

Carte blanche PMU 2017

Règle du jeu



Elina Brotherus

Exhibition

from 27 September
to 22 October 2017
Centre Pompidou
Photography gallery



Centre **40**
Pompidou

Elina Brotherus

From 27 September to 22 October 2017

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Curation

Karolina Ziebinska-Lewandowska curator at the Centre Pompidou, assisted by Emmanuelle Etchecopar-Etchart

Project coordination

Françoise Vogt, in charge of cultural patronage at PMU

For the 8th edition of Carte blanche PMU and the 3rd at the Centre Pompidou, Elina Brotherus, a Finnish artist, has chosen to take a look at the world of the game and offers to take us to an enchanted universe using, for the first time, a second character.

“The rule of the game of a carte blanche is precisely that there is none. And even if there is one, it is there to be broken. Each edition of Carte Blanche PMU is therefore a surprise, a unique point of view, and Elina Brotherus, for her turn, plays the game of originality, totally, sometimes to the point of the absurd and the burlesque. She plays both alone and with her double. But what makes her work unique and poetic is the game of going back and forth between words and images. One must read the photos of Elina Brotherus, taking in the play of words, and the image, at first austere, becomes as light as child’s play. A must see!”

Benoît Cornu. PMU Director of communication

“The Laureate of Carte blanche PMU 2017, Elina Brotherus takes us with her new project to the enchanted world of children’s games – with one difference: two adult women are the inventors. Like two Alices in Wonderland, the artist and her dancing friend Vera Nevanlinna open the doors of new worlds in each photographic series and video. The keys to them are event scores - scenarios borrowed from Fluxus artists. A new proposition to extend the understanding of the word “game”. A word that evokes a hobby, the joy of chance, and hidden in the scenes invented by the two artists are both the playful and the absurd sides of everyday life”

Karolina Ziebinska-Lewandowska, Curator,
Photographic collection – Centre Pompidou.

The artist’s work will be exhibited at the Centre Pompidou from 27 September to 22 October 2017, in the Photography gallery, an area devoted to photography and freely accessible to the public. It will also be the subject of a book designed by Whitepapierstudio and published by Filigranes Editions: *Règle du jeu*. The artist’s works will be accompanied by texts by Abigail Solomon-Godeau, art historian, critic and exhibition curator and Karolina Ziebinska-Lewandowska – photographic collection of the Centre Pompidou.

A native of Helsinki, Finland, Elina Brotherus is represented by the gallery gb agency.

Supporting contemporary photography and the talents that make it live

4 Every year since 2010, PMU has been supporting the work of an emerging or established photographer, not by rewarding work already created but by asking them to interpret in their way the world of the game and to turn it into an image, often unexpected and always very contemporary.

A jury meets each year to audition 6 finalist artists and to choose the laureate of the Carte blanche PMU. This jury is made up of personalities from the world of art, established artists, former winners of the prize and representatives of cultural institutions. The chosen winner is quickly surrounded by a team of professionals to help them meet the tight deadline granted for the production of their carte blanche.

In addition to the 20 000 euro prize awarded to the winner, the PMU takes full responsibility for production of the works to be exhibited and the publication of a book by Editions Filigranes.

The winner's work is exhibited at the Photography gallery of the Centre Pompidou, of which PMU has been the exclusive partner since 2015. The Photography gallery at the Centre Pompidou is a permanent free exhibition space dedicated exclusively to photography. This remains very much part of the museum in the multidisciplinary path of the modern and contemporary collections but finds a new visibility thanks to the Photography gallery which allows the regular programming of four exhibitions per year, thematic or monographic, adapted to different modules: historical, transverse or contemporary.

Exhibition
Elina Brotherus
Règle du jeu

The term “règle du jeu” (“rule of the game”) contains a paradox. Indeed, the game is something spontaneous, joyful, that presupposes the existence of a margin of freedom. It is a moment of relaxation that can turn into a moment of folly. A rule presupposes, on the other hand, the presence of a restrictive scheme. The rule organises, but it also limits. It is a rationalist element. Closely related to the word “game”, it is often used in the plural because an organised game is usually subject to several rules. These dominate the game, making it lose its playful dimension. On the other hand, they awaken emotions, distinguish the winners from the losers, the best from the weak. Rules create competition, hope and disappointment.

