

Assisted Manifesto

We are all assistants and assisted at the same time. Everyone, whether powerful or powerless.

"Close actions" were first carried out during visits to my father, Philippe Fouché, in the medical institutions where he has been living since 2015 (hospitals, rehab centers, nursing homes, specialized care facilities...) following a stroke that left him hemiplegic. Through gestures, movements, and manipulations of objects found on site, I diverted spaces designed for care into spaces of shared life. I acted in Philippe's vicinity, rather than with him, during the waiting periods when healthcare professionals were attending to him.

"Close actions" derives from "close presences," the expression used by Fernand Deligny to designate those, non-professionals, who, in the Cévennes, from 1968 to the 1990s, watched over the non-speaking autistic children entrusted to them, inventing alongside them a way of life outside any institutional framework, in experimental camps called "living areas."

Since 2020, actors and actresses have been acting as assistant-assisted. Bodily collisions and distancings, objects-sculptures-props-cameras — the close actions do not narrate; they are the result of what I call empathic aberrations, which arise from failures of identification with the other, whether thing or person. The close actions consist in trying to put oneself in the place of a nurse on strike, an infant in the grass, someone who cannot walk, something that rolls, a fork that spins... Failing to succeed, and speculating plastically on the diversity of modes of existence.

Assisted Manifesto takes the form of viewing zones embedded in an environment of objects — props and sculptures — that are like disturbed relics of the close actions. They are also potential markers, temporarily freed from their mode of apparition in the filmed actions. This search for spatial and temporal distance affirms the instability of the physical and emotional laws governing the movement of things and beings. The actions take shape outside the orthonormal space where everything is supposed to hold together.

The filmed actions are presented in three subsets, forming a triptych of screens:

- **Philippe**
Philippe Fouché moves around in an electric wheelchair and lives in an institution. Here, the close actions amount to a wild rehabilitation: something malfunctioned (the body, the hospital, society) and it is going to keep non-functioning, differently. Wild rehabilitation applies first to myself, and to all those who are willing to change their mode of idealizing bodies.. It is not medical rehabilitation, "the real one," the one that says "there's no more room in the ward, sir, sorry (STAFFING PROBLEM)."
- **Aberrant Memory (Kid A or the Attempt)**
The Attempt in question is historical and legendary. It is the experimental network for the care of non-speaking autistic children founded by Deligny. Among non-speaking autistic people, Deligny sought the manifestations of "a memory somewhat refractory

to symbolic domestication, somewhat aberrant, one that lets itself be struck by what means nothing — if by struck one means what leaves an imprint." Here, our close actions take place under the influence of the spatial and conceptual propositions of the Attempt. Deligny attempted to locate what pertains to the "point of seeing" of children who live without passing through the use of language — and he insists that this "point of seeing" is radically different from the "point of view" of a speaking subject. Our camera bumps into the opaque otherness of the "point of seeing." It explores a different path: a non-speaking communication, carried by a parodic and lyrical fiction.

>> In an anti-institution, attentive adults would like to adapt themselves to the world of Kid A, the fictional infinitive child.

- **Assisted Life, Institutional Life, (Re)Habilitated Life**

Workers perform tasks. The question arises: "How do you put a dependent person to bed in 3 minutes and 41 seconds?" One tries to feel the difference between putting to bed and throwing away. There is also: feeding, housing, diapering, casting, striking, cleaning, transmitting, massaging, warming, shaving, lifting, rolling, lifting (the patient), arching, camering, verticalizing... (things seen).

The assistant-assisted actors and actresses are Sandra Alvarez de Toledo, Bérly Coulombié, Yannik Denizart, Emmanuel Fouché, Philippe Fouché, Adrien Malcor, Martín Molina-Gola, as well as Antoine Astier, Moussa Arda, Natacha Berger, Yann Bréheret, Félix Brieden, Mariette Cousty, Tiphaine Dambrin, Raphael Delannoy, Anna Dubosc, Marie-Christine Fouché, Christine Fougères, Daniel Galicia, François Guinochet, Nayon Lee, Anaïs Masson, Marlon Miguel, Maxence Rifflet, Patricia Som, Marina Vidal-Naquet, Violette a, Thivakar Yogeswaran, Zlata, and the students of the École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts de Lyon.

Florian Fouché, February 2023

PS:

_Are you an informal carer?
_I am close to an assisted person, I am assisted myself in general and by them in particular
_Are all the assistant-assisted actors informal carers or in need of help?
_All the assistant-assisted actors are a bunch of assisted people like you, like everyone.
*Bunch of assisted-people.**
_I AM ASSISTANT-ASSISTED
_BUNCH OF ASSISTED-PEOPLE!
-I'll give you just enough to keep you from dying
_BUNCH OF ASSISTED-ASSISTANT PEOPLE!
_BUNCH OF ASSISTANT-ASSISTED PEOPLE!!!!!!!!!!!!

***Translator's note:** French "assisté" carries welfare-dependent stigma that neutral English "assisted" lacks.