

**a-part**  
**festival international**  
**dart contemporain**  
**alpi les provence**

# 5 years a-part!

A festival dedicated to visual arts, free in all its venues! Quite a bet indeed, especially we're not talking about a museum or art center's program. It all started in December 2009 when I was asked by local politicians desperately seeking a cultural project to get their cities caught in the huge net of Marseille-Provence European Cultural Capital 2013. I chose to organize a complex summer Festival for living visual artists in several venues of the Alpilles. Sole of its kind, **a-part** was to be a full-fledged contemporary art festival with installations, performances, shows, discussions, and parties during which most of the artists can be seen in the opening week.

Thanks to the generosity of all the artists, the adventure did begin in July 2010. Year after year, public and private local sponsors made the next four editions possible. And with the help of the area residents, adapting a system learnt working with Christo and Jeanne-Claude, I secured each partnership adapting to each partner. Ultimately merging those many individual projects into one fairly big Festival. Since all invited curators and coordinators are volunteers, the budget is restricted to the inevitable service providers. Yet, most of the work probably falls upon me, it may be a lot, but the reward is worthwhile. It is full of adventures that go far beyond the brevity of a summer fest. Trust do build up, as well as the audience which keeps coming back, year after year to get closer to each original artistic expression.

World-famous Provence with its Alpilles hills are lilliputian mountains of incredible beauty, where over 2000 years of human history have scattered architectural traces of spectacular value: abbeys in hidden valleys, former huge limestone quarries, ruined castles, oil mills, XVIII-century mansions, all exceptional and very much "**a-part**". Therefore, the festival audience comes to admire these venues as much as the artistic works. No one is insensible to such unit and powerful combination. So true that, thanks to a-part's interventions, bewitched, some artists even depart willingly from the art market harsh logic to leave a trace in such transcendent surrounding at the request of local residents, turned patrons of the arts.

Five years later, roads have been shared, new bonds made. Nowadays, art foundations, foreign cultural entities and private galleries are getting involved, wanting to invite the Festival outside of the Alpilles. There is no better recognition for such micro-managed Festival. It proves, if needed, that micro-management can be developed in the contemporary art field, because or in spite of the present world crisis.



LA SOLITUDE EST UNE SURFACE UNIFORME



# Praise of the unexpected

## 5 years head over heels

At midnight on August 31, 2014, when the dialogues with Goya end and the artists' flags stop flapping in the wind of the Alpilles, what will remain in our minds of the first five editions of the festival **a-part**? Myriads of caffeine-loaded images and words, smiles and rants, surprising discoveries and paradoxical encounters, visions of flowing wines, slipping clichés and striking installations.

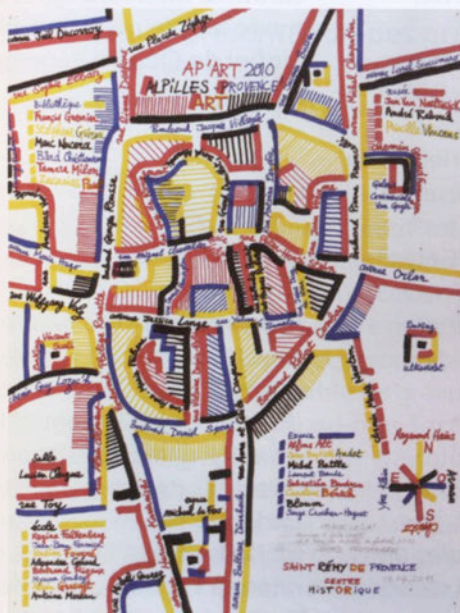
First to come to my mind is what happened on July, 10, 2011 at 7:30 pm: following Leila's spontaneous instruction, Ben, Gérard Fromanger, Michel Onfray together with a joyful audience moved all the chairs of the overcrowded city council room of Saint-Rémy-de-Provence down the staircase to improvise a debate on the square under the unbelieving gaze of the city officials. Then lots of images scattered from 2010 till 2014... Among them, Robert Combas remixing the abandoned school kids clothes into his black mental monsters in the school yard of La République... Daniel Spoerri spreading the walls of the upper floor of the Cordeliers cloister with hundreds of disused kitchenware, all darwiningly connected through his vision... Scenocosme making plants sing when stroked by the visitors in the Château des Alpilles... The upper-case woman, ORLAN, spreading wild hybridations, from an over-inflated harlequin-painted stretched-limo to the MRI images of exuberant mutations seen in l'Hôtel de Manville... The lower-case man, mounir fatmi, answering back with a bliding gigantic flower made with photocopiers and Salman Rushdie sleeping in the depth of Post Tenebras Lux... Five young people dancing to the rythms of the flood of colors, forms and sounds of Miguel Chevalier in the Carrières-de-Lumières... Two wide-eyed ladies staring at Claudio Parmiggiani's ladder thrusting to the sky from the top of a hill next to Pierredon Abbey... And last, fuelled by some foie gras and a very old cognac at the Domaine d'Altavès, remembering the laugh of Pascal Schmitt, the virtualist who left us for unknown skies on Dec,13, 2013, 13 minutes past midnight. Hail to the rebel.

