

(...) What about artist's boxes of the 1990s? Above all, they were characterised by their heightened degree of abstraction and their complete rejection of the anecdote. The conclusion was similar in the late 1980s, although less radical. This time, the objects' dramaturgy served a sensitive minimalism. The backgrounds were painted and given an obvious plastic quality. Moreover, they were essentially front-oriented. We have already underlined the importance of verticality for Pierre Courtois, through the arrow, the plumb-line, the staircase, etc. In this decade, the 'trajectory' was a source of great inspiration. We must also note that these boxes often presented some strange affinities. Some of them seemed to recall African and Oceanic art. These analogies are troubling for certain pieces: **903902 (1990) and 913601 (1991)**. But these associations are purely fortuitous. If Pierre Courtois called upon the totem and savage beauties, it was in an attempt at simplicity. The 1990s were marked by a strong affirmation of the 'architectural' quality of these boxes. The objects placed in the cases were often measuring instruments: compasses, rulers, laths, markers etc. The use of the quadrangle was an obvious choice for one who saw infinity as a set square. 'Square' boxes had to appear sooner or later, and so they did in 1992. The next year, oblong boxes would meet the line in a memorable encounter, that of the cord line, the most perfect rectitude.(...)

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