

CHARLES MATTON – ‘ENCLOSURES’

Press View 8th September 6-7 pm
 Private view 8th September 7-9pm
 Open 9th September- 7th October
 Tuesday-Sunday 10- 6pm



Self portrait in The New York Loft, 26th Street, 1986

AVA (All Visual Arts) is proud to present the first major retrospective of prolific French artist Charles Matton. Thirty seven undiscovered *boxes* will be on show for the very first time in the UK, this September 2011.

From 1985 until his death in 2008, Charles Matton produced numerous mixed media works that defy easy classification. By inviting viewers into these theatrical, atmospheric and meticulously constructed small-scale interiors (or boxes), Matton wished to intensify their awareness of the world around them. Those polychrome sculptures are an integral part of the artist’s quest that was as much formal and aesthetic as metaphysical. Requiring a profusion of intricate details and a new focus, they enabled him to better decode the appearances and re-create the reality they conceal.

Charles Matton began his career in the 1950s, using all mediums at his disposal: painting, sculpture, drawing, engraving, photography and film. He ceased to exhibit publically from 1960 until 1983, but continued to practice his unique style of art making in private.

“The urgent mystery of appearances”.

The first series of boxes were made initially to be as hyper-real as possible and were used as theatrical settings for a series of photographic works and paintings. It’s only little by little that they became an end in themselves. They often represent real world interiors from Matton’s revisited memories such as his apartment on *Boulevard Saint Germain* in Paris, a *New York Loft*, several *Bathrooms* and a *Delivery Room*. Becoming more and more obsessive with the observation of the appearances, Matton painstakingly hand-built, painted and sculpted every visible detail to 1/7 scale, from the faded wallpaper to broken light sockets. As his friend Jean Baudrillard wrote in one of his preface on Matton’s work: “*To get the object to emerge, that’s more important than making it mean*”.

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Other spaces are replicas of existing sites, such as the Studio of Francis Bacon or the one of Alberto Giacometti, as well as the room of Sigmund Freud's study in Vienna. All Freud's personal art collection, recreated by Charles Matton is been displayed on his desk with accurate details. But the artist also created imaginary places representing the dark fantasies of the human psyche as *The Attic of Leopold von Sacher-Masoch*.

The next stage of those site reconstructions are the Illusion boxes, otherwise known as *Vampire Studios* in which objects are duplicated in a (false) mirror that intriguingly never reflects the viewer's face – this can be seen in *Mirrored Wardrobe* or *Anna Freud's living room*.

Such a process is derived from Matton's architectural researches and his experience in filmmaking, a medium he continued to experiment with throughout his life. In other decoy boxes, spaces are replicated in a mirror, or between two, or even behind a two-way mirror, creating abyssal perspectives, as in the *Hotel Halls* or the *Libraries*.

All those fictitious spaces produce a disorientating effect, called by Matton "mental tremors". To add hypnotic optical illusions, Matton sometimes projects videos, as in the box "*Goldfish, Debussy*". The pianist filmed here is his youngest son Jules

"I think I've managed to preserve this memory, capturing it, as it were in a box".

Another series of boxes are the imaginary spaces inviting Charles to exhibit his own works or to experiment with several different styles. *The Room of a Romantic Art Collector* is the quintessence of such a challenge. It is also the case in the several Studios of sculptors (classical, contemporary, a sculptor of Newborns, of Heads, of Beds...).

"Magic boxes and metaphysical boxes, I'd like people to literally enter my boxes as they go round an exhibition".

The exhibition at the All Visual Arts gallery, London, will reveal the talent of Charles Matton through thirty seven boxes, surrounded by other media works: paintings, sculptures, drawings, photographs. All bound together within the artist's project, they summarize in a way his creation and his relation to Art history.

Grace Glueck in the *New York Times*:

"More than a voyeur's delight, each room is a triumph of theatre"

Charles Matton - Enclosures at the AVA Galleries in Kings Cross, London represents the most complete retrospective of the work of Charles Matton to date and features over thirty-seven boxes as well as many of the sculptures and detailed paintings that inspired them. As such the current show aims to rediscover the work of Charles Matton and reconfirm his position at the international contemporary art world.

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

All Visual Arts (AVA) is a new hybrid arts enterprise founded by Joe La Placa and Mike Platt in October 2008. AVA’s goal is to build a major collection of contemporary art by representing and commissioning new work by the today’s most exciting international developing artists.



Title: Sigmund Freud's Study (Day)
 Year(s): 2002
 Medium: Mixed media
 Dimensions: 57 x 71 x 55 cm



Title: Debussy's Poisson D'or (with video)
 Year(s): 2004
 Medium: Mixed media
 Dimensions: 88 x 54 x 92 cm



Title: The New York University Club Library II (blue walls, transcryl)
 Year(s): 2001
 Medium: Blue walls, transcryl
 Dimensions: 59 x 48 x 98 cm



Title: Boulevard Saint Germain (3 doors)
 Year(s): 1991
 Medium: Mixed media
 Dimensions: 49 x 53 x 62 cm