

Sabotage. The act of sabotaging, of ruining a job or a task. A maneuver, an action aimed at disrupting or causing the failure of an undertaking.¹

There is a debt to be paid. In the series of drawings produced during his three-month residency at Ateliers Vortex, Tristan Chinal-Dargent turned his attention to the figure of the parrot or rather, to its absence within our collective imagination. Why do we omit (or fail to remember) this obvious fact? The parrot speaks. As strange and unsettling as it may seem, it explicitly formulates the things it has heard and repeats them. Things learned deliberately with the help of objects - cylinders, circles, squares, volumes² - or, more simply, mimetically, through the assimilation and reiteration of spoken words.

The parrot speaks because it seeks contact. This is one of the reasons for its highly developed brain³ compared to that of other bird species. When isolated from its peers, this linguistic mechanism allows it to establish a bond. Without the possibility of true dialogue, it identifies specific contexts and imitates the human voice in order to carve out a place within our daily lives. In doing so, it adapts and develops new forms of companionship.

Inseparable. The majority of parrots - which scientists classify within the Psittacidae family - live in monogamous pairs. Separation does occur but remains rare, as some parakeets share their lives for many years. The parrot is among the pet animals with the longest lifespan, sometimes up to 30 years alongside its owners. One could almost speak of a human lifespan.

Ethologists assert that the psittacid does not *understand* what it says. It does not acquire a “grammar” in the strict sense - that is, an abstract, flexible form of thought attentive to the words it uses - but repeats, at the right moment, the interjections it has recorded. Repetition would therefore stand below understanding, far from recollection and from any thought situated in time.

And yet, the parrots in Tristan Chinal-Dargent’s work, often hidden, masked behind a tree, or absent from their cages, remember. They chant phrases belonging to a forgotten memory. These anarchist voices, tied to past struggles, are addressed to us. Following the thread of this mechanical misunderstanding - real or assumed - the birds operate in negative space, like transmitting antennas relaying these silenced voices and the present need to bring them back into urgency.

How can we give form, and breath to these unfinished struggles? Above all, how can we find in these memories the momentum and impulse necessary to carry our current struggles forward?

The presence of these ghosts is all the more unsettling because it manifests musically, as an anthropomorphic animality. The bird, often a symbol of transformation, death, or ill omen, here becomes a vehicle for voices that once acted and fought politically.

In the course of his research, Tristan Chinal-Dargent grew interested in the motif of the syrinx, that Y-shaped organ located deep in the trachea which enables birds to speak. More precisely, the syrinx transforms air vibrations into vocalizations, before they emerge and are shaped by the parrot’s tongue. The syrinx - an organ of speech, then - is located at the entrance to the bronchi, at the junction of two distinct paths we might be free to follow or take.

We would do well to take the psittacid as an example. Its mimicry signals various defense mechanisms, masking itself, imitating its predator, blending into or integrating a group, feigning its prey... It imitates and converses in order to survive. Like the parrot, we too should use these shifts in language - dare I say, its sabotage - to broaden our imaginaries, reactivate our struggles, and the narratives that accompany them.

A debt remains to be paid, the artist reminds me. By whom? For whom? For past generations? Those to come? In his exhibition, the painter-drawer infuses a post-apocalyptic atmosphere populated by deserted industrial ruins⁴ echoing symbols of explosion - projectiles, stones, smoke, clogs... A muted struggle, active and generative.

If crows caw, the parakeet talks, chatters, whistles, and cracks sounds, an exceptional figure of remembrance.

Rather than an ending, it offers us new perspectives, defiant and insurgent.

¹ Definition from the CNRTL. A legend claims that the word *sabotage* comes from workers throwing their wooden clogs (sabots) into machines to break them.

² YouTube is full of videos and tutorials of people teaching their parrots to speak.

³ Composed of seven parts, the parrot’s brain possesses innate and extensive learning capacities. Several scientific studies have shown that, in mammals and certain birds, having a “large” brain is evidence of the development of animal social intelligence. Why, after all, evolve an energy-hungry brain? The reason for this growth seems to lie beyond basic homeostatic needs.

⁴ Forgotten data centers, abandoned highway projects, collapsed bridges, nineteenth-century manual machinery... “We don’t throw stones at each other anymore,” repeats the parrot, like an invitation to action.