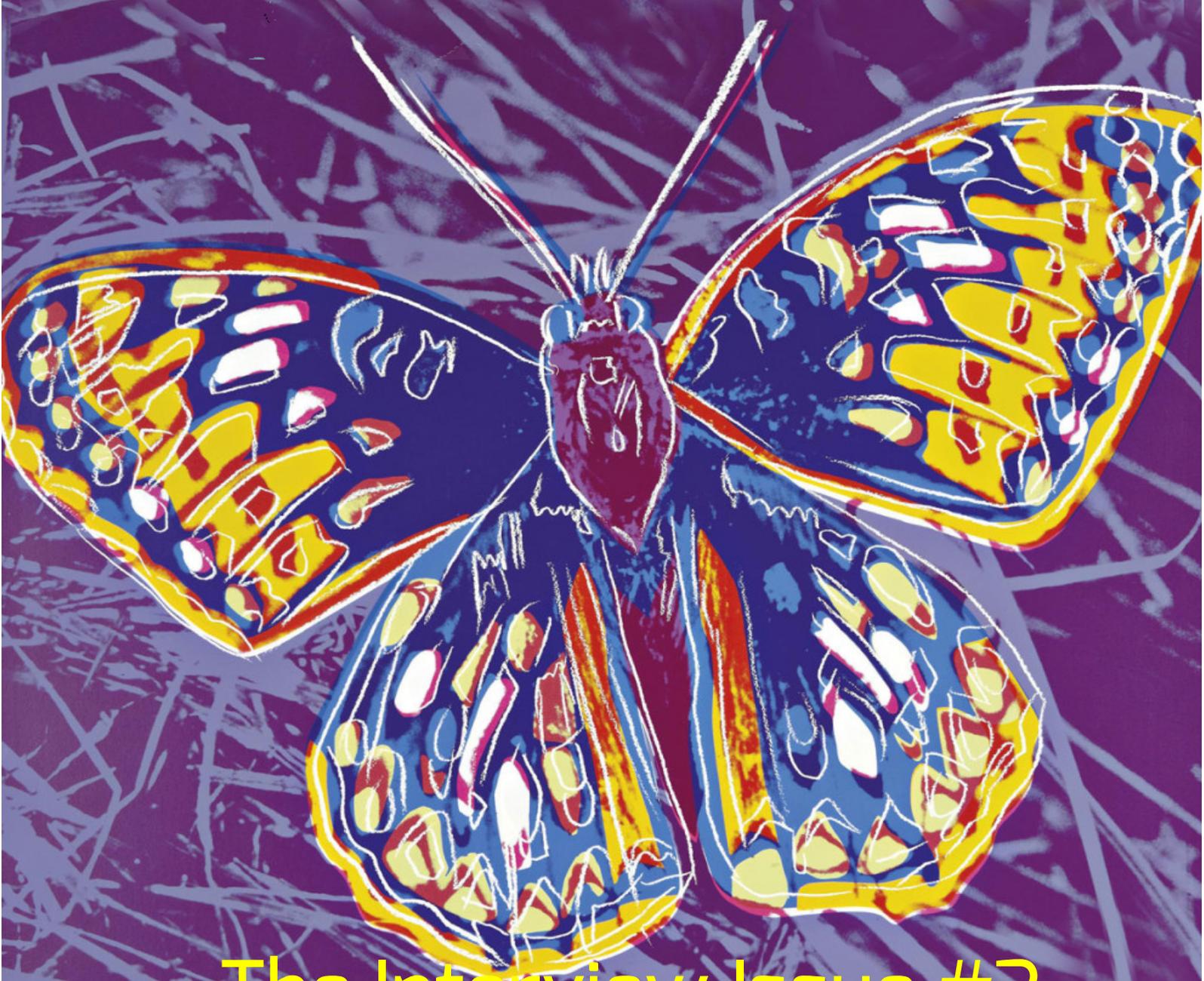


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Antennae



The Interview Issue #2

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ANTENNAE

The Journal of Nature in Visual Culture

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Antennae (founded in 2006) is the international, peer reviewed, academic journal on the subject of nature in contemporary art. Its format and contents are inspired by the concepts of 'knowledge transfer' and 'widening participation'. On a quarterly basis the Journal brings academic knowledge within a broader arena, one including practitioners and a readership that may not regularly engage in academic discussion. Ultimately, *Antennae* encourages communication and crossovers of knowledge amongst artists, scientists, scholars, activists, curators, and students. In January 2009, the establishment of Antennae's Senior Academic Board, Advisory Board, and Network of Global Contributors has affirmed the journal as an indispensable research tool for the subject, now recommended by leading scholars around the world and searchable through EBSCO.

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INTERVIEWEE: **MAX STREICHER**

INTERVIEWER: **MATTHEW BROWER**

Toronto based curator and scholar Matthew Brower has written extensively about animal representation in photography and other media. In this interview he explores the representational specificities at play in Max Streicher's inflatable installation art.

