

A FEW
WORDS
I WANT
TO Poetry
as the
ultimate
uncontested
space
SHOW
YOU¹

Choose your own
adventure, chase
your own narrative.

A game is being
played which requires
deciphering.*

Start making sense.
It all takes time.

1. My interest in art has never been about abstraction—it has always been about experience. My pieces are meant to be considered experientially.

1.1. A few years ago, when I was painting,² it seemed that paintings would look one way in one place and another way in another place, because of lighting and other things. It was the same object but a different work of art. Then I made paintings that incorporated the wall on which they were hung. And finally I gave up painting for the wire installations. Eventually, the wire became so thin that it was virtually invisible. It was at this time that I discarded the idea that art is necessarily something to look at. Although this poses problems, it also presents endless possibilities.

1.2. I am interested for the most part in that area between events which could be called the gap. This gap exists in the blank and void regions or settings that we never look at.

1.2.1. Negativer Raum bedeutet für mich, dass ich über die Unterseite und die Rückseite von Dingen nachdenke.

2. There is a certain amount of fiction in my work. It's something I'm interested in and it is something that I manage to deal with because I'm making art which is not about "the real." It's about unveiling the potentials it entails... or so I keep telling myself.

3.1. In 1969, the conceptual artist Douglas Huebler wrote, "The world is full of objects, more or less interesting; I do not wish to add any more." I've come to embrace Huebler's ideas, though it might be retooled as, "The world is full of texts, more or less interesting; I do not wish to add any more than necessary."

3.1.1. Most of the texts are stolen anyway.

3.2. I have always asked myself: "Why are all these artists continuing to produce objects? And why put stuff on the wall, why put stuff on the floor? Why place anything at all in a room, in a space, in an area?"

4. I would prefer not to.

With words by
(in order of appearance):

Bethan Huws,
Fred Sandback,
Robert Smithson,
Bruce Nauman,
Ryan Gander,
Kenneth Goldsmith,
myself,
Jean-Yves Jouannais,
Herman Melville.

Stellen Sie sich

I have been wondering what it could sound like, mulling the whole thing over in my mind. Originally, I wanted to write in French. I figured it would be easy for you to understand. You would be able to read through the words, and into your own language. You would not quite understand everything for sure, but you would nonetheless have an idea of what it is all about. After a while, you would get more confident, you would get used to deciphering, and also know better how misleading resemblances between one language and another can sometimes be. I was thinking French would have for you the same kind of illusory transparency that Italian has for me, for instance. Actually, another reason why I intended to write in French at first is that it is my mother tongue—a weird expression when you think about it: “mother tongue.” →a

Do you get surprised in your own tongue? Mine has been trained in French pronunciation from the very beginning but somehow I now have difficulty expressing myself in French. Or rather, it is difficult for me to say certain kinds of things in French. It is too close, and too loaded somehow. It leaves little space to move in, little space in which to stretch my legs and feel my way, in which not to fall prey to expectations I’m not even aware of, in which to make mistakes, start anew, start from scratch, and arrive somewhere else, in an

a. **A big red tongue comes before my eyes, contracting and moving as if it had its own existence. The fleshy counterpart of language’s ethereal existence.**

Remarkably enough, we don’t have a matching word for “tongue” in French. For sure, we do have «langue», but it means “language” as well as “tongue,” the two being equally embedded in the same word. So for us, the fleshy appendage doesn’t exist independently from the meaningful words this muscle is capable of expressing.

And it is also the case, *komischerweise*, that «langue» is first and

unknown and unexpected place. I have to admit that I can even get pretty bored in French, knowing the tricks and stumbling over the same old patterns again. It is like a path I've gone on a thousand times, every nook and cranny of which I know by heart. And I go like: Ok, ok, I know, I know. — And this is not very stimulating.

Well, if I am completely honest, there are also days when my mother tongue feels like a good old coat, warm and large, in which I can wrap myself and rest from the world, smelling blackberry jam and grilled toast in the morning. But the point remains essentially the same: as a means of expression, it belongs to the past. For some years now my daily life has been unfolding in a language which is not originally mine. I read, talk, dream, eat, and all the rest in the foreign language of the foreign country I live in. And the funny thing is that with time, being far away from the one I come from has become who I am. So maybe another way to formulate the whole thing would be: I do not know how to speak French anymore so that it would make sense to me here and now. I would have to reinvent the language, find a new way to deal with it so that it becomes my own again, for the present.

I hope you understand.

Stellen

foremost associated with «language» — at least when uttered out of the blue. So in a nutshell, although both denote the same thing, you don't have the same kind of image on your mind with *langue maternelle* as you do with "mother tongue."

In German they say „Muttersprache“. Pretty much the same as in French. Except that „Sprache“ means both «language» and «langue» — but *langue* only in the sense of "language," and not in the **concrete** organic sense, which would be „Zunge“. „Mutterzunge“ would thus be the literal translation of "mother tongue." Which does not really work.

Je voudrais
encore
préciser
une chose
avant de
commencer:¹

Je me demande souvent pourquoi le silence si dense de Marcel Duchamp mérite d'être entendu.

Est-ce en raison de cet état flottant dans lequel coexistent, à côté de l'œuvre réalisée, toutes les œuvres possibles, toutes les variantes qui n'ont jamais vu et ne verront jamais le jour?

J'aime à penser que la réalité comprend, outre ce qui a effectivement lieu, l'ensemble des potentiels passés et futurs, ainsi que ceux qui ne sont pas, n'ont pas été et ne seront pas actualisés dans le monde réel.

Dérouler les lignes de monde non actualisées, s'immiscer dans les interstices du donné pour en faire émerger les mondes possibles qui auraient pu s'en dégager, et les donner à percevoir en tant que tels, c'est peut-être cela au fond qui m'intéresse.

On pourrait ainsi imaginer un art où le réalisé et le non-réalisé se confondraient, où les contingences de la réalité seraient tout à fait minimales, un art instantanément réel et sans fantasmes.

Et d'ailleurs, il se peut qu'il existe déjà: il pourrait bien s'agir de la littérature.

Ou d'une quelconque forme d'écriture.

Non seulement l'écriture se fond dans tout, mais tout se fond dans l'écriture, et face à l'immense quantité de texte qui nous entoure, le problème n'est pas d'en rajouter, mais d'apprendre à négocier ce qui existe déjà.

D'un autre côté, de tout temps, écrire n'a toujours impliqué que lecture et réécriture^{3.1.1}, et par là même, la décision d'écrire peut être depuis toujours, et à chaque instant, questionnée quant à sa nécessité^{3.1}.

Au fond, si on est tout à fait honnête, écrire devrait être aussi facile que faire la vaisselle, et tout aussi intéressant.

