

Boris Achour

DREAM TEAM

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Translated from French by Sheila Malovany-Chevalier

What is a group show? One possible definition could be: the gathering of several artistic proposals in one space during a given period. What follows is a scenario for a group show.

Is it possible to imagine a group show and to avoid the "theme show" or "the subjective choice"? And why avoid these two categories? Because they are categories and because they are over-laden with meaning and therefore pre-biased. Avoiding them would be a way to escape from the dualism of the "validity of the thematic system by its scientific rigor" versus the "narcissistic and authorial-pretentious aspect of the purely subjective way". The so-called "thematic" way, in any case, is too rarely scientifically or intellectually worthwhile (or even simply interesting), and it is more often than not just a weak idea, appended to works that, in the end, limit them to a virtual one-sided understanding, responding to the organizer's pre-suppositions. The ultimate thing being to do theme shows but to deny it vigorously. The main problem for the so-called "subjective" way seems to be that it takes place in an autistic circuit. "I gathered these works to gather them; I like this work because it's good and it's good because I like them." The Über Curator as an autonomous and authoritarian authority of artistic worth. This way also and very often involves a dehistoricization or simply an absence of historical perspective of the works in favor of a generalized system of equivalence in which since everything is equal to everything else, everything can be placed next to everything else by simple opposition or formal mimicry. To escape from this dualism opposing a pseudo thematic objectivity to an authorial-pretentious subjectivity, it might be possible to decide to invest a pre-existing format, preferably outside the field of art, importing it so as to observe what this move produces. Working with translation and shifts, open to experimentation. Injecting fiction, hypotheses, departure points and not arrival points. Unfolding rather than wrapping.

First choose the format. It will be the Dream Team's. Understand the term in its generic meaning of "a gathering of the best specialists in their category" and extend it to any grouping of individuals with complementary skills set up in the aim of carrying out a mission. This is a format found in many film noirs or action films: *The Killing*, by Stanley Kubrick, 1956; *The Magnificent 7*, John Sturges, 1960; *The Dirty Dozen*, Robert Aldrich, 1967; or even *Ocean's Eleven*, Lewis Milestone's 1960 version, or remade in 2001 by Steven Soderbergh. One of the main characteristics of these films is that of the complementarity of skills and thus the division of labor. Here there are no such things as minor or secondary roles. There is teamwork. Such a film could gather a king of safe-openings, a specialist of disguises, an expert in surveillance camera, a master at breaking through tunnels, an ace at rappel descent, a champion computer hacker, a sniper or any other virtuoso whose presence is essential for the mission. The ultimate *Dream Team* is obviously the *Mission: Impossible* one that defines this notion and is its trademark. Each episode opens with a sequence in which Jim Phelps, head of the *Impossible Mission Force* receives orders in an absolutely improbable place through an audio recording that will self-destruct within 5 seconds. Next, music by Lalo Schiffrin and the beginning of the credits featuring Jim Phelps looking at his files so he can make up his *Dream Team*, choosing the best and most suitable elements for the nature of the mission. Successive appearances on the screen of the team members' photos, usually the same actors. An aside: when I used to watch the series as a child, it always seemed weird to me that the same names came back all the time. But then I was too happy to find Willy the great hulk; Rollin, played by Martin Landau about whom I wondered how he could be both Commander John Koenig of the Space 1999 moon base and a disguisement genius in *Mission Impossible*, but I was especially delighted to see Barney, the king of electronics and techno gadgets. Then the installment began, but the best had already gone by.

This notion of *Dream Team* or the joining of complementary skills doesn't just belong to the film or TV series world. It's something found in an even more complex and developed form in super-hero comic books. Very early in the history of the comics came super-hero associations, which led to the complementarity of powers, scenarist developments and dramatic ripple effects specific to group life: love rivalries, conflicts of power for the gang's chief, divergent points of view, disappearance of characters, betrayals. Among the most famous groups of super-heroes, there are the *X-Men*, *the Fantastic Four*, *the Avengers*, and also the *Justice League of America* or the *Justice Society of America*, as well as their corresponding super-villains: the *Bad Mutants*, *Hydra*, the *Maggia*, etc. More recent groups also have to be cited, all created by the extraordinary scenarist Alan Moore: *The Watchmen*, post-modern super-hero story that puts into doubt and into relief the very notion. *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* that gathers together fictional characters created by very different authors like *Captain Nemo*, the *Invisible Man*, *Dr Henry Jeckyll*, *Alan Quatermain*, and *Miss Mina Murray*, and also *Top Ten* that tells the daily life of a police station of Neopolis, a city whose inhabitants all possess super powers.

