

BEN VAUTIER

introspection

truth art & sex

Personal Structures Art Projects # 07

BEN VAUTIER

INTROSPECTION TRUTH ART & SEX

This book is the documentation of *Personal Structures Art Projects # 07*. It has been published as a limited edition. The edition comprises 100 copies of which 50 DeLuxe, numbered from 1 to 50, and 50 DeLuxe hors commerce, numbered from I to L. In addition, there have been created 10 Artist Proofs, numbered from 1 to 10. Each item of this limited edition consists of a book and a DVD about Ben Vautier with the authors in a case, housed together in a cassette. The edition is signed by the artist and additionally contains a mirror with a text by Ben.

This limited edition has been divided as follows:

1-50: DeLuxe edition: Luiscius Antiquarian Booksellers, Netherlands

HC I-L: Not for trade

AP # 1-10: Ben Vautier

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Design by Ben Vautier, Karlyn De Jongh & Sarah Gold

Printed and bound under the direction of Andreas Krüger, Germany

Production in coöperation with Christien Bakx, www.luiscius.com

Published by GlobalArtAffairs Foundation, www.globalartaffairs.org



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KARLYN DE JONGH
SARAH GOLD

BEN WITH SARAH & KARLYN

Here is the story

In 1976 John Armleder proposed me a show in Geneva
in his gallery "Ecart"

I remember we both at the time agreed on
the theme of "Introspection"

What about introspection?

I was (since 1961) and I am still

interested in Truth as a material in art

Some work with coca cola bottles, others paint all blue

I thought I would use "TRUTH" (as my material)

Objective and subjective truths

Objective truth could be "this painting weighs 150 grams"

A subjective truth could be "I am jealous of Boltanski"

In 1976 my truth searching brought me to
that I should start looking into myself

So I exposed around 17 paintings, which we called
"Introspection"

My difficulty to be truthful

My ambition to want to change everything

My desire to be the only one

My incapacity to stop

My shame of being here
My fear of repeating myself
My dissatisfaction of the present time
My anger not to be able to change
My pretension to think I have found something
My jealousy of others
My cowardice to want to please
My anguish to leave others indifferent
My obsession of loneliness
My tiredness of daily life
My hidden sexuality
My doubting of myself
My will to be different
What happened next is that in 2013
Jon Hendricks asked me on the phone
if I wanted to participate in the Venice Biennale
with SARAH AND KARLYN AT PALAZZO BEMBO
I said "of course yes"
And decided to go into the experience
as the continuation of my work on introspection
I would call the piece
Introspection Truth Art & Sex
And would find out more truths about myself and sex
So, Sarah and Karlyn came to Nice
Undressed, kissed me and said "we are ready"
It was just like passing an examination
to enter the army

Nitsch had succeeded by crucifying Sarah and Karlyn
Arnulf Rainer succeeds
and even fell head over heels into painting them
It was as if we were playing rugby
Jon had passed on the ball to me
I had caught the ball with a smile
And now a bit anxious
Was playing in X-Files?
Or Love Story?
Trying not to drown
Swimming on the surface
It was a great experience
I, Ben, the great sex maniac
The Ben who writes everywhere: "let's fuck" or "I love women"
started feeling shy and lost
I did not expect Sarah and Karlyn
to be so wonderful smiling, and beautiful etc
I was shy and embarrassed
and started talking about art
So, we made a film with Anna Byskov
And I finished up by writing
I am afraid
I am naked
I am all alone
Am I showing off?
If everything is art, is sex art too?
If everything is art, is feeling lost art too?

If everything is art, is taking pleasure in putting red paint
on Karlyn's body art too?

Am I trying to be truthful or am I trying to take pleasure?

I am getting a hard on

Am I guilty?

Do I feel guilty?

Why should I feel guilty?

Who decides for me?

Is Annie making love to another man?

Ben, July 2013

BEN IN VENICE

First of all the facts:

During the Venice Biennale

I am invited to participate

in a space of 5 x 5 meters

with a performance, film, photos or pieces

at Palazzo Bembo on the Grand Canal

a work created in collaboration

with Sarah and Karlyn

two very beautiful women

Curious, with Galdin, we go to check out

Venice

the Grand Canal

It is always impressive even when it is raining

A very big palace just next to Rialto Bridge

It will happen during the Biennale

There is a given theme

Two beautiful and sexy women

would love to create a piece with me

THE TITLE: "ART SEX AND INTROSPECTION"

I who always speak about the limits of art

will I fear the limits of sex in art?

Am I ridiculous?

Why is it wrong?

The sex in my head is difficult
If I accepted, it is because
I declaim everywhere that I seek for the truth
that I love women
So, to not contradict myself,
this is an exercise in introspection
What is going on in my macho head
when the girl says yes?
Prepare 34 questions
The result is unexpected
Why did I put myself into this mess?
If everything is art
it is impossible to ignore sex
Also Duchamp has not ignored it
I should make a film
Almost porn
All around, there will be panels, which I will hold in my hands
Panels to create
Disgusting old man
A disgusting old man with beautiful young women
What to do?
A cage: the two women and I inside
three mattresses on the floor
Easier to say and write than to act
The limits of art
We never go until the end

I find myself facing my own contradictions
I who run after women
and harass them
Here are two beautiful women who tell me

“Ok, let’s go”
Will I chicken out?
The anguish of the mirror
of he who is lying to himself for years
caught up in the cycle of his life
I am in trouble
I am used to being
the wolf in the Walt Disney cartoon
panting with his tongue out
Today
the situation changes
Beautiful *pépée* [young woman]
saying, “so, are you coming?”
And I turn around
Sorry
What is it about?
But I do accept
So why?
Because I love the challenge

I AM LOOKING FOR AN IDEA
No art without sex
A cage, two women and a man in the cage
ANOTHER IDEA
10 mirrors with texts on ego
ANOTHER IDEA
5 models on the ground like corpses
covered with a white sheet, you can barely see their faces
The label reads Lawrence Weiner, Kosuth,
On Kawara, and one sentence on the wall:
This is what happened to those who...

Good idea but I dare not to do it

MY FINAL IDEA

Place my six paintings of the 1976 Introspection's series
on the wall

Then

Create and project

a film about me with Sarah and Karlyn

a true interview between Sarah, Ben and Karlyn

at a round table

With the help of small panels

the situation may degenerate

Replace my cock by the truth

This is the cycle

We play psychiatrists

Reichian sickness

But it is in order to make the Schmilblick move

I am the perfect guinea pig

Mysterious beautiful women

Beautiful palace

Who manipulates who?

Will I chicken out?

How do I get out?

It seems that 84 year old Arnulf Rainer

became addicted

If I say yes, it is to

make other artists jealous

The title is decided upon

INTROSPECTION SEX AND TRUTH

I am waiting for what follows

The competition will be tough

Lawrence Weiner had the entire floor downstairs

And what if I would have said no?

Venice Biennale

Egos sharpen their knives

I am invited to exhibit

with Sarah and Karlyn, if I want to

We will all be completely naked

I have doubts

The theme

"Introspection sex truth and art"

What to do?

A game of truth

Truth and sex

Who manipulates who?

Will I chicken out?

How do I get out?

It seems that the 84 year old Arnulf Rainer

became addicted

If I said yes

Three reasons

To not chicken out

To seek the truth

And then: this is Venice

I decided on

8 canvasses about introspection (1976)

and a film with Sarah and Karlyn

filmed by Anna Byskov

An exercise in introspection

What is happening in my macho head

when the girl says yes?

The sex in my head is difficult
I love Annie
All the other assholes seem monstrous
Strange greedy animals come from another world
to grab my little cock
Can I undress you?
Do I desire you?
What if I cannot make love?
Can we stay on desire?
Can I touch your breasts?
Can I go to sleep?
And snore?
Usually an exhibition with a given theme
is not a problem for me
This one is
How to make something new?
To be myself?
And not to lie to myself?
And to speak about sex?
I am in shit
The women scare me
I will talk about it with Doglio
and take Annie
to protect me

VENICE

It is always impressive even when it is raining
A very big palace on the Grand Canal
It is during the Biennale
I was offered a room
I do not know how to fill it

Two beautiful and sexy women would love to create a piece with me
I am looking for an idea
A cage, two women and a man in the cage
10 mirrors with texts about ego, about sex
The competition is tough
Lawrence Weiner has the entire floor downstairs
Another idea:
Place 5 models on the ground like corpses covered with a white sheet,
you can barely see their faces and you read on the label Lawrence
Weiner, Kosuth, On Kawara, and one single sentence on the wall:
This is what happened to those who copy
Good idea but I dare not to do it
Another idea: a boudoir room, 3 armchairs, a carpet, a round table
and show a film about me with Sarah and Kalyn, a true interview
And if I would have said no
it would be the first time in my life that I would hide from glory
However
I love THE CHALLENGE to make a book and a work about sex with
Sarah and Karlyn
I who speak about the limits of art
Would I be afraid of the limits of sex?
To pose naked?
Two very beautiful women but what will happen to my cock?
I could do without it
Humanity could do without it
So stop making yourself trouble, Ben

VENICE

Important
I find myself facing my own contradictions
I run after women, I harass them and *voilà*

two women who tell me: "let's go"
and it is me who chickens out
The anguish of the mirror
of he who lies to himself for years
caught up in the cycle of his life
No valid reason
I am in trouble
Usually, I am the wolf in the Walt Disney cartoon
panting with the tongue out
Today
the situation changes
The macho chickens out
The beautiful *pépée* tells me: "so, are you coming?"
And I turn around
It is what it is

Ben, January-May 2013

BEN À VENISE

D'abord les faits:
Durant la Biennale de Venise
on m'invité à participer
dans un espace de 5 mètres sur 5
avec une performance, film, photos ou pièces
dans le Palazzo Bembo sur le Grand Canal
une pièce réalisée en collaboration
avec Sarah et Karlyn
deux très belles femmes
Curieux avec Galdin nous partons en reconnaissance
à Venise
le Grand Canal
Ça fait toujours de l'effet même sous la pluie
Un très grand palais juste après le pont du Rialto
Ça se passera durant la Biennale
Il y a un thème imposé
Deux femmes très belles et sexy
aimeraient réaliser une pièce avec moi
LE TITRE: «ART SEXE ET INTROSPECTION»
Moi qui parle toujours des limites de l'art
aurais-je peur des limites du sexe en art?

