brigitte Amarger

Lives and works in France

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My practice includes textile and numerical techniques, laser cutting and engraving, photography, painting. I work predominantly with the mediums of medical imagery, handmade paper, hot glue, textile, luminescent and reflective materials.

These last years, I wonder about the traces left by time, engraving in filigree texts or laces on X Ray film and paper.

Layered patterns project shadows and blur the line between reality and imagination, accentuated by the diaphanous and ghostly transparency that the material support delivers. This diversion of materials, and more particularly of the support of medical imagery for artistic purposes and memory ends, is essential for me.

Sensitive to ecological issues, I find in my artistic practice a double direction, highly symbolic: create artworks by recycling discarded materials.

Brigitte Amarger



Humanoids 2010. Installation for Fiberarts International, Each body: 84.6 x 25.6 inches. Bones, organs and prosth



Pittsburgh, USA.

Analysis X Rays and MRI pictures cut and gathered by sewing.



2019 Solo exhibition "D'Ame Nature", Carré d'Art, Montgeron, France

An interview with **Brigitte Amarger**

An interview by **Dario Rutigliano**, curator
and **Melissa C. Hilborn**, curator
arthabens.biennale@europe.com

Hello Brigitte and welcome to ART Habens. Before starting to elaborate about your artistic production we would like to invite our readers to visit <http://brigitteamarger.com> and we would start this interview with a couple of questions about your background. You have a solid formal training, and you graduated from the high art schools (ENSAAMA, ESAA) and the Art University of Paris, where you had the chance to study under the guidance of Robert Wogensky and Jacques Brachet: how did those formative years — as well as your following experience as an art teacher — influence your evolution as an artist?

Brigitte Amarger: From childhood I was passionate about drawing, photography, literature and I wanted to be a teacher.

As a student, I wanted to follow a double artistic training to understand crafts, art and design, find my way as an artist and acquire the maximum necessary knowledge for my teaching profession. Thus, I acquired a solid practical and technical knowledge in the higher schools of Applied Arts and followed theoretical courses, in art history, contemporary art and aesthetics at the Fine Arts University. Then, during the preparation of my professorship, an internship allowed me to discover a field that I associated with the “lady’s work” and which had never attracted me before, the one of textiles.



Brigitte Amarger

I went backwards and ... I had a real revelation for techniques, materials, textures, volume and space. I discovered the work of artists who were previously completely unknown to me and influenced

my early research. I started by making two large pieces, like a threads sculptor. I was asked to exhibit them, and that's how my artistic career started.

At the same time, I became a teacher in Visual Arts then in Applied Arts, and I had the happiness of becoming a mother. Three passions to manage at the same time, it is not easy, but it was a unique opportunity and a great adventure.

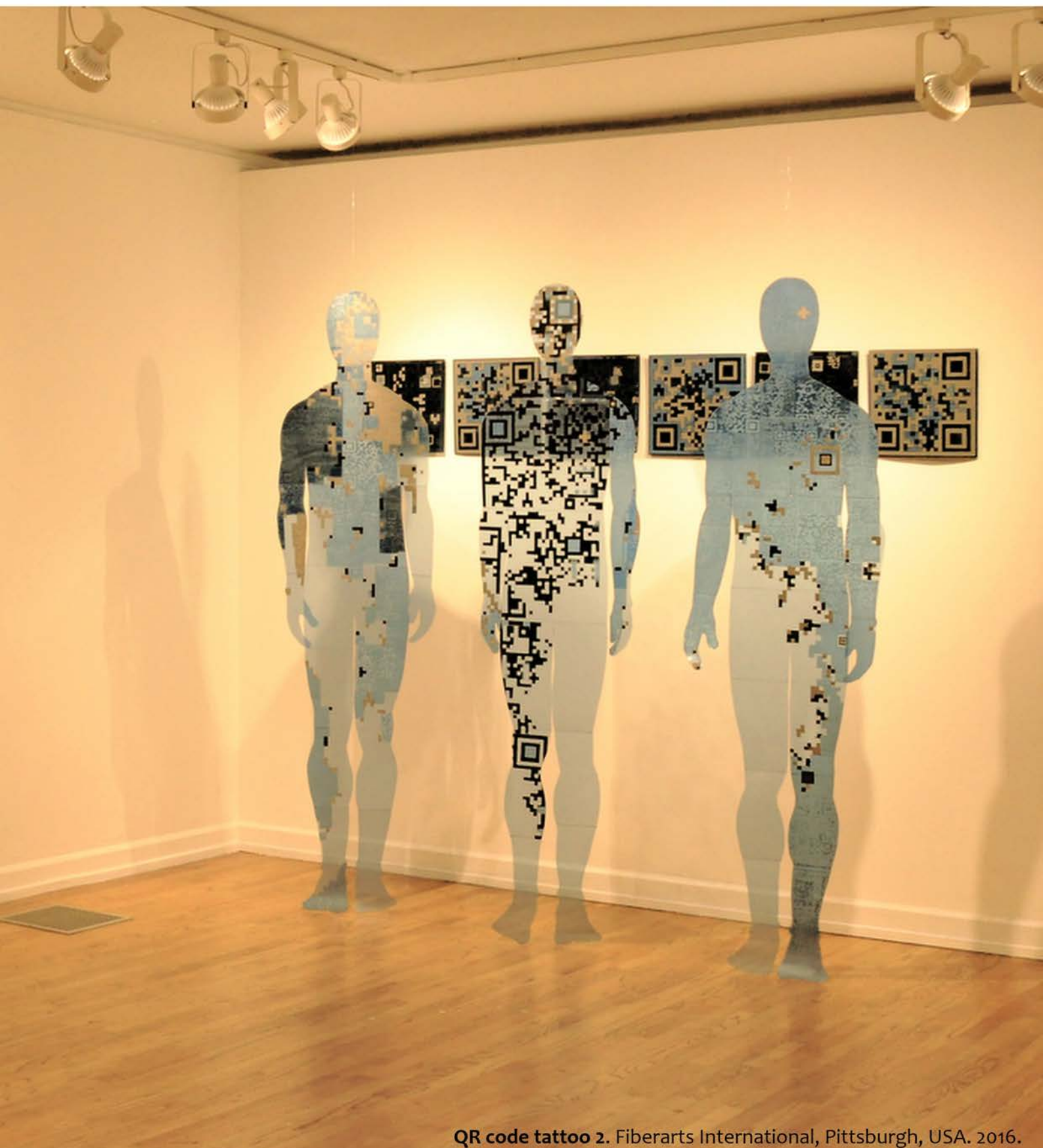
As a teacher, I was fortunate to teach what I practiced as an artist.