Questions by Matthew Brower

I worked with Max Streicher on a project for the Beijing Biennale and was captivated by the work and by his process. The piece we presented was a re-imagining of Picasso's Guernica as a 3m x 3m x3m inflatable sculpture. We had initially proposed remounting a version of the piece that had been installed in a hotel in Madrid but the curatorial committee was concerned that it was too tall for the museum. They asked instead if the piece could be mounted outside on the facade. Max declined, as he was concerned that the pollution in Beijing would damage the work. As a compromise, he remade a version of the work at a slightly reduced scale that was optimized for viewing head-on in the gallery rather than from below in the street. I brought the work over to China folded up in a suitcase (along with a timer and a fan). Installing it was a chore, as the museum wouldn't allow the technicians working on the biennale to put holes in the wall. No one tried to stop me from securing the piece to the wall but no one would help me either. It was an interesting example of working interculturally. However, once the work was attached to the wall and

began to inflate and deflate, it created magic. The piece filled the room with its amalgam of human and animal bodies and exerted a presence throughout the exhibition. Despite the simplicity of the technology involved, the effects the work produced were complex and varied with each iteration of breath. It was this aspect of the work, the affective resonance of its cycles of breath, that made we want to interview him for this issue. Having seen a number of his pieces in different contexts, I wanted to inquire into his process and ask about the significance of the animal and nature themes in his work.

Matthew Brower: You've been making inflatable works since the late 1980s and early 90s (the first one being *Breathe* in 1989; then *Boiler* in 1991; with another early example being *Pillars of Cloud* in 1992) and have exhibited them throughout the world both in gallery exhibitions and as site interventions. What drew you to the form in the first place and has your relation to the medium evolved over time?



Max Streicher

Breathe, 1989, nylon, modified vacuum cleaner, 185 cm, The Crossing exhibition, Bloor St. United Church, coordinated by Mediums Art Centre, Toronto © Max Streicher

Max Streicher: What drew me to the medium originally was kind of an accident. I found a sewing machine and a vacuum cleaner and I had some material on hand from another projection project I'd been doing. I just had finished graduate school. Graduate school is kind of a challenging situation and I thought it's time to have some fun and make something that's just more of a lark. So I had this idea to make an inflatable. It seemed like something

fun to do. Then I made it and it was shown in a group show called *The Crossing* because it was in a church. The work was presented in the foyer of this church and it was loud. It had the vacuum cleaner and when people would push a button this vacuum would roar up and the thing would start to rise. Then the timer would turn the vacuum off and it would sink. It had a lot more motion and life than I expected an inflatable to have. It also got a lot more



Max Streicher

Dream of Guernica, 2015, Nylon sail cloth, electric fan, 3x3x3 meters, National Art Museum of China, Beijing International Art Biennale, photo by Sara Angelucci © Max Streicher

attention than I expected. It became the basis for a few other requests after that including NetherMind who came to me and said that that's the kind of work that fits with what we're doing: It's about body, it's about material, it's about sculpture. So that leads to my involvement with NetherMind. Even though I kept trying to go in other directions and work with other materials and things, I kept coming back to that. It was kind of my fall back plan for all kinds of situations where I was presented with a space and asked what would you like to do with it. There's something about the medium that's so convenient. If I worked in bronze I'd have much more storage and so on to deal with. It's been really a good medium for travelling with. It's been very helpful from a practical level. What I've learned about it was that the motion, the force of air, that sort of thing, within these different materials that I've use reads as very lifelike. I love playing with

that sort of shock factor, or as somebody else has termed it kinesthesia. Where you're looking at an inert balloon but it comes to life when the pressure builds and an arm lifts or even when just a part of an abstract piece bulges out. It has this real sense of reflecting your own experience of breath, of breathing. I love the connection that happens there. Therefore, there's also a vulnerability in the medium. That it is very literally vulnerable, easily popped. That comes through when things inflate or deflate right to the ground. It creates a sense of disappearance. So I've been learning more and more about the medium over the many years I've been working and so my feelings about it have changed a lot. I still think there's more to be explore in it. Scale became an important factor at some point too. Quite early on I realized I could make really big things that really overwhelm gallery spaces. I could make works that were basically about

overwhelming architecture or making architecture that is overwhelming and soft and baroque.

M.B.: As you've mentioned, many of your pieces actively inflate and deflate rather than being statically blown up. Can you speak to why this movement is important and how you see it affecting viewers' responses?

M.S.: In most cases where I use the fan turning off and on to achieve motion, usually they don't totally deflate. That happens occasionally. It did with *Guernica (Dream of Guernica, 2015)*. We had the fans turn off for quite a long period of time which allowed ... I don't remember now did it actually cycle through a breathing motion or was it deflate and then inflate? Kind of still wasn't it?