The game subject to rules is so different from a children’s game that some languages use two words to describe them: ‘play’ and ‘game’ in English, ‘leikki’ and ‘peli’ in Finnish, ‘zabawa’ and ‘gra’ in Polish. The passage from one to the other is presented as the passage from childhood to adulthood, from carelessness to responsibility, from the impulsive to the serious. What if the passage does not take place? What if we introduced a grain of madness into serious games? Brotherus uses the ambiguity of the word and the world of games with rules - card games, chess games, board games - to draw the game towards its playful meaning. The play aspect of the word invokes references as distant as the figure of the jester in royal courts, or the *commedia dell’arte*. The two cultural phenomena had a playful function, but also a philosophical and political one. Their job was to lightly distil a sensitive message that the holder of power would never otherwise have heard. Thus, the function of political adviser occupied by certain jesters in royal courts is well known. The *commedia dell’arte*, for its part, reflected society in a schematic and exaggerated way in order to highlight its unhealthy structures.

If we limit ourselves to the 20th century, closer to our time, we have to look for the ancestors of Elina Brotherus's new piece among the Dadaists, the authors of the theatre of the absurd, but above all the artists gathered under the aegis of Fluxus, to which the author explicitly refers. It is their event scores (scenarios) that Brotherus uses as instructions for the short improvisations and stagings she produces with her friend, the dancer Vera Nevanlinna.

6 Familiar with Fluxus processes, Elina Brotherus took possession of their event scores following her meeting with the famous Berlin gallery owner René Block. For *Règle du jeu*, presented for Carte blanche PMU, Brotherus has set herself up in a duo with Vera Nevanlinna. Their long friendship dates back to their time at the Academy of Fine Arts for one, and Theatre Academy for the other. Today, Vera Nevanlinna is an independent dancer and choreographer, working with Deborah Hay, a former collaborator of Merce Cunningham and a member of the Judson Dance Theatre. The loop is almost completed, so close are the ties between the Fluxus artists and the Cunningham dancers. The fact that Brotherus interprets the event scores with Nevanlinna is decisive because before each shot, the two artists engage in an exercise that would be quite different if they did not join forces. Their starting point is the score. Then comes a collective reflection that triggers the creative process. It is fast and takes on the speed of a tennis match, a whirlwind. It only remains to find a place and to think out the outfits and the decor — always simple but refined. Taking the shots is just as fast as their design. In four months, Elina Brotherus has produced nearly sixty scenes.

While awaiting the political and critical readings of the future, in accordance with the deep sense of the buffoonery of the jester, we retain the humorous and poetic dimension of this enterprise, in which it seems that the artist has turned her back on the serious to free herself from the misfortunes of our time. However, it is not so much a question of hiding in the game as of drawing strength from squaring the irrational. This subversive strategy is often the response of the oppressed to overflowing capital, to the mechanisms of power and disembodied ideologies.



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Elina Brotherus and Vera Nevanlinna create most of their shots in the open or in bare interiors, as if to mark their rejection of the cult of consumerism. They also refuse to appear as objects of desire, and hence of consumerism — they do not use make-up and don't hide their age. This does not mean that they reject aesthetics — the images that result from their actions are resolutely beautiful, well arranged, and are a pleasure to view.

Brotherus's actions derive from the game in its festive sense, but offset from our relationship with reality. It is a break with logic that is significant. "This world in itself is not reasonable, that is all that can be said. But what is absurd is the confrontation of this irrational and the wild longing for clarity whose call echoes in the human heart," wrote Albert Camus in the *Myth of Sisyphus*.¹

extracts from the catalogue text
by Karolina Ziebinska-Lewandowska

* Fluxus, inspired by the sources of Dadaism on the one hand, and Far Eastern culture on the other (Zen, Buto), was born at the beginning of the 1960s in the United States among the pupils of John Cage, who were taking courses at the New School for Social Research. This movement, which refuses to define itself as such, expresses itself in particular at Fluxus festivals organised in Europe and the United States, and

through the magazine Fluxus. It is characterised by a strong desire to denounce the commercial status and the inconsistency of the museum's status of the artwork.