I have been able to make the link between traditional and contemporary techniques and I was led to test and practice new skills, often in self-training, and to be on technology watch to expand my artistic, practical and technical knowledge. It was also at that time that I recovered materials that were thrown away and looked for finding ways to re-use them with the students or for myself. All these approaches and experiences have been very enriching, influenced and complemented, to evolve as an artist and teacher.

Marked out with such unique visual identity, the body of works that we have selected for this special edition of ART Habens —and that our readers have already started to get to know in the introductory pages of this article — has at once captured our attention for the way you use your visual language in a strategic way to counter-balance subjectivity, offering an array of meanings. When

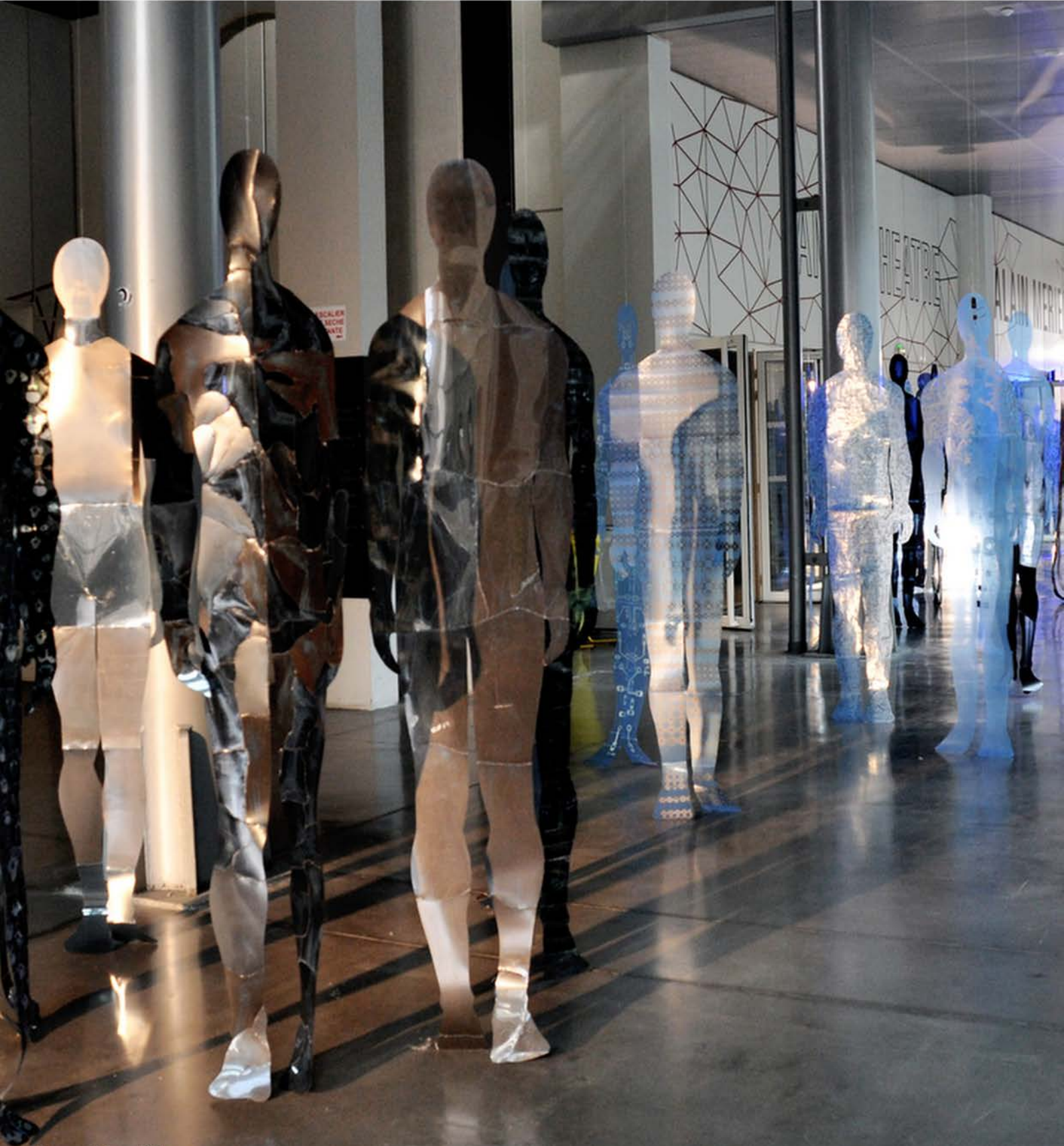


3 bodies, each: 84,6 x 25,6 in



QR code tattoo 2. Fiberarts International, Pittsburgh, USA. 2016.

ch and 6 squares, each: (13,7 x 13,7 inch). QR Code laser engraved and cut on X-Rays and reflective material; sewing.



Homo Algorithmus

Installation of 45 bodies for Biennale Hors Normes "Le jour d'après", UCL Lyon, France. 2019 and conference "De la



cellule au savoir”.

walking our readers through your usual setup and process, would you tell us how do you usually develop your initial idea for your artworks?