Par exemple:

je n'ai rien à dire

je n'ai rien à raconter

je n'ai rien à montrer

je n'ai rien à donner

je n'ai rien à cacher

je n'ai rien à perdre

je n'ai rien à offrir

je n'ai rien à envier

je n'ai rien à prouver → b

c. Note that the contradiction arises only when you read the sentences as being asserted, that is, when you read them as statements. Which means reading the projection as an act of asserting.

b. The sentences are projected in a loop on one of the bottom corners of a white wall. They appear in a rather small size, at knee height. The letters are bright and without a visible frame. After a couple of seconds, they fade and give way to the next sentence. The fact that the projection of the sentences stands in contradiction to their plain linguistic content is what interests me most. ←^c This is not a direct contradiction of the form "a and not a," but this is what I consider a productive one, insofar as it does not end in a dead end but makes visible instead that there is more to the meaning of a statement than its linguistically devised content. In a way, it calls for a new kind of understanding of what is asserted, maybe intuitive rather than rational. Furthermore, your understanding of the statements is affected by each new assertion and each new occurrence of an assertion. The play with words thus becomes a play with language (*Sprachspiel*). Something appearing very plain and simple at an object level opens up a whole range of possibilities at a meta-level. →^d I guess it is in this sense that I consider this piece as still representative of what I am aiming at.

d. The distinction between object and meta-level can be useful when handled carefully: It is not a question of fact but a theoretical tool to better understand specific practices. It involves taking a step back from the scene and analyzing it at arm's length, in other words, abstracting components which are essentially entangled in the practice itself: thinking not only goes with words and concepts, it can also occur in and through experiencing and trying out different material configurations. In a similar way, experiencing does not necessarily go without reflection^e—except that the reflexivity at play is different from that which characterizes the production of theoretical discourse. It is embodied, incorporated, and, as such, not explicit, which means that it cannot be abstracted from the particular gestures and practices it takes place in without being distorted, to a certain extent.

e. A possible name for this kind of embodied reflexivity would be *aesthetic reflexivity*. It is an essential element in the practice of the artist and in the reception of the art-work. In both cases,

a form of aesthetic reflexivity occurs, taking place in and through the experiencing of singular contents.

J'avais
juste envie
de savoir
quel effet
ça fait

d'écrire ces mots-là

*hot chutney
on a violet plate*

*une petite
cuillère en inox
dans un bol
en pyrex*

*an orange
oscillating
between my*

Not
Yet
Titled
(excerpts)

1 ■ We met regularly from the very beginning. Every two or three weeks you would drive downtown, park beneath my window, and wait until I was ready to show up. You never got impatient. I remember hearing your old truck from far down the street and knowing you would be waiting for me without having to take a look. Margaret did lift an eye when she happened to be around and glanced at me with comprehension. She knew I had to go and meet you. There were times when I would quickly pack my things and hurry up, but more often than not I would stay seated for a while, fastening my thoughts, preventing them from escaping and dissolving in every corner of the room, before reaching out to the truck.

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2. I recognized you the very first time I saw you. You matched exactly the picture I had made of you based on the description they gave me. I still ask myself whether this is the reason why it was so difficult to get close to each other without falling into the old traps. But I have no answer to this. We were cautious not to tell each other too much, and it was not clear to either of us what the alternative could have been. Though we had a wide range of experience in many things, we lacked training in this particular domain.

Most of the time, we would drive carefully to the diner located a couple of blocks from my place. We would sit there and rehearse the plan, adding some details here and there, changing others, and trying not to attract attention.

When Robbie was on duty, he simply acted as if we weren't there. There were also times when we would meet at your place in the trailer. It was more comfortable in a way: we could display all the pieces full scale, trying to find a common pattern. We would run through all of them over and over again, starting from scratch for the thousandth time after we'd reached another dead end, playing every step back and trying out different combinations. You used to say that ideas may set off in unexpected directions, but each idea must necessarily be completed in the mind before the next one is formed. This is pretty much what we tried to do.

It usually lasted until late at night. Cans of beer accumulated on the floor, the whole place slowly becoming a mess, the air getting stuffed, and we inevitably ended up more puzzled than when we started. But it made no difference. I guess we even got used to it in some way. Another outcome would have been surprising. And in retrospect I would say that despite it all, we were not quite ready when it started to happen for good. Things have to come to a certain point before you can look at them in the eye—this is the kind of general principle I firmly believe in, albeit not too seriously—and this time, things had not got mature enough when it all started.

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3 ■ We had been sitting there all afternoon, undecided as to whether we should tell them or not. You had kept silent most of the time, looking tired and skeptical. I was focusing on the clattering plates, with no better choice. No one else seemed to pay attention: big mouths, absent looks, large faces, and sparse conversations, the smoke of cigarettes floating up from ashtrays, a TV screen in every corner, each showing a different program, loud enough so that you could lie down and relax without having to follow much. Like this I could concentrate on my own train of thought and not get disturbed. Which was good in a way.

The waitress didn't lose time. Every time I waved to her, no matter how faintly, she immediately arrived and poured some more coffee into the large mug. It was barely warm and had to be drunk quickly if at all, but it was comforting nonetheless. I wasn't asking for more.

A neon sign keeps flickering outside.

Then at some point—it was just before the car incident—you straightened up and gave me a nudge. Not that it was necessary: I had already noticed it myself. But we exchanged a look anyway and both carefully turned around to make sure, even though we both knew the case was clear—we could have recognized it under water. His tone of voice was just the way we had always known it, the same mix of deep and low tones, carefully articulated. This was him, no doubt about it.

“It is not like it would be a movie or something—I just cannot think of anything else.” These are the exact words he uttered after having taken a deep breath reaching at the bottom of his stomach. This was exactly what we had been waiting for the whole time.

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4. ■ We had not heard him at first because of the late afternoon traffic. The city was getting more and more crowded these days, people were coming from all over the country to settle down. True, most of them only stayed for a couple of days before going farther south. They quickly realized it would be more difficult than expected. And they were right.

Another time I guess I would have been really upset and left the scene. But I could hardly recognize myself these last few days. It's not that I really cared though—it's just that I had seen too much of it and was starting to get tired of the whole thing. But I decided to brace myself and know better. Which I did. This was the only way I could keep calm and stick to the plan.

The moon had not yet shown at this point.

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5. He was sitting at the table behind us, holding a cup of black coffee between his two hands, tight. And this is really what we had been looking for the whole time—even though, to be honest, it was also the last thing we could have expected. But here he was, and you dropped your skeptical look, and acted more concerned. I don't know why, but it is at that very moment that I started to get worried, and this time for good.

The sign outside keeps flickering, blue, red, blue, red, blue, etc.

He took another breath and repeated what he had just said. The exact same words. "It is not like it would be a movie or something—I just cannot think of anything else." We both knew the time had come. I slowly got to my feet. I was ready. My heart was pounding, the clock on the wall started to tick louder, and I knew I had to move fast. Without giving it another thought, I took my coat off the rack and went outside. You stayed behind as planned.

Outside the neon sign had been shut down.

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6 ■ You were living in a trailer home. The park was located a few miles away from the city border, where the sky opens up and the horizon starts getting out of reach. You were among the few to like it, and you never quite understood why everyone kept their surroundings so cluttered. Space wasn't exactly lacking. The ground unfolded in the distance as if it had never been conquered. And yet, old tires were scattered all around; old mattresses competed with empty bottles and yellowing books no one had ever read; forgotten pieces of furniture and torn pages of magazines, the colors of which had been washed up by the rain and rendered undecipherable, remained as evidence of lapsed time. Nobody seemed bothered by it, though. I am not even sure anyone noticed, except you.

You once told me you ended up in this place by chance. You said you had arrived one morning and it had been obvious from the very beginning—because of the warmth in the early hours, because of the dust, or the suspension of light, you never could explain, even to yourself. Getting a trailer wasn't a problem. There were a couple of vacant ones, so that you even got a chance to choose among them. The one you picked was comfortable enough, with all the usual appliances, no big arrangements needed. You didn't need much anyway.