M.B.: It cycled off and deflated. It deflated enough for the bull's head to touch the floor and start to soften. And then it would go back up.

M.S.: ok. I find that it's a very simple aspect of the technology to turn the fan off, let the air leak out, and have this deflation. I guess because of the way I design the patterns, they end up having more of a surprising lifelikeness when they're in motion. You can probably say that about any inflatable in a way. I think because of the way I have designed the way an elbow or a knee or foot moves, it just has this naturalism that I like. I think that people really respond to that too and feel it in a kind of empathetic way. I know people often talk about with my Giants that they want to lay down with them and sleep there (*Sleeping Giants, 1998*). They feel very calm and comfortable around them. Other people are afraid of them or find them creepy or something. There are often these rather extreme responses. I had a really interesting response from Muki Baum. This was when I was showing at the Koffler Centre. I see him now, this is some 20 years later, at Manulife and he has his own foundation. He has a condition where he's in a wheelchair and can barely move. I don't know what it is but he has

motorized wheel chair. He has a sign that's out and he collects money for his foundation. So his movements, when he is able to move are very floppy. His arms just flop and he does move a lot. He loved my pieces on the floor cause they were flopping around. He actually wrote me a note, in a very childlike script, because he doesn't have very good control of course, and I still have this note where he mentions big happy moving men on the floor it feels like me. I thought that was a really beautiful reaction. I really think that people have a really visceral response to the work. They feel it in their gut, the way things move.

M.B.: So this means that when you design your pieces you're not just thinking about the final form, you're thinking about them inflating and deflating. The conception of them includes this range of motion.

M.S.: I do think about how an arm will be attached to the body or an elbow or something and how it might have a natural range of movement. But I also realize that because it's an inflatable it will probably bend the wrong way when the air gets to a certain point of deflation. Which doesn't seem to bother people too much. I look at them and go that's sort of an unfortunate bend to that leg but viewers tend not to comment about that. They don't see it as a flaw apparently. Early on, my first studies in art I did at the Art Students' League in New York and we studied anatomy in drawing and painting. Anatomy was a real basic course we all had to take. I chose to take figure drawing and anatomy. That's always interested me. So when I am designing the patterns I'm thinking always of the underlying anatomy and what line in a pattern, what cut, might make a very obvious connection to where we're used to seeing that muscle depicted in a drawing.

M.B.: Can you describe the process whereby you conceive of your works? You've described how you articulate the interior components but I'm wondering how you



Max Streicher

Sleeping Giants, 1998, Tyvek, electric blowers, each figure: 7.5 meters tall

© Max Streicher

come up with the larger concepts, for example, to say this will be four figures coming out of a box (*Quartet in a Box*, 1995).

M.S.: My works often come about really kind of spontaneously or at times accidentally. Like accidentally, I started making these figures in about 91 or 92. They were very first figures I made and they were very awkward and not very detailed. I didn't know really what to do with them. Because figurative work was still kind of taboo at that point in time. I mean there were a few people working with the figure like Louise Bourgeois and Leon Golub. That was just about the time that those post-modern painters were coming on the scene.

Eric Fischl was working with the figure. So those people were around but they were kind of controversial or not very mainstream anyway. Louise Bourgeois, she had a following but it wasn't like... I don't know, I'm not sure what to say about Louse. A lot of us of in the sculpture department, anyway, were really fond of her work. There was a definite place that I felt comfortable too, that kind of treatment of the figure that she was doing. She also did a lot of sewing too that I have only become aware of lately, the stuffed things.

I put the figures away for a while. This was my quartet piece, I made these 4 figures and I showed them to a friend and she said to me 'Oh, you can't show those they're too

literal.' So, I put them away for a little bit. Then I had a chance to do a show out in Halifax and the idea came to me to have the figures shipped in a box, but that somehow, they just came out of the box. I had been working with this notion that making more than one figure was kind of about industrial production and making humans was a comment on the way humans are attached to machines in factories in that kind of assembly line production. I was now making people in the same way. Conceivably you could make them infinitely and have them an infinite number of these figures. Once I had 4 and didn't know what to do with them I stopped. Having them come out of this box made it seem like another aspect of this. Now it would even make more sense to have them shipped by Amazon and then you plug them into the wall and they come out of the box. That work came about as a way to deal with these figures and where are they going to fit into the art world where they don't really fit. The box gave them a kind of pedestal in a way, a reason for being, or a presentation device. Often my installations, are pretty instantaneous in their conception. For example, the cloud I did for the Art Gallery of Ontario, when they showed me the sculpture atrium, the first thing I really noticed was that the floor had a rather large grid pattern (*Cloud*, 2004). These were the seams in the cement. The pattern was large enough to transpose it to seeing the farm fields of Alberta or Saskatchewan from the air. I had been to Lethbridge and had to fly in a small plane from Calgary to Lethbridge and we were going through these huge, huge cumulus nimbus clouds. Then you would see down below, you were flying beside a cloud, and way down below is the shadow of the cloud on these sections of land. That was the impression I had, that I wanted to put a big cloud in the AGO Tannenbaum atrium. My first giants were instantaneous too, Gordon Hatt had invited me to do a show at Cambridge Gallery. He showed me this big gallery and said 'what do you want to do?' I almost instantly said fill it with giants. So then I just had to figure out how many will

fit and how big should they be but I basically had a pretty exact picture in my mind right from the first moment of what it would be. It was the same with the cloud, it was almost exactly what I had envisioned as what I made.

