

Esther Shaley-Gerz

9 February – 6 June 2010





Les Inséparables, double clock, 2000–10
Production La Manufacture Jaeger-LeCoultre

Esther Shalev-Gerz was born in Vilnius, Lithuania, and grew up in Israel. She has lived in Paris since 1984. In her work of this internationally renowned artist, the Other is treated as a counterpart, someone with and through whose agency a process of sharing is developed. Her works therefore solicit an alterity, be it that of the people involved in making them or of the people looking at them.

Shalev-Gerz takes an intuitive approach to the portrait, which she apprehends as a possible reflection of a person, place or event that in itself is never stable or definitive. She is interested in people and in what they say or do not say (their silence) – in their experience, their way of resisting and surpassing their own limits. Their way of telling their story. Her installations, photographs, videos and sculptures are often conceived in response to commissions for public space or invitations to work in a specific context or with a defined community. Consequently, her works are intimately bound up with an active dialogue between institutions, participants and the public.

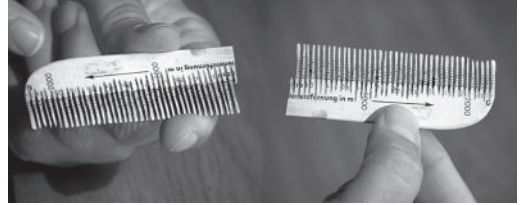
Monument Against Fascism

With Jochen Gerz, Hamburg-Harburg, Germany, 1986–93

Je de Paume: silent video on screen

Commissioned by the municipality of Hamburg-Harburg and standing on one of the city's busiest squares, the *Monument Against Fascism* was inaugurated in 1986. A text presented in seven different languages invited passers-by to participate in the project by engraving, gouging or hammering their signatures, messages and commentaries on a 1.2-metre high, lead-covered column. As soon as the accessible area was covered with inscriptions, it was

MenschenDinge, photograph, 2004–06
Buchenwald and Mittelbau-Dora Memorials, Weimar, Germany



sunk into the ground, the point being that, "In the long run, it is only we ourselves who can stand up against injustice." Since 1993, after seven progressive lowerings, all that remain visible in the centre of the square are the top of the column and the panel of texts.

The Berlin Inquiry

With Jochen Gerz, Berlin, Germany, 1998

Je de Paume: film excerpts with sound on screen

The audiences in three Berlin theatres were invited to perform Peter Weiss's play *Die Ermittlung* (*The Inquiry*, 1965), based on the testimonies of victims, killers, witnesses and judges during the Auschwitz trials. The form taken by these evenings depended on the participation of everyone. Serving as moderators, actors invited the spectators to recite passages from the text, so that the spectators all became potential actors. This system made passive contemplation impossible and catalysed an active memory. At the same time, the German media disseminated the project: the daily newspaper *Der Tagesspiegel* published photographs of the participants captioned with a line from the play, a radio station broadcasted excerpts from the readings and a television channel showed short excerpts being read by celebrities.

Perpetuum Mobile

Brunswick, Germany, 1998–2000

Je de Paume: video projection with sound

A modest metal object (a 10 franc coin) is seen spinning endlessly, as if it will never fall. Overcoming physical laws in order to create perpetual motion is an old human dream, as is the idea of mastering



Between Listening and Telling: Last Witnesses, Auschwitz 1945–2005, 2005
Installation view at Hôtel de Ville, Paris, France, 2005

economic laws so as to make the market works properly. When this installation was first made, on the Adenauer Bridge in Brunswick in 2000, there was a stock market crash preceding the introduction of the euro.