1 — Albert Camus, *Le Mythe de Sisyphus*, Gallimard, coll. Folio essais, 1993, p. 39

**biography
of the artist**
Elina Brotherus

© Elina Brotherus, 2012



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“I can’t help observing that work is built in cycles, depending on where life leads us. I started with autobiographical portraits, at the very beginning of my career, while I was still in art school. At that time, I finished my university studies in chemistry and my first marriage. It was a total liberation, in all respects, and that could be seen in my photography. Then, for ten years, I became interested in painting, in how artists perceive their models and how that is represented in the image. I used myself as a model, but the photos did not evoke what was going on in my life. I was a manufacturer of images who dealt with formal and visual themes, and those related to the history of art. Then, as I approached my forties, life became complicated and autobiography reappeared in my work. This is part of my strategy as an artist: accepting images that demand to be created. In my current work, I am interested in the performance side of photography and in space as a stage where an action sometimes turns into absurdity.”

Elina Brotherus, of Finnish origin, has been sharing her time since 1999 between France and her native country. She lives and works in Helsinki and in Avallon in the Yonne. She holds a Master's degree in Photography from the University of Arts and Design in Helsinki (now Aalto University) (2000) and a Master of Science in Chemistry from the University of Helsinki (1997).

She started to exhibit internationally in 1998. In 2017, she will have personal exhibitions, among others, at the Turku museum of fine arts, Finland, at Mindepartement and photographic centre in Stockholm, at Norrtälje Konsthall in Sweden and at Contretype de Bruxelles. Other recent solo exhibitions include Le Pavillon Populaire in Montpellier, the Fotohof in Salzburg (2016), gb agency, Paris, Martin Asbaek Gallery, Copenhagen (2015), The Wapping Project Bankside, London (2014), the Mois de la Photo in Montreal, and Photo Phnom Penh (2013).

Recent group exhibitions include the Bibliothèque nationale de France (2017), Musée Nicéphore Niépce, Chalon-sur-Saône, FRAC Haute-Normandie, Institut d'art contemporain, Villeurbanne (2016), Palazzo della Ragione, Milan, Neue Berliner Kunstverein, Serlachius Museum in Finland, Brandts Museum of art and visual culture, Odense, Denmark, the Ateneum National Gallery of Finland (2015), 'Le19' CRAC Montbéliard, Belfast Exposed, Fotografie Forum Frankfurt, Museum of Contemporary Photography in Chicago, Tri Postal in Lille (2014), The Photographers' Gallery, London, Kiasma Museum for contemporary art in Helsinki (2013), Louisiana Museum of modern art in Denmark and Bozar Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels (2012).

Her works appear in public collections such as the National Centre for Plastic Arts (CNAP) in France, the National Audiovisual Centre in Luxembourg, the Lambert Collection in Avignon, the Fundación ARCO in Madrid, the Kadist Foundation in Paris, the Hasselblad Centre in Gothenburg, the Koç Foundation in Istanbul, the MAC / VAL Museum of Contemporary Art in Val-de-Marne, the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Strasbourg, the Moderna Museet in Stockholm, Museum Folkwang, Essen, Museum of L'Elysée in Lausanne, Museo Nazionale delle arti del XXI secolo (MAXXI) in Rome, Société Générale in Paris, and the Finnish Photography Museum in Helsinki. She has received several awards, including the Niépce des Gens d'image prize in 2005, the Finnish State Prize for Photography in 2008, and nomination for the 2017 Elysée Prize.

