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Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster

CENTRE POMPIDOU



Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, *Splendide Hotel (annexe)*, 2015, mixed media. Installation view. Photo: Grégoire Vieille.

In 1977, a twelve-year-old Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster visited Marcel Duchamp's exhibition at the newly opened Centre Pompidou. Evoking this seminal experience at the threshold to her own Pompidou survey thirty-eight years later, Gonzalez-Foerster adhered to a life-size transparent photograph of Duchamp's show to a street-facing glass wall and retrofitted the abutting exhibition space with elements of the museum's original decor. Inside this installation, *Espace 77*, 2015, viewers stand on period gray carpeting amid Michel Cadestin's *President* armchairs and look through ghostly images of Duchamp's *Fountain*, 1917/1964, and *Large Glass*, 1915–23, at the outside world. The eerie mise-en-scène (a collaboration with Philippe Parreno) merges past with present, confuses interior and exterior spaces, and conflates memory with reality. It is but one of many wormholes in Gonzalez-Foerster's time-traveling retrospective.

Though the works on view date from 1985 through 2015, the time frame of the exhibition extends well beyond these thirty years. The show's curator, Emma Lavigne—the director of Centre Pompidou Metz—bracketed instead the wide-ranging period evoked in the artist's work through the show's title, "Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster: 1887–2058." In one sense, the oldest work is *Splendide Hotel (annexe)*, 2015, a variation on *Splendide Hotel*, 2014, Gonzalez-Foerster's recent installation at Madrid's Palacio de Cristal, in which Thonet-style rocking chairs, an Oriental carpet, and a gramophone provided a fin-de-siècle ambiance in which to peruse catalogues of 1887 events such as the Palacio de Cristal's construction and the opening of the Hotel Splendide in Lugano, Switzerland. Meanwhile, several stories above, the artist's vision of the future can be seen on the Pompidou's fifth-floor terrace: *Dublinsca*, 2002, a foursome of blue and yellow metal bunk beds (a book set on each mattress-less frame) beside Alexander Calder's large stabile *Nageoire* (Fin), 1964, is a scaled-down version of Gonzalez-Foerster's 2008–2009 installation *TH.2058*, which envisages Tate Modern's Turbine Hall circa 2058 as a postapocalyptic bunker filled with metal beds and facsimiles of public sculptures by Calder. Citing herself, extending her practice beyond her own lifetime, and invading the museum's permanent collection, Gonzalez-Foerster breaks free from the temporal and physical constraints of a traditional retrospective.

The artist's boomeranging through time and space yields a variety of landscapes, including an audible rain forest (*Promenade*, 2007); a desert where books are an endangered species (*Chronotypes & Dioramas [Desertic]*, 2009/2015); and an otherworldly digital light and sound show (*Cosmodrome*, 2001). Several domestic tableaux, however, deliver the most compelling alternate realities. *Une chambre en ville* (A Room in Town), 1996, a carpeted room containing a landline phone, a small TV, and an alarm clock radio, is a poignant time capsule illustrating modern alienation. Theatrical environments such as *RWF (chambre)*, 1993, a brown leather and velvet bedroom inspired by Rainer Werner Fassbinder, and *Nos années 70 (chambre)* [The 70s (Room)], 1992, a re-creation of the artist's parents'

Michael Werner

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hippie bedroom, invite viewers to try on new roles.

The artist herself has done no less, impersonating real and fictional people (Lola Montez, Bob Dylan, Scarlett O'Hara) in photographs and films. The most haunting incarnation was *M.2062 (Fitzcarraldo)*, 2014, a flickering hologram in which she plays Klaus Kinski playing the title role of Werner Herzog's 1982 film, *Fitzcarraldo*, singing the aria "Vesti la giuba" (Put on the Costume) from *Pagliacci* while dressed in a white suit with a matching shock of blonde hair. In contrast, with *Euqinimod & Costumes*, 2014, the artist finally reveals herself. Re-creating her 2014 show at New York's 303 Gallery, Gonzalez-Foerster has hung personal clothing items on Shaker-style wooden pegs across four walls. This self-portrait spanning the 1960s to the present includes a childhood dress, bespoke Balenciaga, a red leather jacket, and an impressive collection of striped-T shirts (a nod to the clichéd image of the French artiste). As its title suggests (*Euqinimod* is the artist's name spelled backward), this work is a mirror image of Gonzalez-Foerster's many selves.

—[Mara Hoberman](#)

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