

Joëlle Ferly

Artist

“Joëlle Ferly brings a creative sense of performativity”

(Christopher Kul-Want, Director of the Master Degree course in Fine Art at Central Saint Martins school of Art)

Joëlle Ferly's practice deciphers our world through “absurd” scenes, which allow the participant to experiment the artwork and that way, getting a better understanding of the underlying concept of free wheel.

Ferly's work always questions the position of the artist, whether in a compassionate or critical way and endeavours to give her practice a real sense of autonomy.



La Relève, 2006

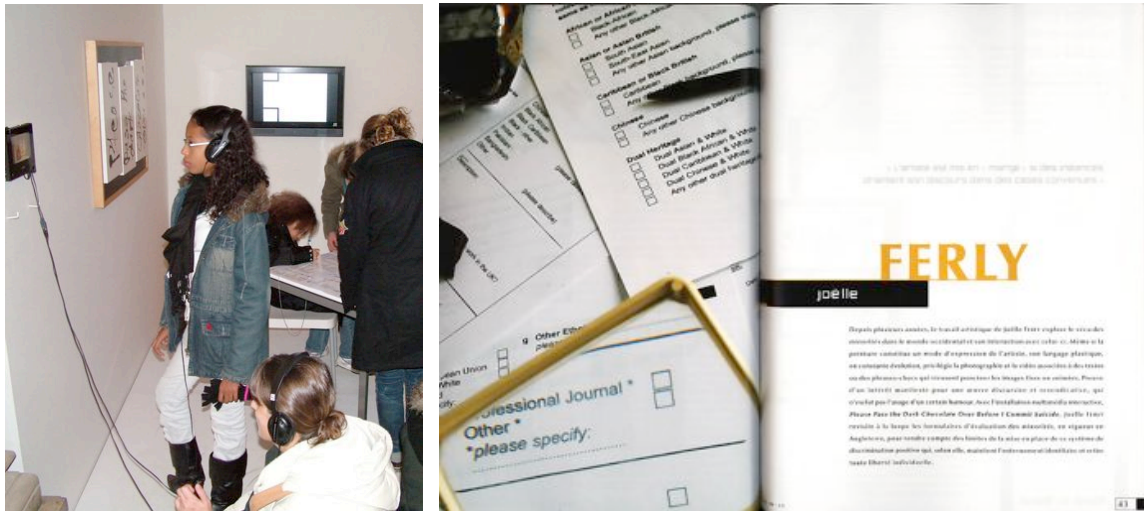


Using various media that span from *in situ* sculpture of common objects to visuals mixed with words or sounds, Ferly likes to create ephemeral pieces (very short videos, installations, performances, artwork exhibited in a weekly newspaper and so on...)

Her videos play on retinal effects, which create patchworks of thoughts that revisit our cultural references, values and memories.