Inseparable Angels: Imaginary House for Walter Benjamin

Bauhaus Universität, Weimar, Germany, 2000

Jeu de Paume: video with sound on screen and double clock

Nowhere exists that preserves physical traces of Walter Benjamin's presence. This project consisted in conceiving an ephemeral house for the thinker and writer in Weimar, a town fraught with history and contradictions, located very close to Buchenwald concentration camp. The film shows the landscape between Weimar and Buchenwald through the windows of a taxi whose driver relates stories of the places driven past. At times the image stutters, slows down, becomes double or appears to peel away from itself. The narrative is accompanied by readings from texts about *Angelus Novus*, the Paul Klee painting that was so dear to Benjamin. Benjamin's figure of the angel is also suggested by the clock with four dials, whose hands move in opposite directions, which greets visitors to Jeu de Paume.

White-Out: Between Telling and Listening

Historiska Museet, Stockholm, Sweden, 2002

Jeu de Paume: installation, video projections with sound and photographs

Saami, the language of the Lapp people, many of whom live in Sweden, does not have a word for "war". The Swedes have not fought in a war for 200 years.

Are these two facts linked in any way? This was the starting point for this work for which Esther Shalev-Gerz recruited two researchers to explore Saami and Swedish archives for interests that the two peoples might have in common. She then invited Asa Simma, a woman of Saami origin living in Stockholm, to take part in the project. The texts assembled by the researchers were read to Asa Simma by the artist who filmed her reactions. Two projections can be seen face to face on each side of each screen: one shows the woman reacting to the reading in her apartment in Stockholm; in the other she is in her native Lapland, listening to her own words. Echoing the official history of the country, the photographs that complete this installation show objects from the collection of the Historiska Museet in Stockholm.

First Generation

Multicultural Centre Botkyrka, Fittja, Sweden, 2004

Jeu de Paume: installation, silent video retro projection and texts in adhesive lettering

"Since you settled here, what did you lose? What did you find? What did you get? What did you give?" The artist put these four questions to 35 inhabitants of Botkyrka, all first-generation immigrants, representing a great variety of nationalities. She then filmed them listening to their own answers. The speakers are filmed so close-up that we cannot make out their faces. The words and the image are separated: on one side, the speakers' words evoking their experiences are transcribed on the walls, and on the other we see their fragmented bodies and expressions on the screen.



Echoes in Memory, photograph, 2007
Courtesy Galerie Baudouin Lebon, Paris



Sound Machine, video still, 2008
Courtesy Galerie Baudouin Lebon, Paris

Between Listening and Telling: Last Witnesses, Auschwitz 1945–2005

Hôtel de Ville, Paris, France, 2005

Jeu de Paume: installation, silent video projections

Invited to conceive an exhibition for the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, Esther Shalev-Gerz worked with the testimonies of 60 survivors now living in Paris. The same film is repeated on three big screens, with a seven-second time-lag between each one. It consists of a montage of faces, shown in the silence between being questioned and the moment of articulating their answers. This work opens a different kind of filmic space-time, outside the logic of language – that of an affective and corporeal memory. The 60 testimonies are available for consultation at the Mémorial de la Shoah in Paris.

MenschenDinge

Buchenwald and Mittelbau-Dora Memorials, Weimar,

Germany, 2004–06

Jeu de Paume: installation, videos with sound on screens

and photographs

When she was invited to make a project based on objects recovered within the Buchenwald camp, Esther Shalev-Gerz decided not to exhibit them physically but, rather, to film them being presented by people connected with them in their professional capacity. She asked a historian, an archaeologist, a restorer, a director of the memorial and a photographer to talk about what they did and about their professional, personal and imaginary relationship to these objects. The objects appear in terms of their sensory perception, in their hands, as images shown on the screens and in the photographs.

Sound Machine

Norrköpings Konstmuseum, Sweden, 2008

Jeu de Paume: installation, silent video projections,

texts on canvas and soundtrack

Intrigued by the transformation of an industrial landscape – a district of old textile mills that is now restored, all neat and quiet, but which previously hummed with the din of machines, the artist chose to work with women, who had been pregnant when the factories were running, and their now adult daughters. “Do they both remember, even vaguely, that permanent noise?” The videos show the pairs of mothers and daughters standing in front of a virtual factory recreated in 3D, listening to a soundtrack consisting of machine sounds recorded and processed by the artist and a musician. This soundtrack cannot be heard while one is viewing the installation but can be heard at the entrance to Jeu de Paume. Canvases hanging nearby show motifs that, when lined up, make visible excerpts from the interviews.