And what do these super-hero groups do when they're not fighting the super-villains? They gather in their secret base to recoup their losses and prepare future missions. Based on these considerations, a group show could be imagined as an environment of a union of many forms, like a temporary alliance. This environment-stage set-landscape would be like the Secret Base for a Limited Gathering of Artists, each of whom assigned to a job or specific function directly linked to his/her practice. Such a show could gather a Gerard de Nervalian king of operetta; Scoli Accosta, a specialist in pigeon aligning; Boris Achour, expert in earthworms and cloning; Gilles Barbier, a genially idiotic master of films; Stéphane Bérard, leader of rotting; Michel Blazy, the top in salad hypnosis; Saverio Lucariello, a champion of energy-yes-quality-no; Thomas Hirschhorn, a pro in questions of pop; Lili Reynaud, a punk capitalist; Joe Scanlan, and lastly two virtuosos in greenhorn sculpture, Daniel Dewar and Gregory Gicquel.

And what do they all do together? What is their mission? They will each be responsible for a precise job depending on their interests of form and concept. Just as in a group formed to accomplish a mission, the talents and capabilities add up and complete each other; here, while maintaining an autonomy, it will be forms that connect to each other, respond to each other, and sometimes even enter into conflict with each other in order to form this environment-stage set-landscape of our secret base. We are the Dream Team and our mission is simple : SAVE THE WORLD. Save it from formatting imagination, save it from boredom (no, I'll never do boring art again; I'll never do boring art again; I'll never do boring art again; I'll never do boring art again), save it from the eternal nostalgics of the avant-garde, save it from thoughtless formalism and generalized equivalence, save it from pseudo critical and really cry-baby art, save it from glamour, save it from calculated provocations, save it from weak trends and strong reactionaries, save it from contemporary art that looks like contemporary art. Poetic Justice. And they all save the world.

Just imagine. Imagine a show. Imagine that to go to it, you have to get down on your hands and knees and crawl (Crawl worm, crawl) in front of a giant drawing by Gilles Barbier and then that you find yourself in an immense room with crannies and split levels, secret corridors and nooks. Imagine *Batman's* secret cellar, the *BatCave* à la Hirschhorn, stalactite and stalagmite in aluminum, built-in screens showing films by Bérard; walls and floors covered with decomposed carrot purée, signed Blazy. Farther on is the *DreamTeamMobile*, designed and carried out by Dewar and Gicquel, a wild mixture of Lynch's *Straight Story* tractor and decoration worthy of a diner, USA. Immense collages by Hirschhorn tracing the genealogy and the heirs of the Nietzschean superman surround you. Lili Reynaud made strange mural trophies, minimalist Anubi heads shot through with plates of fluorescent Plexiglass, giant butterflies in marquetry, iridescent half-spheres. Lucariello's incantations, *Dr. Strange of the Dream Team*, pour out of the monitors placed all around. Here he speaks to lettuces, there he hypnotizes salamis; over there he talks with one of the multiple personalities in himself, in this case, the Mama. If you pay close attention, you'll discover the Costume Room, perhaps, all designed by Stéphane Bérard: there are as many costumes as artists in the show plus his breakfast drawings. Joe

Scanlan took care of the furniture and flower arrangement: Ikebana of metro tickets, post-Ikea shelves. On the floor and walls, my red Plexiglass-mirror and bronze sculptures assembled with polyurethane foam state their own names and forthcoming missions: "Operation Restore Poetry", Operation Desert Form", Operation Proud Pride", Operation Oneiric Decision", etc. At nightfall, in another cranny Scoli Accosta, face covered by his pearl deer mask, gives evening concerts for 3-person groups. Just imagine!
And you're still in the first show room.

It goes without saying that a Secret Base wouldn't be complete without its *Hall of Fame*. Here we'll do better than that, we'll have an *All Star Maximum Respect Hall of Fame*, dedicated to Lawrence Weiner, Mike Kelley, Paul McCarthy, Raymond Pettibon, Andy Warhol, Martin Kippenberger and Robert Filliou. May the Greats of the past inspire and help us in our mission! This is perhaps why, one night very late, during the hanging, looking for help and inspiration, we decided to organize a spirit séance to try to enter into contact with one of the *All Star Maximum Respect Hall of Fame* artists. After several unsuccessful attempts, due to lingering negative waves present in the show's place, we managed to reach the spirit of Martin Kippenberger and asked him a whole bunch of questions, the last of which was what he thought of our plan. His answers were just like him, a mixture of laconic humor and joyous philosophy. Here is the re-transcription, translated from German: "Good art, intensity and good humor. Only fear of women in velvet (panties in silk are not an excuse for flesh-colored bras). No problem with the Rolling Stones because we buy their guitars. No problem with depression as long as it doesn't become trendy. No problem with friends. We sleep with them. No problem with those who look exactly like us because they catch our pains. Paintings No-problem. Good art, intensity and good humor. Dear painter, paint me. May those who want to be artists raise their hands. Now I'm going into the birch forest because my pills are soon going to take effect. May this show be an extra metro entry-exit of my unfinished, unfinishable *Metro Net Project*. It is with these words that Martin's spirit left us.