

## Room 1, 2 + all CLARK

### MATHIEU LEFÈVRE

#### MAKE IT BIG (retrospective)

CURATED BY :

Nicolas Mavrikakis, Roxanne Arsenault & Manon Tourigny and Mathieu Lefèvre (thanks to a mediumistic reading)

How should one be faithful to the memory of an artist and to the meaning of their work? This is one of art history's fundamental questions. The same could be said for friendship. For this retrospective on the work of Mathieu Lefèvre, who died in Brooklyn in 2011, we've gone to great lengths to re-establish a dialogue with the artist and his work. We have even consulted with a medium so Mathieu could tell us how to deal with the work he's left behind. The answer that seemed to emerge from the hereafter was, "Make it Big". Which was fitting, given Mathieu's characteristic humour. And make it big, we did. To our knowledge, this exhibition is the first to have been organized with the help of the artist's spirit, no less. Even more impressive than Chateaubriand's *Mémoires d'outre-tombe* (*Memoirs from Beyond the Tomb*), written before the author's death!

And so, we have chosen to mount the first retrospective of his work based on the recurring themes of his practice, namely his irreverent and anti-establishment spirit, and his habit of confronting the artistic legacy of many of art history's biggest names, especially within contemporary art, with whom he maintained an ambivalent relationship. This exhibition explores his work in all its forms and at each stage of his life, from excerpts of films in which he starred as a young actor, to artworks he created while a student, such as the video titled, *Mathieu Lefèvre est un artiste important* (2005), to pieces he had been working on in his studio at the time of his death, and a recreation of the essential elements of that space. We have even realized his *projet/testament* (will/project), created during the Baie Saint-Paul Symposium, which could only be carried out after his death, *with* his death. That is, to expose his corpse, or at the very least (in its absence) his funerary urn, which his parents have graciously brought here from Alberta especially for this event. Indeed, Mathieu had even thought of turning his death into a work of art.

During the course of the exhibition's five-week run, two books on Mathieu's life and work will be launched. The first is an "un-authorized biography" where friends, family and loved-ones recount stories of the artist's life. The second publication is a collection of drawings and notes selected from his many sketchbooks.

Finally, this exhibition will be complemented by the Montréal launch of, *I Don't Understand Art About Art*, a book written by Mathieu's parents, as well as the launch of issue 113 of *ESPACE art actuel*, which has dedicated its front cover and a special insert to the memory of Mathieu Lefèvre.

Like a rock star, his death came all too soon at age 30. Mathieu Lefèvre was a shooting star who left behind a prodigious and multitudinous body of work.

— Nicolas Mavrikakis / traduction : Jo-Anne Balcaen

#### BIOS

Born in 1981 in Edmonton, Alberta, Mathieu Lefèvre completed a large part of his studies in Québec, including a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from Laval University (2003) and a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from UQAM (2006). Lefèvre died in the early hours of October 19, 2011, in Brooklyn, NY, where he had established his studio in 2010. His career was brief, but extremely prolific.

In just a few years, Lefèvre presented his work in 20 solo exhibitions, and participated in over thirty group exhibitions, including the 2001 Prague Biennale, and the Symposium de Baie-Saint-Paul, in 2007. Lefèvre was represented by Division Gallery in Montreal, Angell Gallery in Toronto, and Hole Gallery in New York.

His work was an irreverent and intelligent critique of the art world, its history and its milieu, but also all forms of sacralization or vanity.

**Nicolas Mavrikakis** is an independent curator, art critic for *Le Devoir* newspaper among others, teacher and occasional artist.

**Roxanne Arsenault** is CLARK's general and artistic coordinator (programming). She is also a kitsch specialist, rap performer and president of Pop Montreal.

**Manon Tourigny** is CLARK's general and artistic coordinator (administration). She is also curator, author and president of VIVA! art action.

#### THANK YOU

CLARK would first of all like to warmly thank Alain and Erika Lefèvre for their generosity and their crucial role in this enormous project. We would also like to thank everyone who contributed to this project, from near or far, with a special mention to Harley Smart, Marie Tourigny and Pier-Philippe Rioux for their work on the publications, our incredible interns Lisa Tronca, Marilynne Minier and Joséphine Dubern, Claudine Khelil for her upstream work, Dominique Pétrin for the paper work, Jean-Philippe Thibault, Pascal Desjardins and Emmanuel Lagrange Paquet for their video work, as well as to all the collectors who loaned works for the show. CLARK wishes to highlight the precious help we received for the installation of the show from numerous people including l'Atelier CLARK, Ziad Naccache, Corine Lemieux, Daniel Olson, Paul Bourgault, Chris Lloyd, Mario Forest, Vinh Truong, Simon Bilodeau, Grier Edmundson and many others. Of course, this project would never have been the same without the devoted and extremely generous work of Nicolas Mavrikakis. Finally, for all their help and diverse contributions, we would like to thank the extended community of people who knew Mathieu.

Nicolas Mavrikakis would also like to thank his co-curators for their fabulous energy and extraordinary ideas.

Above all, we would all like to thank Mathieu Lefèvre for his unique work. We are convinced that you were with us every step of the way in the process of putting this show together.

**OPENING****+ BOOK LAUNCH*****I DON'T UNDERSTAND ART ABOUT ART*****+ LAUNCH OF REVUE *ESPACE NO.113* -  
DOSSIER MATHIEU LEFÈVRE**

THURSDAY MAY 12, 8 PM

The opening of MAKE IT BIG will be the opportunity to launch two publications related to Mathieu Lefèvre. Firstly, there will be the Montreal launch of the commemorative catalog *I Don't Understand Art About Art*, a book put together by Mathieu's parents, Alain and Erika, together with Harley Smart. Moreover, *Espace Art Actuel* will be launching number 113 of the magazine, dedicating its cover and a special section to Mathieu Lefèvre. The 18 pages include images of Mathieu's work and texts by Hrag Vartanian and Nicolas Mavrikakis. These publications, as well as Mathieu's *Guide pratique pour artistes* (2007) will be available for consultation and for sale at CLARK for the whole time of the exhibition.



may 12 to june 18, 2016

Room 1 & 2 + all CLARK

**MATHIEU LEFÈVRE****MAKE IT BIG  
(retrospective)****LAUNCH OF TWO PUBLICATIONS  
ON THE ARTIST****+ DISCUSSION AROUND THE WORK OF  
MATHIEU LEFÈVRE**

THURSDAY JUNE 9, 6 PM

CLARK invites you to the launch of two other publications put together by Centre CLARK. The first one entitled *Fever For Everr* - *biographie « non autorisée »* is a compilation of anecdotes about Mathieu and significant moments related by friends and family members. The second, entitled *KAYÉ(s)*, is a selection of his drawings and notes found in his sketch books. This double publication launch will be followed by a discussion in which various speakers will address different angles of Mathieu's work and its worth.

Poste audio

**POSTE AUDIO CALL FOR PROPOSALS!**

DEADLINE: JUNE 15, 2016

CLARK invites all sound creators to submit their project ideas for our 2016-2017 programming. All details for this simplified call can be found at [www.clarkplaza.org](http://www.clarkplaza.org) !

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[www.clarkplaza.org](http://www.clarkplaza.org)  

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**OPENING, THURSDAY MAY 12 / 8PM**