It didn't take you long to get used to living there. You got up in the early morning and smoked your first cigarette on the doorstep. You caught yourself looking at the sun slowly reaching above the horizon. Fortunately enough, you were on your own at this time of day—it was still the crack of dawn. The neighbors were sobering up from last night, dreaming out the beer and the routine. It was all calm and quiet. As if the world was on pause, and for a while you could really enjoy looking at it and simply being there. It is such moments that kept you staying there I guess, although it is not something you would ever have admitted.

Another reason might have been the electric fields. You could see their silhouette in the distance when the air was clear and there was no wind to disturb the dust.

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7 ■ Pretty soon you started noticing him every morning. He would appear on his old bike, as precise as a Swiss clock, in the middle of his rounds, as he told you later on. He turned his face towards the half-opened door behind you and after a few times you were not afraid to wave back to him anymore. He had dark eyes and curly hair.

No one could reach out to you the way they reached out to others, which is probably why you remained an outsider in their eyes. This was your strength in a way. But with him it was different. Little by little you started to greet each other when you would meet in town, by chance or so it seemed. At the beginning, you recognized each other only when you happened to be standing side-by-side—the first time it happened at the bar, I remember that Jack was drying some freshly washed glasses, and he raised his eyebrows when he noticed it. It was unusual, to say the least, to greet strangers here, and even more surprising that he greeted you. But after a while, you started to give each other a sign from one end of the counter to the other, and finally ended up waving across the room. The whole process took several weeks.

You never seemed to be fully aware of the awkwardness of it. It is not until he ended up talking to you that you reported it to me, incidentally, one afternoon. You mentioned it like you would have told me about the yellow dog following you when you went for a walk at dusk, or the old lady looking behind her lace curtains. For my part, I have come to believe that your being a stranger may have been the very reason why he felt he could open up to you. You did not have much prejudice, or did not seem to at least. You usually would listen carefully without asking too many questions.

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8 ■ On afternoons when the sun was shining bright, Margaret would go to the lake and take a swim. At least that's what she kept telling everyone. And everyone believed her, even though no one ever saw her, which might have been better this way. Not that she was ugly, she just had no real shape. Her body seemed to know no boundaries, she was all fat, extended by loose sweaters and a black hoodie. No one ever saw her dressed otherwise.

She had been my neighbor from the very beginning, and although I could not picture her in a bathing suit, I could tell a lot about her habits and whereabouts. For instance, when she picked up the newspaper on her doormat in the morning, you could hear her groan while bending down, and then groan again while straightening up. She also had pieces of clothing hanging on the porch for weeks, and then one day, when you expected it the least, she would replace them, changing the colors—from dark to lighter ones, and the other way around next time.

When she went for a walk, she carried a pack of cigarettes with her, usually half empty, but never had a lighter. She had to ask people around her, and that's probably how everybody got to know her in town. Except for the kids—they did not seem to notice her but they were the only ones.

The last time I saw her in town, it was on the parking lot next to the grocery store. She was far enough away so that I didn't have to say hello. Which was fortunate, since it would have been embarrassing after what had happened the night before. She was pulling an empty trolley and I don't think she saw me, but still, I heard her sniff deeply and disappear.

It was just after you had decided to go up north.

Of course, things never went back to where they were before, so I guess it will be impossible to know what really went through her mind. I never had the chance to ask her myself. Things being as they were, I was not able to see her alone in the weeks to follow. There were always people around, it was all crowded and busy, they were trying to take care of everyone, checking on us and not letting anyone go. But even if I had had a chance, the probability is high she wouldn't have told me the truth anyway. It was only years later that we emerged again and only then would it have been possible to reconnect, that is, if the memories had not been erased.

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She had been my neighbor from the very beginning, and although I could not picture her in a bathing suit, I could tell a lot about her habits and whereabouts. For instance, when she picked up the newspaper on her doormat in the morning, you could hear her groan while bending down, and then groan again while straightening up. She also had pieces of clothing hanging on the porch for weeks, and then one day, when you expected if the least, she would replace them, changing the colors—from dark to lighter ones, and the other way around next time.

When she went for a walk, she carried a pack of cigarettes with her, usually half empty, but never had a lighter. She had to ask people around her, and that's probably how everybody got to know her in town. Except for the kids—they did not seem to notice her but they were the only ones.

The last time I saw her in town, it was on the parking lot next to the grocery store. She was far enough away so that I didn't have to say hello. Which was fortunate, since it would have been embarrassing after what had happened the night before. She was pulling an empty trolley and I don't think she saw me, but still, I heard her sniff deeply and disappear.

It was just after you had decided to go up north. Of course, things never went back to where they were before, so I guess it will be impossible to know what really went through her mind. I never had the chance to ask her myself. Things being as they were, I was not able to see her alone in the weeks to follow. There were always people around, it was all crowded and busy, they were trying to take care of everyone, checking on us and not letting anyone go. But even if I had had

*snow dancing

We are in a big building and an event is taking place.* You could say that the building has been preserved because of how it was designed, when in fact it is because of its size and location.* Now the building is old and belongs to the city.* The building has everything that is required to proceed with a narrative.* You've noticed the numbers on the large sign outside, on the front of the building, on the entrance door, on the walls all around, on the windows, underneath the table and behind the counter, in the staircase, on the mirrors in the bathroom, next to the paintings in the exhibition spaces, on the ceiling, and in the elevator. A game is being played, which requires deciphering.*

When buying your ticket at the entrance, you were given an audioguide. Each time you encounter a number, you enter it in the device and listen to the voice in your ear. You don't understand everything but you get the different tones. The numbers address the particular space and time that they're in, but it is the more complete situation that you are after, and this situation is only constructed in time slowly, with the individual parts as its constituents.* The texts are either in French, German, or English. Most of them are stolen. They all tell you about the place, about what you see and what you don't see, they tell you about being there. You move around the rooms and look for more numbers. You pass by the paintings and look behind them. You have to keep moving because if you remain still, everyone notices.* Disembodied bytes of language seem randomly to float in space, ghostlike fragments of thoughts in search of a mind to give them meaning. You are caught in thoughts deeply anchored in the place. Your first attraction to this situation is to the way it allows you to play with something both existing and not existing at the same time.*

behind the door
underneath the carpet
on the table
next to the—
around the corner

Innen

Innen

Un autre jour peut-être

Innen

Innen

tre, on ira voir la mer.

Aussen

through the window
above the sofa
at the bottom of a glass
beside the shelves
close to an end

Aussen

40

Hier bin ich. Finally. Ehrlich gesagt, wäre ich lieber in der alten Stadt geblieben. Dort, wo alles gewachsen ist. Im Laufe der Zeit. Schritt für Schritt. Weniger präventiv. Weniger aufgeblasen. Weniger fake und glänzend. Weniger geplant.

Hier hat man mit einer gewollten Zukunft zu tun. Eine schwebende Zukunft, ohne Wurzeln, ohne jede Substanz, die sie verankern würde, die sie sinnvoll machen würde — oder zumindest nachvollziehbar. Eine Zukunft ohne Gegenwart — und ich rede gar nicht von der Vergangenheit: Das Wort hat hier seine Bedeutung verloren.