Suis-je ridicule?
En quoi est-ce mal?

Le sexe dans ma tête est difficile
Si j'ai accepté c'est parce que
je déclame partout que je cherche la vérité
que j'aime les femmes
Alors pour ne pas me contredire,
c'est un exercice d'introspection
Que se passe t'il dans ma tête de macho
quand la fille dit oui?
Préparez 34 questions
Le résultat est inattendu
Pourquoi me suis-je mis dans ce pétrin?
Si tout est art
impossible d'ignorer le sexe
Duchamp non plus ne l'a pas ignoré
Je suis sensé tourner un film
Presque porno
Autour il y aura des panneaux que je tiendrai à la main
Panneaux à faire
Vieux dégoutant
A disgusting old man with beautiful young women
Que faire?
Une cage: les deux femmes avec moi dedans
trois matelas au sol
Plus facile à dire à écrire qu'à faire
Le limites de l'art
On ne va jamais jusqu'au bout

Je me trouve face à mes contradictions
Moi qui cours après les femmes
et qui les harcèle
Voilà deux belles femmes qui me disent

«ok allons-y»
Vais-je me dégonfler?
L'angoisse du miroir
de celui qui se ment à lui-même depuis des années
pris dans l'engrenage de sa vie
Je suis dans le pétrin
Je suis d'habitude
le loup dans la bande dessinée de Walt Disney
haletant avec la langue dehors
Aujourd'hui
la situation se retourne
La belle pépée
dit «alors tu viens?»
Et moi je me retourne
Excusez-moi
De quoi s'agit-il?
Mais j'accepte
Alors pourquoi?
Parce que j'aime le défi

JE CHERCHE UNE IDÉE

Pas d'art sans sexe
Une cage deux femmes et un homme dans la cage
UNE AUTRE IDEE
10 miroirs avec des textes sur l'ego
UNE AUTRE IDEE
5 mannequins au sol comme des cadavres
recouvertes d'un drap blanc on voit à peine leur visage
On lit sur l'étiquette Lawrence Weiner, Kosuth,
On Kawara, et au mur une seule phrase:
voici ce qui est arrivé à ceux qui...

Bonne idée mais je ne vais pas oser le faire

MA DERNIÈRE IDÉE

Mettre au mur mes six tableaux
de la série Introspection 1976

Puis

Réaliser et projeter

un film de moi avec Sarah et Karlyn

un interview vérité entre Sarah, Ben et Karlyn
autour d'une table ronde

Avec l'aide de petits panneaux

la situation peut dégénérer

Remplacer ma bite par la vérité

C'est l'engrenage

On joue les psychiatres

Maladifs Reichien

Mais c'est pour faire avancer le Schmilblick

Je suis le parfait cobaye

Mystère belles femmes

Beau palais

Qui manipule qui?

Vais-je me dégonfler

Comment m'en sortir?

Il paraît qu'à 84 ans Arnulf Rainer

est devenu accro

Si je dis oui c'est pour

rendre les autres artistes jaloux

On décide du titre

INTROSPECTION SEXE ET VÉRITÉ

J'attends la suite

La concurrence sera dure

Lawrence Weiner a tout l'étage du bas

Et si je disais non?

Biennale de Venise

Les égos aiguissent leur couteau

On m'invite à exposer

avec Sarah et Karlyn si je le veux

On sera tous tout nus

J'ai des doutes

Le thème

«Introspection sexe vérité et art»

Que faire?

Un jeu de la vérité

Vérité et sexe

Qui manipule qui?

Vais-je me dégonfler?

Comment m'en sortir?

Il paraît qu'à 84 ans Arnulf Rainer

est devenu accro

Si j'ai dit oui

Trois raisons

Ne pas me dégonfler

Chercher la vérité

Et puis: c'est Venise

J'ai donc opté pour

8 toiles sur l'introspection (1976)

et un film avec Sarah et Karlyn

tourné par Anna Byskov

Un exercice d'introspection

Que se passe-t'il dans ma tête de macho

quand la fille dit oui?

Le sexe dans ma tête est difficile
J'aime d'Annie
Tous les autres cons me semblent monstrueux
D'étranges animaux gloutons venus d'un autre monde
pour dévorer ma petite bite
Can I undress you?
Do I desire you?
What if I cannot make love?
Can we stay on desire?
Can I touch your breasts?
Can I go to sleep?
And snore?
D'habitude une expo thème
ne me pose pas de problème
Celle-ci oui
Comment faire du nouveau?
Être moi-même?
Et ne pas me mentir?
Et parler de sexe?
Je suis dans la merde
Les femmes me font peur
Je vais en parler à Doglio
et faire venir Annie pour
me protéger

VENISE

Ça fait toujours de l'effet même sous la pluie
Un très grand palais sur le bord du Grand Canal
C'est durant la Biennale
On me propose une chambre
Je ne sais pas quoi y mettre

Deux femmes très belles et sexy aimeraient réaliser une pièce avec moi
Je cherche une idée
Une cage et deux femmes et un homme dans la cage
10 miroirs avec des textes sur l'ego, sur le sexe
La concurrence est dure
Lawrence Weiner a tout l'étage du bas
Une autre idée:
Mettre 5 mannequins au sol comme des cadavres recouvertes
d'un drap blanc on voit à peine leur visage, on lit sur l'étiquette
Lawrence Weiner, Kosuth, On Kawara, et au mur une seule phrase:
Voici ce qui est arrivé à ceux qui copient.
Bonne idée mais je ne vais pas oser le faire
Une autre idée: un salon boudoir, 3 fauteuils, un tapis, une
table ronde et projeter un film de moi avec Sarah et Karlyn, une
interview vérité
Et si je disais non
première fois de ma vie où je refuge la gloire
Par contre
J'aime LE DEFI de réaliser un livre et une oeuvre sexe avec
Sarah et Karlyn
Moi qui parle de limites de l'art
Aurai-je peur des limites du sexe?
De poser nue?
Deux très belles femmes mais où est passé ma bite?
Je pourrais m'en passer
Humanité pourrait s'en passer
Donc arrête de te faire du soucis, Ben

VENISE

Important

Je me trouve face à mes contradictions

Je cours après les femmes, je les harcèle et voilà
deux femme qui me disent «allons-y»
et moi qui me dégonfle
L'angoisse du miroir
du celui qui se ment depuis des années
prit dans l'engrenage de sa vie
Aucune raison valable
Je suis dans le pétrin
D'habitude je suis comme le loup
dans la bande dessinée de Walt Disney
haletant la langue dehors
Aujourd'hui
la situation se retourne
Le macho se dégonfle
La belle pépée me dit: «alors tu viens?»
Et moi je me retourne
C'est de quoi qu'il s'agit

Ben, Janvier-Mai 2013

INTROSPECTION ON BEN

Sarah Gold: This is introspection on Ben.

Ben Vautier: Introspection... This is a nice word 'introspection'. I'm looking at myself in the mirror and I'm hoping I change, and the more I look at myself, the more I see a stupid old man who is always the same and cannot change. So, art is change, but we cannot change; we are just the same.

Karlyn De Jongh: I think you are too afraid of change. You do not seem to go into reality, you do not act.

BV: I would be a serial killer, if I could change. I would kill humanity.

SG: Why would you kill humanity?

BV: Because all humanity is ego. We cannot get rid off ego.

KDJ: What means ego?

BV: Ego means you cannot get rid off thinking: I, I, I... I want this, I am there, I am here. *Je suis, je suis, je...* Always 'I'.

KDJ: But you are, your work is about that. You are 'I'.

BV: But I do not want to be. That is why I want to become a serial killer.

SG: Are you a jealous person?

BV: I am jealous of other artists, never of women. Not 'never', really... I say I am not jealous, but maybe I am jealous of my wife

fucking with someone else, that could be... It excites me, it excites me but at the same time that it excites me, it gives me anguish, both... It goes up and down.

KDJ: So why are you jealous? Is it because you cannot do it yourself?

BV: Because you do not want to do it with me. No, no... It is because I cannot do it myself. I am jealous, because... it's complicated.

SG: Are you afraid?

BV: We are always afraid. Afraid of being oneself, afraid of death, afraid of losing or not being who we want to be, afraid of wanting to be another.

KDJ: Who do you want to be?

BV: I want to be truthful. I just want to find the truth and to say: "I am not a liar".

SG: Do you think, you have been truthful in your life?

BV: No, I have been a liar. You know, once George Brecht told me he liked a painting in which I wrote "I am a liar". I said: "why do like that painting?" He said: "Because it is not true: you are not a liar! And if it is not, and if it is the truth, then you are not a liar. So, to write "I am a liar" is a truthful sentence."

KDJ: Can you still look in the mirror and be serious about yourself?

BV: When I look in the mirror, I... I once did a piece called *Mirror Piece*, in which I looked into the mirror, hoping to see myself change. But it takes a lot of time. Now, when I look at myself in the mirror, I have bags under my eyes. When I was young, I did not have bags under my eyes.

KDJ: But that is a visual impression. Can you look at yourself in an human way? Are you proud of yourself?

BV: No, I always see the same. I suppose, I always see the same ego.

SG: If you would have to choose one: art, sex, truth. Which one would you choose?

BV: Truth!

KDJ: What does it mean, 'truth'?

BV: I do not know.

SG: What is the most elementary emotion you have?

BV: Anguish. Not knowing what to do.

KDJ: Not knowing what to do? Or not daring to do?

BV: Not knowing. Anxious. Looking for. Worrying. Thinking of.

