

« **ce passant considérable** » proposed by Marcel Brient

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Arthur Rimbaud & Paul Verlaine  
Felix Gonzalez-Torres & Ross Laycock

Exhibition:  
from 9th October  
to 23rd November 2013  
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Opening :  
Wednesday 9th October 2013  
from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.  
Open Tuesday to Saturday  
from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.  
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Suggestions abound today to decide who will be worthy of joining Condorcet, Gambetta, Voltaire, Marie Curie and Victor Hugo in the National Pantheon to glorify the values of the French nation and live up to the motto: "To these great men, the grateful homeland". This exhibition recalls some names whom Marcel Brient, lover of art and poetry, as well as those who find sense in the notions of genius, combat and singularity, would undoubtedly be destined to it.

They come in couples: the French poets Arthur Rimbaud (1854-1891) and Paul Verlaine (1844-1896), and the American conceptual artists Felix Gonzalez-Torres (1957-1996) and Ross Laycock (deceased in 1991). Separated by a century of literary history and artistic creation, they can nevertheless be brought together under an epitaph borrowed from Stéphane Mallarmé: "ce passant considerable". This provisional "grave", which should be seen as the elegiac literary genre devoted to the dead at the end of the XIX century and known as "tombeau", is not in any way mournful and sorrowful, quite the opposite. On its frontispiece resound the verbs: live, celebrate and bestow.

This exhibition brings together two visionary and absinth-lover giants of the world of poetry, with two artists whose fates were sealed by aids: Felix Gonzalez-Torres, one of the most influential artist of the XXth century and his life companion, who inspired some of his most moving works of art. It is an hymn to love, life, creation and death like a love song. It is also an hymn to the gaze that each of us, mere mortal beings, can throw at the works of these shooting stars in order to enrich one's life and pursue, as must be, their fight for freedom, generosity and the respect of difference, whether it be sexual, political or related to identity.

Poems, original manuscripts, photographs and letters of striking beauty by Arthur Rimbaud, Paul Verlaine and their peers, including Rimbaud's early writings and his "Seer Letter" (1871) interact with works and documents from Felix Gonzalez-Torres, most notably the candy portrait of Marcel Brient, accomplished in 1992.

Clément Dirié