Brigitte Amarger: If my inspiration is related to a theme that touches me, I start by deepening my knowledge, looking for more information and visuals on the subject. I have a precise and structured idea at the start, and then develop the concept. As I am working, it sometimes evolves in such a way that it gives birth to new ideas or directions.

If a place is proposed to me for a personal exhibition, it is the space itself which will inspire me for a well-defined in situ installation, adapted to it, like, for example, for " D'âme Nature ", at the Carré d'Art in 2019.

Finally, the discovery of specific materials, whose qualities seduce and intrigue me, and which I can associate with particular techniques, gives me means of expression and inspires me.

My studio is a bit like a laboratory. I search, I test, I experiment, I discover, break boundaries, challenge myself to find solutions and appropriate material and technique. That's how I got to work with textile materials, paper, hot glue threads, porcelain, ceramics, X Rays and techniques such as tapestry, laser engraving and cutting, electronic textiles.

With their unique multilayered visual quality, accentuated by the diaphanous and ghostly transparency that the



"Homo Algorithmus" 2019 "Biennale Hors Normes" Lyon, France. 2019

Trash recovered medical imaging and electronic circuits. Perforated Jacquard lace cards. Reflective fabrics, threads. Patterns of electronic circuits, algorithm, coding laser cut and engraved.

material support delivers, your artworks walks the viewers through the liminal area where reality and imagination find such unexpected still consistent point of convergence. Scottish visual artist Peter Doig once remarked that even the most realistic paintings are derived more from within the head than from what's out there in front of us: how do you consider the relationship between reality and imagination, playing within your artistic process?

Brigitte Amarger: What are the boundaries between reality and the reality of oneself, in sensation, memory, and imagination? We shape our reality from past events, from our experiences and knowledge, from stored images, from their internalized and recombined fragments, to invent and express a perceived, dreamed, imagined personal vision.

It is often when I wake up that my ideas are born. I'm always amazed to see how a



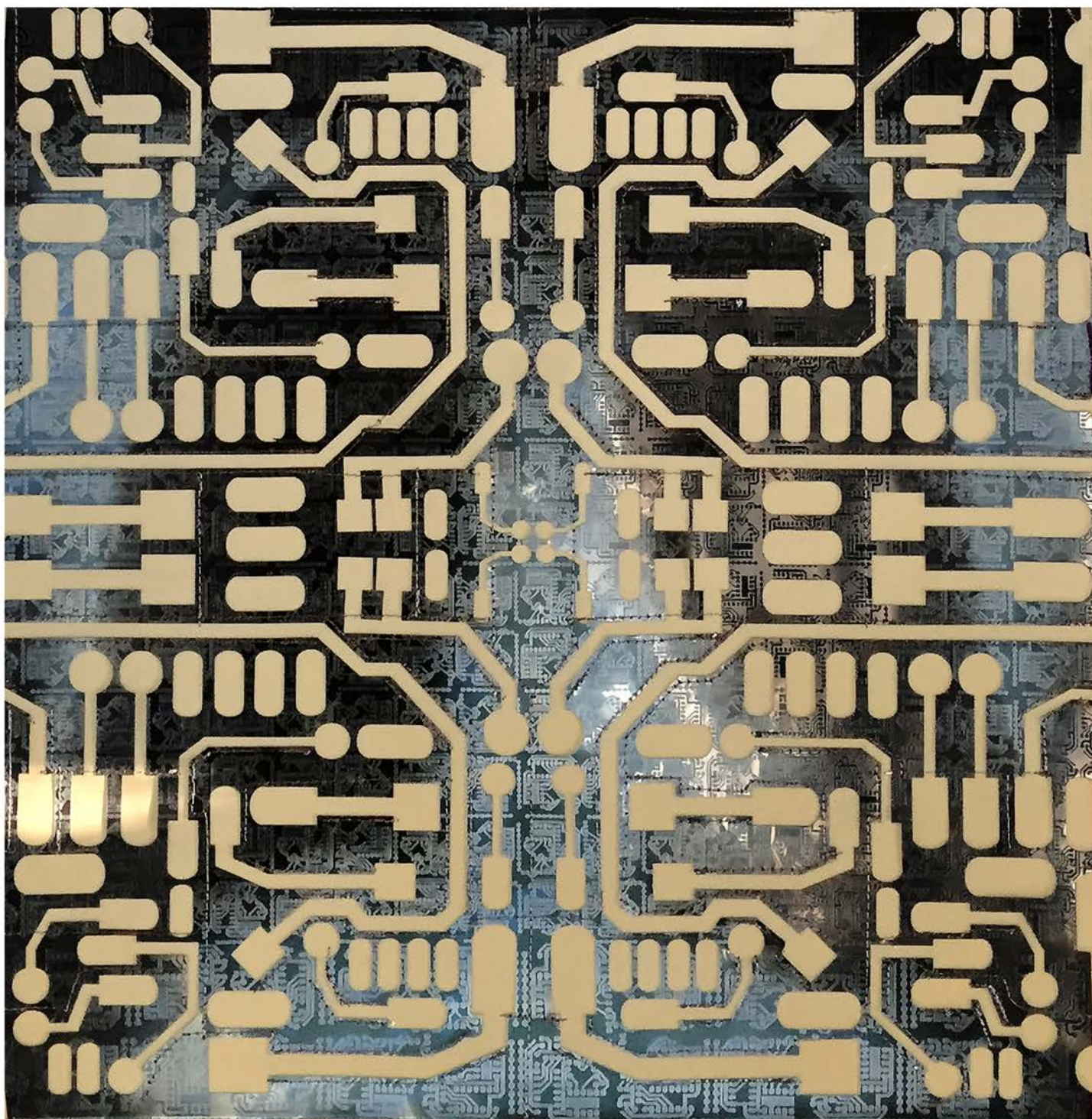
ds, laces. Electronic textiles , machine embroidery and wrapped threads.

project can suddenly arise, just like this, emerging from the unconscious, bringing out an unexpected and original thought, in a fraction of a second.

