

STROLL



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MENTAL LANDSCAPE

How can one think about and make a group exhibition today? This is one of the questions this publication could answer based on the experience of Balthazar Lovay, a Swiss artist and a co-founder of the independent art space Hard Hat in Geneva. Invited to organize an exhibition at Le Manoir de Martigny in the Swiss Alps, he responded by creating a kind of mental universe in which left and right cerebral cortexes could at last talk to each other. To achieve this, he brought together, in a transversal and non-authoritarian manner, 60 international and local artists, photographers, and press cartoonists, and juxtaposed contemporary artworks with medieval devotional relics and so-called "art brut." For example, Max Ernst's "Histoire naturelle" converses with carnival masks; New-York-based artists Guyton/Walker are hung next to a 14th-century polychrome Christ. As the curator writes: "The result creates confrontations or, more precisely, situations. These are not directive, but open and suggestive. Hence, on the surface, there is an exhibition that could be the image of my personal museum and, in an underlying way, a more general questioning about art. Most important for me was to make a non-hierarchical proposal, by taking the risk of flirting with this big load of nonsense."

As a literary extension of the exhibition "Adventure, Reflection, and Ambush," this book offers a photo-report of the successive sections ("Fantastic Paraphrenia," "Mental Landscape (Before Dying)," etc.) and a conversation between Balthazar Lovay and Swiss art critic and curator Daniel Baumann, co-curator of the Carnegie International 2013. The reader can drift through the book as the visitor drifted through the exhibition.

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