I was just writing lately, for another proposal, that I look for places that my inflatables misbehave. I started a long time project called balloon disasters. It's never really been formalized but I have enough of them myself of things that have been destroyed in the wind, blown over and so on, ripped apart. These include Macy's parade balloons that sometimes go out of control and crash into people and injure people, the Hindenburg blowing up, and things like that. I'm fascinated by balloons when they step out of their niceness and become menacing. They're not always menacing but like with the breathing again, they suddenly, when you respond to them empathetically, their breathing, they just go to another level of meaning where they become about other things like disappearance and destruction or death or birth. My installations that might not be kinetic, I'm also interested in how they might misbehave. Like the clown heads are stuck between two buildings. That's meant to look accidental; like they were just blown in there and got stuck (*Endgame (Coulrophobia)*, 2010). My first horses that I did on a rooftop, was for KWAG (Kitchener Waterloo Art Gallery). They'd asked me to do a piece and I decided to do an equestrian quadriga (*Four Horses*, 2003). The way I designed it was really not very good. It turned out to be one of my balloon disasters. They were supposed to sit up, these horses, on the rooftop and look very grand and they wouldn't sit up on the system I had designed. So, I just let them fall over. They were toppled on the roof. One of them I sort of propped between a couple of others and it's standing but it really looked like a wagon wreck on the roof. They were huge. These were 30 foot long horses about 20 feet high and they're in this jumble on this tiny roof. The funny thing about that piece is that the AGO did a show on surrealism and there



Max Streicher

Horses (Installation), 2003, vinyl, electric fans, each horse 8 x 10 x 2 meters, Beaverbrook Art Gallery, Fredericton, N.B.,
 © Max Streicher Below: *Lamentation (Swan Song)*, 1996, Tyvek, electric fans, switches, 14' high, "Once Upon a Time," Southern Alberta Art Gallery

was a little drawing by de Chirico of a building with a jumble of classical horses on it. It was like they had all fallen over and were lying there and it looked just like my installation. That was a show that came from the V&A and I've been meaning to locate that image. I have another connection with de Chirico. One of the first horse works I ever did was an etching. It was an etching after a dream and in the dream, a horse got cut in half at the belly and its front half and back half are still running around. There's this big gash between because they've been severed. I depicted that in this etching. Last year I was in Rome and the hotel had a de Chirico etching or drawing where the horse wasn't cut in half but it had a red blanket over its midsection that looked exactly like it was cut in half where I had cut my horse in half. It's also running and it's very frontal in the image. I often relate my work to de Chirico through its



sense of the metaphysical -- like his ruins in squares. I'm working on something like that for Sydney right now.

