

## bonjour bonsoir adieu tristesse

*t-e-l-e-g-r-a-p-h-y*

*on a video installation by Simone Michelin*

## S)WITCHBOARD

*(Short-circuits)*

1. BONDAGE: *stay. but not too long.*
2. CHOICE: *no way. you have to try.*
3. INCLINATION: *almost. always not quite.*

## E)XPERT EROTICS

- He: *"the right angle... the only constant relationship..."* (Mondrian)

- She: *"(...)"*

- He: *"...and hunger, which they call love..."* (Holderlin)

- She: *"the great sadness..."*

*that we cannot eat what we love most..."* (Simone Weil)

## L)ONG DISTANCE CALL

*between the bride and one of her bachelors:*

*(whether she's naked (or how naked she is) doesn't change much in this case – we are talking telecommunication ((sic! (we are, as so often (but not always) on His side, that's to say, she's on the other line, and, like him, we can't hear her very well))))*

- Hi, Baby! Where are you? ...can you... can you hear me?(...)...? ...you?
- (...)
- I can... no, I can't... I... (...)
- What? ...sorry? You are? Where? (...) ...in ...love? (...) ...no!?
- ...what do you mean? ...you?
- (...)
- ...about? ...where? ... *about* love? What's...?
- You mean... *for*... ? You mean... for making...
- (...)
- ...for how much?... hey?!...
- ...gratis...? You...? I....?
- No? ... it's not what I think? What do I...?
- (...) ... and you...?
- That's ridiculous...! ...why should somebody want...? ... yes...
- Exactly... (...) no! (...) ...
- ...ha, ha! ... *exhibition*? ...you must have mis-... (...) ... no!
- ...that's what they said... *she*? ...Who's?... *about* love?
- (...) ah, now we are talking business, Baby... yes!... no! That's what they call a peep show, my darling...
- ...no?... why...? not?...
- (...) who's she?
- ... no! ... well... come over and we watch... together...? ...no?
- (...) there is... (...)

- ...this... really cool... everybody's...? (...) ...?
- ...why don't... I? (...) No!! ... no way!...
- (...)
- I... can... I can't...! I... no! ...just had a chicken... yes, lovely... no! ...you didn't...? ...no... yes... roasted... (...)
- ...my mother... (...) no! (...!) my mother... (...)...?
- What's? ... no! ...can't hear you, Babe! ...no...
- What's that? ... no...? ... music? ... (...)
- ...my heart...? (...)
- ...my heart belongs to Daddy... ???
- Bullshit! ...
- (...!) ... no!
- Hold on!...
- (...)
- ...hey! Hold on... what's that stuff you're watching...? ...?
- (...)
- ...it's... what? ... quite! ... (...) the moon? ...? Come on...!
- ...do I?... do you...? believe... love at first sight...??
- Babe!,... you know... my contact lenses...
- Ah... (...)
- Hey, Baby! ... yes... know this one! ...Titãs!... isn't it?... (...) hey!... minutos guardados...
- (...)
- Babe! Still there?... (...)
- ...hungry? ...well, it's your... ...you know... (...)
- (...)... that chicken...
- (...)... Baby! ...

- (...)
- ...it's your choice... (...) no! ... no...
- ...it just... it doesn't fit you... (...) no!.... it doesn't...
- ...god! ...that music gets on my... ! (...) ...? Really!...
- (...)
- ..., Baby! see you... Babe... I must... I'm off...
- Don't...! (...) Cool! ... don't...
- ...don't go... (...)
- ...and you
- (...) ?
- (...)

## A) ROOM SERVICE

You may enter...

The room is bare, white, cool. Inside, a structure takes most of the space. It covers the ground with another floor. The second looks like the first. Or almost. But the linoleum is warmer than the tiles of the room. You are welcome to sit on it. Or lie down, if you like. There is a step or two between the structure and the walls of the room. The thing stands on its own. Free-standing object or stage. You can walk around it. Yet it's not fit for walking. Or not entirely. You may walk on the horizontal, not on the inclined surfaces. The structure furnitures the room and blends into the space it furnitures. There are right angle blocks: a stage, a sideboard, a table, and inclined surfaces: a sofa, a ramp, a desk. The sofa-like piece provides little comfort, but you are invited to recline, sit down and lean

back. It's a seating that could serve a couple. The resting position offers a point of observation. The side-board-like piece across contains a video monitor. Still further across, the ramp connects side-board and table-like parts of the structure. The thing is also a kind of machine. It makes you work as part of the set. There are two kinds of objects on the table. On the right, if you stand before it, a set of eight telephone switches. On the left, a palm-sized, chimney-like piece of black metal. It invites the peeping eye. The thing is a tool to assist positioning the eye in a right angle to a small video screen. An instrument for right inclination. It channels the view. It offers a ninth channel: the small screen inside shows a B/W drawing, as if oscillating, metamorphosing. The switches allow to change channels. You may plug and unplug as you like. There is a choice, yet the options are neither named nor numbered. On the wall across, at the other side of the room, a mirror hangs at about knee-height. From behind the desk, switching plugs and channels, you can, at a certain point of positioning watch a reflection of the video images in the mirror. You don't know what you choose while switching. But once you've switched, you can see what you've chosen. Or at least, its reflection. It's just a small delay. You have to try. If there are two – or more – of you watching, the procedure of choice may shift. You may watch together, sitting. In this case, you'll interrupt viewing for switching channels. Or, you separate positions and share functions: one watches and the other switches channels. The 8 switches provide access to 8 video clips. There are urban images, the moon above LA, reflections in shop windows, mannequins, the tidy kitchen of a loft apartment, a blond woman, a young man dressed up like a lead-soldier, a heart-shaped wall plug. The sound-track mixes South-American music and North-American 'radio-voices' (interviews from a public radio station in NYC).

## V)OICE-MAIL

*Voice of a nude (reclining, or descending a staircase)  
(given she had a voice (which she doesn't)):*

Perhaps...

“Bonjour! ...

I'm no longer a bride, nor a virgin, nor – yet – a widow, even. Where am I? Bonjour! I go and enter: a room about love. Or, so I'm told, when I enter: *it's about love...* and here I am. Inside. The space is bare, white, quite empty. My steps echo. My voice reflects, and becomes noise. Obviously, love (if it has been here...) has left already. Bonsoir!... I recline where I'm supposed to, and watch what's left to be seen. Is there something to be seen...? About Love? Passion. Eros. It's as if I could still see them walking off. Hand in hand. Leaving the scene. Already too far off for me to enjoy the delightful swing of their backsides... Bonjour! Bonsoir!... Èros c'est la vie. Reality, that's the lover when he's asleep. What's left for me...? A game of switches. A machine for grinding chocolate. Adieu!... I love departure. Adieu!... I'm no longer a bride, nor a virgin, nor – yet – a widow. Even. Where am I?”

Y)ours faithfully...

*(instead of a footnote)*

- 1) “Bonjour bonsoir adieu tristesse” is a new work by Simone Michelin presented at the Espaço Cultural Sérgio Porto between December 2001 and February 2002. The work is part of a series the artist calls “Lições

Americanas". Another work of the series, entitled "Amirável Mundo Novo", was on show at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Niteroy until 2nd March 2002.

- 2) In conversation with the author, the artist indicated a work of hers that involves and deals with telecommunication. The work has not yet been realised, nonetheless, it appeared already in two publications. Or, in other words, the work on telecommunication was precisely and solely realised in this form of a double publication in advance. In advance of a show. This text also pays tribute to this work and its way of working.

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