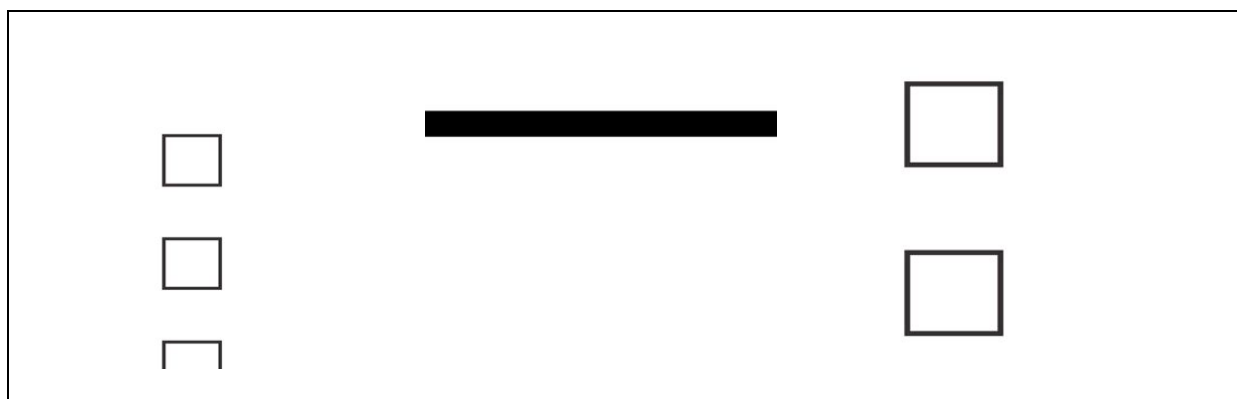
La Relève, 2006



Please Pass The Dark Chocolate Over Before I Commit Suicide... 2006 – 2007

Influenced by the open concepts of «Whole world » , « Chaos world » and « Creolization » dear to Caribbean critic Edouard Glissant, Ferly's work emerges from observations, personal experiences as well as issues of mass culture (such as the notion of authorship, the effect of the Equal Opportunity Form and so on). Ferly's work finds its premises within the French Caribbean life, politics and social issues. For the relationship between France and its Overseas Departments is highly finger-pointed, Ferly continues to combines humour to aesthetical forms that further reminds the anachronistic aspect of the French Caribbean islands.

Formally Ferly's videos are made under the tradition of animation, frame by frame. They achieve abstraction by recalling various markers of our daily life (square, balloon shapes...). Language used is likely to be reduced to a minimalist form (onomatopoeia) that, at first, cannot be understood, for it is partly hidden or made-up. The narrative of the video always finds its resolution in the ending, when sound and visuals merge into some form of revelation to the viewer.



Please Pass The Dark Chocolate Over Before I Commit Suicide... 2006 - 2007 (Detail from video)

Ferly is influenced by the Jazz techniques of improvisation, which require spontaneous responses to create an experimental ensemble bridging over various worlds coming together within the same space at a given time.



Please Pass The Dark Chocolate Over Before I Commit Suicide...

The result is an eclectic body of works both in terms of material used and in its multifaceted meanings and non-meanings. Silences, darks, pauses, gaps, are to be mixed with non-void material, often turned up-side-down (*Towers*), revisited through the use of repetition (*A MazeD, The Strange Fruit, Still Band, Big March in 44 Strokes*), opaque (*Untitled -*

Hush sound track and *Key Hole* visual) to let us discover infinity and sense of loss, where it is argued, one can find its true self.

It is where the viewer can, in Ferly's words, experience the state of « in-betweenness » (*état d'entre-deux*) by 'meeting' with the piece through some effort, understanding and decoding. The pieces are there to please the eye, while at the same time, destabilise the viewers.