Echoes in Memory

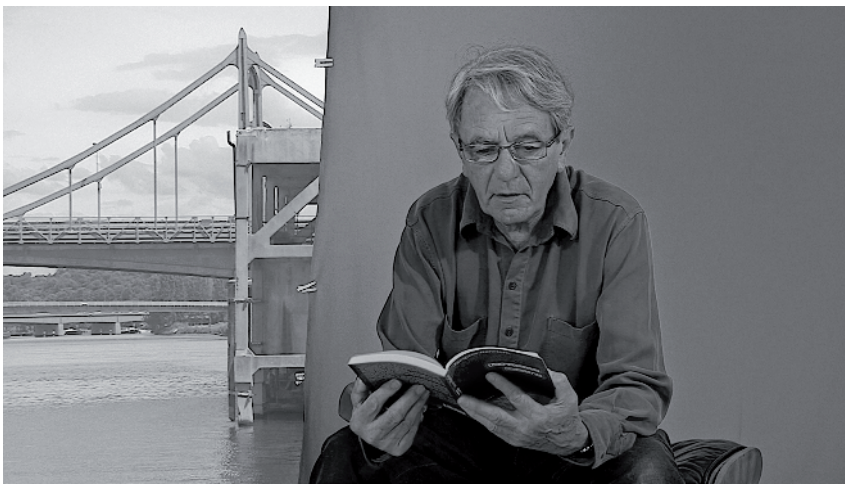
National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, Angleterre, 2007

Jeu de Paume: installation, silent videos on screens

and photographs

This project was conceived for the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich, the hall of which once contained a mural by Orazio Gentileschi executed, it is said, with the help of his daughter Artemisia, also a painter. It represented an allegory of “Peace and the Liberal Arts in the Time of the Crown”, as personified by 24 female figures.

While referring to this historical detail, Esther Shalev-Gerz created 24 photographic images



D'eux, video still, 2009

Production Jeu de Paume / Courtesy Galerie Baudouin Lebon, Paris

based on virtual sculptures of 24 women (artists, writers, friends and relatives) who have inspired her at various times in her life. About ten of these women feature in the *Jeu de Paume* installation. Two screens show the staff at the National Maritime Museum listening and reacting to the stories repeated to them by the artist, as told to her by other members of staff.

D'eux

Jeu de Paume, Paris, 2009

Installation, video projections with sound, soundtracks

and photographs

Created especially for this exhibition, *D'eux* presents a world inhabited by two people who Esther Shalev-Gerz met in Paris yet who do not otherwise know each other, and two landscapes that do not exist in the same temporal or spatial zones. The videos show the ways in which the philosophers Rola Younes, from Lebanon, and Jacques Rancière seek to keep their relation to the world vital and new. They appear against the background of the Ile Seguin, west of Paris, and Cortes, an island off the west coast of Canada. Rola Younes speaks of her passion for languages (Yiddish, Hebrew, Persian, French, English, Arabic) that she has felt deeply since coming to Paris seven years ago. Jacques Rancière reads a passage from his text *The Emancipated Spectator*, in which he describes an important moment in the development of his thought that led him to "reformulate the established relations between seeing, doing and talking", and comments on the function of contemporary art. Also presented are some photographs of the Ile Seguin, whose subtitles use the words of songs in different languages, coming from another wall.

exhibition-related events

■ discussion with Esther Shalev-Gerz

at Beaux-Arts de Paris, l'École Nationale Supérieure

14 Rue Bonaparte, 75006 Paris

free entrance (places available on a first-come first-served basis)

information: www.beauxartsparis.fr

Friday 19 February, 3 pm

■ tour* with Esther Shalev-Gerz and curator Marta Gili

Tuesday 23 March, 7 pm

■ "Dispositif et intervalle": thematic tour*

by a Jeu de Paume lecturer

Tuesday 30 March, 7 pm

■ "Puissances de la parole: une réflexion sur les formes du témoignage dans l'art d'aujourd'hui" (The Power of Speech: On Witness in Today's Art): symposium**

moderated by Jean-Christophe Royoux, with artists Esther Shalev-Gerz, Amar Kanwar, Salem Mekuria and Nalini Malani and sociologist Bruno Karsenti.

