

*Michel Nuridsany*

**Antonio Guzmán**

Translator: Simon Pleasance

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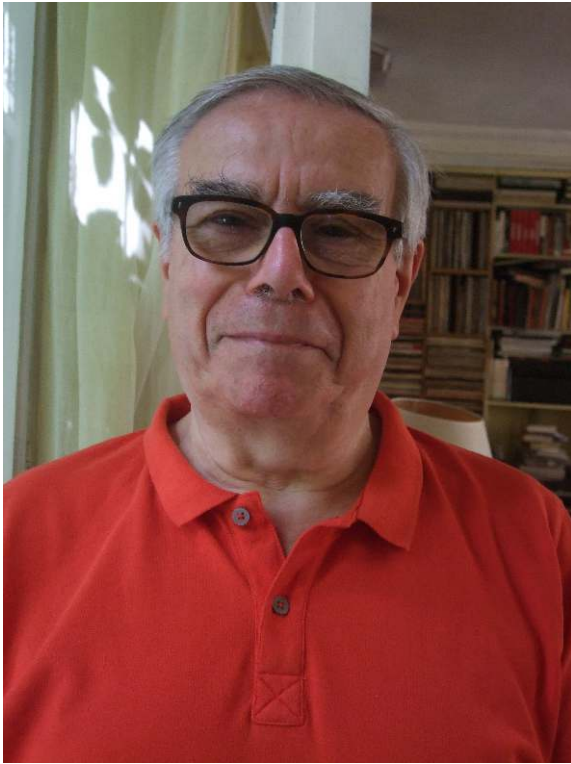
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## EDITOR'S NOTE

You can find the list of Michel Nuridsany's writings online on the website of the Archives de la critique d'art, starting from the menu "Ressources documentaires" then in the "Répertoire des critiques d'art", [http://archibvesdelacritiquedart.org/outils\\_documentaires/critiques\\_d\\_art/331/bibliographie](http://archibvesdelacritiquedart.org/outils_documentaires/critiques_d_art/331/bibliographie)

- 1 Bibliographical references:



Michel Nuridsany © d.r., 2015

- 2 It is a question here of players and protagonists, of markers and milestones, of how periods emerge, develop, and of how they describe themselves. Sketching a portrait of Michel Nuridsany is tantamount to conjuring up a period that is partly in the process of coming to an end, already inscribed in the handbooks of contemporary art history.
- 3 This period started with the years marked by the Algerian War and May '68. Born in 1938, Michel Nuridsany studied at the School of Arts and Crafts (today known as the Ecole Olivier de Serres), a professional training centre for the applied arts. He became the class bursar, and had Daniel Buren and Michel Parmentier as classmates, two artists among many others with whom he would remain close and faithful friends.
- 4 In 1962 he took a journalism course, which would be decisive for the next stages of his career, at the ACP Press Agency, where he dealt with local news, mundane events and wrote a TV criticism column. In 1971 he joined *Le Figaro*, where he remained until 2002, and it is there that his career took root and took off. Column succeeded column: literary criticism, science fiction, art reports, and the first column dedicated to photography in a major French national daily, starting in 1972. Having been one of the first to promote *art photography* in France with exhibitions such as *Tendances actuelles de la photographie en France* (1977) and *Ils se disent peintres, ils se disent photographes* (1980), as opposed to reportage photography, remains today one of his main achievements.
- 5 He turned his journalistic work into a special lookout post and made it his particular calling card in the new art world emerging at that time. Openings and exhibition reports ensued on a weekly basis, in a newspaper with a daily circulation of 500,000 copies. Encounter followed encounter, interview followed interview, and the list is as long as it is cosmopolitan: William Burroughs, Norman Mailer, Eugène Ionesco, Pierre Klossowski, and Alain Robbe-Grillet in literature; Richard Serra, Joseph Beuys, Mario Merz, Nam June Paik, Robert Rauschenberg, Frank Stella, and Francis Bacon in the visual arts.

- 6 Michel Nuridsany became a media man and personality, contributing regularly to periodicals (*Art press*, *Beaux-Arts*, *Connaissance des Arts*), and radio (France Inter, France Culture), while pursuing his film activity (directing short fiction and documentary films from the 1960s on, as well as portraits of artists—Christian Boltanski, Sarkis, Bertrand Lavier, Annette Messager, Paul-Armand Gette and Jean Le Gac...—into the 1990s). All of this without abandoning literature, for he has supervised collections (Flammarion, 1984-1988, where he edited some 40 titles in the Textes collection; the Imprimerie Nationale, 1988-1990; Critérion, 1990-1991), and written novels (*Ce sera notre secret*, *Monsieur Watteau*, 2006, and *Andy Andy*, 2012) and biographies (*Andy Warhol*, 2001; *Dalí*, 2004; *Caravaggio*, 2010). His writing is clear, direct and simple, without being simplistic, and his verdicts can be scathing and dismissive. And it is in no way an offense to him to note that theory was never his priority.
- 7 An observer at first, he also became a player and exhibition curator. His list of curatorial achievements would include shows in pivotal French institutions such as the ARC at the Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris, the Centre Pompidou, the Paris Biennale, and the artistic direction of the turbulent Arles Festival of 1995. Abroad, for France, he curated biennials in Sao Paulo (1985), Cairo and Alexandria (2001), chaired the Montreal art film festival (2009) and put on many exhibitions in Korea, Japan, and China, from 1996 onward. In addition to this activity he has written more than 100 exhibition catalogue forewords.
- 8 The pace has always been brisk and this portrait can only be a swift sketch of a man who has provided so much testimony about the art of his day and age. And what of Michel Nuridsany in 2015? The publication of a biography of Jean-Michel Basquiat, the representation of his exhibition *Lux* at Shenzhen, Shanghai, and Beijing, and the editorship of the biannual and multidisciplinary publication which first appeared in March 2015, titled *Rendez-vous : au cœur de l'art, exactement*. A new title and a whole new programme.