

### **The network, three living areas, three time periods**

“Le Serret” was a camp between two hills of oaks, fifteen kilometers from Monoblet. Jacques Lin lived there with four to five children with autism from 1972 to 1974. Their customs were ritualized: building shelters, chopping wood, fetching water from the river, preparing meals, doing dishes, washing clothes. The children were attracted to objects and repeated gestures. Over time, they became spatially oriented and took initiative to participate in tasks. Each day, the adults traced the movements and gestures of the children. Beginning in 1968 Gisèle Durand-Ruiz, Deligny, and Janmari lived in Graniers, a hamlet near Monoblet. Between 1968 and his death in 1996, Deligny never left the hamlet. He wrote in the morning, received parents or visitors in the afternoon. The “network” extended from Deligny and Janmari. Guy and Marie-Rose Aubert lived with three or four children, in a house surrounded by farmyards in Le Palais, a district of Monoblet. Guy was responsible for the material organization of the network. These maps were drawn by Nicole Guy, who lived in a caravan nearby.

—L’Arachnéen Publications

LEFT TO RIGHT:

**Le Serret** August 1973

India ink and pastel on four sheets of transparent paper (facsimile)

Gisèle Durand-Ruiz traced Marie-Pierre's and Dany's movements and gestures in the shelter of the living area: in black India ink, the children's wandering; in orange and green pastel, the turns the children took and the actions they initiated. The black dots mark the objects handled and moved. Dark-green pastel stick figures denote adults. With the small squares, the vertical lines designate the "close presences" and the horizontal ones the tasks. These moments (presence + task = raft) are what attracted the children.

**Hamlet of Graniers** September 1977

India ink on four sheets of transparent paper (facsimile)

Jacques Lin traced Janmari's journeys, which led him to the fountain (above and to the left), to the vegetable garden (above and to the right), and to the camp next to the hamlet (bottom of the map); he also forayed into the house. The brown ink identifies his customary paths. The black ink marks his wandering lines, his detours. The dial at the bottom left marks the hours they were transcribed. The Y allows the maps to align and recalls the infinitive of "to be there" in the place.

**Le Palais, Monoblet** November 1978

India ink on three sheets of transparent paper (facsimile)

Nicole Guy traced Jérôme's movements and gestures as he followed Marie-Rose Aubert from the kitchen (in the center) to the laundry room, via the alley. In the kitchen, he moved around the table, and swerved while Marie-Rose prepared the meal. The child's wandering lines are in black ink, and the routes of Marie-Rose are in pencil, but hardly visible.

Courtesy Gisèle Durand-Ruiz

*Gallery 518, near light  
box with Wander Line  
drawings*

### **The network, three living areas, three time periods**

In 1967 Jacques Lin, a young electrician, joined Deligny and his companions in Monoblet, in the Cévennes. The first living area, "L'Île d'en bas," initiated in 1969, was located below the hamlet where Deligny lived. Lin built a living area for himself and several children. One day when he was overwhelmed by the autistic children purposely hurting themselves, he shared his distress with Deligny, who suggested to him that rather than try to put the concern into words, he "trace": trace the map of the territory, the routes of the children, their "wander lines." The mapping practice spread through the network, and it was sustained until the early 1980s. The maps are neither art brut nor drawing in the artistic sense, nor therapeutic documents. They are experimental objects intended to leave a trace of the experiences shared by speaking adults and children with nonverbal autism, and to support Deligny's theoretical and clinical research on language and space.

—L'Arachnéen Publications

*Gallery 416, in vitrine*

LEFT:

**L'île d'en bas** June 1969

India ink and felt-tip pen on paper and transparent paper (facsimile)

This is the first map drawn by anyone in the network. Jacques Lin traced Janmari's journeys (in red) and Gaspard's (in dotted red lines). The living area is in India ink. Janmari (who lived with Deligny, a few hundred meters away, in Graniers) crossed the small river, went to the shelter, took a few plates that he would rinse in the river, then retraced his steps going up the stairs backwards. Gaspard moved between the converted ruins (on each side of the map), passing through the shelter. Lin traced the first initial of his last name in the two converted ruins.