M.B.: There seems to be separate strands of

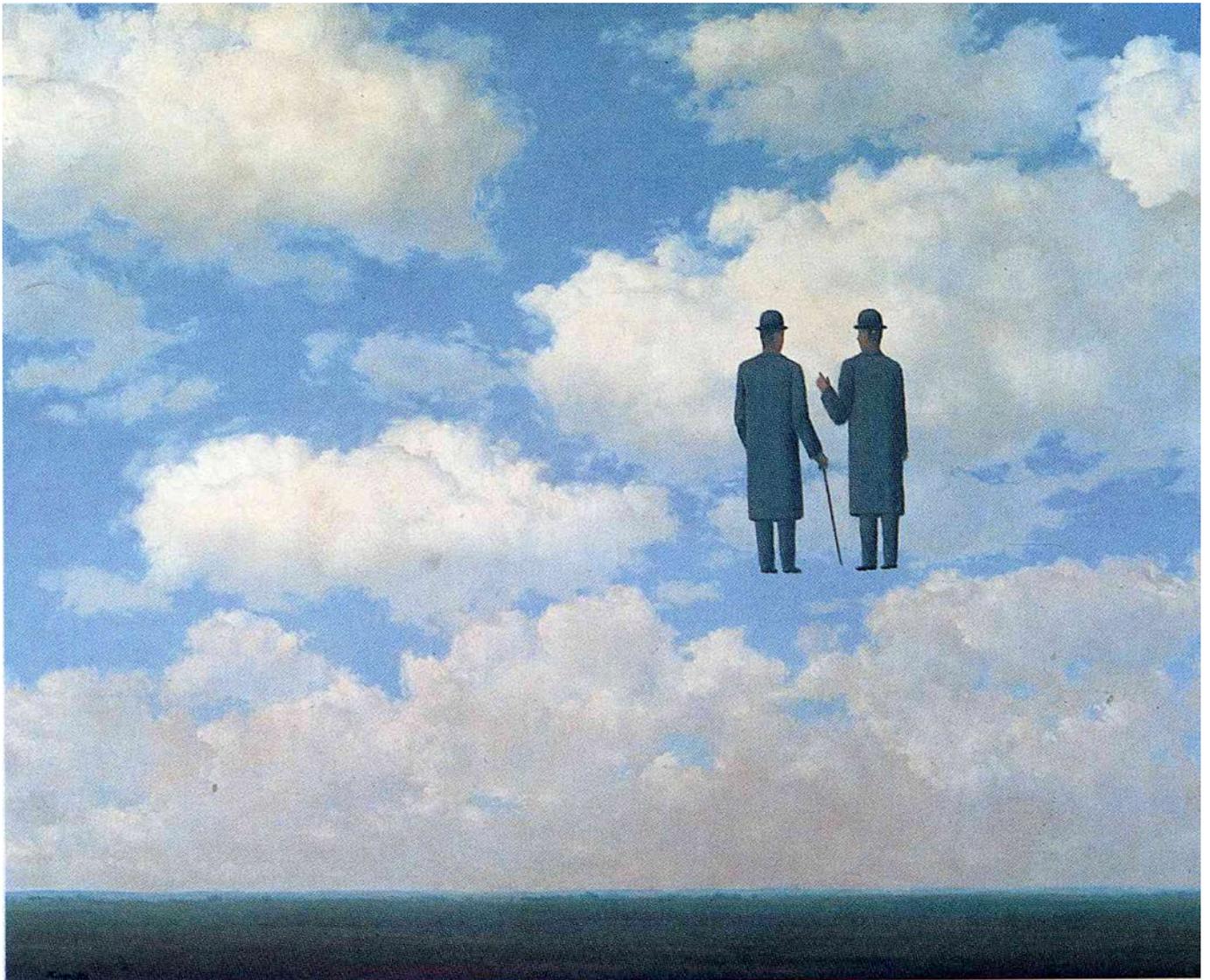
your practice between a group of sculptures that deploy human figures (such as *Quartet in a Box or Sextet*, 1996) and other works that focus on animals (*Lamentation: Swan Song*, 1996 or *Four Horses*) and natural forms (*Cloud*). Do you see these as separate aspects of your practice or are there underlying themes or connections for you between these bodies of work?

M.S.: I think they're all kind of connected. I think it is in the matter of a metaphysical or surreal vision. The *Clouds* are Magritte, the *Horses* are all over de Chirico and Dali, and

the figures really fit in with Dali, in a way; the machine figure. So, I think there are connections.

M.B.: Do you see a difference in how audiences respond to the different types of works? Do they respond differently to the giants than to the animals?

M.S.: I don't really think so. I mean some works are more popular. I think the *Horses* tend to be more popular. I donated a set of horses to the Beaverbrook [Beaverbrook Art Gallery, Fredericton, New Brunswick] a few years ago.



René Magritte
The Heartstrings, 1960



Giorgio de Chirico
Two Horses by a Lake 1950

Max Streicher
Quadrige, 2006 vinyl, electric fans; each horse, 7 meters tall, Ludwig Forum for Contemporary Art, Aachen, Germany, 2006 © Max Streicher

M.B.: How do you see these works in relation to the long history of equestrian statuary? I think often they're responding or referencing that history.

M.S.: Well there's been a bit of learning curve to my use of horses. My first horse I did, I had the false impression that equestrian monuments were big in Venice. I guess because there are a couple that are famous like the ponies above San Marco and the statue of Bartolomeo Colleoni. But, In getting to know more about Venice I realized that that's not really the case. There's a kind of grandiosity about equestrian monuments that the Venetians are really opposed to. Which is why Verrocchio's equestrian statue isn't in the square somewhere in San Marco where he had willed it to be. Instead, it's ended up in another square. So when I went there to do an equestrian monument it was with this false impression and misunderstanding of their history. What fits is that I think of them as anti-monuments because