SG: Where do you think this comes from?

BV: Survival. Art survival.

KDJ: Is art about your survival?

BV: Yes.

SG: Is it survival of the fittest?

BV: It could be.

KDJ: Are you fit enough, Ben?

BV: No. Truth is sometimes against survival.

KDJ: Are you afraid? Of yourself?

BV: I am tired. I want to go to sleep. I have been afraid, but not of myself, no. I want to go on, continuing...

SG: Who am 'I'?

BV: I do not know. I'm tired.

KDJ: Who is Ben?

BV: A boring artist, who is looking for something new and does not find it.

KDJ: Is there a difference between I and Ben?

BV: Who is I? Who is behind there? We are all the same in a way. A mirror is... I wonder who discovered the first mirror and what he thought when he saw himself for the first time. He must have said, "what is that?!"

KDJ: I think you are trying to avoid giving an answer.

BV: Yes.

KDJ: Why?

BV: I do not know the answers. I am not so clever. I do not know the answer.

KDJ: After fifty years of performance, of making art, can you not give an answer to the question 'what is ego'?

BV: I can show off, that is all. To know 'why' and philosophy is too complicated this morning.

SG: We spoke about your mother yesterday, tell us about her.

BV: My mother was very, very important to me, because I lived with my mother and she used to say: "Ben, the only thing that counts is the truth, the truth, the truth!"

KDJ: What did she mean?

BV: She always used to meet her friends and play bridge together, and my mother used to make horrible fights between them,

because she used to say, "In the name of the truth, I must tell you that you went with another man and your husband does not know it!" So, that were horrible stories!

KDJ: If you cannot say now who 'I' is, can you tell us: who is the other?

BV: Who is the other? On a morning like this, I am not a good philosopher. I would love to talk with you about it. The other is always. You cannot be someone else, but another. Marcel Duchamp once said: *c'est le regardeur qui fait le tableau*. This means: the man who looks at the painting, makes the painting. Then: you always need another to exist: a big one to become small; a rich one to be poor; a poor man to be richer; a strong man to be a weak man. You always need another; you cannot be alone. You are beautiful, because there are girls who are—I suppose—less beautiful. You are tall because there are people who are less tall, because there are midgets. In a world full of midgets, maybe one of the midgets would be a giant compared to some small midgets. So, to be another is always to be in comparison with others. And let's say in art, we have those who succeed in bringing something new and those who repeat themselves and are not new enough. We are fighting to try to find newness. We are trying to find something that makes our difference; if I am different from the others, people will say: "I recognize it! That is a Ben!" Or: "I recognize it! That is a Rembrandt!" So to be, to exist, is to be someone in comparison to the others. But maybe today it is interesting for artists to NOT look like another, but to (on purpose) look like everybody. So that is another simple art, too. But then they also cannot get away from being different. When John Cage says: "Everything is music." At the same time he is changing the games, the world's games. In previous times composers had a certain personality. The personality of John Cage was to open up a window in which everything could fall into.

SG: Are you happy that when people see your work today, they see "that is Ben"?

BV: Yes, well I am not so happy when they think that Ben is always in graphics, in a graphical way of writing. There I missed it, I did not succeed.

SG: Because you want to convey a content?

BV: I want to convey sense and contents. And they want to see me writing a name in my handwriting. My work is not handwriting. But I am very pleased to be one of the first: the ego and dates go together, and I must have been one of the first to do writings with sense. But then today writing is... every artist, more and more artists—also the big ones—use sentences in their works, and so nowadays that is normal. Nobody can tell me I cannot do it, because I did it before.

KDJ: You say that you were so early and so recognizable, but at the same time you are different. Can you say that you made a difference?

BV: I was looking for difference. I was thinking how can I bother the others, because art is ego and ego is jealousy. So, I was trying to be, trying to see: what can I do to make my difference? So, I thought: "nobody did this, then I will do it." Nobody wrote "this is blue", or "this is art." I mean nobody wrote a sentence, so I did it. I was very pleased with myself, because I thought that nobody had done that. But if you then look at the history of art and find out about Housman or you find some Dada artists who used writing too. The thing is that they did not use writing as their main work. My main work was in a way not writing. It was writing sense, being myself.

KDJ: Is that why you are so afraid of making 'nonsense'?

BV: Yes, no! But I think nonsense could be art too, because since Duchamp said that 'everything is art', you have also those who say that not succeeding is art, not doing what you want is art, art has become... it burst. But what I'm showing in Venice is an important work which is: a moment in which I ask myself questions on 'who am I?', 'who I was'. I am. *Je suis*. Those introspections done in 1976 are a kind of introspection analysis on 'I am', 'I want to show off'... In all of these paintings, I put negative parts of myself. I could have put only positive parts, but all those negative parts were strong.

SG: Do some of those introspections still apply to you today?

BV: All, all of them! I'm always jealous, I'm always anxious, I'm always... I am now missing one painting about my sexuality, *sexualité refoulée*. My sexuality is always there. My sexuality... at some time I stop. Although, physically I can.

KDJ: If it is like you told us that 'ego is jealousy'. I am not a jealous person. Do I still have ego?

BV: Maybe you do not know your jealousy sometimes. I think, jealousy is culturally different. Maybe. I do not know, I can't tell you. For myself and I think for most artists when they look at another artist, they think in their mind: "Oh, that's good! I would have liked to have done it." So, "Oh that's good, I can do better" or "that's not good, mine is better." It's a way of 'the other'. If it is a degree different in jealousy. It is the presence of the other. There could be jealousy in a way, when you say: "I did this! He took my idea. Why did he get success and I don't and I did before him?" So, there I would say is a more condense jealousy. But that is always, for example when you go into a show and you look at the work, you think: "That is good! I would have liked to have done that."

KDJ: So when you see some writing and you know that you have done it before, then the jealousy starts? Or how does it work? I think you have a very strong tendency to prove yourself. You want to prove that you were there first.

BV: That was true. I used to even write texts, but now it's different. Now it is 2013, and I have changed. These days I am pleased when somebody recognizes what I did, and I am less anxious than before. It is not becoming more 'zen', but it is about taking life as it comes. Now, I do not bother as much. But when I was 30 or 40... Now I am 78. I think time has changed me a bit.

KDJ: But you still talk about it very often. So, that would mean that during your 30s and 40s, you must have been impossible!

BV: No no, it is that time: *Lu-ci-di-té*. *Lucidité* means... Sometimes you meet people who reject art. I say: "be *lucide*". Do not tell yourself stories! You can say: "I'm not jealous." Others might say: "I don't care. I do this for god. I will pay for others to help humanity. I say: "be *lucide*". Your ego is there. You are in front of the world. You react to the world. To be *lucide*, means to be aware.

SG: You just mentioned God, do you believe in God?

BV: Yes, I could believe in God. But I am closer to being an atheist than to believing in God. But still when I look at science and we are talking about the Big Bang, and we are talking about our ego presence, then I think there is an interrogation point.

KDJ: So you did not throw God away completely? You threw him out of the country, but then you were traveling quite a bit and took him back home?

BV: He does not look like me and he does not do bad things. He is a kind of... I have some theories... I do not know. I cannot tell

you... It is a mystery. But I had to take him away. But there is a mystery in the words 'life', 'survival', 'ego', 'reproduction', 'time', 'space'... and if you put all of these words together and combine ego with time and space, you only get an interrogation point. You do not get an answer. To see time, space, ego, survival... these 'things' exist. But the 'why', the 'when', 'how'... We don't understand them.

SG: Are you fine with not knowing?

BV: No! I'm always trying. But you see... When Copernicus said that the world is round. And when Newton said that the world has gravity. And Einstein said the world is time. Then Hawking said something about the black holes and that the universe started many millions of years ago and before that was a Big Bang. Each one has given an explanation. Then came another explanation, and another one. Today we have the explanation of the quantity. The world is full of explanations.

KDJ: What is your explanation?

BV: My explanation of the universe is a funny one. [Ben starts drawing] My explanation of the universe is that there was—at the beginning of time—an ejaculation. Just as when I fuck. This ejaculation contains ego, reproduction, survival. Now: what happened before, I do not know. But I feel that the world today is an expansion. The universe expands, the galaxies... This is the ejaculation of ego. Why do I see ego as more important than galaxies? It is because ego contains the explanation of these galaxies. I mean to say that we need the ego of Hawking to say this-and-that about the world, we need the ego of Einstein, we need the ego of Freud, we need the ego of Heidegger, we need the egos of the ones who spend their time explaining things. So

what do we have? We have the universe, which is full of explanations. These explanations come from ego, because Einstein was jealous of so-and-so. All these egos are there.

That interests me as a theory. I'm actually trying to find the particle of ego, which I want to be able to scientifically find. And then I will call it '*particule de Ben*' [Ben's particle]. And people will be able to say: "Of course, the *particule de Ben*! *C'est très important!*" And it is all a joke! But somebody will see the particle of love, which is very important too!

SG: So what you drew here, that is 'all'? Everything?

BV: Yes, it contains all. The 'particle of ego' means *lucidité*. It means 'introspection'. You cannot speak of ego unless you know what it is made of. What is ego? Ego is the name of jealousy, ambition, wanting to be, not wanting to be, *lucidité*, *lucidité* over the others. What means ego? We come back to my famous verse [Ben searches the right plate out of the collection he made that day]. This one! and it becomes this one! How did the ejaculation come? It comes from an ego which was all alone in the universe. There was nothing. And he met another ego by chance, we do not know how they met. He became very angry and started to fuck the other one. And then... BANG!... the ejaculation! The bang of two egos gave the ejaculation.

KDJ: Are you afraid of sex because your ejaculation is not as powerful as this one?

BV: Yes, this one is very powerful...! But I have two children and five grandchildren.

SG: This was such an intense ejaculation that he must have died after his ejaculation and we do not want that to happen with you, of course.