Aber hier bin ich, endlich. Auf diesen Moment habe ich gewartet. Ich habe mich gefreut, als es nur noch eine Idee war. Bin jedoch nicht sofort gegangen. Habe den Ausflug von einem Tag auf den anderen verschoben. Je näher der Moment, desto mehr habe ich es verschoben. Vielleicht habe ich sie schon geahnt: die Enttäuschung. Ich wäre lieber bei der Vorstellung geblieben.

Gestern aus dem Bus habe ich die Männer gesehen, die die Lichterketten an den Bäumen aufgehängt haben. In der ganzen Stadt wird ein ähnliches Spiel gespielt. Nur hier scheint es inszeniert zu sein: Nicht für die Freude an der Jahreszeit hängt man Lichterketten auf, sondern weil es so sein sollte, aus irgendeinem Grund, den man gar nicht wissen will. Es werden Regeln von anderswo aufgenommen und befolgt, zu denen aber die Umgebung nicht mehr passt.

Die Gebäude sind zu schnell gewachsen — als es noch keine Menschen gab, die hineinpassen würden. Sie sind vor dem Leben, das sie animieren würde, das sie verlangen würde, entstanden. Eine merkwürdige Situation.

Draussen auf der Strasse, die keine Strasse ist, musste ich an DeLillo denken. *Falling Man*. Auf dem Platz wusste ich nicht, wie ich mich verhalten sollte. Ist es wirklich chic und seriös, oder sieht es nur so aus? Drinnen bei der Rezeption habe ich den Dialekt der Rezeptionistin nicht verstanden. In dem Lift haben zwei junge Männer gelächelt, aufgeregt vor dem Abenteuer, ohne es zeigen zu wollen.

Und in jeder Ecke ein Kunstwerk. Es ist kaum auszuhalten.

**Chus
Martinez**

**Laisse parler
le langage**

Chus Martinez

Let Language
Tell You

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Laisse parler
le langage

Invasion subtile

Pere Calders

À la pension Punta Marina, à Tossa de Mar, j'ai rencontré un japonais qui ne ressemblait en rien à l'idée que je me faisais d'un japonais.

À l'heure du souper, il s'est assis à ma table après m'avoir demandé la permission sans trop de cérémonie. J'ai été frappé qu'il n'ait ni les yeux bridés, ni la peau jaune. Tout au contraire : ses joues étaient roses et ses cheveux plutôt blonds.

J'étais curieux de voir quels plats il commanderait. Je l'admets, il était puéril de ma part de m'attendre à des nourritures différentes de celles que nous mangeons de nos jours, à des combinaisons exotiques. J'ai été surpris qu'il demande qu'on lui serve un plat typiquement catalan : salade – « avec supplément d'oignon », commanda-t-il en catalan –, puis un *cap i pota* (un ragout de joue et de pied de veau), suivi de *molls a la brasa i ametlles torrades* (mulet grillé accompagné d'amandes rôties). Il a conclu son repas avec café, cognac et cigare.

Je m'imaginai que le japonais allait manger avec une propreté excessive frôlant l'irritation, disséquant la nourriture comme si le moindre petit morceau était un mécanisme d'horlogerie. Mais cela n'a pas été le cas : il s'est servi lui-même avec couteau et fourchette, manipulant les couverts avec beaucoup d'aise, et a mastiqué chaque bouchée sans transgression esthétique. La réalité secouait mes idées préconçues.

Il parlait catalan aussi bien que nous, sans la moindre trace d'accent étranger. Cela n'est pas si étrange si l'on considère le goût pour l'étude et l'intelligence des Japonais. Pourtant cela m'a fait me sentir inférieur étant donné mon ignorance complète du japonais. Je dois admettre que je suis celui qui a introduit une note étrangère dans la conversation, en adaptant chacun des mes actes – gestes, mots, débuts de phrases – au fait que mon compagnon de table était japonais. Lui, de son côté, est resté frais comme une rose.

J'ai pensé qu'il devait être un représentant de commerce, ou un négociant en caméras digitales ou en puces informatiques – qui s'y connaissait également en perles de culture. J'ai tenté tous ces sujets, qu'il a écartés d'un geste ample de la main.

« Je vends des images saintes d'Olot », dit-il.

« Il existe toujours un marché pour ces choses ? », demandai-je. Et il répondit que oui, il y en avait un, la demande avait certes baissé, mais il maintenait le marché à flot. Il couvrait la région sud de la péninsule, et quand il y avait des vacances, ou lorsque deux jours fériés tombaient l'un après l'autre, il était certain de trouver les gens à la maison.

« Il n'y a pas meilleur endroit que chez soi ! », trancha-t-il avec un air de satisfaction.

« Vous habitez dans votre pays ? »

« Où voulez-vous donc que j'habite ? »

Oui, sans aucun doute, ils sont des globe-trotters et roulent leur bosse partout. Je le regardai de nouveau, et je jure qu'aucun détail, que ce soit dans ses vêtements ou dans ses manières, ne trahissait ses origines. Il portait même le badge du club de Football

de Barcelone épinglé au revers de sa veste.

Bref, il était très suspect, et mon inquiétude grandissait. Comme elle ne se sentait pas très bien, ma femme s'était fait servir le dîner dans sa chambre. Je lui ai décrit ma rencontre fortuite, émaillant de mes peurs le récit : en fin de compte, l'homme était un espion.

« Où es-tu allé chercher l'idée qu'il était japonais ? », me demanda-t-elle.

Je me mis à rire, bien que sans joie, ayant pitié de sa crédulité.

« Je les reconnais à des kilomètres à la ronde », répliquai-je.

« Tu veux dire que tu as vu beaucoup de Japonais ? »

« Non, mais je les repère immédiatement ! »

« Il t'a dit qu'il était japonais ? »

« Pas du tout. Ils sont rusés. »

« Quelqu'un d'autre te l'a dit ? »

« Personne ne m'a dit quoi que ce soit. Inutile de me le dire. J'ai un instinct infailible ! »

Nous nous sommes disputés. Elle n'a pas cessé de s'en prendre à moi, me dit que j'étais méchant et qu'un jour je mettrais vraiment les pieds dans le plat. Comme si je n'étais pas vigilant ! Elle semble se plaire à faire fi de toute logique, en plus d'être incroyablement naïve.

Cette nuit-là, j'ai dormi peu, et mal. Je ne pouvais m'enlever le Japonais de la tête. Car tant qu'ils se présenteront tels qu'ils sont, avec ce petit sourire, ces révérences, ce regard de côté, nous serons à même de nous protéger – du moins je l'espère ! –, mais s'ils se mettent à jouer ce genre de comédie, s'ils apparaissent ainsi sous un faux visage, nous allons vraiment avoir du pain sur la planche.

