

PROJECT DESCRIPTION
OCTOBER 2014

cONcErn is an artist-led initiative
conceived by Cécile Colle}{Ralf Nuhn



cONcErn is an artistic infrastructure for artworks that, for logistical reasons, are at risk of destruction, disposal or abandonment.

Together with the artists, cONcErn investigates the possibilities for a recovery of the artworks "in need". A gathering rather than a collection, cONcErn welcomes the artworks in a dynamic space for storage and visibility and appreciates the diversity of contemporary creation.

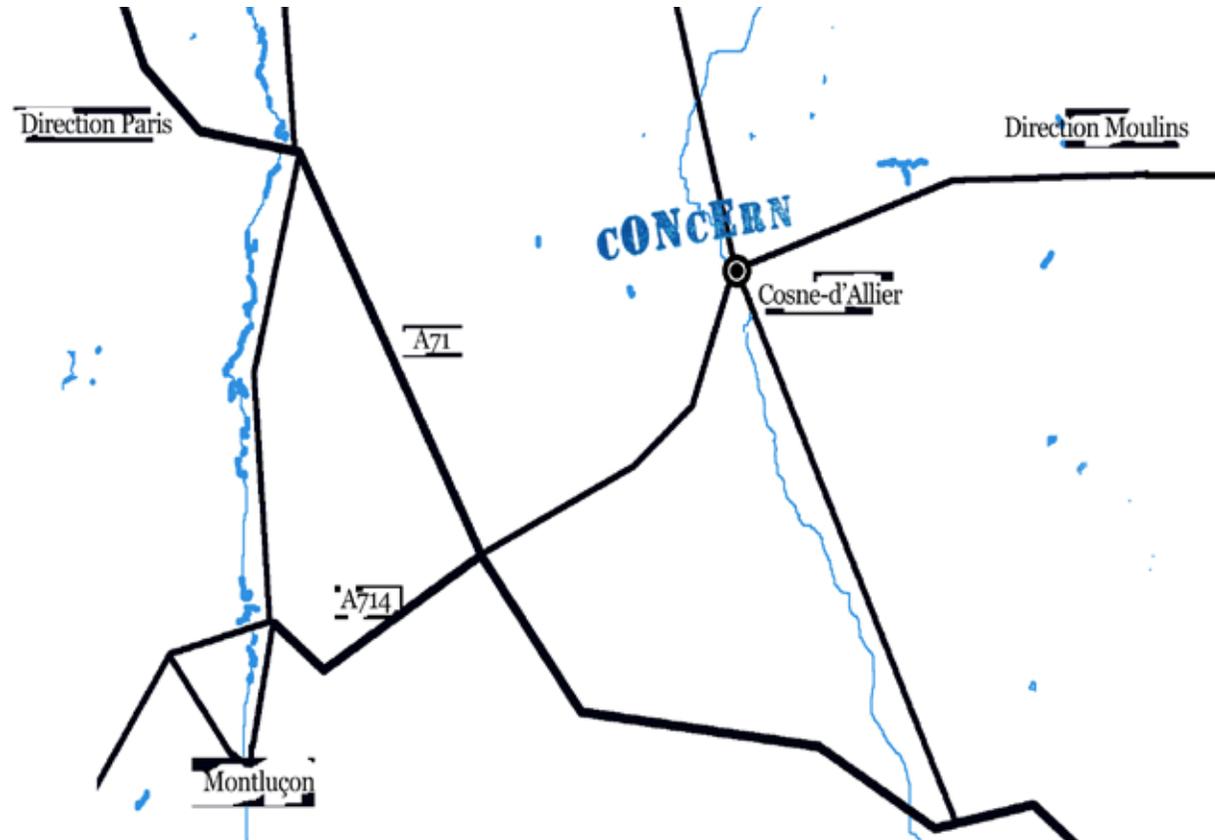
Thanks to the ensemble of recovered artworks, cONcErn organises educational and cultural activities, public events and round-table discussions that explore the place and potential of artistic practice in the current socio-economical and ecological climate.

THE SPACE

cONcErn's space for storage and visibility is situated at the geographical centre of France, in Cosne-d'Allier. Here, a dilapidated industrial site - formerly used for the manufacture of agricultural trailers and stage mechanisms for theatre - stretches alongside the river l'Œil (the Eye) and provides almost 3000m² of different spaces: self-contained rooms, large halls, an attic, covered outdoor spaces and green spaces.

cONcErn's approach is to rehabilitate the site both for and through the reception of artworks. To put it differently, the challenge is to establish a balance between the potential of assimilation offered by the vacuity of the space and the transformative power which the artworks exert on their environment.

If cONcErn cares about artworks at risk of destruction or abandonment, then the same applies to the site of their reception.





Top left: Main entrance to cONcErn's space for storage and visibility at Cosne-d'Allier, situated in the geographical centre of France. Top right: *Un immeuble*, an artwork by Olivier Thuault created in 2006 and reactivated by cONcErn on the occasion of its reception on 26 October 2014. Bottom right: Unwrapping of the artwork *Un immeuble* on its arrival at cONcErn.

Next page: The artworks *Scène de Parole* (2008) and *DialSeat* (2003) by Accès Local/Philippe Mairesse are reactivated through a reading by actress Messaouda Sekkal on the occasion of their reception on 26 October 2014.