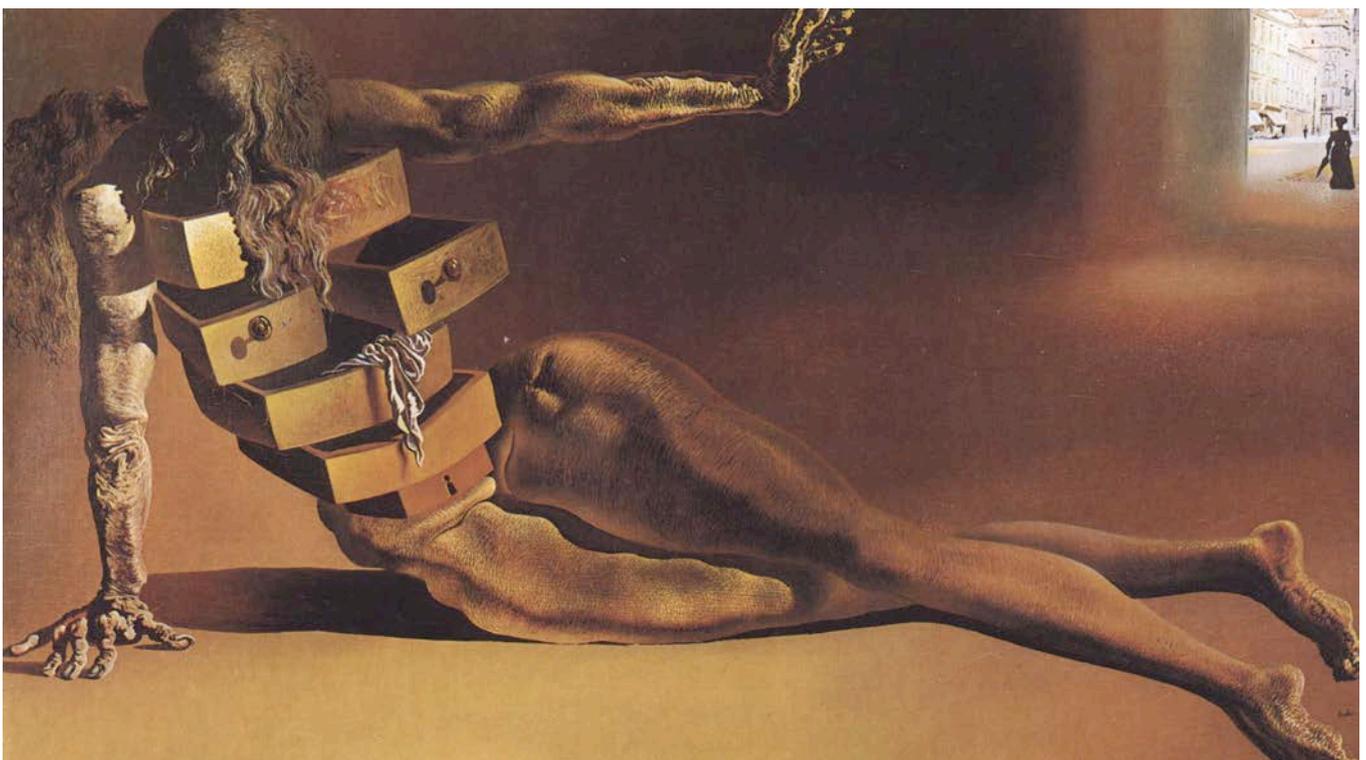
they are inflatable. They have this vulnerability. They're kind of silly as big inflatable horses so they're anti-monuments. That fits for Venice. I think that's the tension that I'm playing with in doing this quadriga. It's this sense of might and grandiosity, which is what a quadriga is kind of about normally, and mine which are inflatable and they're grand but they do blow over in the wind. My favorite picture of them is in Beaverbrook when we were installing and there's one of the workers lifting the horse into position and he's got the whole weight he's pushing up but it looks impossible (*Horses* 2003).

M.B.: It seems to me that's one of the key themes in your work this tension between the monumental scale of many of the pieces and their insubstantiality. Can you talk about how you make use of that in the works? Is it always an undermining or does it work in other ways?

M.S.: I think it's mostly an undermining of any

kind of association with representations of power. But also trying to make it more magical too, it's not just negative. The horses appear to buck and nuzzle when the wind hits them. This is a kind of naturalism that's not possible in bronze. You might get a moment but it's not like they're going to be different every time you look at them. There's something kind of magical about that. I think that's maybe more important than the undermining. It's kind of like bringing it to life. I've often felt that the medium, kind of tongue in cheek I'm talking here, is taking this ancient desire to bring marble to life – like really knowing how to do the skin so that it looks alive and the bone is pushing through underneath and the veins are pulsing – that sort of naturalism and lifelikeness I'm trying to take a step further by actually putting air into it and letting the air bring it to life.