Traduit du catalan vers l'anglais
par Lawrence Venuti

Pere Calders est un cas étrange dans l'histoire de la littérature. Il s'est exilé au Mexique après la guerre civile, mais il est ensuite retourné en Catalogne où, je pense, il fut malheureux. Il a choisi d'écrire en catalan, sa langue maternelle. J'ai grandi en écoutant les plaintes affirmant que la littérature d'une langue parlée et écrite par une minorité manque de reconnaissance. Toutefois, bien que je ne puisse nommer aucun écrivain aussi brillant que Calders, celui-ci n'a été ni célébré, ni récupéré par *l'establishment*. Il n'est pas tombé dans l'oubli, sans qu'on s'en souvienne pour autant. Ses traductions sont en outre épuisées et, par conséquent, il ne peut être lu qu'en catalan. Il a écrit surtout des nouvelles, toutes très particulières, en portant à la langue une grande attention, comme s'il craignait de faire des abus littéraires dans la présentation de sa pensée. De retour chez lui, dans un pays dirigé par un dictateur, comment exprimer l'inconfort extrême de découvrir qu'il ne semble plus y avoir d'espace pour respirer à son aise la liberté, les idées, la littérature... Difficile dans ces conditions de créer des liens affectifs ou d'inventer des façons de transmettre, de raconter, et même de croire en quoi que ce soit. Invasion subtile est la description de ce sentiment, assis à une table face aux autres, face à la tâche d'être écrivain. Ceux qui sont exactement comme vous mais ne le sont pas, le sentiment fort et grandissant d'une étrangeté à l'intérieur de soi, rendant le «possible» impossible.

J'ai choisi d'aborder le travail de Delphine Chapuis Schmitz avec Pere Calders en introduction, car il y a une étrange affinité entre le travail de ce dernier et la façon qu'elle a d'approcher le besoin d'être «prudent» dans la manière dont nous adhérons à la production, dans le fait qu'elle se réfère à des textes existants afin de leur faire dire de nouvelles choses, et dans la nature de la critique que cette opération représente en regard du monde de l'art actuel. Il y a une invasion subtile qui – après une vague d'œuvres conceptuelles – a fait du faire une manière d'exprimer éperdument la présence de l'art. Il y a aussi une opinion radicale sur la production artistique comme instaurant une nouvelle économie, une économie qui divise le travail des artistes féminins et masculins.

Le retour au texte n'est pas uniquement une stratégie conceptuelle et critique; il s'agit de bien plus que cela. Le «bien plus» est représenté par la philosophie. Le besoin de tester de nouvelles stratégies en se racontant, et en racontant sur la relation de soi aux autres, sur soi en tant qu'artiste, en tant que femme artiste, et sur le fait d'être confrontée aux regardeurs prenant la forme de lecteurs: tout cela doit prendre place à l'intérieur du plus abstrait des mondes. La philosophie maintenant ne signifie pas la quête de raison, mais une investigation dans la nature des idées en dehors de la réalité de l'information.

L'action, la matière et l'expérience, en tant qu'œuvres d'art réalisées, sont concrètes. D'un autre côté, le texte philosophique entretient une relation étrange avec le maintenant, et avec le maintenant de l'information et de la culture numérique auxquelles nous sommes confrontés. Si l'on veut, la philosophie est aux mots ce que la céramique est à la technologie. Une substance où les mots ne répondent pas à la logique de tourner autour d'un sujet, mais gravitent à l'intérieur d'une logique.

Un trait distinctif de l'œuvre de Delphine Chapuis Schmitz repose dans le fait que sa présentation semble différée et qu'elle nous présente à la place une architecture faite de textes. Ses pièces sont des systèmes globaux où recherche, présence matérielle, information, et la mise en scène de tous ces éléments, coexistent avec le désir de produire un lieu pour la critique. Son travail innove quant à la nécessité de «débattre». Toutefois, il serait inexact de réduire ses travaux aux sujets historiques et politiques de ses textes. Tout au contraire, ses travaux s'ébauchent dans une forme de recherche spécifique, à même la substance du texte, puis acquièrent une forme et une matérialité à un stade ultérieur, un stade qui demande à être réalisé. Ses travaux impliquent une forme précise de recherche artistique; ils abordent la question de la forme, de la possibilité de pousser des matériaux existants à parler différemment de questions concernant la pratique de l'art aujourd'hui, mais aussi de la nature même de la subjectivité inhérente à une telle tâche. Un livre comme celui que vous tenez entre vos mains est un mélange débridé d'art et de non-art qui se propose de fournir un contexte intellectuel pour répondre à la question de la forme, de l'échelle et de la matérialité dans chacun des mots qui nous sont présentés. Pensez à Internet. Pensez aux millions de mots auxquels vous êtes confrontés chaque jour, à la nature de cette rivière de sources interconnectées, aux outils qui permettent la capture des mots, des phrases et des textes, et de les faire glisser dans un autre ensemble de textes. Cet exercice qui consiste à prendre, à façonner et à mouler un nouveau texte dans une masse de textes et d'images ne nous est pas étranger. Il est par conséquent judicieux de le faire à nouveau, de le faire lentement, soigneusement, à l'ancienne. Cet exercice se met alors à faire écho à différentes vues historiques qui correspondent à notre histoire récente de la liberté, de l'accès et de la démocratie. Cette recherche à travers le texte façonne une idée du digital comme étant réel, sculptural, et de la façon dont les formes et les images s'impliquent et participent à une construction très singulière du social.

Les travaux de Chapuis Schmitz concrétisent différemment cette question de la source et de la matière du texte à l'intérieur du

contexte de la production artistique. Le texte est plus que jamais intrinsèque à l'art. Partant de là, il est clair que l'art est le lieu où nous pouvons mettre en place un terrain qui permette à la transmission historique d'avoir lieu d'une manière sans précédent, un terrain où nous faisons face au passé de la connaissance et en sommes, dans le même temps, radicalement déconnectés, comme jamais auparavant. Cette tension extrême entre continuité et discontinuité est essentielle aujourd'hui. On pourrait même imaginer que le travail de Delphine Chapuis Schmitz sur le texte représente une nouvelle image documentaire de cette tension, de notre relation au numérique, où information et croyances se confrontent. Un documentaire sans voix témoins, sans images ni représentation, mais néanmoins un documentaire qui aborde les changements profonds affectant notre rapport à la narration, au texte et à la voix.

Il est facile de cataloguer ce type de travail comme art politique. Toutefois, je plaiderai en faveur d'une œuvre qui vise à sa propre construction, plutôt que de se livrer à une critique de narrations données. La critique est le siège du doute, et ici aussi, le doute est présent. En étudiant cette œuvre, nous devenons participants de la recherche menée par Chapuis Schmitz, nous sommes les spectateurs des formes qu'elle présente, et nous sommes aussi les lecteurs des récits qu'elle nous propose. Cependant, la critique, le sentiment de distance et le doute ne sont pas ses préoccupations premières; elle s'intéresse avant tout à la manière dont ces éléments constituent un nouveau matériau.

Mais quelque chose d'autre se dégage de son travail : un intérêt pour la création et le développement de nouvelles formes de liberté à l'intérieur de conditions données, en particulier une qualité que nous pourrions nommer *negative capability*, pour reprendre l'expression du poète John Keats. À titre d'exemple, on peut évoquer la volonté humaine et la capacité à transformer un contexte institutionnel – Internet par rapport à la bibliothèque numérique, par exemple – afin de l'ouvrir et de le soumettre à la révision. Ainsi, la question de savoir comment décomposer les généalogies conventionnelles qui déterminent la façon dont nous lisons, comprenons, et réassemblons la connaissance traditionnelle, est un terrain d'exploration fascinant pour cette artiste. En résumé, le travail de Delphine Chapuis Schmitz pourrait être décrit comme étant au centre de toutes ces tentatives pour rompre avec le passé, tout en n'appartenant à aucune.

