

From 1976 Pierre Courtois paints small oil landscapes which he then inserts into collage-drawings, in a late (and particularly perverted) honeymoon with painting. During that same year, the 'explosive' mushroom cloud appeared into his work. In Examen positif (**Positive Examination**) (1976), a nuclear explosion is seen through a 'sight'. It is almost as if the spectator himself has decided to fire, and is responsible for the global deflagration. At the centre of the collage-drawing, real midges are held between plates of glass. Ironically, the work evokes the ancient Vanities and the debates on the inanity of human ambition. In other words, man is but a fly to other men, or even more radically, 'Who cares, flies outlive us'. Right at the bottom, an oil painting shows us a signpost warning us of potential danger. The meaning of the circular sign only appears through the relational connections with the death of the insects and the morbid circularity of the 'sight'.

Olivier Duquenne, 2012

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