TRANSPORT

For the recovery of the artworks, cONcErn conceives of “special deliveries” that facilitate continuous relationships between the artworks and their surroundings. For instance, cONcErn is interested in means of transportation that support visibility, participation and are sensitive to environmental concerns.

Séverine Hubard’s mobile and participative sculpture, featured in her video *Un jour*, is an inspiration for cONcErn with regards to its poetic vision of transporting artworks. (© Séverine Hubard.)



This obsolete model of the “Papamobile” (1981/2011) might now serve for transporting artworks. (Photomontage comprises Subodh Gupta’s *Very Hungry God*.)

The “velorail” as a local option for participative and ecological transportations. (Photomontage comprises Kohei Nawa’s *Glass Pixel Cell Rabbit*.)



ISSUES AT STAKE

The destruction or disintegration of an artwork can be part of the artist's intention and symbolic dimension of the work. This applies, for instance, to the "auto-destructive art" of Gustav Metzger, the ritualistic incinerations at the annual Burning Man festival or the various practices that might be referred to as ephemeral art. However, on many occasions the "loss" of an artwork is not based on a deliberate decision by the artist but due to logistical difficulties, such as lack of storage or transport facilities.

cONcErn considers the involuntary disposal of artistic creations as a generally overlooked phenomenon and as a potential cultural loss that deserves our attention. At the same time, it would be foolish to make a rigid ideology of the endeavour to safeguard "endangered" artworks. cONcErn does not reject destructive and ephemeral art, which it aims to complement in its reflections and perspectives; in particular, with regards to economic, ecological and social issues. Let cONcErn be one more component of cultural supply - which should be as diverse as possible.





CONCERN

DIVERSITY

cONcErn embraces the diversity of artistic expressions through the suspension, or at least a shift, of established criteria for selection. How does cONcErn implement this politics of inclusion?

1. cONcErn is a dynamic infrastructure. For each situation in which an artwork is at risk of destruction or abandonment for logistical reasons, cONcErn investigates, with the artists, the possibilities and requirements for the safeguard of the artwork. The artworks taken care of by cONcErn remain the property of the artist and, ideally, stay with cONcErn on a temporary basis only.

2. The assimilation of artworks at the storage site is a process based on "elective affinities" between the artworks and the host milieu. cONcErn is a "sensitive milieu" that affects the artworks and, in turn, is affected by them. It is therefore conceivable that certain artworks do not find a point of attachment with cONcErn. Above all, what substantiates the assimilation of an artwork is its biography and the anecdotal context surrounding its liaison with cONcErn.

3. The storage site is an open space which permits the artworks to remain in continuous relationship with their environment, to continue their vital modes of exchange.

What would cONcErn be good for if the artworks were draped with big white sheets, with no interaction between them, out of sight and out of reach. In which aesthetic experience would they be able to partake? In a shared space, the entrusted artworks are reactivated by the very milieu that they are creating. Such a regrouping of "endangered" artworks provides a unique resource for research in art, offering new insights on contemporary artistic creation and its "logistic realities". It also serves as a precious pedagogical tool that provides a singular perspective on the large diversity of artistic practices, whether they are established or marginal.

4. The ensemble of artworks in the space for storage and visibility is complemented by an ongoing archive of documentation about artworks which have been, or at risk of being, abandoned or destroyed. cONcErn is actively looking for stories and images of such artworks and is in continuous dialog with artists about their experiences with the issues at stake. In addition, whenever cONcErn is not able to integrate an artwork in its space for storage and visibility, it assists with its potential disposal and produces documentation of the artwork and its context for inclusion in the archive.





CONCERN



ARTISTIC BACKGROUND

cONcErn is an artist-led initiative conceived by Cécile Colle and Ralf Nuhn in 2013.

Since 2003 Cécile Colle and Ralf Nuhn have developed a shared artistic practice that comprises sculptures, installations and performances. Their work is shown internationally at museums, galleries and festivals, including the National Museum of Fine Arts (Kaohsiung), Tenderpixel Gallery and V&A (London), WRO Biennale (Wroclaw), Art Claims Impulse and Haus am Lützowplatz (Berlin), Verbeke Foundation (Antwerp), Tripostal (Lille), and is held in the permanent collection of the ZKM - Centre for Art and Media (Karlsruhe). In addition, the artists present their ongoing research at conferences, public talks and through written publications.

Since 2009 Cécile Colle and Ralf Nuhn have explored the polysemic notion of the parasite as an integrated theoretical framework and methodological tool for sculptural propositions in urban space. Their ongoing project ParaSites has engendered various context-specific interventions that “feed” from their “host” environment on a formal and conceptual level and, in return, transform that very host context through their adapted presence.

Put more generally, ParaSites questions the relationship between artwork and its context and implies a veritable “mesology¹ of art, for art and through art”.

Today, the project cONcErn explores the same question but by means of an inverse strategy: through the creation of an artistic infrastructure that functions as a host environment. Concretely, this infrastructure is centered around a dynamic depot for artworks that, due to logistical reasons, are at risk of destruction or abandonment. This depot is not a simple space for storage but rather a sensitive milieu where the different artworks remain visible and continue to communicate between them and with the public.

¹ The term “mesology” comes from the Greek word “mesos” (middle, in the midst of, milieu) and is understood here as “study of milieus”.



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