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SOCIETE IMAGINAIRE

MICHEL BUTOR

Farewell to the Century

Translated from the French by Leon Roudiez
For Batuz and the Société Imaginaire

Farewell to the so-called Belle Epoque
sculptured entrances to the subway
Impressionist cathedrals
waterfronts bearings parasols
tropical helmets trousers
in carmine blue dashing cavalrymen
catching bouquets tossed
by young women standing at windows
parading on the Champs Elysees
before the blue skyline of the Vosges mountains

Farewell Russian ballets Rolls-Royce
folds of Fauve painters Blue Rider
cubist Harlequins trenches airships planes massacres
of infantrymen clad in sky blue
bombings countries torn apart
the great night (of the expected revolution) the great desperation
on the shores of the Pacific ocean
the young cinema narrates
the Birth of a Nation

Farewell lost generation
Montmartre gives way to Montparnasse
fashion show in Deauville
jazz crosses the ocean
long necklaces cigarette-holders
dodecaphonic nostalgias
manifestoes psychoanalyses
collages rubbings frenzies
the stock market takes a plunge
it is the crash of Wall Street

Farewell Cambodian dances
of the French Colonial fair
moving pictures have become talking
goose-stepping and the swastika
invade the Rhineland
and then Austria and it keeps on going
Olympic games outstretched arms
Spain is in a bloodbath
we attempt to avoid war
only to end up in the debacle

Farewell curfews rations
yellow stars in the streets
very soon they have disappeared
chimneys belching smoke over the snow
bombings landings
resistance liberation
Hiroshima Nagasaki
could this really be the last one
so we try to convince ourselves
the League of Nations becomes the United Nations

Farewell long march be-bop
Saint-Germain-des-Prés miniskirts
television proliferates
where have the colonies gone
new nations everywhere
everywhere an economic miracle
but which does not last long
everywhere towers scrape the sky
new novel new wave
international abstract art

Farewell patience cold war
Japanese automobiles
the movies are in color
erection of the Berlin wall
they say China is awakening
turnpikes supermarkets
come to us from across the Atlantic
pop art op art and so forth
we sink into a purring humdrum
May 1968 sounds the alarm

Farewell stagnation highspeed trains
we fear China is awakening
computer science is spreading
as well as miniaturization
on the other hand planes are growing
as well as airport noise
Hilton Disney Coca-Cola
war continues elsewhere
the United Nations in New York
complain of their impotence

Farewell frenzies shivers
we know China is awakening
we set our foot on the Moon
and then after a few trials
we await the coming century
toward the Middle East
things are hardly getting settled
the war still goes on
cracks in the Eastern block
in the West unemployment and AIDS

Farewell to another century's end
we see that China is awakening
the Berlin wall has fallen
a new empire has crumbled
but there is no end to war
Europe is taking shape through trial and error
we still speak of the Third World
but there is no longer any Second
unemployment and AIDS everywhere
Farewell stanzas of farewells



On Michel Butor's "Adieu au Siècle"

One of the basic thoughts of the Société Imaginaire is to bring people from different cultural regions together for personal meetings and to keep them together over a longer period of time through shared research or any other collective project. This results in a deeper personal as well as cultural understanding.

One particular form of this collaboration, which has already become traditional for the Société Imaginaire, are the graphic portfolios, in which artists of one cultural region (e.g., Eastern Europe) illustrate the works of poets of another (e.g., South America).

This kind of collaboration has assumed a new quality in the most recent work of Michel Butor. His "Adieu au Siècle," written in Alzella on hand-crafted paper ("Büttenpapier"), constitutes the invitation to an innovative "illustration" which transcends the customary (often boring) illumination through graphic work.

The ten stanzas, each describing—in each instance from a different viewpoint—one decade of the previous century, are illuminated by other witnesses of this century with original texts, photos, graphic art, etc., by means of contributions by prominent associates of the Société Imaginaire from all over the world.

In this way, a comprehensive piece of art is created, in which the form of collaboration is raised to a new level of significance. This collaboration or "correspondence project" began 20 years ago with Butor's "Meditation sur la frontière," which he wrote about the paintings of Batuz.

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January 1999

The M.I.T. Project Group "Urban Design", in co-operation with the Technical University Dresden, met for the 3rd time in Altzella and Dresden.

Professors Mark Jarzombek and Michael Dennis, together with 12 M.I.T. students, offered solutions to specific problems in the city planning of Dresden. They intend to present the results of the whole project in the year 2000 with a publication in Dresden.

April 1999

The "Scaglia Project" started in Altzella. It is a Pilot Project showing how big industry can take part in the program of the *Société Imaginaire*.