In a few minutes, I can see it precisely taking shape, developing with all its components, each element logically linking with another, each part of the whole assembling with evidence. Sometimes it is linked to a recent event, a subject that touches me, but other times it

is really the result of completely unexpected associations. Finally, I also sometimes want to deal with a specific subject and, in this case, spontaneity is not required. Then, it becomes a long series of researches, reflections, trials punctuated by failures and successes that brought the basic idea to mature and finalize the project.

Your artworks highlight contours of known reality in an unknown world and seem to



Homo Algorithmus, 2019

invite the viewers to look inside of what appear to be seen, rather than its surface, providing the spectatorship with freedom to realize their own perception. Austrian

Art historian Ernst Gombrich once remarked the importance of providing a space for the viewers to project onto: how important is for you to trigger the



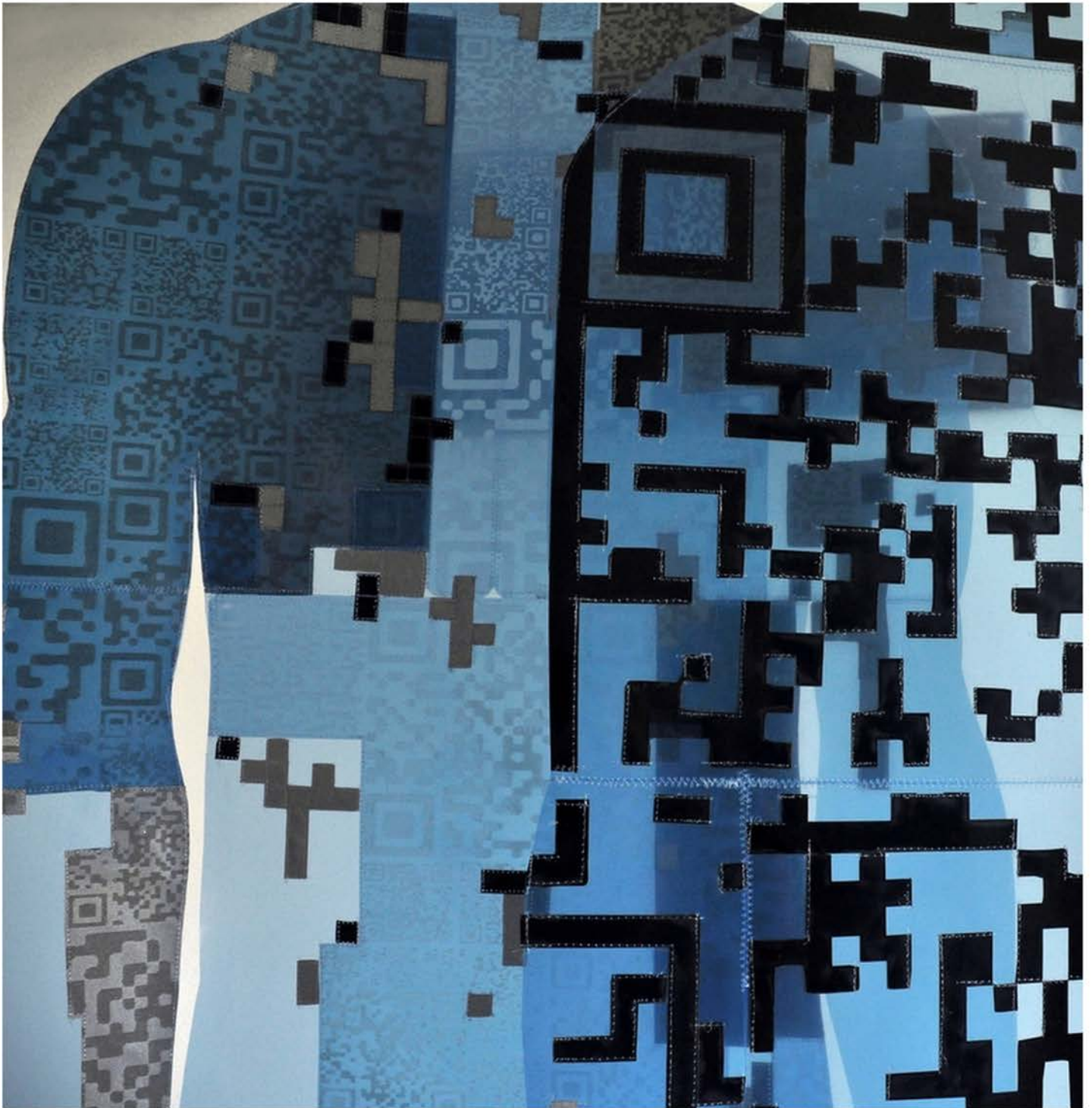
Homo Algorithmus, 2019

viewers' imagination in order to address them to elaborate personal interpretations?

In particular, how open would you like

your works to be understood?