BV: This one? Yes! But I have another theory. Today we have the extremes, the extreme world. We have the extreme big and the extreme small. We are losing this sense of knowing where is the middle. So, I was thinking: if you take your brain... Your brain is full of billions of neurons. It could be that my 'ejaculation of ego' has led to tons of other egos that are ejaculating too. So, we have not one universe but we have many universes. I'm still working on this. It is very complicated.

Introspection

- 'Truth sex and art'
a work by Ben (1976)
with Karlyon and Sarah



Who is Ben
?



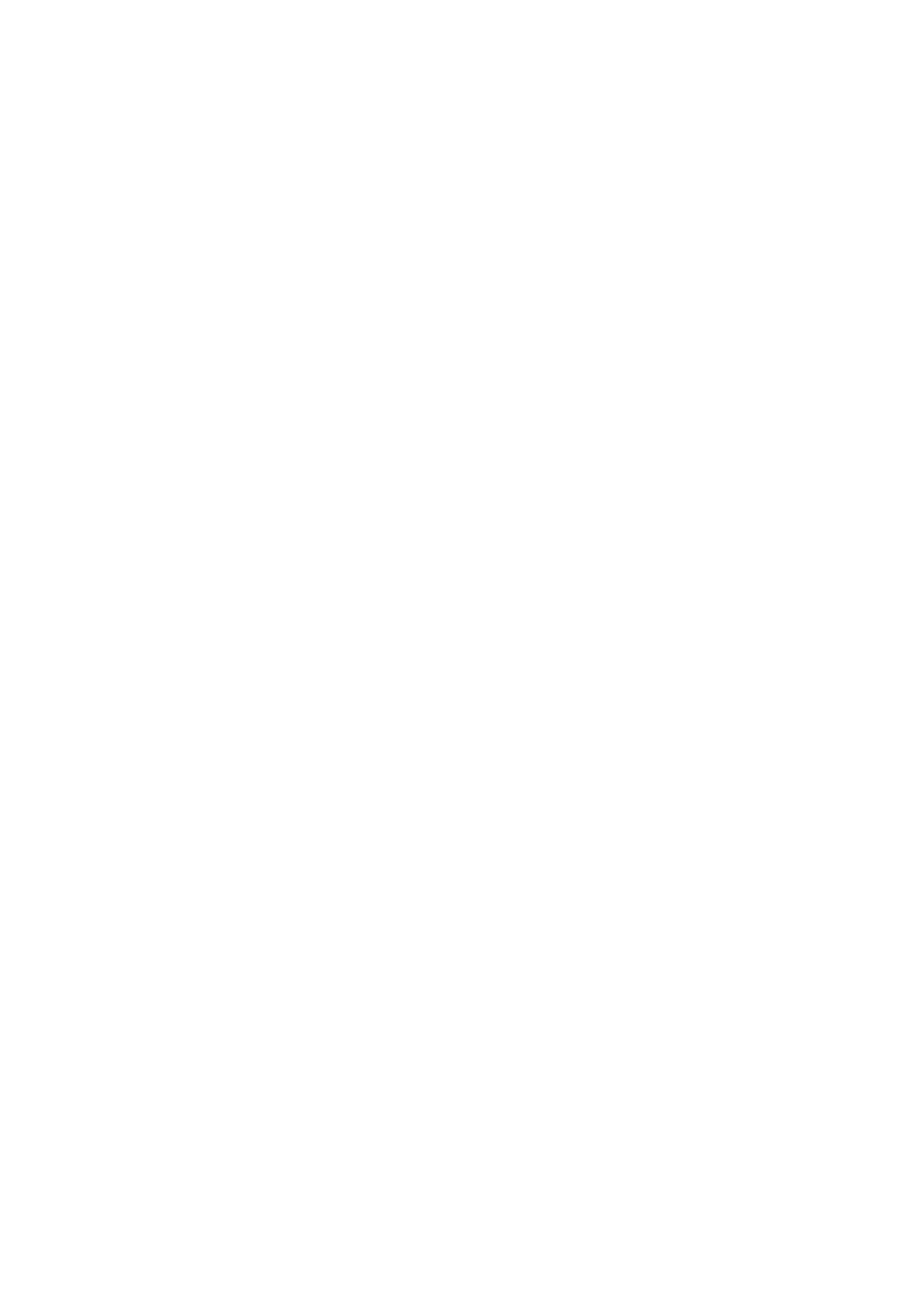








just
a
man





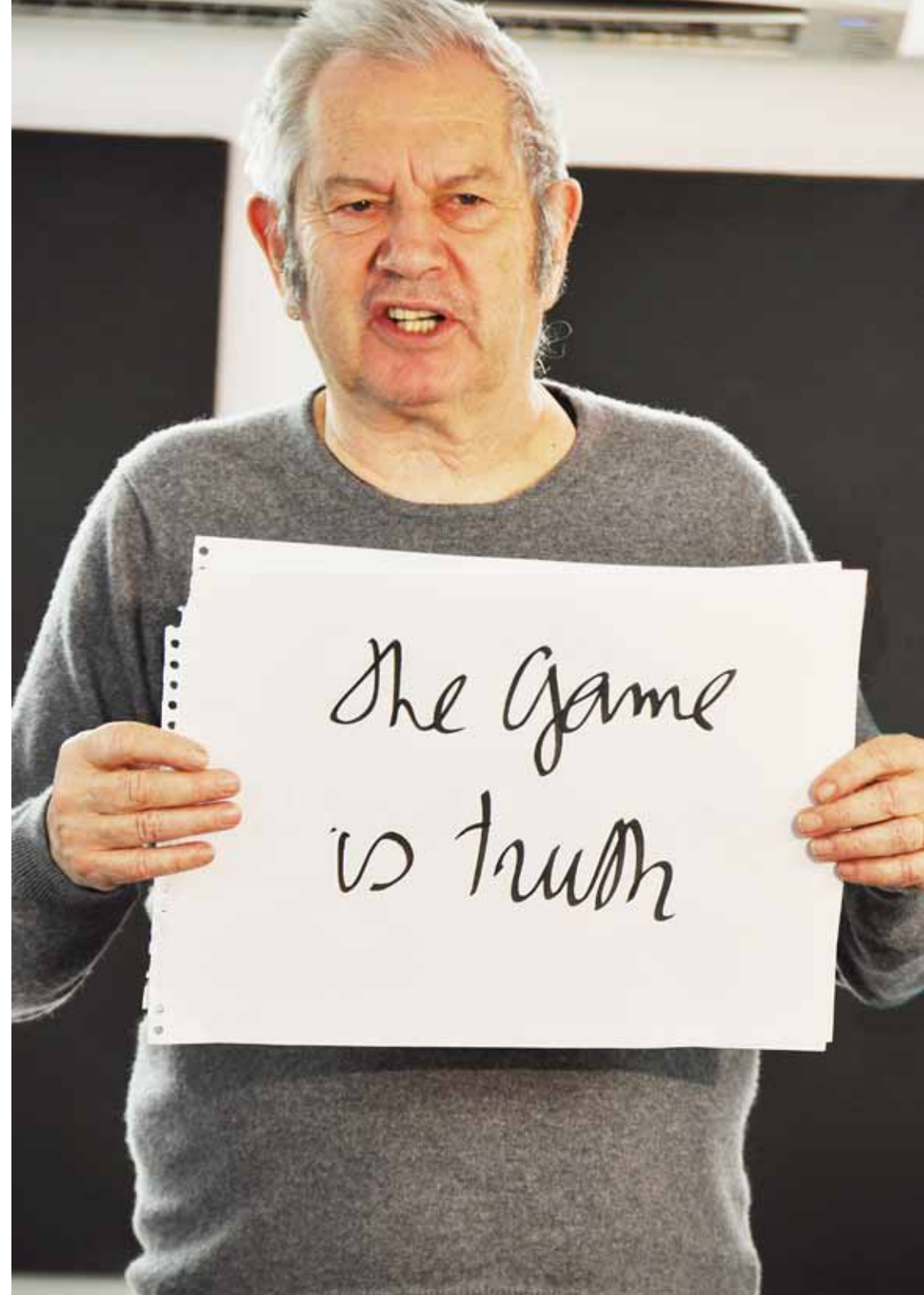


Je cherche
la vérité



No
I am an illusion
of myself

**ma volonté
d'être différent**



The Game
is truth



it is a
first experience
for me



I am afraid
of Truth - ?





truth
can

hurt!



