

## NUMERO SPECIAL

### PABLO DE LABORDE LASCARIS // INTERVIEW

1/ Pablo, vous utilisez du sable dans vos œuvres. Pourquoi avez vous choisi ce matériau? Que vous inspire t-il? Parlez nous aussi du bois et du verre, que signifient ils pour vous? Quelle importance ont ces / les matériaux en général dans vos œuvres?

The use of sand in my work applies to a series of works I created during my time at Falmouth University, but I'm not a sand artist! I consider myself to be a mixed media artist, so sand entered my practice initially by chance. However, the effect sand had on my work helped define my practice at its core. Sand is intrusive, heavy, and almost a liquid, so my exploration of the material was initially concerned with finding a way to contain it while retaining its fluidity.

Wood has always been present in my work. It's a material that is considerably cheap and I'm often able to rescue it from skips, so it allows me to work without the pressure of expense. The material is also organic and pure as well as being associated with construction and the foundations to most of our furniture or housing. Most importantly it can be recycled and altered into new combinations whether it be organic or geometric. The relationships I establish between wood and sand, or wood and rubber, stand in contrast to each other establishing a bond or exchange between the two.

Glass is just a vessel to contain sand, and the relationship between sand and glass already exists in the form of silica.

2/ Comment reliez vous concept, matériaux et esthétique dans votre travail? De quelle manière travaillez vous ? Quel(s) processus, quelle(s) méthodologie(s) employez vous pour concevoir vos oeuvres?

The underlying quality and process of creation in my practice is play. I use play in finding every possible combination between materials and in the process of making something, by asking myself 'what happens if'. Through play I explore relationships as a child would without certainty and with an openness to learn and fail.

In terms of the physical process I take in creating, I often start by cutting, sweeping and reassembling to produce small variations of the same thing in all its possible combinations. I then let them simmer on the floor of my studio till they either mature or finish up in the skip!

The relationship between form and concept evolves through a desire to produce work that is aesthetic whilst still poetic, working with materials through their social connotations and their physical restraints, two elements which one can not isolate from the final result.

In a nutshell, my work is about what happens between two materials when combined, which in itself illustrates a shifting impermanence between one and the other.

3/ Que ressentez vous lorsque vous faites une performance? Dans quel état vous sentez vous, quelles sont vos sensations? Quelles sont vos perceptions? Comment percevez vous le rapport avec votre « public », les spectateurs qui vous regardent réaliser une performance?

The video containing the performance is the piece, so for me, performing live is unusual. The idea of many people focusing their attention on you at one time can be intimidating. Performance is also marked by a starting point followed by a conclusion, which can be limiting to the cyclical quality of my videos. On the other hand the audience is able to focus on what is actually happening, which is unusual during a private view when people often spend more time on each other than the actual work in front of them.

4/ Pourquoi avez vous choisi de faire des vidéos? Comment percevez vous l'utilisation de la vidéo dans votre travail ? Et dans l'art contemporain en général?

Video is a method of recording an action or process in my practice, rather than its narrative quality. I'm interested in questioning the conventional narrative of the medium by removing the beginning and the end from the storyline. The videos are able to flow in either direction, allowing the work to develop an open-ended interpretation without the constraints of a resolution. Run on a loop, one is able to appreciate the single framed mechanic motion for a flexible amount of time. Whether it be for 30 seconds or an hour, one is able to view the videos and appreciate them for what they are.

I think video is carving its way into contemporary art as it slowly builds a market for galleries and museums. It is a universal medium, as we all find it hard to detach our existence from the screens that surround us. On the other hand I find few people are open to watching a video piece for its entire duration, as one approaches the work with an initial fear of commitment to it, myself included!

