

## CLAUDE CATTELAIN

Claude Cattelain,  
 Born in Kinshasa (Zaire) in 1972

« Claude Cattelain likes the things to be understood. He likes to strip shapes, techniques and materials of all their superfluous effects. Gone are the sculptor's knife, the decorator's chisel and the carpenter's saw : Claude insteads manipulates and uses the raw material of the ordinary object. With his hands, head, arms and feet he has kneaded, carried, planted, crushed, held and aspirated...These carefully ordered actions have structured his performances, which are based on communicating vessels and displacement. As his body expends energy the artist obstructs its movements. In places which are confidential or almost inaccessible (except for public performances), his actions are thought out, executed and framed in accordance with the camera filming them - all in a static shot.

The atmosphere is silent, conducive to concentration. Some of his actions are dangerous. Yet they are always calculated to give the performance real existence, real substance. Spectators may feel uncomfortable witnessing his risky stunts, for exemple when, standing on a rooftop terrace, his back defies gravity and the empty void below. But they may also admire his constancy and courage. And they will be amused by his more lighthearted, absurdist performances, then moved and shocked when the artist subjects his body to almost inhuman trials.

In the Vidéos hebdomadaires series, Claude Cattelain follows his self-imposed instructions : blow out the dandelions in a garden, fill a basin on his legs with water until he can no longer carry it, fall asleep in front of the camera in ordre to watch himself dream, wrap up his face in adhesive tape and only breathe through a snorkel, itself imprisoned in adhesive ribbon... as a worthy successor to Vito Acconci, Bruce Nauman or Matthew Barney, his actions are defined only by the limits of his body, and follow a script that can be described with a simple sentence. They are reminiscent of the task movenemts performed by dancers such as Anna Halprin or Trisha Brown, for whom carrying a chair or having a rest in the middle of a clearing were choreigraphic movements carrying the same importance as the dance of a bird's flight. »

From « Bis repetita placent » Barbara Forest - Curator Musée des beaux-arts de Calais.

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