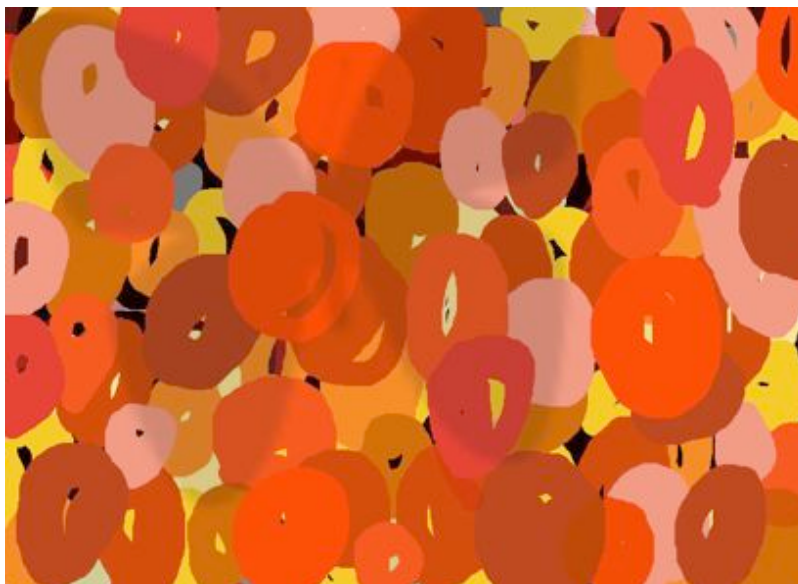


Towers, 2006



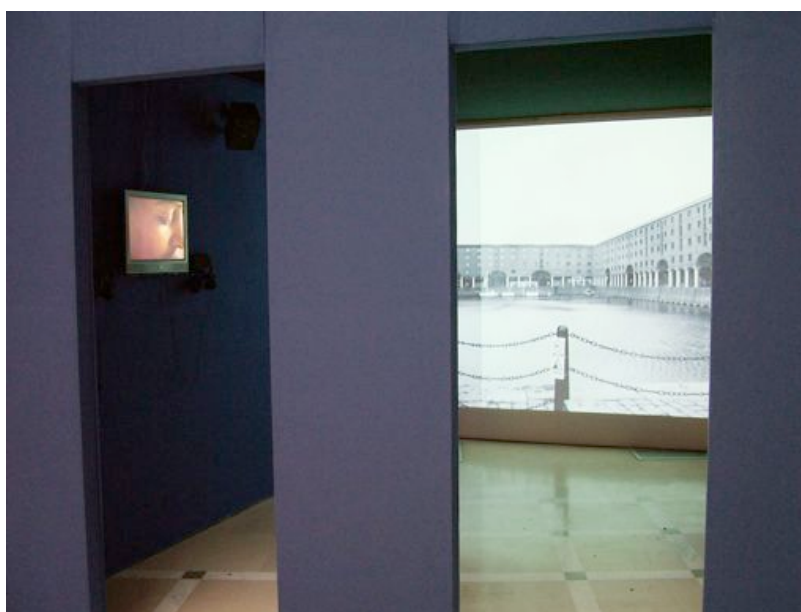
Towers, 2006 (Detail)

Please Pass The Dark Chocolate Over Before I Commit Suicide... is a corner stone of Ferly's work. It was presented in London (Elseph Kyle gallery) , Cyprus (NEME art centre) and France, before being taken on tour through the Latitudes Exhibition curated by Régine Cuzin from 2007 to 2009 in Panama (Museo de Arte contemporaneo de Panama Ciudad), New Caledonia (*Jean-Marie Tjibaou* Art centre) and the 10th Biennale of Havana in Cuba before going to Guadeloupe, where it was presented at the Pavillon de la Vile de Pointe-à-Pître, in 2009.



Still Band, Big March in 44 Strokes, 2009

The video *Please Pass The Dark Chocolate Over Before I Commit Suicide...* in an introspection of the Equal Opportunity Monitoring forms (set in place as part of the programme of Positive Discrimination) used in the UK to question the necessity of having criteria overtaking human beings. Through the use of the monitoring form, UK has established a system that enables statistics to be made, but more sadly, a form of dehumanisation of individuals, forced to reveal private aspect of their life such as religion, sexuality, age, ethnicity, disability, police records, and so on.



Cordialement Vôtre, the art of compromise, 2004

Subsequent works have been equally challenging: *Ceci n'est pas un coup de Coeur* (*This Won't Be Your Favourite*), an installation presented at the Contemporary art exhibition of Le Marin in Martinique, in May 2008, invited visitors coming to Ferly's stand, to choose a painting printed on a business card, which invited visitors to go on a website where the artworks was posted alongside slogans linked to the social and political affairs of the French island of Guadeloupe.



Ceci n'est pas un coup de Coeur, 2008

Several paintings were visible online, behind which, comments on social issues known in the French Caribbean are today reminding us of the social unrest, which burst out in Guadeloupe in late January 2009. With humour, the artist was revealing some truthful facts little known in mainland France.

In *Cahier d'Un Retour Au Pays Bancal (Notebook for a return to the wobbly country)* published 5 days before the social uprising in Guadeloupe, Ferly who has returned to Guadeloupe just a few months earlier, is exhibiting 5 textual pieces, in a weekly

newspaper, which refer to many of the demands formulated a week later by the LKP Union at the general strike that they organised and which lasted 44 days in January 2009. The island was put to a complete standstill of economical activity for over 3 months.



