

# Innerspace

Jean Comandon / David Douard



David Douard, *Linked with an element of resignation*, 2011, metal, print on aluminium, painted plaster, wood, 168x110x183cm. View of the exhibition at Catherine Bastide gallery, Paris 2011. © David Douard and Catherine Bastide gallery.



Structure for accelerated filmshots by Jean Comandon at the Institut Pasteur (1945). © CNC - Fonds Chevalier.

From 15 February to 24 March 2012

Opening on Tuesday 14 February from 6pm to 9pm

9 esplanade Pierre Vidal-Naquet  
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# PRESENTATION OF THE EXHIBITION

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*“What interests me in Jean Comandon’s work is the ingenuity of his filming device and of the imaginary that resides within it. [...] His way of dipping into microscopic research, purely and simply, like a quest for interiority, is what links my practice to his. [...] With the help of his camera, Comandon perforates the surface and goes beyond it to make visible everything there is to see. In my work and in sculpture in general, it is the surface of the object and the information that this surface can give us about interiority that interest me most.*

*My proposal for this exhibition is to create hybrid objects, between sculpture and display; to work with emotions, problems, sensations and with all the irregularities of the body and the mind, and to shed light onto them just as a scientist would make an atom visible. [...] In order to show Comandon’s films in the best possible way, I am starting from the assumption that everything has consistency, that everything is an organism, and that this very organism, as hybrid as it may be, can be penetrated and explored. One must search deep inside and authorise oneself quite a few things, a bit like Joe Dante who, in the film *Innerspace* (1987), recounts the journey of a miniaturised Dennis Quaid contained in a 0.02mm capsule, through the body of Martin Short.”*

David Douard

*INNERSPACE* is conceived in collaboration with Paris Diderot University (Thierry Lefebvre, lecturer and the students of the Master in Scientific Journalism course) and the Centre National du Cinéma (Béatrice de Pastre, Collections director of the French film archives of the CNC).

## Jean Comandon

Jean Comandon, born in 1877 in Jarnac (Charente), was a French doctor and biologist, pioneer of scientific cinematography and of the study of pathogens at a microscopic level. After graduating from the Institute of Commerce in Paris in October 1897 and from the Faculty of Sciences of Paris in 1906, Comandon decided, nevertheless, to study at the Dastre laboratory of the Faculty of Medicine in Paris. During his studies, Victor Henri introduced him to the use of the ultra-microscope; Comandon had the idea of filming micro-organisms in order to deepen his understanding of their biological functions.

From 1909 onwards, he created a micro-cinematography laboratory in the so-called scientific service of the Pathé factory in Vincennes, where he filmed microbes, movements of the heart, as well as the screen of x-rays. He presented his films at the Academy of Sciences and at the Pasteur Institute. In 1926, since Pathé-Consortium-Cinéma deemed it useless to continue with the creation of scientific films, Jean Comandon was obliged to leave his laboratory in Vincennes. The banker Albert Kahn then proposed that he works, along with Pierre de Fonbrune, in the documentation centre of the Archives de la Planète (Archives of the Planet), which Kahn had installed in his Boulogne-sur-Seine property. After the 1929 crash, Albert Kahn, ruined, had to stop financing the two film-makers' work. Jean Comandon then joined the Pasteur Institute in 1932, where he worked until his retirement. Since his death in 1970, he has remained in the collective memory as the person who created the first films on the infinitely small at the service of education on hygiene and of knowledge transmission.

## David Douard

David Douard was born in 1983 in Perpignan. He graduated from the École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris in 2011 and is represented by chez Valentin gallery in Paris. His work was recently exhibited at Catherine Bastide and Castillo Corrales in Paris. He lives and works in Aubervilliers.

His work takes the form of installations in which various sources and materials are used and where referents are manipulated and developed into hybrid sculptures, very often anthropomorphic ones. Like a system of multiple folds, David Douard's objects allow signs to emerge, to become animated from the inside. In his artworks, the particularity of digital objects is combined with organic materials, as if to accentuate a possible autonomous interior life.

Even if references to conceptual art are abundant, his work is often expressive and overflowing; the direct link between these two foundations is a factor allowing one to understand what is shown and what is not.

# IMAGES



David Douard, *Beauty life is body love*, 2011, Wood, metal, inox bars, plaster, flat screen, DVD player, canvas, chain, spray, plastic, variable dimensions. View of the exhibition *Mécanique populaire 2011- David Douard / Renaud Jerez*, chez Valentin, gallery Paris 2011. © David Douard and chez Valentin gallery.