5/ Parlez nous de votre rapport à la sculpture. Que doit être une sculpture contemporaine selon vous? Qu'est ce qu'elle ne devrait plus/pas être aujourd'hui? (développez, utiliser des exemples, développez sur vos propres sculptures)

My relationship to sculpture is quite natural; my mother is a sculptor so it must have rubbed off on me. What should be a contemporary sculpture? I think it's easier to say what it should not be. Sculpture has established itself traditionally as the sculptor carving the wooden block. Contemporary sculpture is as far detached from that as possible! The experience of sculpture is about the materials, scale, and interaction, and the understanding of sculpture is unique in that we can walk around it, on it or be a part of it. My work aims to question this static reputation, by focusing on sculpture and its ability to move within a space

through my interaction with it. In 'Rung' I produced a four-sided ladder attached to rockers. Through video one can experience the piece by observing how two men climb up its frame causing it to rock back and forth in rhythm.

6/ Quels sont les artistes classiques, modernes et contemporains que vous préférez et/ou qui sont pour vous des références ? Pourquoi ? (plusieurs réponses possibles, développez)

The artists that have influenced my practice tend to shift from year to year depending on what series I'm working on. Currently I'm very interested in contemporary Latin American art, notably Gabriel Orozco and Cildo Meireles, but I'm also interested in arte Povera artists such as Guiseppe Penone and Alighiero Boetti. These artists have the knowledge and ability to turn water into wine, quite literally. I love the idea of working from everyday objects, which would have otherwise been overlooked. The poetic simplicity is just bliss, so conceptually I think I look up to these artists.

In terms of form, my influence shifts slightly. As I'm concerned with how things are made, I think good craftsmanship is a quality that helps sculpture prevail through time, as well as establishing a universal understanding with its audience. So my influences include Richard Deacon, and Rachael Whiteread.

When it comes to video work, the most influential artists have been Francis Alys and Roman Signer.

7/ A quel rythme travaillez vous? Produisez vous beaucoup?

I'm very disciplined when it comes to working, I think it's important to keep making, even when you think nothing's there. The best ideas come through nothingness; it's when one truly starts to play. If I'm too precious about my thoughts or time-management, my work tends to get serious and this creates a mental block on my creativity. As a result I guess I produce a lot of work! Most of which gets recycled but the few pieces that prevail are exemplary of my efforts.

8/ Pablo, vous êtes le gagnant du concours IEAA 2013. Que s'est-il passé à Dubai? Qu'avez vous retenu de cette expérience?

Being the winner of the IEAA has been a fantastic opportunity. Working with the director of the competition, we were able to present something a bit different from what the art scene in Dubai is used to by introducing both video and performance into the exhibition. As a result, people were curious to see my work at the gallery, questioning its themes and motifs with an overall openness to hear what I had to say.

I think what I will retain from my experience in Dubai was the support I received from Her Highness Sheikha Wafa Hasher AlMaktoum, and the staff at FN Designs. Everything was made possible and we were able to complete everything in time and to standard.

9/ Dans le cadre de votre séjour à Dubai, vous avez découvert le désert. Est ce la première fois que vous avez vu le désert ? Quelle perception avez vous eu du désert de Dubai ? Que vous a t-il inspiré? Avez vous réalisé / souhaitez vous réaliser des œuvres à partir de cette expérience ? Sous quelle forme ? (vidéo, photo ? etc.)

It was not my first experience of the desert, but I do think it was significantly different. When one thinks of the desert, one often thinks of it as one long and continuous plane of hills, which are uniform in color. Yet the desert in UAE actually shifts in shade and colour depending on the region. The sand used for the exhibition was from the north of Dubai so the sand was the colour of copper due to its high mineral content. Possibly the richest sand I've ever seen, I wanted to water it and watch it sprout into life!

The desert I saw and experienced in Dubai was through it's highways, which was possibly more interesting than on a camel as it continues on for miles with no end, and one can experience how arid the area actually is. We pulled over, got out of the car, and jumped right back in. Air-con is a true necessity in the area.

Sand was part of a particular series of work produced in 2011, so I feel if I returned to working with the subject of sand at this point I could be at risk of repeating myself. I am currently looking to new materials to work with.