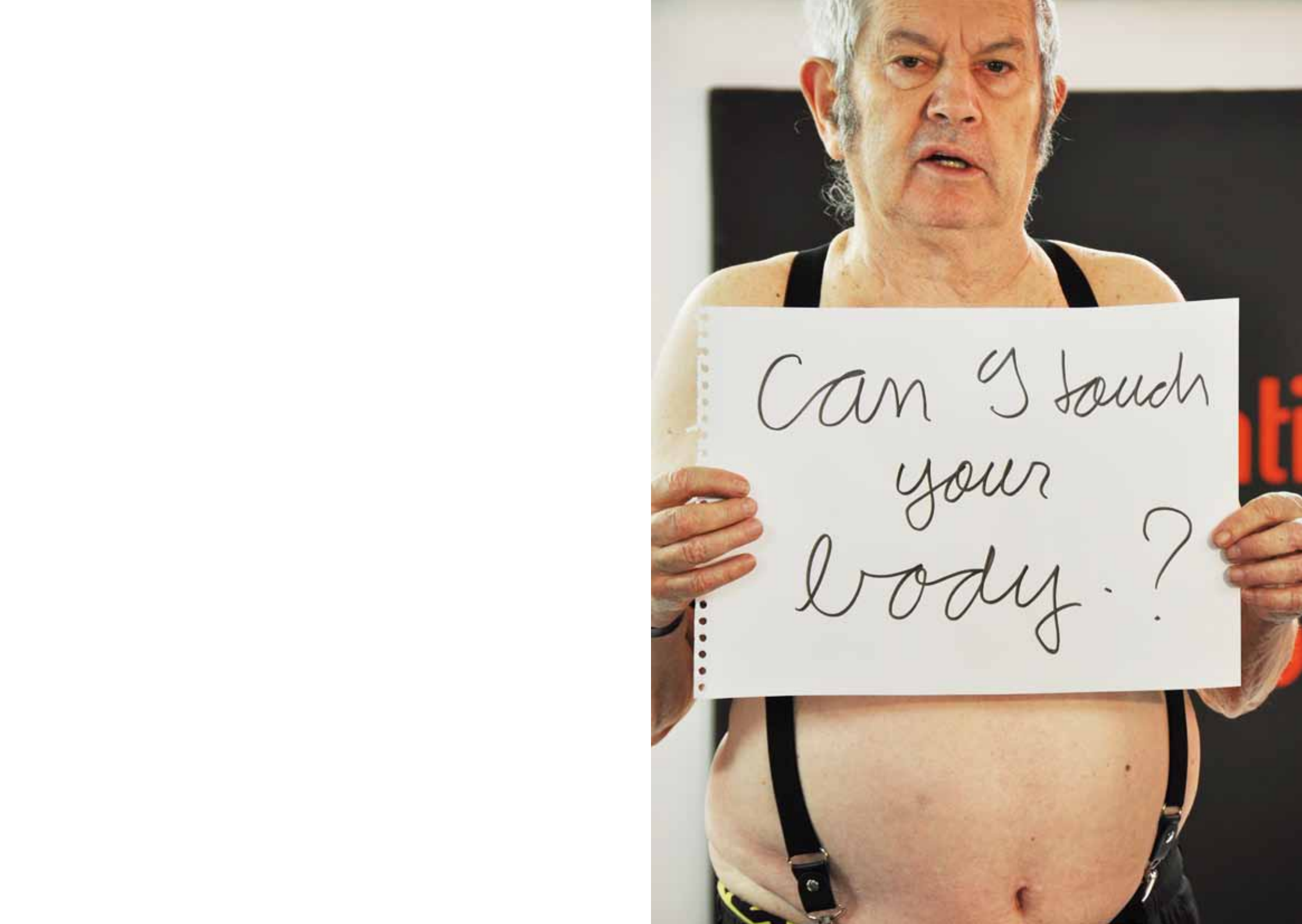
where is
truth ?

**ma prétention
d'avoir trouvé**









Can I touch
your
body.?



do we
need a
voyeur?



Bad is
in my mind

**ma honte
d'être ici**

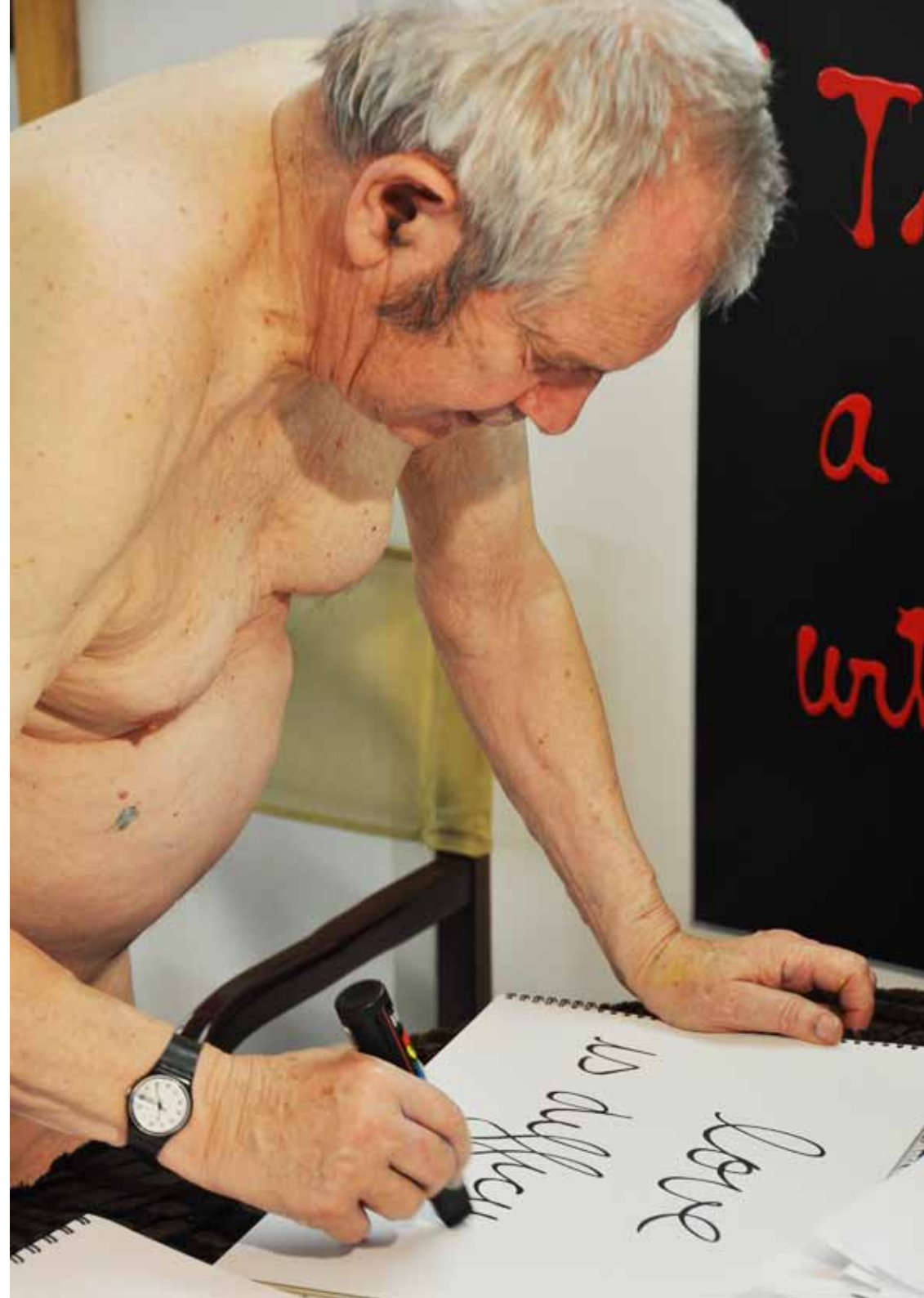




J'ai honte
d'être mu



love
is difficult





Sil is -
embarrassing
but exciting

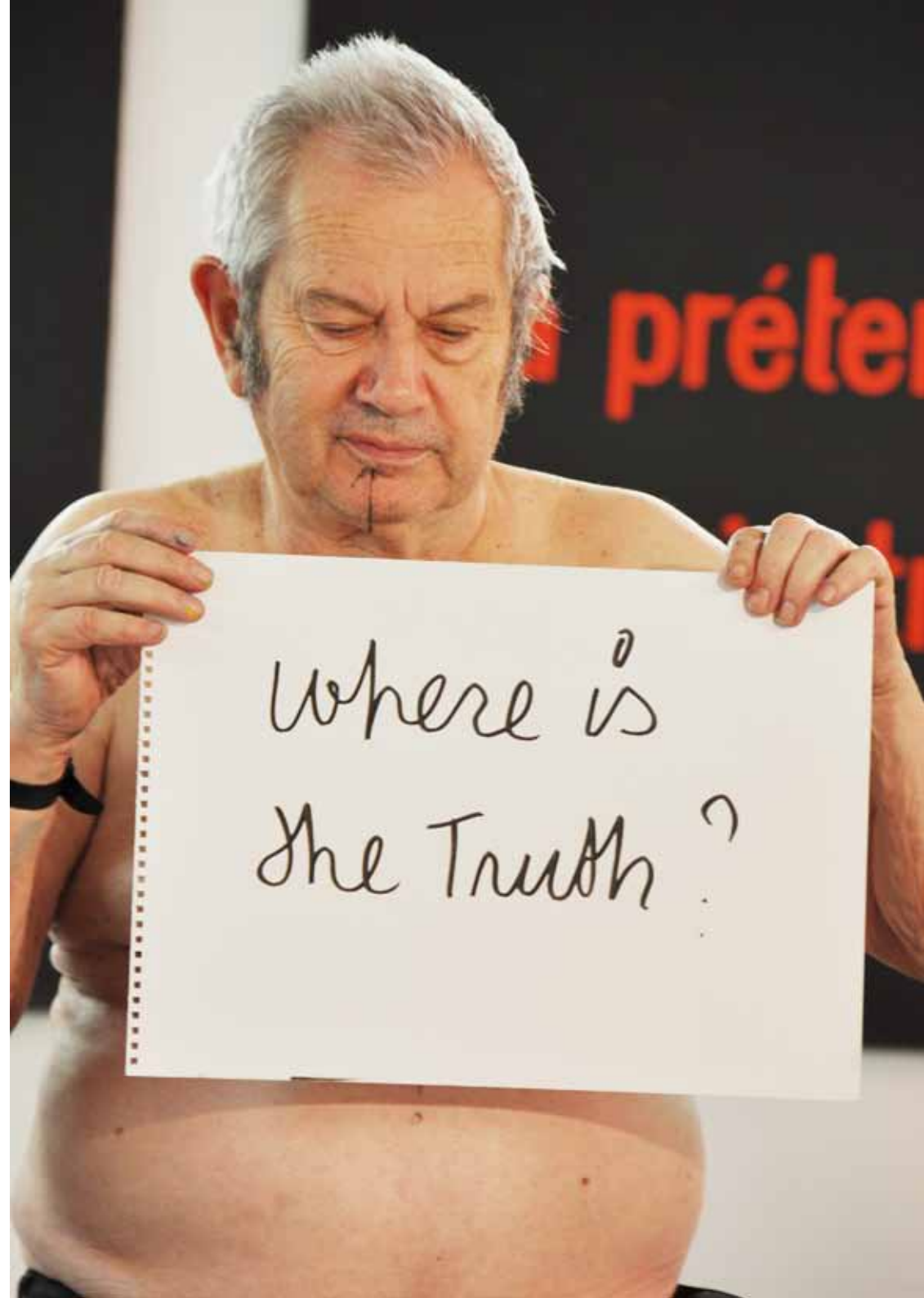


ego
and SEX



DLX
is easy?