**Elina Brotherus has been chosen
for Carte blanche PMU 2017
by a jury made up of:**

Paula Aisemberg

Director of the Maison Rouge

Benoît Cornu

PMU Director of communication

President of the jury

Fannie Escoulen

Independent exhibition curator

Nicolas Ferrand

collector

Founder of Quotidien de l'Art

Thierry Fontaine

winning photographer for Carte blanche PMU 2015

Valérie Jouve

photographer

Sam Stourdzé

Director of Rencontres d'Arles

Françoise Vogt

in charge of cultural patronage at PMU

and Karolina Ziebinska-Lewandowska

curator at the Centre Pompidou – photographic collection.

More information at carteblanchepmu.fr

**the Photography Gallery
of the Centre Pompidou**

Area
200m²

Access
Free admittance,
Forum -1



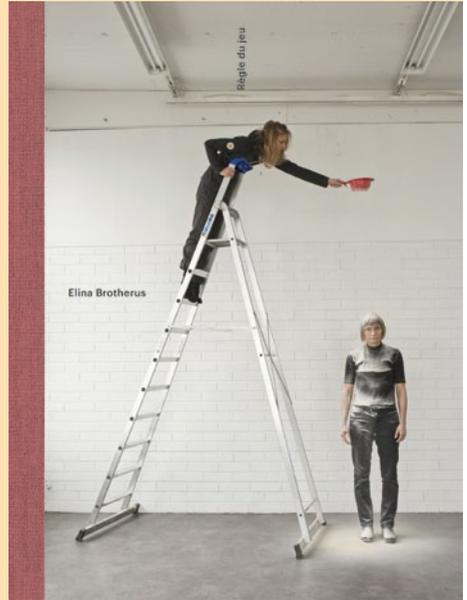
There is a major photographic presence at the Centre Pompidou with nearly 400 photographs exhibited in the multidisciplinary pathway of the museum's modern and contemporary collections. While maintaining this presence alongside other disciplines, the Photography Gallery presents the full scope, richness and diversity of the Centre Pompidou's collection in this field.

The annual programme for this new exhibition space is arranged around three themes:

- Modern photography from the 1920s to 1930s,
- Contemporary photographic creation from the 1980s until now,
- A thematic and transversal approach tackling some of the major questions of the art of the 20th and 21st centuries.

Publication Règle du jeu

Elina Brotherus
A book designed
by whitepapierstudio
published by
éditions Filigranes



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Visuals free of copyright for the press

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Improvise with paper © Elina Brotherus
Carte blanche PMU 2017



Balloon Dash © Elina Brotherus / Carte blanche PMU 2017

Flux Harpsichord Concert © Elina Brotherus
Carte blanche PMU 2017



Look intensely at somebody's hand © Elina Brotherus / Carte blanche PMU 2017





Orange event © Elina Brotherus / Carte blanche PMU 2017



Passing music for a tree © Elina Brotherus / Carte blanche PMU 2017

Yellow ball © Elina Brotherus / Carte blanche PMU 2017



Regardez-moi, ça suffit © Elina Brotherus
Carte blanche PMU 2017



I am here differently than a toothbrush
© Elina Brotherus / Carte blanche PMU 2017



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Hôtel de Ville, Rambuteau
opening hours
Exhibition open from 11am to 9pm
every day, except Tuesday di

Photography gallery

Forum, level -1
Free admittance

coming soon at the Photography gallery of the Centre Pompidou

Photographisme

Ifert, Klein, Zamecznik
8 November 2017 — 29 January 2018

The Centre Pompidou is devoting an original exhibition to its collections based on the history of the relationship between photography and the graphic arts. Initiated at the beginning of the 20th century, the dialogue became very intense between 1945 and 1969.

The actors of this plastic awareness, in the United States and in Europe, were inspired by the precepts of the Bauhaus. Their experiments — photomontages, photograms, luminous drawings — live through advertising, publications, records... Gérard Ifert (Basel, 1929), William Klein (New York, 1928) and Wojciech Zamecznik (Warsaw, 1923-1967) invented, in the 1950s and 1960s, new forms of “photo-graphic” expression. By capturing luminous vibrations, editing effects and colour schemes, they endeavoured to transcribe the dynamic sensations of their time: speed, crowd experience, mobility.

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Wojciech ZAMECZNIK
*Study for the poster of the 8th
Exhibition of Polish Photography, 1959*
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