

Lucile Bertrand - a lyrical

in exhibition catalogue *Artists' duet: an exchange*

In today's society beset by doubt and instability, Lucile Bertrand stands as an observer of the world and shares with us, through various images tinted with sweet melancholy, her personal vision of a form of disorientation, of this precarious equilibrium which, at any time, can change the course of things to a rise or decline, the sensation of vertigo.

A metronome to the wind

Playing on the air element, Lucile literally carries us closer to the sky. In the space heights of Iselp, Lucile has conceived three uncanny swings with evocative seats, three structures sweeping the air and moving along miscellaneous elements drawn from the artist's terms. First, the feathers, referring to the flight, a human fantasy since the dawn of time, a call for freedom. Second, the hair, symbolizing traces of past lives, the traces of an existence, a singular component of mankind quite basic in its shape and complex in its data. Thirdly and lastly, the use of bulbs clinging to rubbles, residues from a derelict habitat left to drafts and weighted as a remembrance of our link to the earth.

These three concrete elements refer to the passage of wind on any single thing, to the intangible and invisible ether, quite real despite its immateriality. This installation unleashes all forms of thoughts. "To become lighter or stay heavier, in this dilemma, some imaginations have the ability to summarize all dramas of human destiny. The most basic and poorest images, as soon as they unfold on the verticality axis, make the connection between air and earth. They are essential symbols, natural ones, always acknowledged by imagination both of the matter and the strength".¹

These various evocations interfere gently in the levels of the Gallery in order to highlight its physical component: the void.

By the comings and goings of the structure, we are literally projected towards the mezzanine whose floor was transformed for the occasion in an inverted celestial vault. One moves from one space to another thanks to the path evoked by the wind, the breeze engendered by the swing.

The presence-absence cycle marks the rhythm of time and space, an escape to another place, another world yet to be invented in the worried consciousness of the always-likely fall.

The forces and pressures of flight begin, the chains and bonds strain and are unloosed,
ladders for ascent are readied, and winds examined.
A tendency to flight begins though the ground is never out of sight.
Peter Greenaway²

¹ Gaston Bachelard, *Air and Dreams*, 1943.

² Peter Greenaway, *Flying out of this world*, Paris, Ed. Réunion des musées nationaux, 1992, p. 67.

Closer to the firmament

Bearing in mind the possibility of flying, one needed a place to rise: so heaven was represented. A boardwalk, hastily made of wood, invites us to discover the space "as if it were a fragile and vertiginous walk in the heights".³ Indeed, under our feet, various stratus or cumulus jostle, inviting us to trample upon them as in a waking dream where gravity would have no impact on bodies, where the celestial ceiling would have become the earth's surface. Common perception is reversed and modified. Once again, the idea of void, of what eludes us and moves away from us arises in thought, like the ever-changing shapes of clouds.

Echoing this universe, Mireille Henry's images, sometimes diaphanous or blurry, sometimes realistic, come in the form of paintings, photographs and videos and accompany this poetical universe and give to our imaginary an infinity of stories to compose with.

Catherine Henkinet, curator
Iselp, Contemporary Art Center, Brussels

³ Lucile Bertrand, artist's notes, November 2011.