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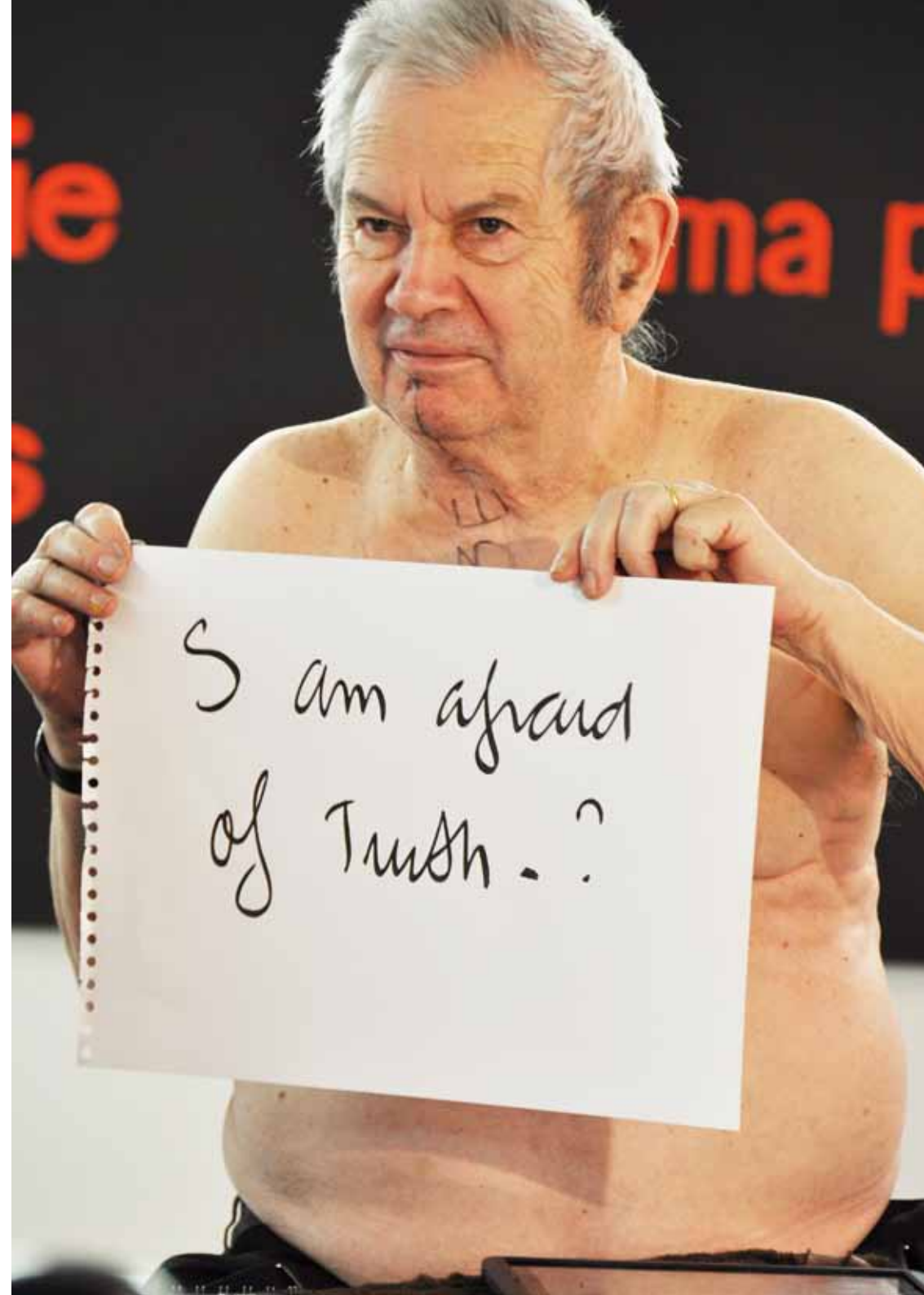


Where is
the Truth?



And we
all sex
maniacs





I am afraid
of Truth.?



Is man
bad?

REF ICE

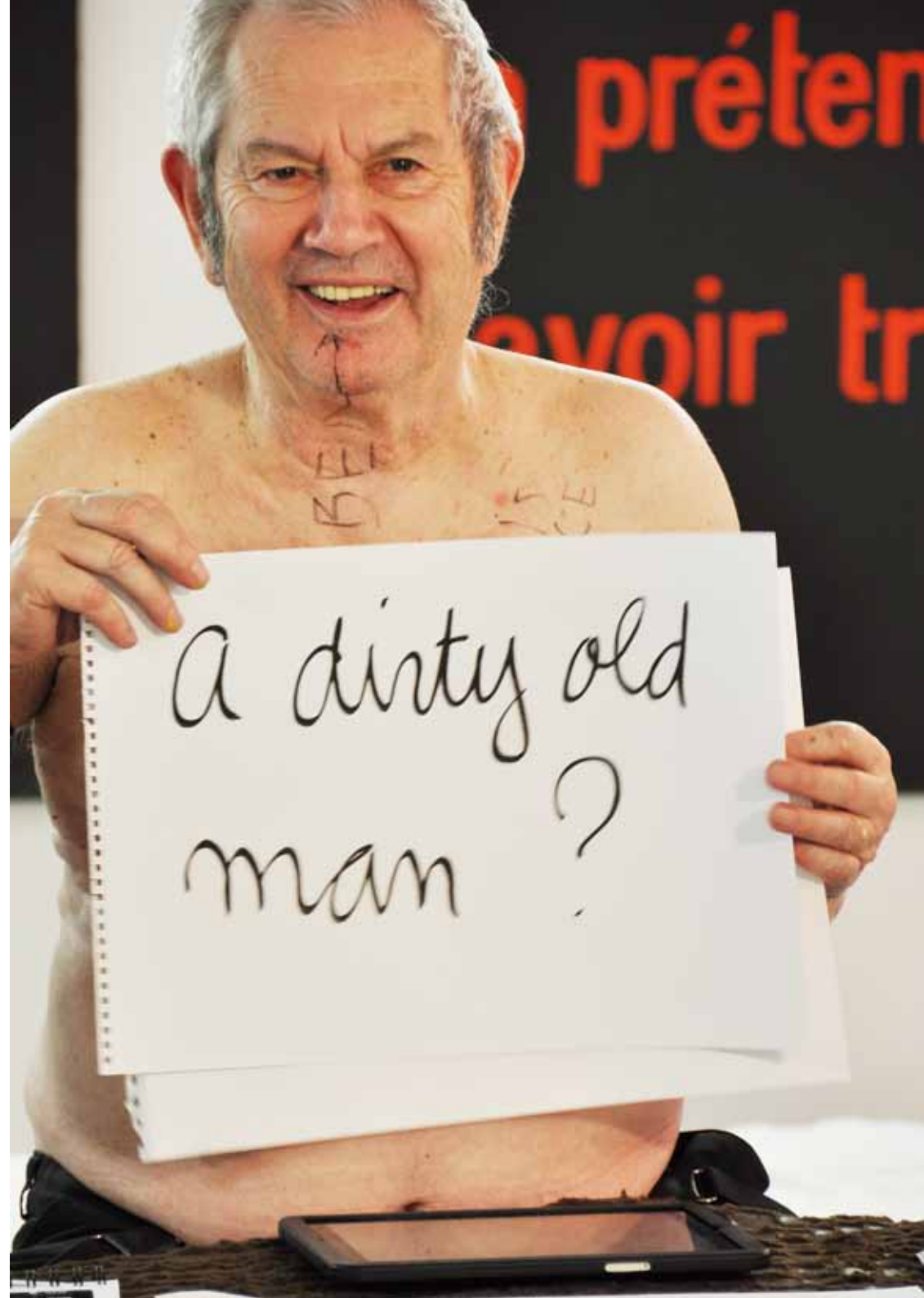
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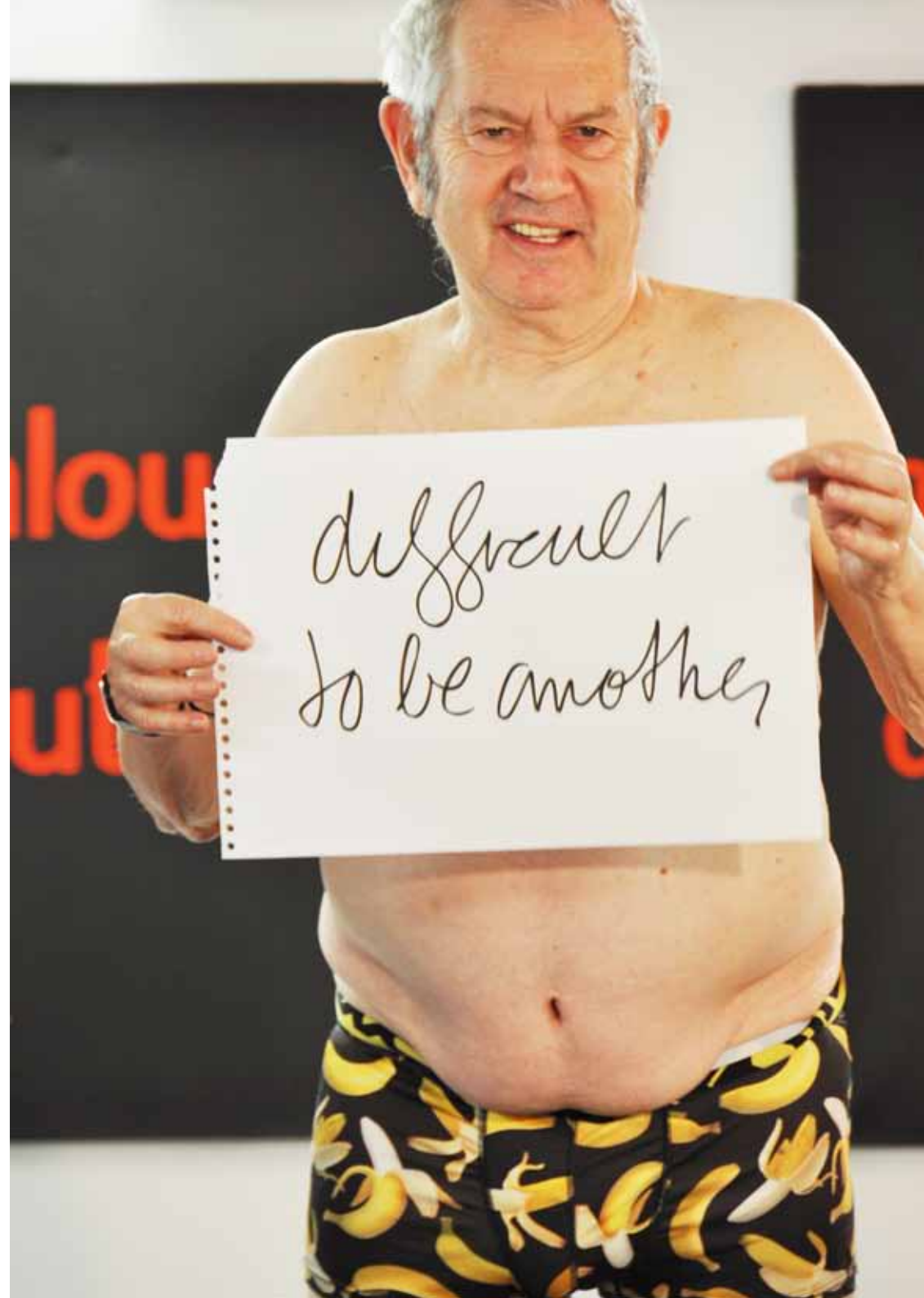