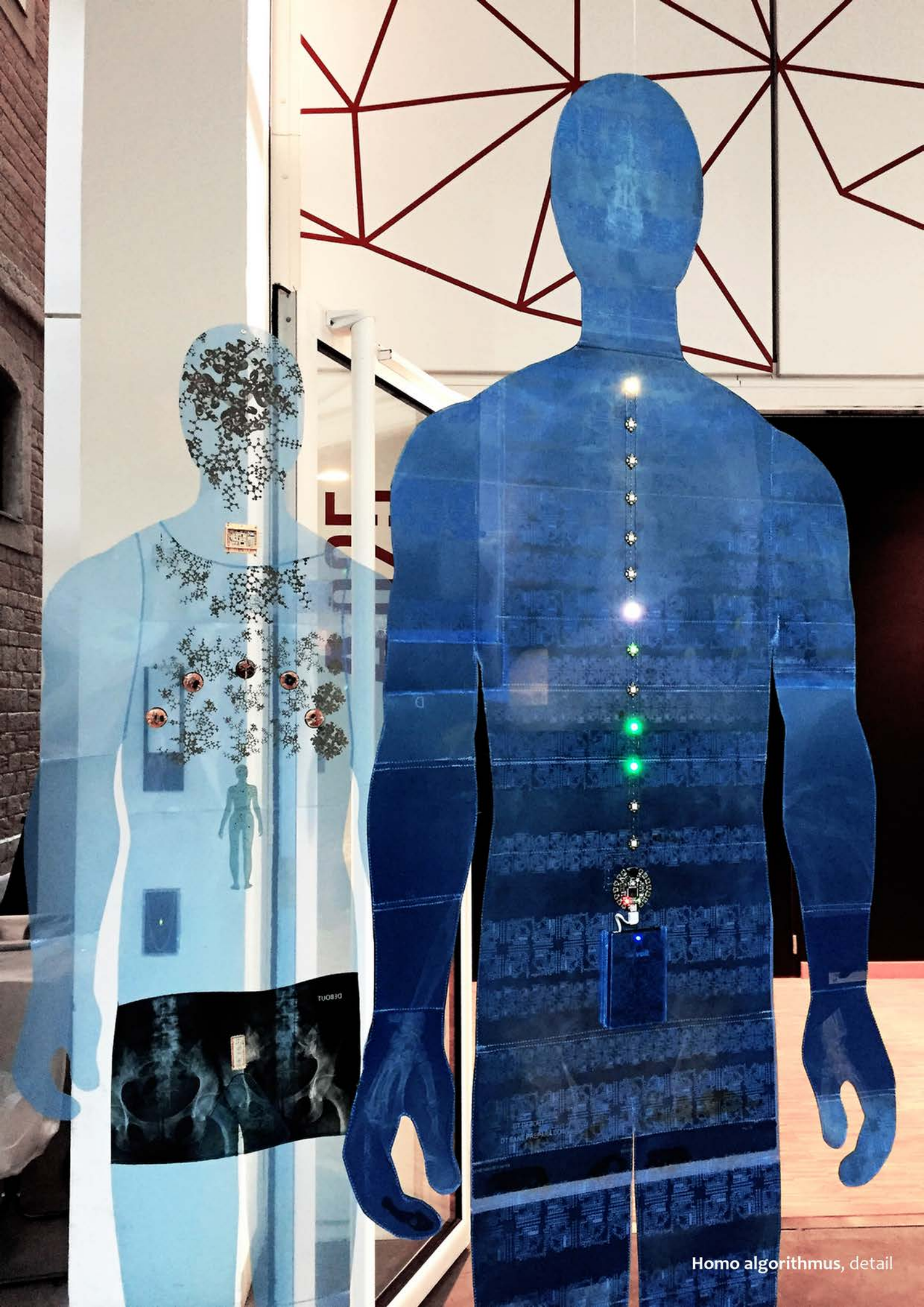
Brigitte Amarger: I like to play with ambiguity, illusion, surprise, dream, the



QR code tattoo 2, detail

intangible, the seen and the unseen, according to aesthetic or symbolic interpretations and meanings. The X Rays

support, by its transparency, calls to project itself inside the other and in oneself. It reveals an elusive border where



Homo algorithmus, detail



Dentelles à l'âme, installation for Arttextures, 2013

reality and imagination can mix. Also, the reflective and luminescent materials that play with light, day, under black light and at night, allow me to reveal a part of the invisible, revealing hidden layers and other readings of the work, like palimpsests.

I am very observant, paying attention to things that many people do not notice. I like to share the exciting jubilation of my discoveries, stimulate the imagination of others, and provoke both emotional and intellectual responses through my works. It also gives rise to interesting discussions with my viewers or listeners during exhibitions or conferences.

The fact of having been a teacher certainly explains my tendency to want to be clear and accessible in my intentions, also the pleasure that I have in informing, explaining the foundations of my thinking, analysis and approach.

However, spectators combine what they see with their own experience and emotions and the work remains open to a multiplicity of associations, interpretations, and unexpected meanings. I just want them to snatch the spirit of my work, that it is not just confined to passive observation but that it stimulates, asks questions, and engages dialogue.

With references to the imagery from technology, your works broaden the boundary of aesthetics, inviting your audience to capture beauty in everydayness. Mexican artist Gabriel Orozco once stated, "the artist's role differs depending on which part of the world you're in. It depends on the

political system you're living under": do you think that your artistic research respond to a particular cultural moment? Moreover, as an artist particularly sensitive to ecological issues, do you think that artists can raise awareness to an evergrowing audience on topical issues that affect our globalised and everchanging society?

Brigitte Amarger: Too often we speak of a dichotomy between arts and sciences, technique, between tradition and contemporary. Personally I have always been more in the union, the complementarity of the elements rather than in their division, their opposition. I started with traditional techniques like tapestry and photography that mix art and technique, and now I use new contemporary technologies. It all depends on what we do with it in the end, and nothing prevents us from perpetuating the traditions, in a contemporary vision and aesthetic, where arts and sciences can play together.

If there is an influence on my artistic research, I would say that it is societal one and not linked to a particular cultural moment. I am especially touched and concerned by problems related to the place, the role, behavior of the human being in our society and to the ecological issues which question me more and are my search engines.