La transformation est une préoccupation essentielle du travail de Delphine Chapuis Schmitz. Comment une transformation

s'opère-t-elle ? Dans l'art et dans la société ? Comment un événement passé ou un récit changent-ils de forme dans un travail ; comment ce travail se développe-t-il en une pièce, une installation, et devient aussi espace et image ? L'art s'intéresse à la forme, mais aussi à la structure, c'est-à-dire à la façon dont la présence de forme dans le matériau produit de l'espace, mais aussi altère la perception et la lisibilité. Une œuvre témoigne toujours de la tension entre un engagement envers l'expérience esthétique et la place et le contexte dont elle est issue. Delphine Chapuis Schmitz nous présente une origine jumelle : d'un côté le lieu/la situation réelle où nous, spectateurs, faisons connaissance avec son œuvre et, de l'autre, la recherche et les interrogations qui donnent un sens à l'espace politique et historique dans l'espace réel de l'œuvre en question. Le dénominateur commun de toutes ses pièces est le jeu entre deux dimensions de temps et d'espace très différentes, bien que corrélatives ; l'une située dans le passé, l'autre faisant partie de notre présent. L'espoir n'est pas la possibilité de se « souvenir » de ce qui s'est passé grâce à l'œuvre d'art, mais d'établir une corrélation entre ces deux moments, ces deux corps sociaux. Pourquoi ? Probablement parce que l'espoir est un système très similaire à l'exercice qui consiste à chercher la reconnaissance d'événements passés pertinents dans le présent. Si nous sommes capables de percevoir l'intérêt du matériau qui s'adapte à cette dimension narrative des œuvres, nous sommes alors déjà capables de fonctionner à l'intérieur des énergies empathiques indispensables pour imaginer une communauté libre.

Le problème du savoir et de la pensée tels qu'ils se déroulent à la fois dans notre esprit et dans la matière est si complexe qu'il mène à une forme de panpsychisme créatif – en supposant qu'il existe un degré de conscience ou de pensée advenant dans la matière. J'ai écrit un jour : « S'interroger sur le savoir implique l'effort de formuler – par une logique et des langages qui dépassent les disciplines – comment les relations inextricables entre les choses, le langage, les formes et le sens sont possibles. Cela veut dire tenir compte des éléments, des possibilités autant que des circonstances dans lesquelles les principes qui associent l'animé et l'inanimé, ou les objets et la mémoire, les animaux avec d'autres animaux, les graines avec l'art, la théorie avec la logique du politique, ou encore la poésie et la connaissance, se produisent. Et par conséquent, on ne sera pas surpris du fait que l'imagination soit un principe central dans l'invention de la connaissance qui se produit dans l'art – c'est là une tâche qui ne vient pas imiter une activité académique, mais bien plutôt produire du temps et de l'espace d'une façon excessive et subversive, constituant ainsi une

nouvelle « culture ». La possibilité de l'échec est le trait principal de la fiction et de l'imagination. Ces dernières ne représentent pas une base solide pour la parole ; elles constituent une interférence dans la logique d'une affirmation intentionnelle de sens. L'art a conservé cette inversion de la relation entre le sens et le dire comme façon de surmonter les pièges de la conscience ainsi que le principe transcendantal régissant la conception moderne de l'individu, qui définit le politique comme un texte sans ambiguïté, marqué par l'intention de signifier et capable de produire et de reproduire un sens de l'empathie tout à fait défini. Cet exercice consistant à accepter l'énigme de l'ambiguïté et l'altération constante des relations entre la matière et les mots, le temps et le sens, définit une forme de recherche qui demande une reconsidération radicale du rôle du langage, des conceptions simples sur la façon dont les choses interagissent, ainsi qu'un inventaire des monologues produits par des formes de signification sérieuses. »¹

L'art et sa relation à la conscience est un autre sujet d'importance. Dans son travail, Delphine Chapuis Schmitz se penche sur la question de savoir comment nous devenons conscients, mais aussi comment, par le fait même de devenir conscients, la compréhension traditionnelle de l'esthétique se voit mise à l'épreuve. Son travail traite de la conscience et du lien, étrange et difficile à prouver, entre ce que nous nommons le réel, notre présence, et la dimension de la mémoire. Les œuvres surviennent en elles-mêmes, pour ainsi dire, mais surviennent aussi dans notre esprit. La matière et la forme stimulent les sens, mais sont aussi là pour produire une forme d'actualité complexe qui instille en nous une « mémoire » tandis que nous regardons la pièce. La mémoire du confinement, d'avoir été privés de liberté, de faits et d'évènements dont nous nous « rappelons » en voyant la pièce. Notre corps et notre esprit établissent une relation épistémologique complexe avec l'œuvre.

Le mot « conscience » est employé de différentes façons. Il peut être utilisé pour désigner la capacité à distinguer les stimuli, à signaler de l'information, à suivre des états intérieurs, ou encore à contrôler le comportement. Nous pouvons concevoir ces phénomènes comme posant le « problème facile » de la conscience. En principe, l'idée qu'un système physique puisse être « conscient » en ce sens ne semble pas poser grand problème, et il n'y a aucun obstacle évident à ce qu'on puisse finir par expliquer ce phénomène dans des termes neurobiologiques ou informatiques. Mais comment, et pourquoi, les processus physiques donnent-ils lieu à l'expérience ? Pourquoi ces processus ne se

¹ Chus Martinez, *Unexpress the Expressible*, in: *DOCUMENTA (13): 100 Notizen* – 100 Gedanken, 2012. 24 pp., 9 ill.

produisent-ils pas «à l'aveugle», sans être accompagnés par des états d'expérience? C'est là le mystère central de la conscience.

Selon l'argument de la connaissance, il existe des faits qui relèvent de la conscience et ne peuvent être déduits de faits physiques. Quelqu'un pourrait connaître tous les faits physiques, être parfaitement rationnel et néanmoins incapable de connaître sur cette base tous les faits relevant de la conscience.

Toutes les notions traditionnelles d'expérience esthétique – sur lesquelles repose encore, je m'hasarderai à l'avancer, ce terme tel qu'il est utilisé dans le contexte artistique actuel – ont une base épistémique; elles supposent toutes un fossé entre le réel et l'esprit ou – pour simplifier les termes – entre les «vérités» physiques et phénoménologiques. Autrement dit, elles dérivent toutes de Descartes, ou d'une façon cartésienne de présenter la division entre les domaines de l'animé et du non-animé. Le paradigme esthétique demeure réductionniste. La conscience survient uniquement dans l'esprit humain, un esprit affecté par le réel, un réel qui ne possède aucune forme de conscience. L'esthétique dépend d'une lecture matérialiste de la relation entre l'humain et la nature. Il est difficile de croire que le matérialisme puisse encore être considéré comme une façon adéquate de nous présenter en opposition avec la nature, ou d'expliquer un cas d'expérience particulier, mais le matérialisme doit être vrai puisque toute autre alternative est inacceptable. Néanmoins, nous devons vouer nos efforts de recherche à concevoir des alternatives à cette vision du monde encore dominante, une vision qui affecte non seulement notre façon d'interpréter l'art et ses effets, mais aussi le cœur même de la compréhension traditionnelle de l'art, de l'expérience et du politique. Nous avons de bonnes raisons de croire que la conscience occupe une place fondamentale dans la nature, et – à la lumière de tous les développements scientifiques et philosophiques pertinents – nous devons examiner comment cela pourrait donner lieu à une nouvelle science pour l'exploration de l'art et de sa réflexion, ainsi qu'à tout un nouvel ensemble de termes et à une logique permettant de découvrir de manière complètement nouvelle notre inclusion dans l'art du point de vue de «l'art-je», et pas seulement de l'humain «je».

