

**Robert Cahen** (Valence, France, 1945)

## Installation

***Serra de Tramuntana. Lights and vibrations, essay for the painting in movement***  
2018

Video installation, three projections, colour, sound, loop

Duration: 12'

## Retrospective videography (1979 - 2015)

***Trompe-l'oeil***

1979

Video, colour, sound

Duration: 5' 58"

In the film *Amarcord* by Federico Fellini, a packet boat emerges from water like a mysterious monster in the middle of the night and the fog. This video work is inspired by that idea of an unreal "passage" and plays with the spectacular surprise it reveals.

***L'éclipse***

1979

Video, colour, sound

Duration: 3'

Experimental use of the Spectron

A sun appears and disappears between the patterns generated by the experimental use of the Spectron on a background of '20s jazz music.

***Juste le temps***

1983

Video, colour, sound

Duration: 12' 40"

Score: Michel Chion

"The video sets forth the parenthesis of a travel moment when the transformed landscapes become actors in their own right in a story that tells of the possible encounter of two beings. The limits between the exterior and interior landscape, between sleep and wakefulness, between noises and silence, and even between the characters, diminish to the point of fading away. The notion of passage, so well-illustrated by the train journey, impregnates the whole story" (Sandra Lischi, *Il respiro dei Tempo*, ETS, 1995)

***Cartes postales vidéo***

1984-1986

Video, colour, sound

Duration: 225'. Fragment exhibited at Es Baluard: 10' 19''

Co-Directors: Stéphane Huter, Alain Longuet

Described by the artist himself as "30 seconds of dreams". *Cartes postales vidéo* is a version inspired by the typical tourist trips. This work was produced in Paris, New York, Rome, Quebec, Iceland, Lisbon, Cairo, Algeria and other parts of the world. The more than 450 iconic images of these cities are captured like traditional postcards and frozen in time. The postcards suddenly take on life for a fleeting moment. By exploring the frozen frame of the postcard, Cahen provides a subtle vision of the transitory nature

of reality. On his path, Cahen invites spectators on a perceptual journey through the currents of memory, emotion and reflection.

### ***Montenvers et Mer de glace***

1987

Video, colour, sound

Duration: 8' 57"

Co-Director: Stéphane Huter

A tribute to the films of Jacques Tati which combine fiction and video art with humour. The work was produced as part of the international project Time Code, in which Cahen and Huter had to capture the spirit, the reality and the pulsations of a place, with no dialogue and without making any comments. In this curious, capricious travel diary of tourists in the French Alps, the artists play with electronic and cinematographic codes, manipulating image, sound and time like malleable materials.

### ***Dernier adieu***

1988

Video, colour, sound

Duration: 8'

Music: Olivier Messian

The photographer J. M. Tingaud takes photos of the sea. On the day of the summer solstice of 1990, twelve bottles, each one containing an original photograph by J.M. Tingaud, are thrown into twelve seas and oceans around the planet. Robert Cahen takes us through the solitude of these giant oceans, with a certain solitude.

### ***Le deuxième jour***

1988

Video, colour, sound

Duration: 8' 39"

Score inspired on a musical fragment by John Zorn, *Tribute to Godard*

The images are constructed and composed on the basis of an extract from the music of John Zorn, in a tribute to Jean-Luc Godard. The discontinuous rhythm of the music leads the montage of the film on a succession of swift shots, about a young Chinese woman who passes through the city of New York. Robert Cahen offers us a vision of the city inspired by the music through rhythm, colour and movement.

### ***Chili impressions***

1989

Video 8, colour, sound

Duration: 13' 01"

Directors: Robert Cahen with the collaboration of Ermeline Le Mézo

Music, score: Ermeline Le Mézo

Excerpts from *Canto general* by Pablo Neruda

"The film is the travel diary kept by Robert Cahen during his stay in Chile in 1987. The pages of a paper notebook are superposed on one another, the images, superimposed, appear to emerge from behind the memory: the wind, the river, the rails, the journey never stops and goes back even further, to the exquisite vibration of sensitivity touched by the simple power of a few ephemeral scenes that suddenly say the significance of the place, the place of this world", (Apert).