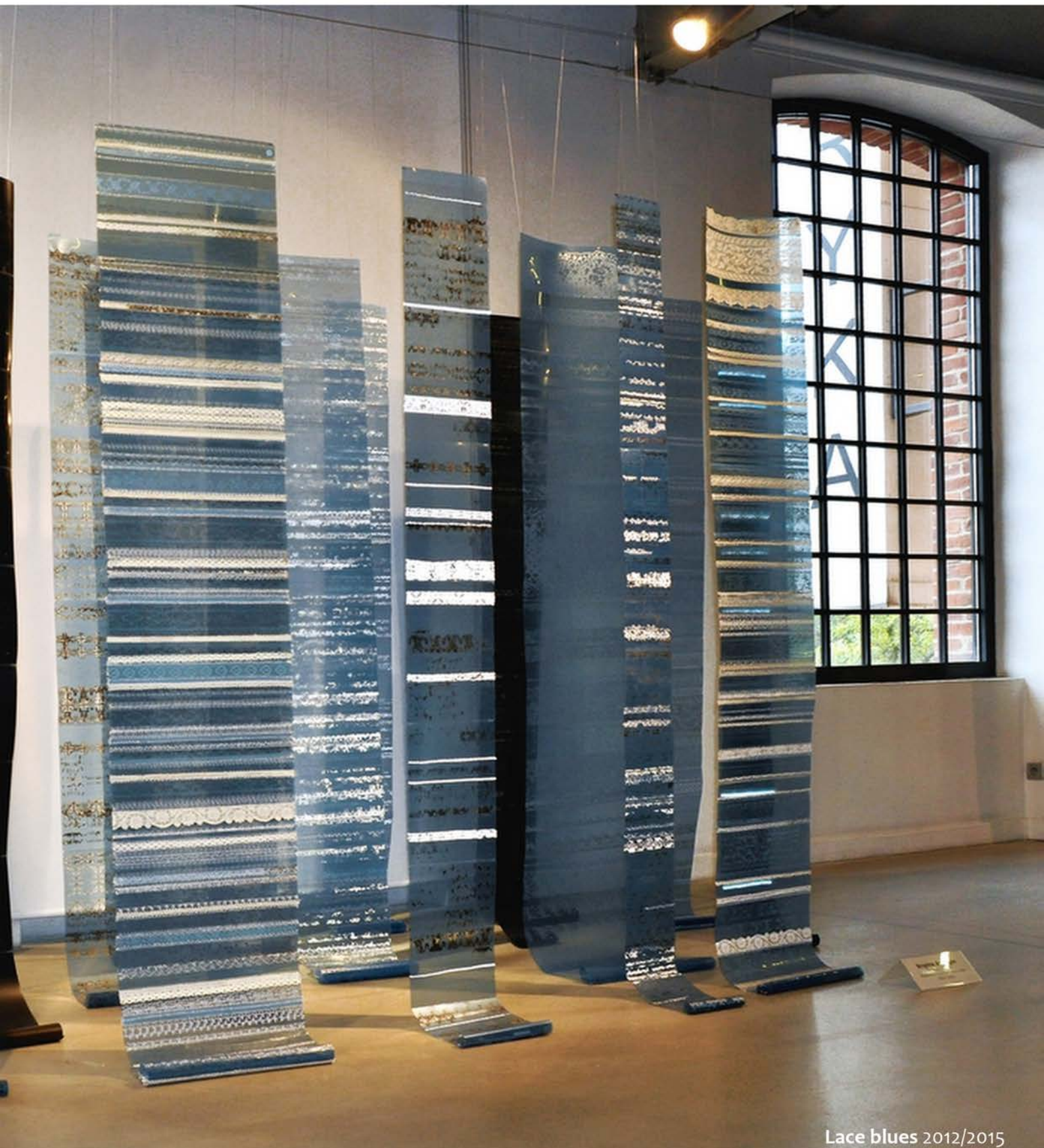
I have always worked on Nature, light, memory and writing. I approach these subjects from an aesthetic point of view

but, when I can, I take the opportunity to convey a message that educates people and leads them to reflect on important contemporary issues. The diversion of materials for artistic and memory purposes is very important to me. Sensitive to ecological issues, they give my artistic practice a very symbolic double direction: creating works of art by recycling discarded materials.

We really appreciate the way your choice of unconventional materials and techniques —as handmade paper, hot glue, textile, luminescent and reflective materials— provides your works with metaphorical aspects, eliciting response in the spectatorship: New York City based photographer and sculptor Zoe Leonard once stated, "the objects that we leave behind hold the marks and the sign of our use: like archeological findings, they reveal so much about us". We'd love to ask you about the qualities of the materials that you include — or that you plan to include — in your artworks: in particular, , as an artist who create artworks by recycling discarded materials, how important is for you to use materials rich of metaphorical properties in order to create such allegorical artworks, capable of inviting the viewers to investigate the traces left by time?