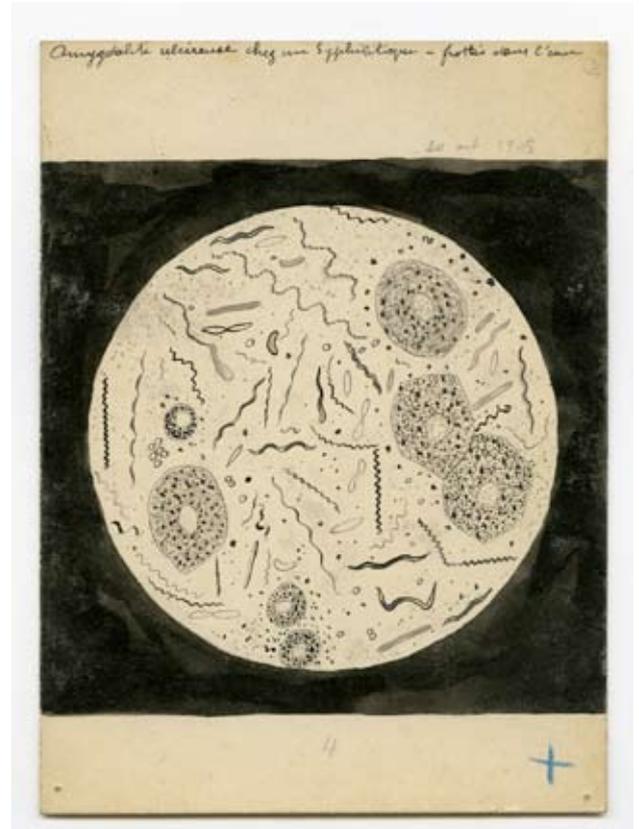
Excerpt of the story-board for the animated film *La Mouche* (The Fly) by Marius O' Galop and Jean Comandon in 1919. © Fonds Vétéau-Comandon.

# IMAGES

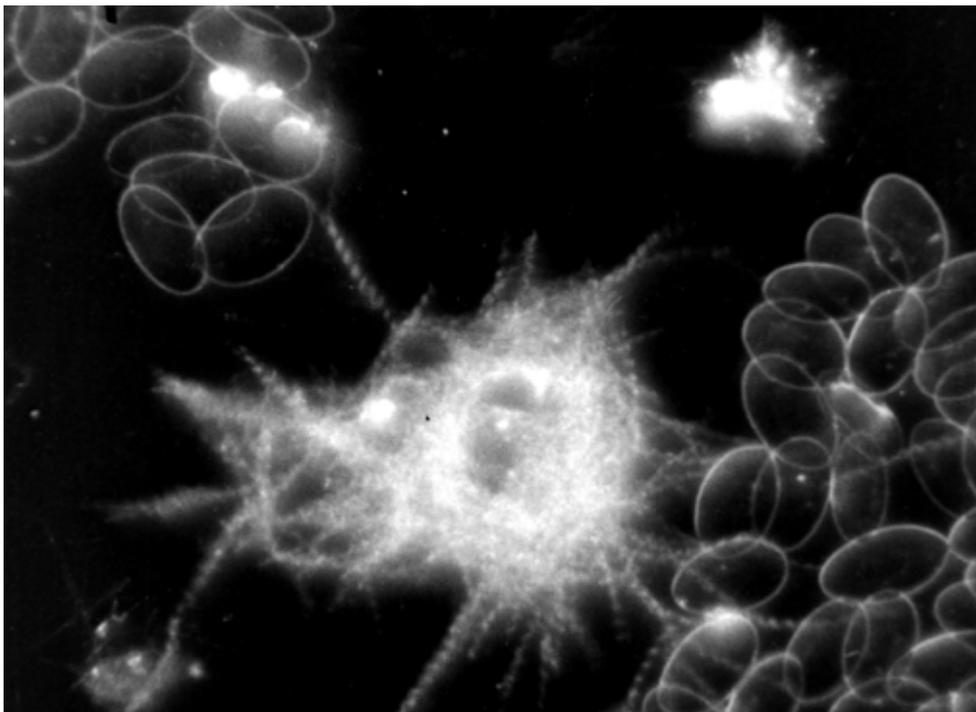
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David Douard, *NO*, 2011, Camera DV «sony», plexiglass, plaster, metal, wood, speakers, «samsung» poster, resin, shoes, tv «samsung» stickers, variable dimensions. © David Douard and chez Valentin gallery.



*Amygdalite ulcéreuse chez un syphilitique - frottis dans l'eau.*  
Drawing of microscopic view made by Jean Comandon on October 20th, 1908. © CNC- Archives françaises du film-Fonds Chevalier.



Photogram from the film *Agglutination de Spirochaeta gallinarum* by Jean Comandon in 1909. © Gaumont-Pathé-Archives.