The events of the strike in both Guadeloupe and later Martinique, and other parts of Overseas departments, led Ferly to improvise a performance in support to the first day of general strike in Martinique (5th February 2009).

Ferly was invited to be part of a group show at the Clément Foundation, a highly regarded space run by a direct descent of slave owners and reconverted into a new venue mixing art and Rum industry.

The space is known in the Martinique for having divided the artist community in two categories: those happy to have their work presented in a contemporary art venue which is today unavoidable, and those refusing to have anything to do with an owner, whose ancestors were part and parcel in the slave industry. For one of the many claims of the strikers was to denounce the continuous manner in which an unfair monopoly is still maintained to a very few family whose richness and privileges are directly linked to slave trade or slave work (sugar cane, rum industry being one of the major fields). Ferly, who was invited by curator Suzy Landau to exhibit her work in a group show, decided not to dress for the opening but to instead, write on her shirt "artist on strike". Although Ferly was appreciative of the endeavour for the owner (Mr Hayot) to use art to attempt to reconcile Black and White communities together, she was denouncing in her own way the fact, that despite his power, the event had denied artists of any form of exhibition contract.

The response was a mixed feeling of VIP art professionals refusing to see politics being discussed at a cultural event, as well as real changes taking place right after Ferly's performance: artists going to exhibit at Foundation Clément now receive a proper contract. Ferly herself finally got paid for the work that she presented.



L'Art de faire grève (The art of Striking) - 2009

2010 was the year during which Ferly were part of many group international shows which all wanted to include artists from Guadeloupe, put on the map of the world since the Big strike.

In 2011, Ferly did a 3 months art residency in Port-au-Prince Haiti, during which, she further experimented with performance.

The result had a huge impact on both the large public and the press which only referred to Ferly master's piece Revolution..., in which the artist stood up on a pedestal for 24 hours without drinking, eating nor stepping down to ease herself. The pedestal was positioned in Champ de Mars, the main square of the city, near the Presidential palace, still destroyed by the earthquake and most importantly, among the many tents where an enormous amount of men, women and children still lived under, 18 months after the catastrophe.



Revolution, Motion of a Body Around Another Body or on its Own Axis - Haiti, 2011

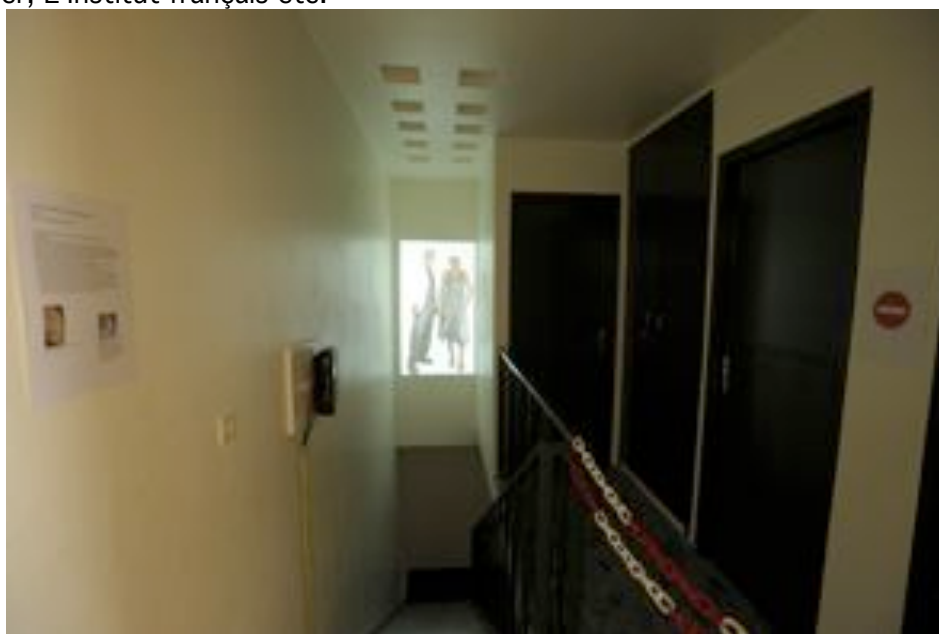
Revolution was clearly a piece written for Haiti and the aftermath of the January 12th (2010 - as it is now known as).