M.B.: It seems to me that in some of the equestrian works there's a lifelikeness and an anti-monumentality whereas with the clouds



Salvador Dalí
Anthropomorphic Chest of Drawers, 1936



Andrea del Verrocchio
Equestrian Statue of Bartolomeo Colleoni, 1483-88

the insubstantiality reads very differently. That it's connected to the evanescence of the underlying object. With some of the figures, in particular, the clown heads, the sagginess is less anti-monumental and more of the *informe* – a creepiness, that gets at the subconscious fear about the instability of things. It seems to me that in these works that same tension is given a different valence depending on the kind of work it is. Relatedly, there are works you do where the mechanics are really visible and up front. Some foreground the mechanics in the interaction, like the early pieces where you're pressing a button and that's what makes it go and others incorporate the mechanics into the form of the work, like the swan piece where the fan is the head of the bird (*Lamentation*). There is another set of your works where the mechanics are erased. Like with *Cloud* where you just get the form

floating in space with no sense of how it happened. I'm curious about how you make those distinctions in terms of which works will foreground the apparatus and which works will obscure it.

M.S.: I guess the works that foreground the apparatus most are the figurative pieces. In the swans the head is a powerful part of the movement because of the fans when they would turn on, they would torque and turn the birds. There was this whine when they'd start up and a twisting. With the smaller figurative pieces where they're actually connected to machines, I'm making a comment on that factory thing about mass production and assembly lines. With the clouds and the giants, I'm going for a sense of magic. With the clouds the fans are simply there to fill them. There's no motion except if the wind or a breeze hits them. With the clouds especially I'm looking for a sense that they're just floating in space. You don't notice the cables that hold them up and so the fans also aren't to be noticed.

M.B.: So it's connected to the kinds of effects you're trying to evoke.

M.S.: Yeah.

M.B.: Some of your recent works have responded to Picasso's *Guernica* (*Battle of Cannae*, 2014 and *Dream of Guernica*), which makes explicit a kind of political charge that you've hinted at in terms of your comments on industrialization with some of your other work. Can you talk about what it means for the work to make the politics more explicit? Or do you see the *Guernica* reference as not being explicitly political?

M.S.: I think I was actually more worried about it being explicitly political. The first version I did was for Madrid and I changed the name to Cannae. I found this reference to an ancient battle outside of Rome where a bull had committed suicide because it couldn't deal with the fact that Rome was no longer the



Max Streicher

Cloud, 2004, Tyvek, vinyl, electric fans, 9.75 x 9.75 x 7.5 meters, Art Gallery of Ontario

© Max Streicher

great power they thought they were. They'd been defeated so badly by Hannibal that this bull committed suicide. So that became a reason to have a bull jumping out of a window in downtown Madrid. There's a big hand coming out of the one side of that work which is the most obvious reference to Guernica. I actually worried about the political implications of calling it Guernica. I didn't know if they were still angry about this situation. When I first saw Guernica at the Prado many years ago it was behind bullet proof glass.

I think I was more interested in creating tableaux in the way that Picasso's painting of Guernica is a sculptural tableau with its monochromatic color scheme. I've been interested Picasso's sculptures and particularly the paintings of what I think of as sculptures. They're paintings but these figures on a beach, some of them, I think they were really meant to be sculptures that he just never realized. Or didn't want to spend the money on realizing. I have this urge to make one or two of them just to see. Just as an homage to Picasso. To make one of his figures in real life or 3 dimensions. I'm not sure what to say about any kind of political statement that I think those works are making. The same as I've been using the quadriga form in the past, I think I'm interested in that kind of commemorative sculpture that you see on the sarcophagus of Alexander the Great, that sort of thing. That has battle scenes, a melee of figures and horses crashing together. So the painting becomes kind of an excuse to do a tight clustering of figures and beasts.

M.B.: Where is your practice going now? What kinds of themes are you taking on?

M.S.: I'm trying to back away from super detailed renderings of figures. I'm torn, that's been one of my strengths and maybe I should push that even further (and I probably will do that at some point). The show I just did in India was of older work where the forms were more generalized and they were contrasting with these paintings of another artist that were very photographic (*Sleeping Giants*). It was a nice

contrast. I'm trying recapture some of the innocence of my earliest days in the struggle to define the forms so I'm putting things in my way. I'm trying to imagine what the pattern should be rather than actually literally making it in 3 dimensions. It's maybe having a couple of steps to getting to the final figure which will probably be much more like an antique toy figure or a doll than a roman sculpture. I'm trying to find the lifelikeness in those very generalized forms. I'm also working with the idea of inflatables as life rescue devices. They're often used for making triage hospitals in war zones, life rafts, life vests, and oil spill containing buoys. Inflatable technology is kind of everywhere trying to save the world. I'm playing with that. Maybe. This has now all gotten mixed up with the refugee crisis so it's kind of something I'm backing away from. I might do some big Ai Wei Wei's; depictions of him as different things because he seems to like to do that. That might be the more political work to do. I think his statements are sometimes shots in the dark where he's not quite sure where it will land.

M.B.: Is the move away from a specific politics connected to your desire to get at a more metaphysical content? Are you worried that if you get too concrete that the work won't get there?