Courtesy Gisèle Durand-Ruiz

*Gallery 416, in vitrine*

LEFT:

**Hamlet of Graniers (near Monoblet, where Deligny, Gisèle Durand-Ruiz, and Janmari lived from 1968)** December 14, 1974

Pencil and India ink two sheets of paper (facsimile)

Jacques Lin traced (on the right) his journeys and gestures and (on the left) those of Janmari. They came out of the house (at the top right), took a detour past the place where some food was out, by way of the stone sink (at the bottom of the map) where they threw a large wooden dice, and then went to the fountain to get water. Janmari's wander lines are marked by "black flowers" denoting the moments when he stopped and swayed. His gesture of splashing the water from the fountain is indicated by a spray of small circles.

Courtesy Gisèle Durand-Ruiz

*Gallery 416, in vitrine*

RIGHT:

**Maison Y in the village of Monoblet, at the junction of two roads, where, in the fall of 1976, four adults lived with Anne, Phillippe, and Dany, three children with autism**

November–December 1976

India ink and felt-tip pen on paper with transparent layer (facsimile)

Traced by Thierry Bazzana and Marie-Madeleine Godet, the background map shows the kitchen in red with a large table surrounded by chairs, stove, sink, refrigerator, and oven. The adults and children bake bread. The adults' movements are transcribed in felt-tip pen or in red pencil; the movements of children are marked in black ink. They come and go from the table in the kitchen, and stretch their hands over the large table. The "eyes" are a sign to designate what Deligny calls "zyeuter," which means not to look but to glance.

Courtesy Gisèle Durand-Ruiz

*Gallery 416, in vitrine*

Glossary terms from *Maps and Wander Lines* (Paris: L'Arachnéen, 2013), pages 6-11

### **Wander Line [Ligne d'erre]**

“*Erre*: the word just came to me. Like all words, it speaks a little of everything. It suggests a ‘way of proceeding, of walking,’ says the dictionary, and ‘the residual movement of a vessel when it is no longer being propelled,’ but also ‘the tracks of an animal.’” (*Cahiers de l’immuable 1: Recherches*, no. 18, April 1975)

With the term *wander lines* Deligny designates the movements and gestures of the children as well as the transcriptions of them on the maps. Wandering is distinct from errancy, purposeless drifting (with the romantic tinge it takes on in the surrealist and situationist movements); in French, *erre* is also consonant with *aire* (as in *area of stay*).

—“Glossary,” *Maps and Wander Lines* (Paris: L'Arachnéen, 2013)

*Gallery 518, near light box*

### **Area of Stay [Aire de séjour]**

Designates those places where the children live with the *nearby presences*—encampments or farms. “Area” emphasizes the notion of a limited surface, as well as having an ethological connotation (an *area* is also an *eyrie*, like that of a bird of prey).

—“Glossary,” *Maps and Wander Lines* (Paris: L'Arachnéen, 2013)

*Gallery 416, near Ellsworth Kelly, Light Reflection on Water (1950)*

### **Ring [Cerue]**

The idea and shape of the *ring* come from the “circles” that Janmari draws interminably on a sheet of paper. It takes two forms, the *Wander Ring* and the *Area Ring*. The first applies to any “outside-language” presence or gesture: on the maps of 12–13 June and 28 June 1975, the *Wander Ring* occupies the whole space, and defines the autistic condition of Janmari and Toche: its sign may be added to the “stick-man” (a schematic figure indicating the presence of the speaking adult) to show that the adult has been *marked* by the child.

An *Area Ring* designates both the perimeter of the customary and the virtually infinite space and time within which the autistic mode of being manifests. For, as Deligny remarks, the children’s attraction to what is going on (the *doing*, or the “to-be-done,” as he also sometimes says) keeps their movements contained within the territory of the area of stay, without any limit (in either material or verbal form—fence or prohibition) having been imposed. *Wander Rings* and *Area Rings* appear on the maps in the form of an unclosed circle (open to initiatives). The maps of May and June 1976 include both types of ring.

—“Glossary,” *Maps and Wander Lines* (Paris: L’Arachnéen, 2013)

*Gallery 416, near Alberto  
Giacometti, Hands Holding a  
Void (1934)*



**Raft [Radeau]**

The raft is a metaphor for the experiment conducted in the Cévennes with children with autism. Its lightness and maneuverability make it an alternative (a) on the institutional level, to the psychiatric hospital (the “boat”), and (2) on the political level, to the revolutionary project (“When questions hit, we don’t close ranks”). In 1973 the sign of the raft first appears on the maps in the form of a square whose vertical sides schematically represent the presences and the horizontal sides the tasks; it is later simplified into the form of a “half-raft” (with only two sides). The image also appears in the form of a frame made up of “planks,” upon which the customary tasks are drawn. In 1974 it becomes an object, constructed by the Lin brothers. In the same year, Deligny draws a raft floating on the waves (or the mountains), the rudder of which looks like a quill; the raft as metaphor for the place from which and about which he writes.