I am
ashamed

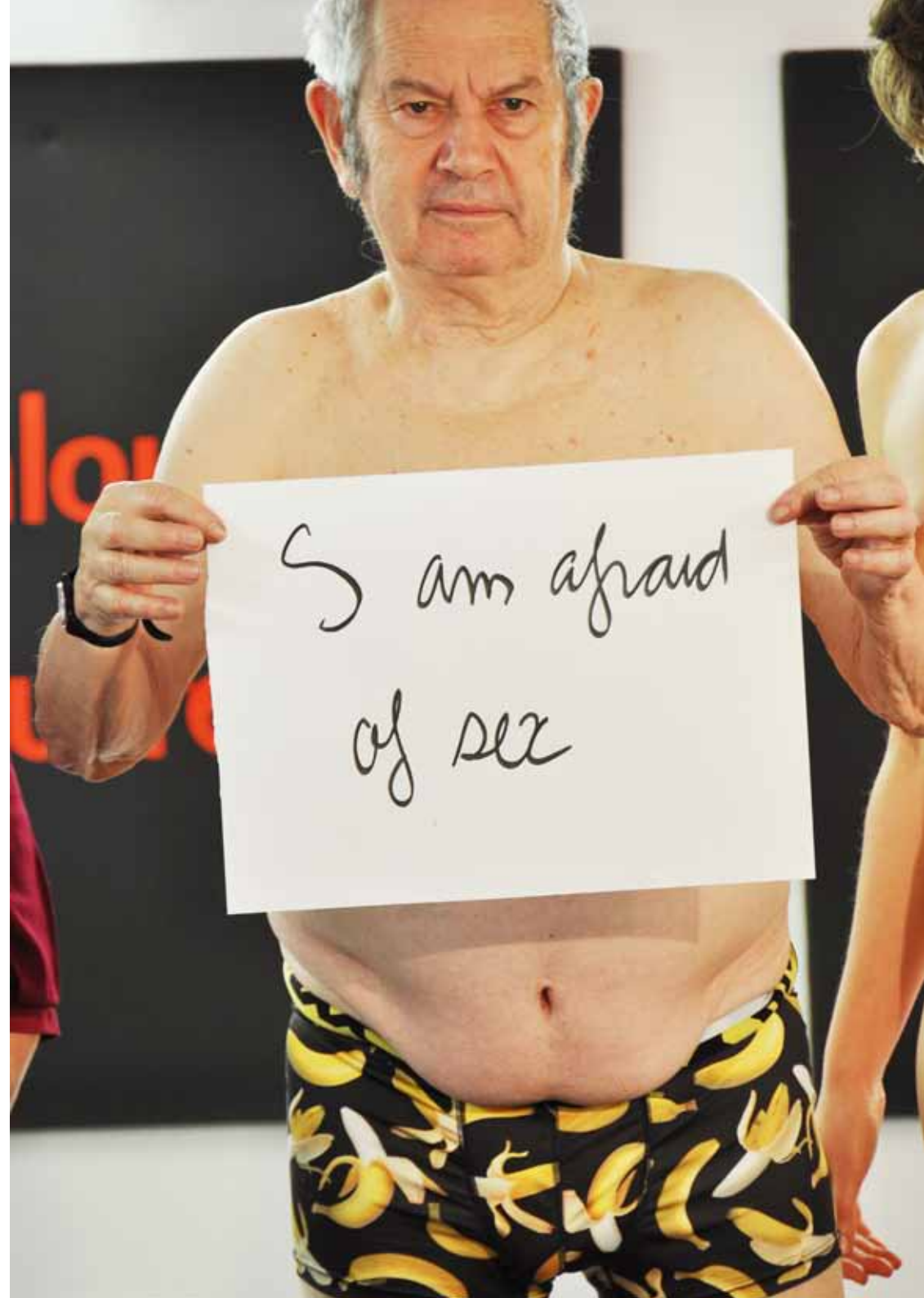


a dirty old
man ?





difficult
to be another



I am afraid
of sex

**mon impuissance
à m'arrêter**





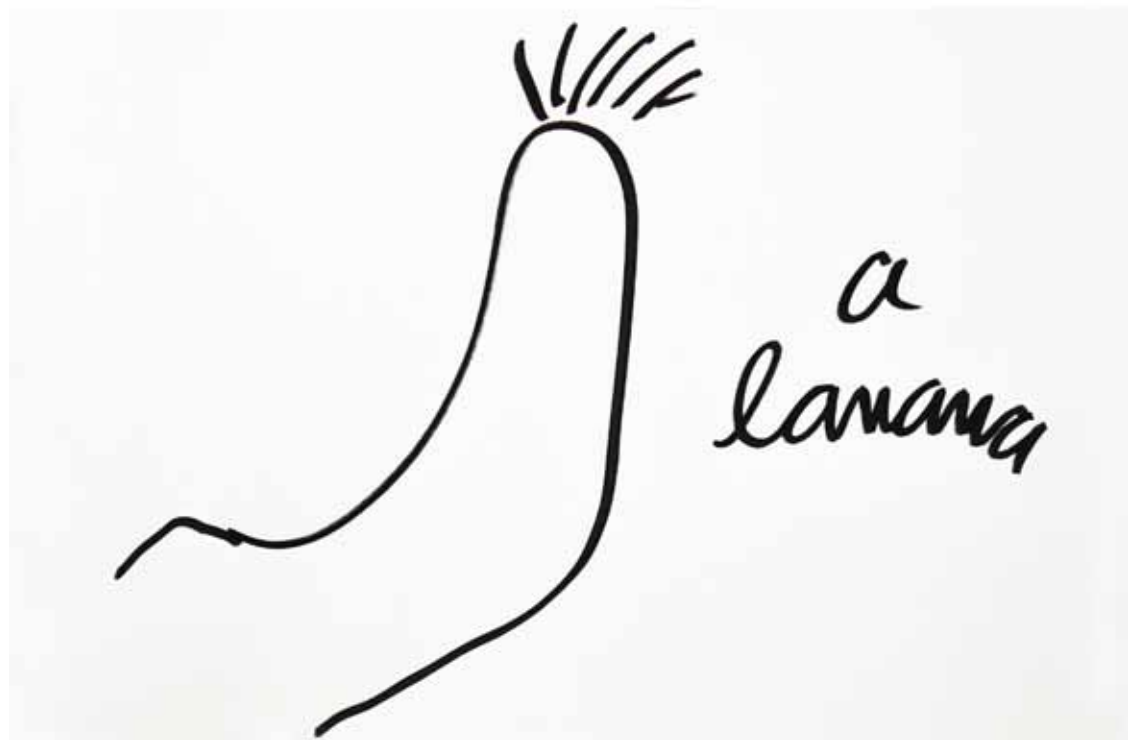




Lust!



For whom?