10/ Actuellement, vous vivez en Angleterre. Quelle(s) ville(s), quel(s) pays vous intéresseraient le plus pour y développer votre art et votre carrière? Pour faire une résidence? Parlez nous également de vos origines mexicaines.

The United Kingdom has been very supportive towards my practice so far, the art scene here is very healthy and its artists are very good! Though I'm currently happy here, I'm very interested in the prospect of working in Germany, the United States or Japan as I think they have good platforms for emerging artists.

I was born and raised in Mexico and exhibited there at a young age. For the time being my art is maturing, but rest assured once matured it will return to Mexico. I think Mexico is a great place for established artists, but there is a big gap between education and a professional practice. Mexico needs to support its emerging artists through residencies, grants, and competitions to promote and ensure their success.

11/ Après votre exposition à Dubai à la Galerie FN Designs\*, vous exposerez à Singapour Galerie Vue Privée\*, Istanbul Galerie The Empire Project\* et Marseille Galerie Gourvenec Ogor\*, le circuit du gagnant de IEAA 2013. Comment percevez vous ces opportunités ?

I'm looking forward to the rest of the journey, each of these locations are new to me in terms of their art market, so visiting these sites as an exhibiting artist should be an interesting opportunity. Sometimes these experiences can help in paving the path to success as it can expose you to the appropriate market for your work to flourish in.

## 12/ Comment allez vous orienter votre travail dans le futur?

I'm currently working towards a solo show in June 2013 so my work is already developing towards a new body of work. Without giving you any spoilers, it contains a lot of sails!

In the future I would like my work to develop in a number of ways. I'm interested in the idea of chaos and asymmetry to contrast with my current body of work. I'm also looking at working with new materials, such as textiles and possibly a structural substitute to wood. I think it's important to work out of your comfort zone in order to grow and develop your work. I'm also very keen on the idea of collaborations through video, so I intend to develop that aspect of my practice as well.

### EXTRA QUESTIONS ADDED

#### What does the piece Battleships mean to you?

When making Battleships I was interested in the idea of creating a series of sculptures, which played on balance to suggest motion within my work. For this piece I thought I would build upwards on a series of intersecting rockers, and as a result the higher the sculptures got the more unstable they became. This relationship in itself is beautiful to me as the more weight or mass the sculpture carries the more uncertain is its outcome. I then decided to suspend each sculpture by placing them on an abnormally high table, with threads coming off each of the pieces, pulling them in different directions through the planks on the table. On its underside, each thread is held in tension by a clay weight. It's as if the line of each thread is drawing the different direction that the piece could take. The table itself created a dialogue between what is happening on top and the result underneath.

#### What does the piece Starboard mean to you?

This sculpture is the result of a series of studies I made on buoys. While thinking about buoys in relation to the sea, I started to wonder how they might be affected by tide. It suddenly became interesting to lift the structure from the sea. What if the tide disappeared all together, what kind of a landscape would it leave behind? The other elements within this piece are the sails, which are facing arbitrarily in all directions. It's as if they might be searching or waiting for a breeze or gust to decide their path, yet the sculpture remains still and quiet. The static quality of the sculpture is rivalled by what we know of both the tides and the wind. It's as if it's waiting in anticipation.

#### Where is the forest and the places you walked through? What is the meaning of this work to you?

The forest I walk through is called Shelley's woods and is located in West Sussex near Christ's Hospital School where I was Artist-in-Residence for two years. The woods are named after the British poet Percy Bysshe Shelley, who was also the husband of Mary Shelley the author of Frankenstein. Apparently he used to walk there for inspiration.

Sail was conceived out of two elements I wanted to combine, that of sails and chaos. I wanted to capture the strength of the wind and let it's force affect the direction in which I was walking, so I created a mechanism which I then strapped to my back. Every time there was a weather warning, we would rush outside to try and capture the gale, but obviously the wind is changeable and unpredictable so it was difficult to work with. As a result the piece is more about search and anticipation than the chaotic effects of wind on my body.