

janus

art science theatre music philosophy film architecture literature and beyond 12/02

8€

Collection Office / Affairelancetoo 2010 Antwerpen 2 - Ploaia
quarterly / driemaandelijks

English edition
100% recycled paper

editorial

janus 12/02

Janus is the god with two faces, ubiquitous and enigmatic. He looks both forward and back, at the past and the future, at the inner and outer worlds. He sees everything from both sides.



janus is a magazine on art and culture.

With its wilful mix of subjects and its crossover approach, janus is intended to reflect the blurring of disciplines and to provide a forum for 'leaps of the imagination', a melting pot for new developments and discussions. Its contributors are writers, artists, philosophers, scientists and academics in all fields, all areas ripe for consilience.

Janus is the god of

Janus is the god of everything that's beginning

"Consilience is a 'jumping together' of knowledge by the linking of facts and fact-based theory across disciplines to create a common groundwork of explanation"

William Wimsatt cites this synthesis in Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences

'Siamese twins', 'Stam twins', torned ortho film, torned sheer print, tape, plywood, 1982-90.

Hans Ulrich Obrist
Bruno Serralongue
Akiko Miyake
Louise Bourgeois
Paulo Herkenhoff
Attilio Maranzano
Marina Abramovic
Susan Greenfield
Doug & Mike Starn
Rob Van Kranenburg
Christian Nold
Tadeusz Kantor
Robert Wilson
Paul McCarthy
Gérard Rancinan
Virginie Luc
Enrique Vargas
Israel Rosenfield
Luc Steels
Olafur Eliasson
Christine Peters
Mårten Spångberg
Florian Malzacher
Tim Etchells
Hugo Glendinning
Superamas
Hans Magnus Enzensberger
Luc Deleu



Absorption of Light

Doug and Mike Starn (b. 1961, New Jersey), identical twin brothers, have collaborated for more than twenty years in the territory between photography, video, installation, sculpture and painting, and occupy a unique position in contemporary art practices in photography. Their works are created in an effort to confront the fragility of the photographic print, and to acknowledge its material existence, rather than treating photography as a sacrosanct two-dimensional image. They blend elements of postmodern appropriation and a seeming disregard for the integrity of the medium's materials with an almost pre-modern interest in creativity and spirituality.

The sun has evolved as the major focus of the Starns' work, as a symbol of things greater and more powerful, that which is beyond the everyday trials of life - physically, scientifically and spiritually - the sun as a symbol of knowledge, illumination, enlightenment, and brilliance. Beginning in 1994, the Starns created their first illuminated transparent

works, weaving together images from NASA, their first kinetic 'sun machine' entitled *Amaterasu*, and their first film and video work in collaboration with the film-maker Jem Cohen, called *Sun Project*. In an effort to better comprehend the sun's draw on them, throughout 1995 the Starns committed themselves to in-depth historical research - from studies of ancient Egyptian history, the teachings of Plato and Copernicus and the writings of Dante, to scientific research compiled from today's modern radio telescope observatories.

Absorption of Light combines for the first time four bodies of work from the last five years exploring their metaphors of light through real symbols of the 'gravity of light': leaves, trees, moths and a blind 8th-century monk and reformer of Buddhism. It encompasses the artists' broad spectrum of media, including computer-generated prints on rice paper, hand-coated silver emulsion on paper, and video. The work will travel around Europe, Japan and the United States, starting in spring 2003, for a period of 3 years.



Structure of thought

Trees are a recording of light - light turned into carbon through photosynthesis. They are containers of comprehensive information and layered knowledge. Web, networks, synapses, like dendritic neurons in the brain. The Sun writes of its complex knowledge and describes itself.

Like a book, a tree is transcribed thought. A scroll can be laid out and read as a single page, like a branch. The pictographic nature of Chinese calligraphy is related to the silhouetted form of trees - the layered dendritic branches are related to the complexities of knowledge, understanding, memory and imagination. These trees are light written in the calligraphy of the sun.



left page 'Structure of Thought #3', Starn Twins, MIS and Lysonic inkjet prints on Thai Mulberry, Gampi and tissue papers, with wax encaustic and varnish, 27 x 23, 2001; this page above 'Structure of Thought #9', Starn Twins, MIS and Lysonic inkjet prints on Thai Mulberry, Gampi and tissue papers, with wax encaustic and varnish, 27 x 23, 2001 ; below 'Black Pulse #17', Starn Twins, MIS inkjet w/ albumen and encaustic on Gampi paper, Scotch tape and glue, 42 x 82, 2001



Black Pulse

Black pulse is the flow of absorbed light through the architecture of darkness built from light. Leaves are the discarded cardiovascular and respiratory system of trees. By photorespiration, sunlight is inhaled and activates the process of manufacturing carbon, turning light into darkness as it streams through the leaves' veins, creating the body of the tree. Dropping from their branches after the long summer weeks, the leaves are curled up and brittle, only veins remain.



Attracted to light

At night, a dilated pupil is starved of light - it opens wide to swallow as much as it can. The holes in the sphere of your skull let illumination into your mind.

Moths are attracted to light in the darkness, no one understands why. It's neither to mate nor to eat. Like butterflies, moths are almost as light as air, but they are the poor stupid cousins, they live their lives at night, flying from nowhere towards the end of their lives. A moth will bounce across a ceiling, orbit a lamp, fly into a flame - the mystery and futility of their flight towards something better. Their tattered fragile dusty wings are metaphors for our own flight.



Ganjin

Ganjin was a blind 8th-century Chinese monk sent to Japan to reform Buddhism. The contemporaneous sculpture and Temple Residence in Nara is an UNESCO world treasure and is currently undergoing a decade-long restoration. Over the centuries much of the gold leaf on the raised and prominent features had worn away, exposing the dark clay underneath, leaving the brilliance only in the recesses and shaded areas. This creates an odd negative appearance, a coincidence of opposites — darkness in the light and light in the dark. Ganjin's eyes see nothing but black, filled with light.