—“Glossary,” *Maps and Wander Lines*  
(Paris: L’Arachnéen, 2013)

*Gallery 518, on pedestal*

**To draw [Tracer]**

*To draw*, designating the act of drawing in the infinitive, takes its inspiration from Janmari’s gesture of interminably drawing rings and little waves on paper. *To draw* suggests an evacuation of the subject and, according to Deligny, as a primordial gesture, pertains to “species memory.” By suggesting that Jacques Lin transcribe the children’s movements and gestures in space, rather than seeking to understand them, Deligny aims to produce the a-subjective image of a space “outside language,” on the model of *to draw*.

—“Glossary,” *Maps and Wander Lines*  
(Paris: L’Arachnéen, 2013)

*Gallery 416, near Marcel  
Broodthaers*



**Nearby presence [Présence proche]**

The *network* is not an institutional childcare setup. The adults responsible for watching over the children with autism are not professional social workers. They live with the children permanently, day and night, without receiving any payment in return for something which they do not regard as “work.” In the absence of any term to describe a role that does not exist, Deligny invented this expression, which emphasizes the necessary distance between the adult and the child: to be “nearby” is not necessarily to be “close” with the child, nor to be there “for” them.

—“Glossary,” *Maps and Wander Lines*  
(Paris: L’Arachnéen, 2013)

*Gallery 416, near Vito Acconci*

### **Action/Doing [Agir/Faire]**

In Deligny's vocabulary, *the action* of the child "outside-language" is distinguished from *the doing* of the speaking subject. The child's *action* is intransitive, does not proceed from any wish or intention, and anticipates no reciprocity. It occurs within the context of the *customary*, of daily gestures identically repeated. The action is "allowed" by the adults: by breaking down the gestures involved in everyday tasks and placing particular emphasis on one or another, they make them available more easily to the children's eyes as markers, thus offering them the opportunity (giving them room) to become involved in the sequence of gestures, to participate in it via the kind of action that Deligny calls an "initiative." The *action* is thus fostered by the presence of an adult and their *doing*. It is not a matter of apprenticeship or imitation; it takes place in reaction to an image *marked* in the sequence of gestures (a current image or the trace of an image), and may therefore also take place in the absence of any adult. The *action* therefore testifies to a trace of "species memory." The corresponding sign takes on different forms depending on the period: little waves or loops in Indian ink, patches of brown pastel, schematic hands drawn in bistre ink. . . . The first formulation of the action appeared on the March 1972 map.

—"Glossary," *Maps and Wander Lines* (Paris: L'Arachnéen, 2013)

**Network [Réseau]**

Rather than arranging for the children to be taken care of within a single enclosed area, with hierarchical roles allotted to the adults, Deligny opts for the principle of small, autonomous units spread out and placed under the responsibility of one or several *nearby presences*. Here once again there is a sensitivity to space, and a concern with maintaining a distance between *areas of stay* and between children and adults, so as to avoid concentration. Each *area of stay* is itself conceived of as a dynamic *network*.

—“Glossary,” *Maps and Wander Lines* (Paris: L’Arachnéen, 2013)

*Gallery 416, near Gyula Kosice*

**Ce TRACER d'avant la lettre  
je n'en finirai pas d'y voir ce qu'aucun  
regard, serait-il le mien, n'y verra jamais.  
l'humain est là  
peut-être  
tout simplement  
sans personne à la clef**

This DRAWING from before the letter  
I will always see in it something that no gaze,  
even my own, will ever see.  
the human is there  
perhaps  
quite simply  
without there being any someone there as a  
point of reference

—Fernand Deligny, *Cahiers de l'immuable 1*  
(1975)

**Arachnéen, le mot m'enchante et quel dommage que, sur la planisphère, on ne trouve pas les îles Arachnéennes, ni îles, ni chaînes de montagne. À part les araignées, rien d'arachnéen; peut-être quelquefois et par allusion furtive une broderie ou un détail d'architecture, alors qu'il est évident que devrait exister une langue qui arachnéenne serait et au moins un peuple sinon une civilisation.**

Arachnean: the word enchants me. What a pity that on this planisphere we find no Arachnean islands, neither islands nor mountain ranges. Besides spiders, nothing else is Arachnean; sometimes perhaps there is a fleeting allusion to an architectural detail or a piece of embroidery, whereas it is obvious that a language that would be Arachnean ought to exist, and at least one people if not a civilization.