From the democratic agora to the memorial, the symposium will consider the increasing artistic use of verbal expression as an act of witness and look at those unique moments where voice becomes image and the image itself another voice.

Wednesday 26 May, 5.30 pm

■ publication: *Esther Shalev-Gerz*, texts by

Jacques Rancière, Lisa Le Feuvre and Stefanie Baumann, interview with the artist by Marta Gili, co-edition Fage Éditions / Éditions du Jeu de Paume, 2010, 160 pages, 22 x 27 cm, 30 €

Jeu de Paume – Concorde

1 Place de la Concorde, 75008 Paris
access via the Tuileries Gardens, Rue de Rivoli entrance
www.jeudepaume.org

information +33 (0)1 47 03 12 50

Tuesday (late opening) noon–9 pm

Wednesday to Friday noon–7 pm

Saturday and Sunday 10 am–7 pm

closed Monday

admission: 7 € – concession: 5 €

admission free to the exhibitions of the Satellite programme

Mardis Jeunes: free entrance for students and visitors under 26 every last Tuesday of the month from 5 pm to 9 pm

exhibitions

9 February – 6 June 2010

■ **Lisette Model**

■ **Esther Shalev-Gerz:** Regarding Your Image Regarding Me!?

■ **Satellite programme, Mathilde Rosier:**

Find circumstances in the antechamber (Trouver des circonstances dans l'antichambre) to 30 March 2010

■ **Virtual Space, Samuel Bianchini:** All Over

on www.jeudepaume.org and in the resource room

31 March – 17 November 2010

■ **Virtual Space, Agnès de Cayeux:** Alissa, discussion with Miladus, Elon/120/211/501

on www.jeudepaume.org and in the resource room

Tours for individual visitors*

with guides from Jeu de Paume: Tuesday to Saturday at 12.30 am

Family Tours*

Saturday at 3.30 pm

forthcoming exhibitions

29 June – 12 September 2010

■ **Bruno Serralongue**

■ **William Kentridge**

■ **Satellite Programme, Klara Liden**

Jeu de Paume receives a subsidy from the Ministry of Culture and Communication.



It gratefully acknowledges support from **Neuflyze Vie**, its global partner.



Les Amis du Jeu de Paume contribute to its activities.

Jeu de Paume | Monnaie de Paris

exhibition

16 April – 22 August 2010

■ **Willy Ronis, a Poetics of Engagement**

La Monnaie de Paris

11 Quai de Conti, 75006 Paris

information: www.monnaiedepartis.fr

Jeu de Paume – extramural

exhibition

29 May – 7 November 2010

■ **Nadar**

Château de Tours

25 Avenue André Malraux, 37000 Tours

information: www.jeudepaume.org

forthcoming exhibition

15 July – 24 October 2010

■ **Camille Silvy, Photographer of Modern Life**

National Portrait Gallery

St Martin's Place, London WC2H 0HE

information: www.npg.org.uk

* free entrance on presentation of exhibition ticket (valid on the day of purchase only) and for members; Family Tours, by reservation on +33 (0)1 47 03 12 41 / serviceeducatif@jeudepaume.org

** 3 € per session, or free on presentation of exhibition ticket (valid on the day of purchase only) and for members; first come, first served

The exhibition "Esther Shalev-Gerz" is supported by La Manufacture Jaeger-Le Coultre, major partner of Jeu de Paume, which produced the work *Les Inséparables*.



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layout: Gérard Plénacoste
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White-Out: Between Telling and Listening, video still, 2002
Courtesy Galerie Boudouin Lebon, Paris