Ferly worked with artists from the Base Art Culture on this first piece and all the subsequent ones, which led her to get L'Artocarpe (her art space) to invite two artists in residency in Guadeloupe for 3 months each.

Parallel to that, Ferly has been running a course for the University of the Arts London, the Art schools in Martinique (Iray), the University of Antilles Guyane (Fouillole) in Guadeloupe as well as the Foundation art centre of Bergevin (Centre des Métiers d'Art) where she continues to teach.

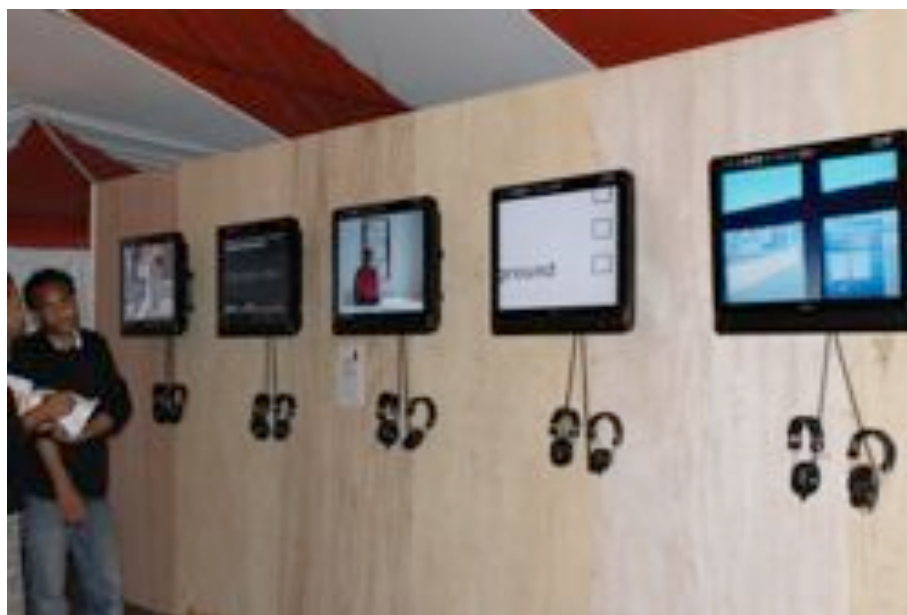
Ferly's work received many bursaries from the Arts council England, the *Conseil des arts et des Lettres of Quebec*, RAAC of Canada, French Ministry of Culture, throughout her years in London. That enabled her to finance art residencies and art projects.

Ferly's work has also been supported by the *South Square Trust UK*, London Arts, the *Ténot Foundation* among other organisations such as DRAC, CultureFrance, Secrétariat d'Etat à L'Outre-Mer, L'Institut français etc.



Attention Au Nus Dans L'Escalier, at L'Artocarpe – Guadeloupe, 2009

Joëlle Ferly practice's is heavily inscribed in contemporary art. The artist escapes all conventions from the medium, turning words into onomatopoeias, still images into motions, text into visuals, paintings into virtual images so as to put our world into a distance, allowing then to stop and reflect about it.



ArtBemao - Guadeloupe, 2009

Ferly has returned to Guadeloupe after 20 years of absence, setting up an art space, L'Artocarpe (www.artocarpe.net), to enable contemporary art to be promoted at a professional level through art residencies and other art related theoretical events (conferences, open day studio, workshop, film viewing, portfolio reviews, meeting with art curators and art critiques...)

L'Artocarpe counts to date 47 members (June 2012). Among them, are 7 professional photographers, 2 art critics and 1 academic researcher, based in Guadeloupe, Martinique and Spain.

Our activities so far, have proved being highly beneficial to both invited artists as well as local artists.

Artists invited in residence came from Trinidad (x3); Brazil; (mainland) France (x2); Martinique; Haiti (x3) and Spain, in residencies going up to 3 months.