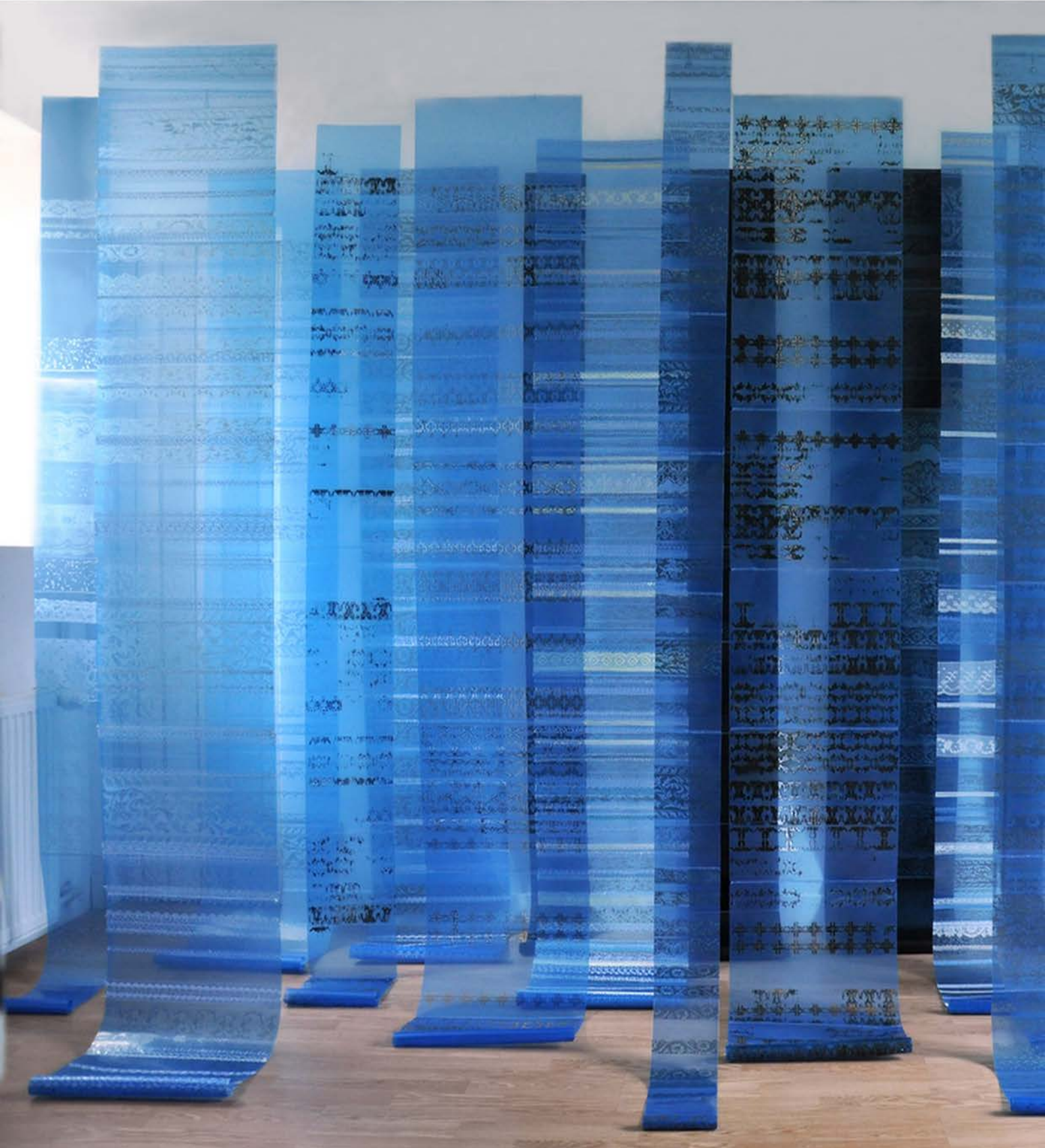
Brigitte Amarger: Textile artist, I was interested in the history of clothing. It is assumed that at the base, an exposed anatomy, a flesh in raw state, seemed as intolerable as threatening. The bodies, the skin, in their only nakedness, had no