Et donc, cette façon de concevoir les pièces représente une étape audacieuse et intéressante vers une compréhension différente de la connaissance à travers l'art, une compréhension qui tient compte de processus ne représentant ni le passé, ni la bonne action par opposition à la mauvaise, mais permettant au contraire de percevoir l'histoire collective de nos sociétés d'une façon différente, afin de découvrir une expérience de la liberté nécessaire à la réinvention du contrat social à travers l'art.

Chus Martinez

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le langage

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Let Language
Tell You

Subtle Invasion

Pere Calders

At the Hostal Punta Marina, in Tossa de Mar, I met a disturbing Japanese man who didn't bear the slightest resemblance to the idea I'd formed of the Japanese.

At suppertime he took a seat at my table after asking my permission without much ceremony. I was struck that he didn't have slanted eyes or yellowish skin. Just the opposite: his cheeks were pink and his hair was fairly blonde.

I was curious to see which dishes he ordered. It was childish, I admit, to expect foods that weren't what we eat nowadays, or that made up exotic combinations. I was surprised that he had them bring him a typical Catalan meal: salad—"with extra onion," he said in Catalan—then *cap i pota* (a stew of calf's cheek and foot), followed by *molls a la brasa i ametlles torrades* (grilled mullet with roasted almonds). He finished off the meal with coffee, cognac, and a cigar.

I'd imagined the Japanese would eat with exaggerated neatness, even to the point of irritation, pinching the food as if each morsel were a mechanism in a timepiece. But this wasn't the case: the man served himself with knife and fork, using them with great fluidity, and he chewed each mouthful without any breach of aesthetics. Reality shook my preconceptions.

He spoke Catalan as well as any of us, without the least trace of a foreign accent. This wasn't so strange if you consider that the Japanese are very studious and quite clever. Yet it made me feel inferior since I didn't know a scrap of Japanese. I have to admit that I was the one, oddly enough, who introduced a foreign note into the conversation, adapting my every action—gestures, words, opening lines—to the concrete fact that my tablemate was Japanese. He, however, stayed fresh as a rose.

I thought he must have been a sales rep or dealer of digital cameras or computer chips—who also happened to know about cultured pearls. I tried all these topics and he swept them away with a broad wave of his arm.

"I sell saints' images from Olot," he said.

"There's still a market for those things?" I asked. And he said that, yes, there was, that it had certainly fallen, but he was keeping it alive. He covered the southern region of the peninsula, and when there was a break or two holidays fell together, people were certain to be at home.

"There's no place like home!" he decided with a look of satisfaction.

"Do you live in your country?"

"Where else would you want me to live?"

Yes, clearly, they're globetrotters, and they get around everywhere. I looked at him again, and I swear that no detail, whether in his clothing or in his manner, gave away his Japanese origins. He even wore the shield of the Barcelona Football Club pinned to his lapel.

In a word, he was very suspicious, and I grew worried. My wife had her supper served in our room because she felt a bit sick. I described my chance meeting to her, decking the tale with my fears: when

you came right down to it, the guy was a spy.

"Where did you get this idea that he's Japanese?" she asked me.

I laughed, although without much glee, pitying her innocence.

"I recognize them a mile away," I replied.

"You mean you've seen many Japanese people?"

"No, but I spot them immediately!"

"He told you he was Japanese?"

"Not once. They're shrewd!"

"Did somebody else tell you?"

"No one told me anything. No one needs to tell me. I have the sharpest instincts!"

We had a falling-out. She is always getting at me, saying that I'm nasty and someday I'll really put my foot in it. As if I didn't have my wits about me! She seems to get pleasure from abandoning logic, and she is incredibly naïve.

That night I slept little and badly. I couldn't get the Japanese man out of my head. Because as long as they show up as they are, with that little smile, those bows, that sideways glance, we'll be able to protect ourselves. Or so I hope! But if they put on such a charade, such a bogus display, we'll really have our hands full.

Translated from the Catalan
by Lawrence Venuti

Pere Calders is a strange case in the history of literature. He was in exile in Mexico after the civil war but returned to Catalu na where, I assume, he was unhappy. He chose to write in Catalan, his mother tongue. I grew up listening to complaints about how a literature in a language that only a minority speaks or reads faces weak recognition. However, even if I cannot name any other writer so brilliant, Calders is not the writer that the establishment praised or has recuperated. He is not forgotten, but he is not remembered. His translations are also out of print and so you can only read him in Catalan. He mostly wrote short stories. They are all very particular, very careful with language as if he is afraid of using any extra 'literature' to present his thinking. Returning home, to a place governed by a dictator, how can you express the heavy discomfort of finding that there seems to be no space, no ease in breathing freedom, ideas, literature... No easy ways of bonding with others or inventing ways of transmitting, telling, even believing. Subtle invasion is the description of this feeling, seated at a table facing others, facing the task of being a writer. Those who are exactly like you but they are not, the strong feeling of a foreignness building up inside, making the 'possible' impossible.

I have chosen to start with Pere Calders in addressing the work by Delphine Chapuis Schmitz because there is a strange affinity in the way she addresses the need to be 'careful' in how we embrace production, in the way she returns to existing texts to make them say new things and also in the nature of the critique this operation embodies regarding the art world of today. There is a subtle invasion that—after a wave of conceptual works—embraced doing as a way of deliriously expressing the presence of art. There is also a radical view on how art production establishes a new economy and an economy that divides the work of female and male artists.

The return to text is not merely a conceptual critical strategy; there is actually much more to it. The 'much more' is represented by philosophy. The need to test new strategies in telling about oneself, about one's self in relation to others, about one's self as an artist, as a woman artist, as confronted with viewers in the form of readers: all this has to happen inside the most abstract world of all worlds. Philosophy now does not stand for the search of reason, but for an inquiry into the nature of ideas outside the reality of information. Action, matter, experience as realized art works are concrete. The philosophical text, on the other hand, bears a really strange relation with the now and with the now of the information and digital culture we are facing. If you want, philosophy is to words what ceramics is to technology. A substance

where words do not respond to the logic of revolving around a subject, but gravitate inside a logic.

If there is a particular trait of Delphine Chapuis Schmitz's work, it is that its presentation seems to be delayed and that, instead, she presents us with an architecture made of text. Her pieces are broader systems where research, material presence, information, and the staging of all these elements coexist with the desire to produce a place for critique. Her works innovate the necessity of 'debate.' However, it would be inaccurate to reduce her works to the historical or political subjects of her texts. On the contrary, the works start with a very specific form of research into the substance of text and then acquire form and materiality in a later state, a state that needs to be realized. Her works involve a precise form of artistic research, they address the question of form, the possibility of forcing existing material to talk differently about questions that concern doing art today, but also the very nature of the subjectivity inherent in such a task. A book, like the one you are holding in your hands, is a wild mixture of art and non-art that intends to provide an intellectual context to face the question of form, scale, and materiality in every one of the words that are being presented to us. Think of the Internet. Think of the millions of words you face every day, of the nature of this river of interconnected sources, of the tools that allow you to capture words, sentences, texts and drag them into another pool of text. This exercise of taking, forming, and molding a new text inside a swimming pool of texts and images is nothing foreign to us. And therefore, it makes sense to do it again, to do it slowly, carefully, in an old-fashioned manner. This exercise then starts resonating with multiple historical views that conform to our recent history of freedom, democracy, and access. This search through texts informs an idea of how the digital is real, how it is sculptural, and how forms and images participate and engage in a very particular construction of the social.