—Fernand Deligny, "The Arachnean," in *The Arachnean and Other texts*, translation by Drew S. Burk and Catherine Porter, Univocal, 2015, p. 39

*Gallery 416, near Ruth Asawa, Ilse Bing, and Anni Albers*

**Un radeau, vous savez comment c'est fait: il y a des troncs de bois reliés entre eux de manière assez lâche, si bien que lorsque s'abattent les montagnes d'eau, l'eau passe à travers les troncs écartés. . . . Quand les questions s'abattent, nous ne serrons pas les rangs—nous ne joignons pas les troncs—pour constituer une plate-forme concertée. Bien au contraire. Nous ne maintenons que ce qui du projet nous relie. Vous voyez par là l'importance primordiale des liens et du mode d'attache, et de la distance même que les troncs peuvent prendre entre eux. Il faut que le lien soit suffisamment lâche et qu'il ne lâche pas.**

You know how a raft is made: you have tree trunks bound together quite loosely, so that when a sheet of water hits, the water passes through the gaps between the trunks. . . . When questions hit, we don't close ranks—we don't bind the trunks to make a tight, solid platform. Quite on the contrary. We retain only those aspects of the project that bind us together. So you can see the primordial importance of bonds and of the mode of attachment, and that the very distance there may be between the trunks is also important. The bond must be loose enough, but without losing hold.

—Fernand Deligny, *Le Croire et le Craindre* (1978)

*Gallery 518, on pedestal*

**Ce que je me suis dit / et que j'ai dit et redit  
inlassablement / immuablement / à nous  
autres / à ce nous autres-là / ce que j'ai dit  
et rabâché / c'est NOUS qu'il cherche / et  
NOUS / nous y étions là / proches / attentifs  
/ étonnés / inquiets / émus**

What I said to myself / what I said and repeated  
untiringly / immutably / to we others / to that  
we others there / what I said and harped on  
about / it is this WE that he is searching for /  
but WE / we were right there / close by /  
attentive / astonished / disturbed / moved

Voiceover by Fernand Deligny in the film  
*Ce gamin, là* (directed by Renaud Victor, 1976)

*Gallery 416, near Ce gamin, là*

**Et nous voilà aux prises avec le mystère de la fourmilière dont l'image est dans la tête de ce petit insecte hyménoptère? Mais a-t-il, à proprement parler, une tête? Ou alors, dans les articulations ou les petits nœuds du système nerveux, ou dans la terre peut-être; ou alors, dans les cieux.**

And here we find ourselves grappling with the mystery of the anthill, the image of which is inside the head of that little hymenopteran insect. But does it even have a head, properly speaking? In the tiny articulations or nodes of its nervous system, then, or perhaps in the earth; or in the heavens, then.

—Fernand Deligny, *Le Propre de l'image*

*Gallery 518, Joseph Beuys*

**Et l'humain alors apparaît comme étant ce qui reste, quelque peu en lambeaux, de l'arachnéen traversé par cette espèce de météorite aveugle qu'est la conscience.**

And the human then seems to be the somewhat tattered remains of the arachnean when traversed by that kind of blind meteorite that is consciousness.

—Fernand Deligny, *L'Arachnéen et autres textes de Fernand Deligny* (2008)

*Gallery 416, near Ruth Asawa, Ilse Bing, and Anni Albers*



**Il ne s'agissait que de transcrire ces trajets, pour rien, pour *voir*, pour n'avoir pas à en parler, des enfants-*là*, pour éluder nom et prénom, déjouer les artifices du IL de rigueur dès que l'autre est parlé.**

It was simply a question of transcribing these trajectories, for no reason, just to see, to not have to talk about them, about those children *there*, to evade surnames and first names, to undo the obligatory artifices of the HE that arise once the other is spoken.

—Fernand Deligny, 1976

*Gallery 518, near Gego and light table*