We are setting up partnerships with regional and international organisations such as an art venue in Haiti, which has chosen our venue to reward their two artists laureates to win a residency at our space.

Likewise, the art school of Martinique, our sister island, is to reward each year, from now on, a young graduate or art teacher with a residency at L'Artocarpe.

High key figures of contemporary art who came to L'Artocarpe include Léna Blou (contemporary art dancer and director of a Dance Company - Guadeloupe - USA); Claire Tancons (curator Guadeloupe / USA); Régine Cuzin (curator - Paris), André Rouillé (Director of Paris-art.com); Christophe Cuzin (artist and art teacher at Paris Cergy National School of Art); Valérie John (Director of the Art school of Martinique); Michelle Cazanove (art dealer - Guadeloupe); Fabienne Pourtein (Director of La Maison des Suds - Cultural Ingeniering); Thierry Alet (artist and Director of T&T gallery); Jean-Marc Hunt (artist and Director of ArtBémao art exhibition) among others private collectors, journalists and other artists■



You've Been Googled! Canary Islands, 2010

Recent and future exhibitions

- Island project, Aruba - October 2012 (curator: Jose manuel Noceda)
- International Conference CSA2012 Program, Le Gosier Guadeloupe - Creole Beach and Karibea Hotel May 28 to June 1st 2012 (org. Gina Ulysse)
- Bienal de la Habana, Cuba - May 2012 (curator: Jose manuel Noceda)
- ARte por Excelencias space, Madrid + Grenada, Spain - March 2012 (curator: Carlos Garrido Castellano)
- Les Anneaux de la Mémoire, Nantes - Jan. 2012
- L'Artchipel, Scène nationale de la Guadeloupe, 44 JOU - nov. 2011 (cur. Nabajoth; Goudrouffe)
- Fondation Clement, (Horizontes Insulaires exhibition), Martinique - Nov. 2011
- Museo de Arte Moderno, (Horizontes Insulares exhibition), Republica Dominicana- Aug. 2011
- Visa Pour la Creation: Lauréate du programme CulturesFrance –Residence en Haiti, June-Sept '11
- Centro de Arte Contemporaneo Wifredo Lam, (Horizontes Insulares exhibition), Cuba May 2011
- Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Funchal, Madeira, (Horizontes Insulares exhibition), Feb.2011
- Global Caribbean -Museo de Arte Contemporaneo (MAC) de Puerto Rico February - May 2011
- Festival Mondial des arts negres, Dakar, Senegal - Dec. 2010 (curated by Dominique Fontaine)
- Global Caribbean - Musée des Arts Modestes, Sete, France - Juin - Sept. 2010
- IES Canarias Cabrera Pinto - Tenerife, (Horizontes Insulares exhibition), Sept. 2010
- Centro de Arte La Regenta, (Horizontes Insulares exhibition, curated by Orlando Britto) Las Palmas city - May 2010
- IBW Film Festival, Tricycle Theatre, London UK - Mar. 2010
- Clark University, USA - Jan. 2010
- Miami Art Basel - Global Caribbean, Haitian Pavillon, Miami, USA - Dec. 2009 (cur. by E. Duval Carrie)
- Pavillon de la Ville de Pointe-a-Pitre, (Latitudes Exhibition), Guadeloupe - Nov. 2009
- MAC'09, Le Marin, Martinique - November 2009
- Museo de Arte contemporaneo de Panama Ciudad (Latitudes Exhibition) - Aug. 2009
- Ghetto Biennale, Haiti - August 2009
- L'Artocarpe, Art contemporain, Le Moule, Guadeloupe - June 2009
- Art Bemaou,(Contemporary art fair curated by Jean-Marc Hunt) Guadeloupe - June 2009
- Havana Bienale, Cuba - March 2009 (Latitudes Exhibition)
- Fondation Clement, (Entrevues exhibition, curated by Suzy Landau) Martinique – Feb. - May 2009
- Neme Art centre - Cyprus - September 2008
- Tjibaou Art centre, New Caledonia (Latitudes Exhibition, curated by Regine Cuzin) – 2008