

Edgar Sarin: The Miraculous Cocoon



Edgar Sarin, Photo by Danny Roche

By KURT MCVEY, NOV. 2014

Over the last week, in an unassuming and seemingly out of place pop-up gallery on West 3rd Street in The Village, the Parisian artist Edgar Sarin has presided over six “cocoons” (the number came to him in a dream), each a tightly wrapped scroll containing a unique and carefully crafted blueprint for the perfect murder. This past Sunday evening, Sarin unveiled his final and most ingenious murder plot to an audience he considered to be a loving collection of unfortunate suspects, future accessories and co-conspirators. During the *The Miraculous Cocoon’s* run, the individually unfolding murder recipes were joined by a growing number of cryptic artifacts, such as an antique globe positioned on a carefully tuned axis, a weary three-foot strand of splintered rope, or a miniature dictionary opened to a strategic page (see: re·prieve). Sarin transforms the framed cocoons and each ancillary item into a “problematic entity,” a poetic, Duchamp-esque term that builds on the notion that the context surrounding a mundane item can change dramatically once it crosses an animated threshold, whether that happens to be the door to a small makeshift gallery, or the police tape surrounding a gruesome crime scene.

The Miraculous Cocoon experience, which was curated by Sarin’s energetic American fixer, Ehren Shorday, builds on themes explored in Sarin’s last series for his L’Inlassable Galerie, the much-celebrated *Lifetime Concessions* (*Concession à Perpétuité*), which dealt with paintings hidden inside immaculately packaged, wall mounted wooden boxes to be opened upon receiving a handcrafted letter informing the collector of the artist’s death. We also find a bit of what Sarin calls “perfusion,” a subjective and often macabre

performance style that positions the subject as a sort of humanoid painting and the viewer as a conflicted voyeur with a potential choice to make, perhaps not so unlike Camus's antihero in *The Stranger*. It's no accident that "fusion," a term used liberally in nuclear physics and engineering, in turn fused itself to Sarin's own understanding of performance. Sarin also happens to be an accomplished engineer with a focus on renewable energy, mathematics, and a bit of quantum theory. The artist's favorite example of perfusion, which he hopes to unleash for his next solo exhibition in Paris, comes in the form of a live pregnant lady casually smoking a cigarette, which in description alone stirs a myriad of complex and volatile emotions. Like all intense and dedicated philosophers, Sarin is only satisfied when tackling the problem at the center of the human experience—our dual capacity for good and evil, its relationship to free will, and the prospect of creating or closing a door to a parallel universe based on our own unique choices.

Outside of all the artistic evidence on display, *The Miraculous Cocoon's* biggest draw, it turns out, is Sarin himself. A natural host, the artist's looming yet light-footed presence crafts an authentic, delightfully vintage and altogether otherworldly atmosphere for his latest speculative exhibit, which stands as a sort of *Clue* like living theatre in reverse. With a dash of Poe, a smear of Tim Curry's Wadsworth, and a healthy dose of Bogey's tortured noir spirit circa *The Dark Passage* (1947), Sarin basks in the interplay between his own inner Bond villain and the inherent mischief dancing behind the eyes of unsuspecting New York art lovers.

Sarin was born in 1989 and raised in Marseille by his psychiatrist mother. He only knew his father through a handful of the man's abandoned oil paintings, which the young artist used to construct an ideal but ultimately dubious portrait of a flesh and blood man. Sitting outside Ange Noir Café in Brooklyn, Sarin chain-smokes as quickly as he speaks. His nails are chewed down to the root, a sign of a powerful and frantic mind. Outside of this however, he is immaculately put together, well dressed in black and midnight blues and not a hair out of place. In his possession, he holds a 12" ruler (reason still unknown) and a hard copy of his artistic literary gazette, *The Antechamber of Radiant Substance* (*L'Antichambre de la Substance Rayonnante*), which features artists from multiple mediums and writers from across the globe who contribute in their preferred language.

Soon after *The Miraculous Cocoon* divulges its secrets and in turn poses an infinite number of questions and possibilities, Sarin will head to Art Basel, Miami to continue on his quest to destroy the boundaries between art, performance, and the known theories of relativity. Sarin, no doubt, is a busy man these days and as he lights another cigarette, it's obvious that he's aware of the dangers involved with stopping his own propulsive inertia. "If I don't work, my fears, they overtake me," says Sarin with the slightest grin. "I'm interested in the weakness of human beings and that includes my own."