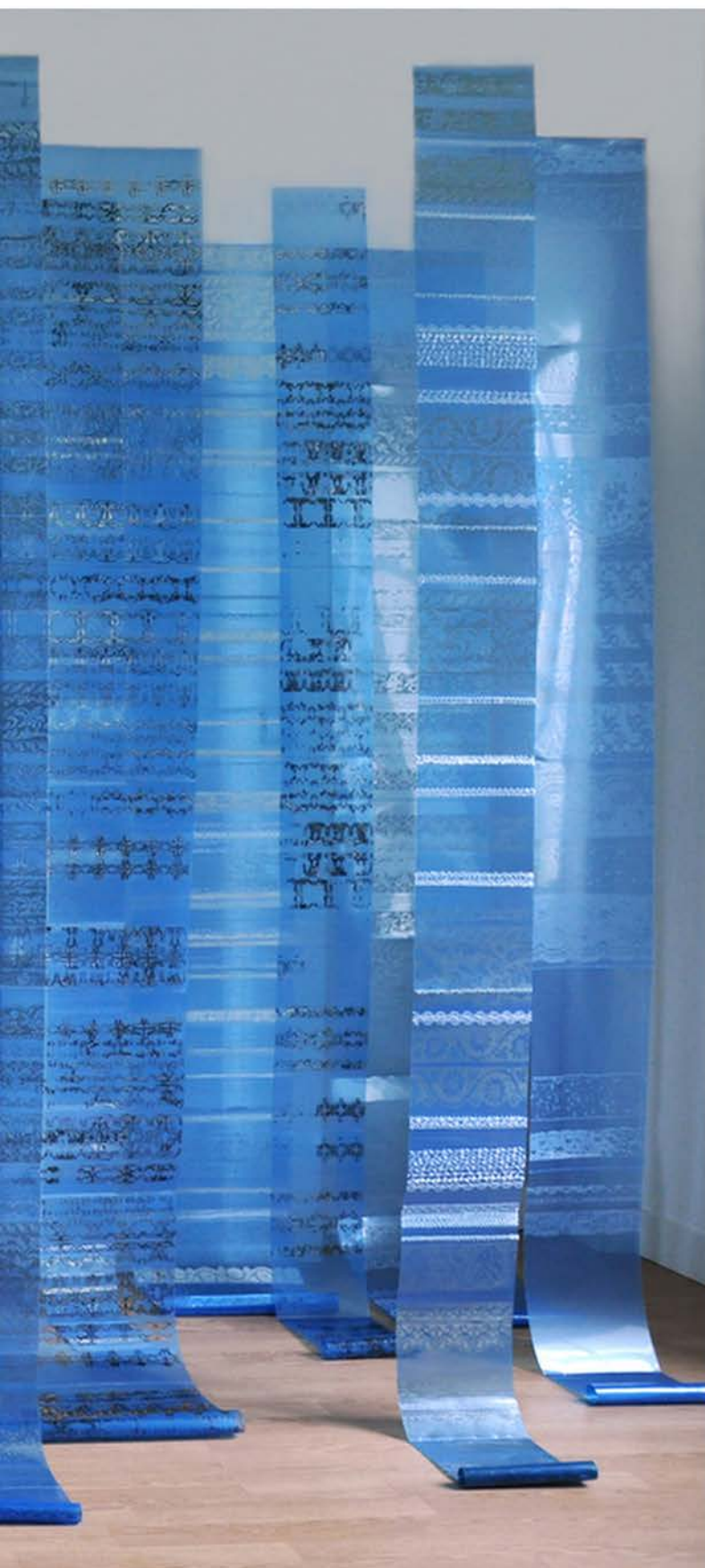


Lace blues 2012/2015

Installation for Textile Museum, Lodz, Pologne. 2016



Installation of 40 panels laser cut and engraved, machine embroidered on X Rays (virgin and of laces, in negative and positive)



d positive) and with reflective material.

possible existence and were only acceptable if transformed, covered with signs, dressed in artifices. Hiding its nudity or highlighting the body is the source of the garment. I just realized that I had worked on these threads that we weave to become fabric and clothing in order to offer a second skin to humans. Then, about the scars, the tattoos, a skin material of memory, which tell the story of a body identified by its marks.

After, I discovered the X Rays transparency that invites to a surplus of nudity, which illuminates the opacity of other tissues showing a subcutaneous tissue that reveals a spectral image of the body. To look at an x-ray is to look at the heart of an anatomy, to take a guided tour of intimate history, to carry out a sort of police investigation whose object is, in medicine, the search for clues and traces on a body fixed in the moment. I believe that it allows, artistically, also to feed the imagination, to foster a drift, to encourage diversion and to arouse the reverie and the fantasies of the laymen.

I have always been particularly interested in the scientific and medical worlds, surgery and archeology. In my artistic creation, I find a similarity in their working process, in this desire to discover, to open, to see or to pass through, to enter an interior world, to reveal the invisible, to plunge into the mystery of the origins.

My artwork is an invitation to share these stories of time, memory, light, visible and invisible, life and death...

We have particularly appreciated the way

your artworks highlight the physical nature of art making. New York City based artist Lydia Dona once remarked that in order to make art today one has to reevaluate the conceptual language behind the mechanism of art making: are your works created gesturally, instinctively? Or do you methodically transpose geometric schemes? In particular, how do you consider the relation between the abstract nature of the ideas you aim to communicate and the physical act of creating your artworks?

Brigitte Amarger: It all depends on the subject. Some of them require preparation, a methodical structure that does not leave too much place for chance but others are more spontaneous. The electronic textiles used in 'homo algorithmus' require essential technical knowledge to be successful. Laser engraving and cutting also require specific skills for preparatory work on computer software and precision for machine settings.

My painting work is more instinctive, the handling and assembling of threads and textiles more gestural. I would say that if the technique becomes more precise and refined in the creative process, the role of chance, with its errors, unpredictable effects, unexpected discoveries, disturbs and modulates the initial conductive line. Often, they allow progression and opening of surprising new ways.

You are an established artist: your work has gained recognition and features in public and private collections and since 1979 you have participated in numerous exhibitions in France and all over the world: how do you





Le Jardin des Supplices detail

Laser cutting and sewing on X-rays; threads; red and retro reflective silver fabrics



“ D’Ame Nature”

a 1600 inches installation with a central vegetal waterfall and 16 different flower beds. Solo show , Carré d’Art, Mont



geron, France. (2019)

consider the nature of your relationship with your audience? Direct relationship with the viewers in a physical context is definitely the most important one, in order to snatch the spirit of a work of Art. However, as the move of Art from traditional gallery spaces, to street and especially to the online realm — as Instagram — increases: how would in your opinion change the relationship with a globalised audience?

Brigitte Amarger: Every artist needs an audience and, I prefer my artworks to be seen physically, during exhibitions. This allows me to have direct comments, exchanges with my audience. It is a more spontaneous, intimate and cordial relationship, which creates links and feedback. My exhibitions abroad also allow me to reach another audience and meet other artists, create links and networks on an international level.

In addition, my site is a virtual extension of course, but it has the advantage of establishing contacts, allows me to respond to requests for sales or exhibitions or other proposals. I'm having trouble with online exhibitions, Instagram etc. I do not adhere to this system that I find reductive, under the appearance of a large opening. I believe that this type of functioning belongs more to the new generation, more trained in this type of contact from an early age, contrary to my habits.

And then, I work all the time, I have too much to say otherwise, artistically.

I really don't know where I could find time to do this and prefer to devote myself to the



“ Le Jardin des Supplices ” and “ À fleur de peau ” 2016

Installation in solo show “ NATUROSCOPIES”, Galerie de l’Ecu de France, Viroflay, France (2017-2018)

realization of my ideas.

We have really appreciated the originality of your artistic production and before leaving this stimulating conversation we would like to thank you for chatting with us and for sharing your thoughts, Brigitte.

What projects are you currently working on, and what are some of the ideas that you

hope to explore in the future?

Brigitte Amarger: I am preparing a large installation on the theme of the cosmos for Los Angeles this summer and another one using transparent elements in volume. In parallel, I works are always in progress, about nature and on human displacements, exodus and networks. For a long time I have



also been working on books for sick children, in hospitals, using medical imagery.

Already two years ago, I made the elements on the theme of microbes and bacterial cultures, and I did not have the opportunity to set it up. It was not a premonition of the coronavirus ... but with this pandemic, and all that which questions, I wonder if this project

will not change and be adapted to this new terrible context...

Thank you for this interview. It's been a pleasure to work with you.

*An interview by **Dario Rutigliano**, curator
and **Melissa C. Hilborn**, curator
arthabens.biennale@europa.com*