Five employers of the Company U.T.E. were guests of the Batuz Foundation for four weeks. They had the opportunity to work together in the workshops of the Foundation, to meet artists from various countries, to visit museums and high schools. At the end of their stay a collective exhibition was displayed.

May 1999

A delegation of representatives of Industry and Trade of the Republic of Uruguay under the leadership of Dr. Julio Herrera, Minister of Industry, Energy and Mining, visited Saxony to present Montevideo as an entrance to the market of Mercosur. The delegation started the tour with a visit to Altzella on May 2 to obtain information on previous cultural projects of the Batuz Foundation as well as on current events and on plans for the future.

At the same time, a delegation from the University of Tucuman, Argentina, lead by Prof. Pablo Holgado, director of international relations of the University, arrived in Altzella. Several contracts concerning international collaboration with Universities in Saxony were signed.

The Konrad-Adenauer Foundation hosted a meeting of the *Société Imaginaire* in Cadenabbia. The theme was "Globalization in Politics and Culture"—The collaboration of the regions on the example of the Republic of Uruguay and Saxony.

Keynote speakers were Prof. Kenneth Keniston (M.I.T.), Minister Kajo Schommer (Economics Minister for the State of Saxony) and Ing. Lucio Caceres (Minister of Transport and Public works, Uruguay). In the ensuing discussion the participants hailed the projects of the Batuz Foundation as

innovative and future-oriented, and signed the "Declaration of Cadenabbia." This inaugural document of the "Circle of Friends of the Batuz Foundation" proposed the nomination of President Julio Maria Sanguinetti as Honorary President of the Batuz Foundation.

Minister Caceres presented to Batuz, as an official gift from President Sanguinetti, the original working model which the artist Ricardo Pascale which had used when creating his large sculpture for the residence of Uruguayan President.

June 1999

Altzella was the place for an important international Architecture Symposium on the work of Eladio Dieste. Prof. Stanford Anderson and Minister Lucio Caceres had invited outstanding architects from all over the world. Participants included:

Prof. Edward Allen (M.I.T.)
Antonio Dieste (Montevideo)
Prof. Thomas Herzog (München)
Gonzalo Larrambebere (Montevideo)
Jörg Schlaich (Stuttgart)
David Selby (London).

Professor Anderson and Minister Caceres agreed to continue the project in the year 2000 in Montevideo.

"Emerging Artists" from Uruguay and a group of professors and students from the Corcoran College of Art and Design, Washington, had their workshop in Altzella with partners from the Academies of Fine Arts in Krakow and Warsaw and also from the Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst Leipzig.

The results of the workshops were documented in a catalog and in exhibitions in Washington and Montevideo.

July 1999

With an international meeting of constructivist artists the Batuz Foundation continued its project "Constructivism in Two Worlds." Artists from Germany, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Uruguay worked together and prepared an exhibition in the "Lozza-Saal".

The 4th International Art Workshop for High School Students took place in Altzella. Pupils from Saxony, Poland, Argentina, Hungary, and Brazil participated in courses given by art teachers from Poland, Uruguay, Germany, and Argentina.

August 1999

The project "Tango and Bandoneon" was continued. The ensemble "GRUPO TANGO" with Nestor Vax gave several concerts in Saxony. The performances were a great success.

September 1999

The Workshop "Art in Dialog" took place from August 31 to September 17. The participants were rectors, professors, and students from the Academies of Fine Art in Poland, Czech, Slovakia, Hungary, Uruguay, and Germany. Three students from the University of Tucuman were guests of the Foundation.

The Saxon-Uruguayan portfolio of the *Société Imaginaire* with poems of five Saxon writers and graphic works of five Uruguayan artists was completed with introduction by President Julio Maria Sanguinetti and Prologue by Prime-Minister Kurt Biedenkopf. During the presentation three writers of the portfolio read excerpts from their work in Altzella.

October 1999

Minister of State Dr. Kajo Schommer, in his role as president of the "Circle of Friends of the Batuz Foundation," invited representatives of the political and economic life to Altzella. The objective of this meeting was to identify new partners, to implement the program of the *Société Imaginaire*, and to complete the infrastructure of the Working Center Altzella.

During the recent visit of Batuz to Uruguay, the president of the Republic, Julio Maria Sanguinetti, informed his country about the members and objectives of the newly founded *Fundacion Batuz Uruguay*. The function took place in the presidential palace in Montevideo before a large audience and was transmitted live by three TV channels.

The members of the Board of Directors are:

Honorary President: Dr. Julio Maria Sanguinetti

President: Ctdr. Ricardo Pascale (former President of the Central Bank of Uruguay)

Vice President: Ing. Lucio Caceres, Minister of Transport and Public Works)

Secretary: Alfredi Testoni

Treasurer: Ctdr. Ricardo Scaglia, President of U.T.E.

Speaker: Juan Jose Arteaga

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