For high definition images, please contact [florakatz@betonsalon.net](mailto:florakatz@betonsalon.net)

# THE MASTER IN SCIENTIFIC JOURNALISM

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The professional Master in Scientific Journalism offered by the University Paris Diderot is a theoretical and practical education programme on the techniques and issues related to the diffusion of scientific knowledge to the wider public. Based on the need of contemporary societies to establish networks of communication and of mutual understanding between researchers, journalists and the larger public, this Master aims to help students develop critical thinking skills, linking sciences to their social, economic and political context.

The Master programme includes practical courses on journalism using various media (press, publishing, radio, television, scientific cinema, internet), as well as theoretical courses aiming to consolidate scientific knowledge of Biology, Earth Sciences, Biochemistry, Physics and Mathematics. Moreover, students of Scientific Journalism develop knowledge of the modes of diffusion and circulation of scientific knowledge and discourse and participate in contemporary debates about the sociopolitical, juridical and cultural dimensions of science.

The exhibition is the result of a collaboration with the students, who will be responsible for writing and editing a publication and who will create audiovisual works on the subject of scientific cinema and its heritage.

## CNC - LES ARCHIVES DU FILM

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The French film archives of the National centre for cinema and the moving image (CNC) were created in 1969 at the initiative of André Malraux, culture minister, in order to look after the inventory and conservation of old films, including nitrate films, stored at the Bois d'Arcy. Since then, they have collected about 110 000 films. As years went by, a collection representative of cinema production and diffusion in France, from the beginnings of cinema to the present day, was thus constituted. This collection can be explored through different ways and approaches: reconstitution of a production, subject-based groupings, the evolution of a genre through the history of cinema... The present invitation to discover Jean Comandon's work combines several of these approaches: the actualization of this oeuvre allows to understand the work of a man and a doctor throughout the 20th century, as well as the different representations of the living caught by the moving image in its most intimate state. This project reflects the exploration that science and cinema have developed hand in hand in order to understand life more fully. Furthermore, it is an opportunity to discover the restoration work done on films, that are sometimes older than a century, which requires the use of very specific tools.

## Thursday 16 February - Bibliothèque nationale de France

“Botanical ballet. On Jean Comandon’s cinema”

2.30pm: study afternoon. Jean Comandon’s work.

Origines and actuality of the time-lapse

6.30pm: film screenings accompanied by music,  
with Benoît Alziary (vibraphone)

The French film archives of the CNC, Paris Diderot University and the Bibliothèque nationale de France organise a study day focusing on scientific cinema pioneer Jean Comandon. This event will particularly emphasize on the impressive films created by the cinematographer in the beginning of the 1930s around the development of plants. This study day will be followed by the screening of films restored by the French film archives, accompanied by live music.

Participants: Roxane Hamery, Thierry Lefebvre, Béatrice de Pastre and others to be confirmed.



## Thursday 1 March - Bétonsalon

7pm: Concert - The Seawolves

Experimental music evening, including a screening of original films by Jean Comandon in 16mm.



## Wednesday 14 March - Paris Diderot University

Ciné Diderot

6pm: screening of *Science! On tourne* (2011), followed by a discussion

6.30: screening of *The Fantastic Voyage* (1966)

In the first part of the programme, a film concerning scientific research, directed by students of the Master in Scientific Journalism at the University Paris Diderot, will be screened and discussed. The second part will present the Oscar-winning science fiction film *The Fantastic Voyage* by Richard Fleischer, which follows a team of miniaturised scientists in a human body.



# ABOUT BETONSALON

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Bétonsalon is a non-profit organisation created in 2003 and turned into a centre for art and research in 2007. Located within the premises of Paris 7 university at the heart of a neighbourhood currently undergoing reconstruction, Paris Left Bank Development Zone in the 13th arrondissement, Bétonsalon proposes a programme that is context-sensitive and engages the daily meeting between cultural practitioners, researchers, students, teachers, locals and the general public.

Bétonsalon has been particularly committed to developing a space of reflection and confrontation at the confluence of art and academic research, giving expression to various discourses – whether aesthetic, cultural, political, social or economic. Over the years, Bétonsalon has experimented with various formats including exhibitions, workshops, lectures, seminars, publications, neighbourhood tours, festivals and residencies developed on processual, collaborative and discursive levels according to different time scales and in cooperation with a variety of local, national and international organisations.



# PRACTICAL INFORMATION



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9 Esplanade Pierre Vidal-Naquet  
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75013 Paris  
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Opening times :  
Tuesday to Saturday, 11am to 7 pm  
FREE ENTRY  
Access: metro line 14 or RER line C  
Stop Bibliothèque François Mitterrand

## ADVISORY BOARD

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## OUR PARTNERS

*Bétonsalon is supported by the City of Paris, the Department of Paris, the University Paris Diderot, the Île-de-France Regional Board of Cultural Affairs – Ministry of Culture and Communication, Conseil régional d’Île-de-France and Leroy Merlin (Ivry/Seine).*



Exhibition and events partners

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