Faire les
femmes

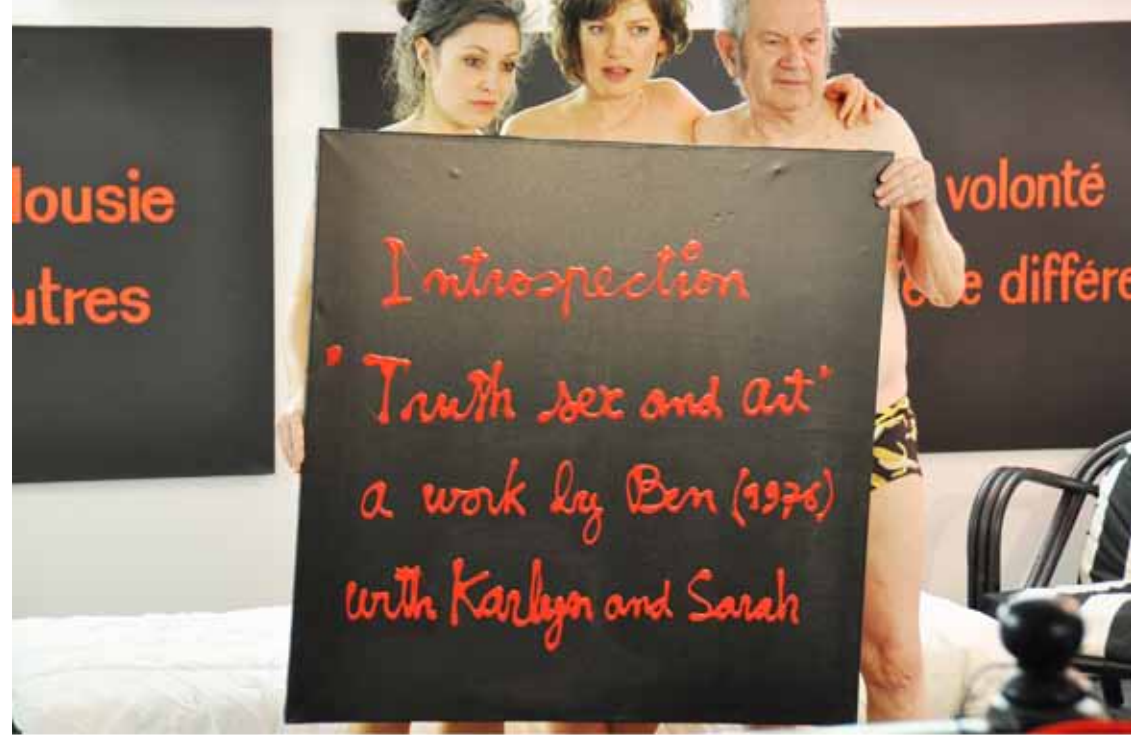




I am
two old for you



a false →
a del
maniac



mon angoisse

de laisser indifférent



Anguish?
~~art~~ is culture
deciding

ma peur

de me répéter







nous changer lent
se faut changer lego
pas changer lego
le fait
changer
le
sex
et devenir
sire - de tout
dmes
et dmes











**ma lâcheté
de vouloir plaire**







What is
desire made
of ?



Because I
think of it
too often









**ma jalousie
des autres**



~~Are~~ are we
all sex
maniacs



ce lit
rêves
ennement
alité

chambre
commu
mais n
à p

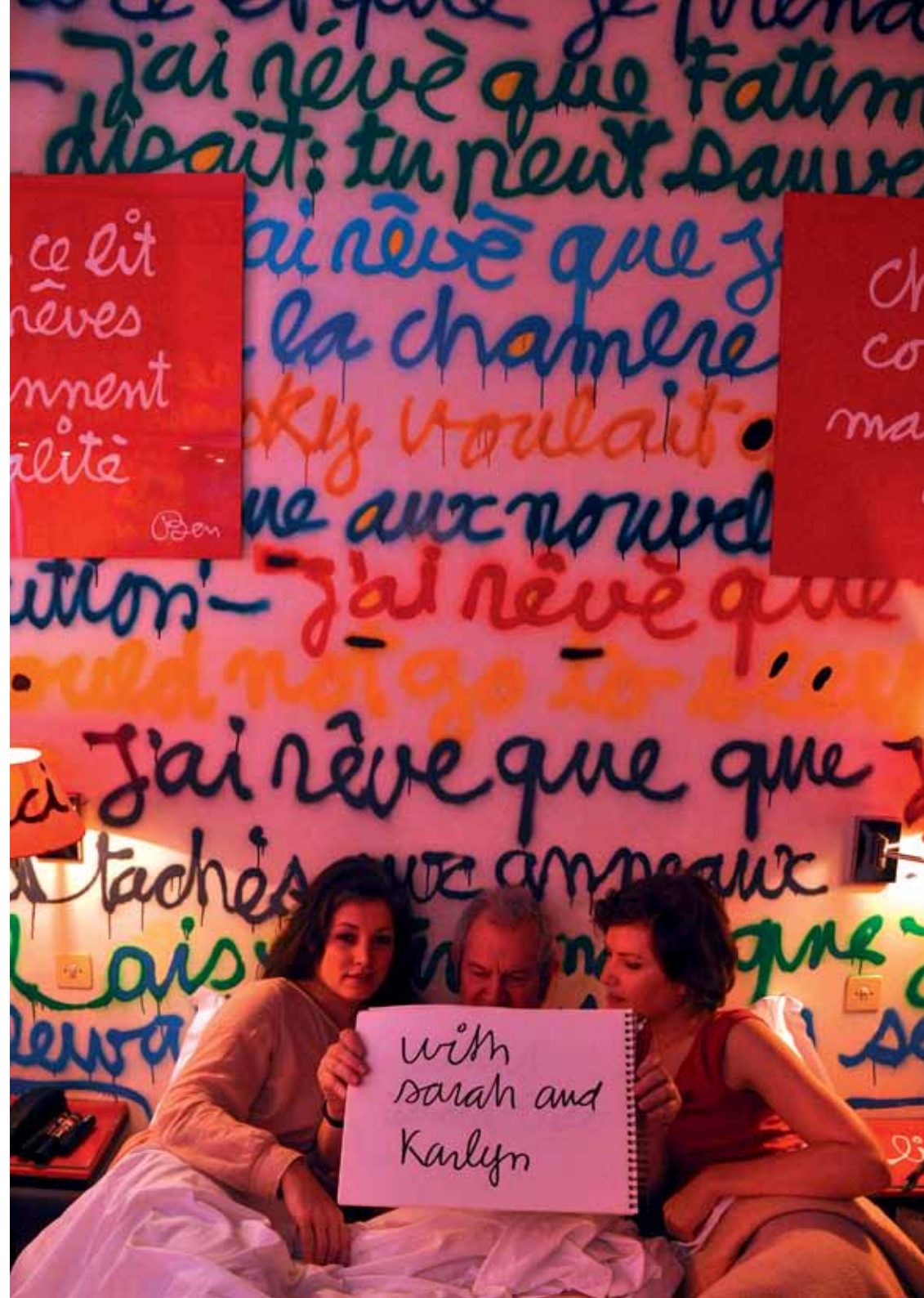
phantasy
or
reality?

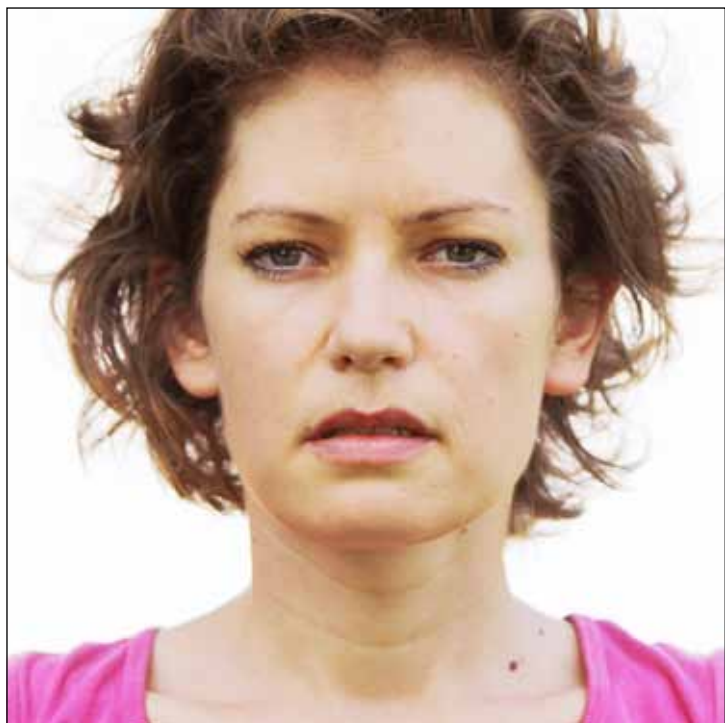


ce lit
rêves
nment
alité
Ben

Ch
com
mais
à

in a
bed





Karlyn De Jongh

Karlyn De Jongh (*1980, Netherlands), M.A. Philosophy and M.Phil. Art History, artist, independent curator and author. Since 2007 with the project *Personal Structures*, organizing symposia and exhibitions in a.o. Amsterdam, New York and Tokyo as well as at the 53rd, 54th and 55th Venice Biennale. With the Global Art Affairs Foundation, publishing books and documenting Art Projects, in coöperation with a.o. Lawrence Weiner, Hermann Nitsch and Roman Opalka.

[Photo: Karu, Papua New Guinea, 8 August 2013, 09:48]



Sarah Gold

Sarah Gold (*1978, Netherlands), M.A. Art History, independent curator and author. Since 2005 with the project *Personal Structures*, organizing symposia and exhibitions in a.o. Amsterdam, New York and Tokyo as well as at the 53rd, 54th and 55th Venice Biennale. With the Global Art Affairs Foundation, publishing books and documenting Art Projects, in coöperation with a.o. Lawrence Weiner, Hermann Nitsch and Roman Opalka.

[Photo: Karu, Papua New Guinea, 8 August 2013, 09:57]

Personal Structures Art Projects # 07

BEN VAUTIER

INTROSPECTION TRUTH ART & SEX

Personal Structures Art Projects are projects which are documented as special edition artists' books. Each project centralizes one artist and emphasises his work. All books in this series will be published by Global Art Affairs Foundation, the Netherlands. An excerpt of each project will additionally be published in the ongoing series *Personal Structures: Time · Space · Existence*.

Previously published in this series:

LAWRENCE WEINER: SKIMMING THE WATER [MÉNAGE À QUATRE]

HERMANN NITSCH: UNDER MY SKIN

ROMAN OPALKA: TIME PASSING

ON KAWARA: UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

ARNULF RAINER: UNFINISHED INTO DEATH

LEE UFAN: ENCOUNTERS

In discussion to appear as part of *Personal Structures Art Projects* in 2013 is:

YOKO ONO