M.S.: I'm not really good at responding to themes. Especially I find the way that these contemporary residencies and calls for exhibitions will give you these themes that are so obtuse. Is that the point that you can go anywhere you want with this? Or am I really supposed to understand what you're saying? Themes I always have trouble responding to and when I think I should make a political artwork, it never gets anywhere. I just can't. I don't know how. I just have decided that doing what you do best is the most political thing you can do.

I like making things that people really respond to and feel connected to and connected to others through. There's a social aspect to the practice. I do these *nuit blanche*



Max Streicher

Battle of Cannae, 2014, Nylon sail cloth, electric fan, 9 w x 4.5 h x 5.5 d meters, Radisson blu Hotel, Madrid Prado © Max Streicher



Pablo Picasso

Guernica, 1937

projects and you have all these people at the same time in the same place taking pictures of it and sending them all over on Instagram. There's something political about that even though it's not overt. It's more covert. I wouldn't say the work is non-political or anti-political; it just that it's not issue oriented in any way.

There's a history of inflatables being used in protest. There was an exhibition about that. [*The Inflatable Moment*, Urban Center, New York 1998] In the 60s, Warhol was doing inflatable performance pieces and there were a lot of inflatables that would show up at protest rallies and would get a lot of attention. That's of interest to me to a degree. It has a little more to do with going back to the idea of balloon disasters. The idea that inflatables can have a little more punch than we normally give them credit for.

M.B.: How do you see your work in relation to the broader strands of the art world? Is that something you're concerned with?

M.S.: Well, I have to think about it especially when I go around to museums. I think Toronto is kind of a good place to hide from the art world. But when I'm traveling, when I'm in other places, I find my work fits in just perfectly with what they're showing. It was ahead of its time in many ways. There's a kind of innocence and playfulness about the work that's just now being rediscovered in other artists and shows. For example, at the Hayward Gallery, there was an exhibition with inflatables and similar kinds of works and technologies. The Venice Biennale, not the last one but the one two years before that, [in 2013] that had all of the naïve art in it. People loved that show. I mean a lot of people liked it. It was so full of quirky ideas and accessible in a way that the last Biennale wasn't. The last Biennale was more about ideas. The gallery that I'm with in New York, their specialty, apart from contemporary art, their real specialty is folk art. I feel quite at home with that. They use to have three streams, one was photography, contemporary

art sculpture, and then the folk stuff. But I don't see too much of a division. I think there's a craft side to my work that crosses over. There's a conceptual and a craft side to the work that I try to keep in balance. I think it's hard to get people's attention when you're from Canada. Especially if you're in Canada trying to get someone's attention. I mean they'd much rather have an artist from New York or London or Berlin.

I feel the work is a little bit of an outsider. But I think of outsider as a sort of in at the moment. I think there's an overemphasis on really overly intellectualized, conceptual process stuff. For a while, it was all about identity and politics. I'm not even sure where it is right now. It seems that most of the attention in Canada is intellectual. I guess it's because of the way our grant system works and the intense amount of writing that people have to do to get grants, and that we're all university trained (most artists have a masters), so there is this heavy kind of intellectual side to the Canadian art scene that I think my work is often left out of. That I have to fight for my place in it. But I think I've done ok; when it comes to applying for shows and grants and things I can justify that the work has some philosophical or theoretical underpinnings or contribution to make. It might not be changing the world in an overtly political way but it's operating at another level.

Max Streicher is a Canadian artist. Since 1989 he has worked extensively with inflatable technology in kinetic sculptures and installation works. He has shown widely across Canada in solo exhibitions in museums such as The Art Gallery of Ontario, Edmonton Art Gallery and the Mendel Art Gallery in Saskatoon. He has been part of group exhibitions at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Taipei, the Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, Toronto, the Saidye Bronfman Centre, Montreal, Power Plant Centre for contemporary Art, Toronto and Southern Alberta Art Gallery in Lethbridge. He has completed several international site-related projects in such places as Taichung, Taiwan, Erfurt, Germany, Reims, France and Aachen, Germany, Madrid, Spain and Mumbai, India. His inflatable works are in the collections such as that of the ESSL Museum, Vienna, and Beaverbrook Art Gallery, Fredericton and the University of Toronto. He was a founding member of the NetherMind collective of artists who have organized several sculpture exhibitions in alternative spaces in Toronto. Max Streicher is represented by Ponce+Robles in Madrid, Galerie Miguel Marcos in Barcelona, Gallery Maskara in Mumbai, India, Felix Ringle Galerie in Düsseldorf and Ricco/Maresca Gallery in New York.

Matthew Brower is a curator and academic. He is the Director of the Museum Studies Program in the Faculty of Information at the University of Toronto. He included Max Streicher's *Dream of Guernica* in *Mediated Memory*, a Canadian Focus Exhibition for the 6th Annual Beijing International Art Biennale that he co-curated in the Fall of 2015.