For the past five years, **a-part** has been a totally exceptional festival. Out-of-line. Totally free, because refusing all elitism. Exploring every facet of contemporary art, from ceramics to digital art, from street art to video and drawing. Not everything achieves perfection. Some pieces disappoint, too easy or too difficult. Other pieces delight some while they let others cold. Out-of-line is the name of the game. Not the dull certainty of some aesthetic coterie, but a perpetual immersion into the most exhilarating unknow. That's the key to these unexpected moments, intriguing or magical encounters which will crowd the memory of the festival-goers for a long time.

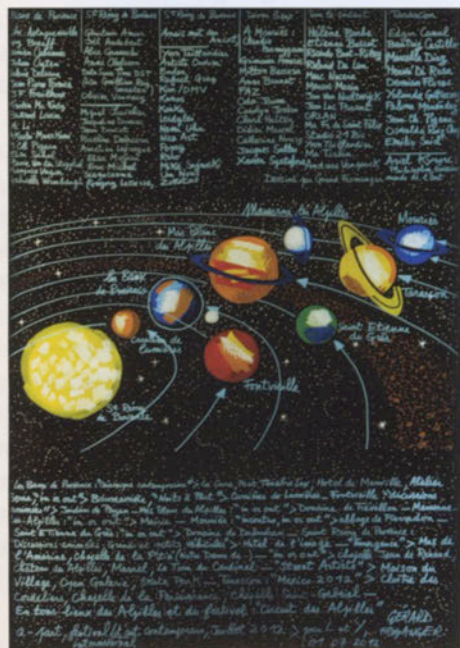
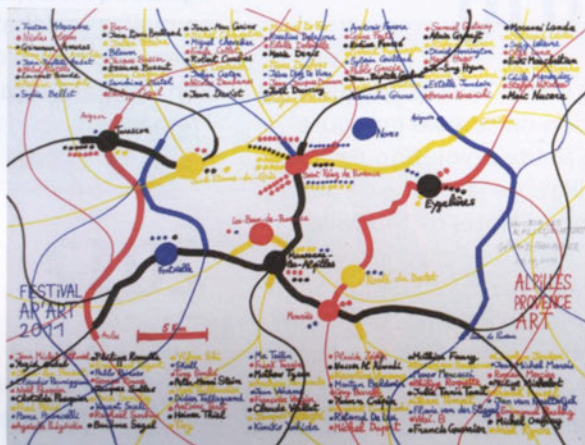
Ariel Kyrou, curator



# festival a-part les éditions précédentes



Pour chaque édition, Gérard Fromanger offre aux festivaliers son affiche du festival. Éditée en 1000 exemplaires, elle est gracieusement mise à la disposition de tous les visiteurs.





## Grimanesa Amorós

*Golden Uros*, 2011, Installation au sol, 390, 200, 35 cm, Chapelle de la Persévérance, Tarascon; 2012, Installation verticale 396, 216, 40 cm, Oustau de Baumanière, Les Baux-de-Provence Grimanesa Amorós Studio Rendering ©de l'artiste



MOMENTS a-part