### ***Hong-Kong Song***

1989

Video, colour, sound

Duration: 20' 47"

with the collaboration of: Ermeline Le Mézo

Robert Cahen describes *Hong Kong Song* as an exploration of "the sonic identity of

Hong Kong, its space and its architecture. Modern China fuses with ancient China, the reality of this city rings out and reverberates from image to image, revealing a multifaceted vision". This work shows the frenzied urban paces of Hong Kong, its people and its natural surroundings through a synergy of time and space, aural and visual textures.

### ***L'île mystérieuse***

1991

Video, colour, sound

Duration: 15' 50"

Music: Cécile Le Prado, Ermeline Le Mézo

Lost in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, the mysterious island trembles gently as though in the dawn of humanity, penetrated by the light and colours: on it, a group of children organise themselves like the first inhabitants of the island.

### ***Voyage d'hiver***

1993

Video, colour, sound

Duration: 18' 04"

Collaboration: Angela Riesco

Music: Christine Groult. Sound design: Robert Cahen

On a trip to the Antarctic, the director filmed glacier landscapes, blocks of bluish ice floating in the sea alongside images of ghost ships and mysterious flashes of people, more like apparitions than human beings. Thanks to post-production and digital editing, these images turn into a new universe, an abstract and often disturbing one.

### ***Sept visions fugitives***

1995

Video, colour, sound

Duration: 31' 47"

Sound conception: Michel Chion

"The ephemeral fascinates us; it sometimes reopens a wound and speaks a kind of truth", Jo Attié.

Robert Cahen addresses this idea of landscape, in which seven short poems are written in image, fleeting visions of a China perceived, glimpsed, heard, always in movement, half understood, always in movement.

### ***Corps flottants***

1997

Video, colour, sound

Duration: 13' 01"

Sound conception: Michel Chion

A Japan trapped in time, men and women tied to their land, bodies floating in the water of a thermal spring. The film is inspired by the indications and comments of Kenzo, the main character of *Grass on the Wayside*, the last novel by the Japanese writer Natsume Soseki, published in 1916.

### ***Le Cercle***

2005

Video, colour, silent

Duration: 10' 18"

"Svalbard is an archipelago in the far north of the Arctic, a meeting point between here and elsewhere, still familiar, and yet already disturbing, a gateway to the unknown. It marks the end of the universe of our senses: beyond lies the abstraction of unchanging stretches of ice. The colour blue in Robert Cahen's film - the colour of cold and loneliness - and the slow-moving landscapes against which one witnesses the

flight of birds and the movement of men prepared to confront the mysteries of this unique land are in harmony with its mesmerizing sense of desolation. Svalbard imposes its law on all those who come there. It is a law of confined space, to be explored, understood and acknowledged.” (Daniel Baillon).

***Dieu voit tout***

2011

Video, colour, sound

Duration: 11'

Work inspired on a poem by Patrick Mudekereza

An experimental video based on a poem by the African artist and writer Patrick Mudékéréza. In the film the young people of Katanga, the southernmost province of the Democratic Republic of Congo, recite one of his poems.

***Cérémonies***

2015

Video, colour, sound

Duration: 8' 30"

Music and sound design: Nicolas Vérin

Coming close and touching human history for just a moment is enough to remind us of the fragility, the beauty of existence, the importance of ceremonies and the force of nature.

***Entrevoir***

2014

Video, colour, sound

Duration: 18'

Sound conception: Francisco Ruiz de Infante

Comprised of panoramic shots of landscapes (forests, fields, etc.) this work invites spectators to immerse themselves in nature whilst keeping them at a distance thanks to the parenthesis between the two projections. The soundtrack of the installation, produced in collaboration with Francisco Ruiz de Infante and based on Bergman's *Wild Strawberries*, joins the mystery and melancholy that emanates from this "crossroads" of the landscape, at the same time as it includes a fictional and narrative dimension.

Works provenance: collection of the artist.