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Maxime Matthys, Documentation from the performance *Sortez Couverts*

The final image I will describe is a documentation of the performance *Sortez Couverts*, from 2020. As it is documentation, the presentation size of this particular image varies depending on context.

The photograph is portrait in format, and shows a figure standing on a pavement at the side of the street. The figure is on the left side of the composition, looking out into the road on the right.

The pavement fills the bottom of the image and tapers in perspective to the left side of the photograph. It is a usual pavement grey, with two small manhole covers. A dark strip of tarmac runs horizontally from the left side of the pavement to the curb on the right side. A small amount of the rectangular manhole cover is in the tarmac section. The other manhole cover is circular and is within the section of tarmac. The circular cover is more central on the pavement than the rectangular one ... just to the left of the figure's left foot. The low curb is a paler grey than the pavement. The pavement is dirty, with small pieces of litter and white cigarette butts scattered across it and discarded chewing gum stuck to it. Leaf green lines have been spray painted onto the pavement by utility companies, to mark the location of supply pipes or something that needs to be repaired around the manhole covers.

Further along the pavement ... behind the figure ... some liquid has been split on the left side of the pavement or perhaps it is dog urine. Further still ... presumably in front of a shop or cafe, there is a large black plant pot with a small round bush at the top of it. Even further in the distance ... there are bins, road signs and lamp posts along the pavement.

The buildings alongside the pavement are on the left side and fill the entirety of that side of the photograph in a straight vertical line, acting almost as a frame to the composition. From the angle that the photograph was taken at, it is not possible to see any of the fronts of these buildings. It is as if we are

standing with our left side almost touching the closest building ... looking down the street. Protruding door frames and doorsteps are visible, as well as the various colours these buildings have been painted. The one closest to us is white ... the one further on from that is a teal green ... the next one a darker green.

Towards the top of the photograph there is a sign attached to the top of the closest buildings ... it reads 'HOTEL' in black capital vertical letters, on a white rectangular background. There are more signs attached to the tops of the buildings beyond this one. The next closest one is dark blue ... in an oval shape, with two white gramophones depicted on it. Beyond this ... a rectangular dark blue sign with white writing on it. Further along ... a red, white and blue barbers' pole.

The road cuts in from the right side of the photograph ... towards the top of the bottom half of the photograph. It is a two-way road, with white spray paint lines down the middle. The road is uneven and made up of a patchwork of different tarmacs.

On the other side of the road ... shorter white spray paint lines mark out parking spaces between the road and the pavement on the right side of the road. Four cars are tightly parked in the spaces ... then there is a gap, and another car. The front of each vehicle points away from the viewer. If you folded the photograph in half from top to bottom, the cars mark out an almost horizontal line across the centre of the right side of the composition.

A tall light brown concrete building shadows over the cars. There are 19 cream thick vertical columns that run from the top of the building ... to just above the cars. The building has many large windows along the side facing the road. Each window reflects the buildings opposite.

A small section of a grey tower pokes out of the top of the building and vanishes beyond the top right corner of the photograph.

Further down the road, there is another large building - similar in height and concrete construction. This one has no windows and appears to be made of a light brown pebbledash material. White railings run around the top of this building and its slate grey roof.

The light in the photograph is a bright, natural spring light. The photograph is very crisp in detail, and there is not a cloud in the pale blue sky.

The figure in the foreground, standing upright on the pavement, is covered from head to toe in official looking white A4 paper documents. There must be over 100. The documents all look to be the same, but it is hard to tell what they are exactly. They all have the same four bullet points on them, and a scribbled signature in the bottom right corner. Each piece of paper cascades and overlaps over the others, covering the entirety of the figure. Only the figure's nose, left hand, right leg khaki trouser cuffs and white trainers are visible beneath the papers.

This photograph is documentation of a performance that the artist undertook in Rennes in north-western France on the 23rd March 2020... early on in the Covid-19 pandemic. The name, *Sortez Couvert* translates as Go Out Covered. During the French quarantine period, anyone leaving their home had to take a paper permission form with them and keep it with them. Each mandatory form required information identifying the person as well as the date, time and reason for leaving their home. The artist explains the performance:

“By disappearing under a hundred of permission forms I wanted to question general quarantine dictated by governments in almost every country of the world. The costume, made up of over 150 certificates, is a metaphor for the current health situation in France and many other countries; put the population in quarantine to compensate for the lack of preparation and reaction of governments.”