Chapuis Schmitz's works actualize differently this question of source and text material inside the context of making art. Text is inside art more than ever. Knowing this, it is clear that art is the place where we can establish a ground for historical transmission to happen in an unprecedented way, a ground where we encounter the past of knowledge and are, at the same time, radically disconnected from it, like never before. This immense tension between continuity and discontinuity today is key. One could even imagine that the text works of Delphine Chapuis Schmitz represent a new documentary image of this tension, of our relationship with the digital, with information versus

wisdom. A documentary without testimonial voices, without images and representation but still a documentary, which addresses the profound changes affecting our relationship with narration, text, and voice.

It is easy to classify this type of work as political art. However, I will argue in favor of a work that aims first at its own construction rather than engaging in a critique of given narratives. Critique is the place of doubt and there is doubt here, too. In studying this oeuvre, we are participants in the research Chapuis Schmitz is conducting, we are viewers of the forms she displays, and we are also readers of the narratives she offers us. However, critique or sentiments of distance and doubt are not her primary concern; she is interested above all in how these different materials constitute a new material.

And there is something else that stands out in her work: an interest in the formation and development of new forms of freedom within given conditions. There is a quality, in particular, that we might call 'negative capability,' to borrow the words of poet John Keats. A case in point: human will and the capability to transform an institutional context—the Internet versus the analog library, for example—to open it up and subject it to revision. And so, the question of how to break down conventional genealogies that determine how we read, understand, and reassemble traditional knowledge is a fascinating field for this artist. In short, the work of Delphine Chapuis Schmitz could be described as being in the middle of all these attempts to break with the past while, at the same time, apertaining to none.

Transformation is a salient concern in the work of Delphine Chapuis Schmitz. How is transformation possible? In art and in society? How does a past event or a narrative acquire a new form in a work; how does this work become a piece, an installation, but also space and image? Art is interested in form, but also in structure, that is, in the way the presence of form in material produces space but also alters perception, readability. A work always testifies to the tension between a commitment to aesthetic experience and the place and situation in which the work originates. Delphine Chapuis Schmitz presents us with twin origins: on one hand, the actual place/situation where we, the spectators, encounter the works and, on the other, the research and questions that make historical and political space resonate in the actual space of the respective piece. Common to every piece is this play with two very different but correlative dimensions of time and space, one situated in the past, one part of our present. The hope is the

possibility not of 'remembering' what happened thanks to the artwork, but of establishing a correlation between these two moments, these two social bodies. Why? Probably because hope is a system very close to this exercise of seeking recognition in the now for relevant events in the past. If we are able to sense the relevance of the material that conforms this narrative dimension of the works, then we are already able to function inside the empathic energies necessary to imagine a free community.

The problem of knowledge and thinking as happening both in our mind and in matter is so complex that it leads to a sort of creative panpsychism—assuming that there is a level of consciousness or thinking already happening in matter. I once wrote: “To inquire into knowledge implies the effort to formulate—through logics and languages that surpass disciplines—how inextricable relations among things, language, matter, form, sense are possible. It means to account for the terms, the possibilities as well as the circumstances, in which the principles that associate the animate with the inanimate, or objects with memory, or animals with other animals, or seeds with art, or theory with the logics of politics, or poetry with knowledge occur. And therefore it cannot come as a surprise that imagination is a central principle in the invention of the knowledge that takes place in art—a task that does not mimic an activity of academia, but that, in an excessive and subversive way, produces time and space for it, constituting a new ‘culture.’ The main trait of fiction and imagination is their potential failure. They do not serve as solid ground for a speech act; they are an interference in the logic of an intentional assertion of meaning. Art has retained this inversion of the relationship between meaning and saying as a way to overcome the traps of consciousness, the transcendental principle that rules the modern conception of the individual, that defines the political as an unambiguous text marked by intention of meaning and able to produce and reproduce a very definite sense of empathy. This exercise of accepting the riddle of ambiguity, the constant alteration of the relations between matter and words, time and meaning, defines a research manner that calls for a radical reconsideration of the role of language, of straightforward conceptions of how things interact, as well as the inventory of monologues produced by serious forms of meaning.”¹

Art and its relation to consciousness is another important subject. In her work, Delphine Chapuis Schmitz addresses the question of how we do become aware, but also how, in becoming aware, the tra-

¹ Chus Martinez, *Unexpress the Expressible*, in: *DOCUMENTA* (13): 100 Notizen – 100 Gedanken, 2012. 24 pp., 9 ills.

ditional notion of aesthetic experience is challenged. Her work deals with consciousness, with the strange and difficult-to-prove connection between what we call the real, the dimension of memory and our own presence. The works do happen in themselves, so to say, but they also happen in our mind. Matter and form activate the senses, but are also there to produce a complex form of actuality that introduces in us a 'memory' that was not there before. The memory of seclusion, of being deprived of freedom, of facts and events we now 'remember' while we see the piece. Our body and mind establish a complex epistemological relationship to the work.

The word 'consciousness' is used in many different ways. It is sometimes used for the ability to discriminate stimuli, or to report information, or to monitor internal states, or to control behavior. We can think of these phenomena as posing the 'easy problems' of consciousness. There seems, in principle, to be no deep problem with the idea that a physical system could be 'conscious' in these senses, and there is no obvious obstacle to an eventual explanation of these phenomena in neurobiological or computational terms. But how and why do physical processes give rise to experience? Why don't these processes take place 'in the dark,' without any accompanying states of experience? This is the central mystery of consciousness.

According to the knowledge argument, there are facts about consciousness that are not deducible from physical facts. Someone could know all the physical facts, be a perfect reasoner, and still be unable to know all the facts about consciousness on that basis.

All traditional notions of aesthetic experience—on which, I would venture to say, the term as used in the art context today still very much depends—have an epistemic basis; they all assume a gap between the real and the mind or—to simplify the terms—between physical and phenomenological 'truths.' In other words, they all derive from Descartes, or from a Cartesian way of presenting the divide between the anima and the non-animate realm. The aesthetic paradigm is still a reductionist one. Consciousness happens only in the human mind, a mind affected by the real, a real that does not possess any form of consciousness. Aesthetics depend on a materialistic way of reading the relationship between human and nature. It is hard to believe that materialism can still be considered a true way of presenting us versus nature or explaining a particular case in experience, but materialism must be true since alternatives are unacceptable. However, we need to dedicate our research efforts to produce alternatives to this still preeminent worldview, one that affects not only the way we read art

and its effects, but also the core of traditional ways of understanding experience, art, and politics. We have good reasons to believe that consciousness has a fundamental place in nature, and that—in the light of all relevant philosophical and scientific developments—we need to explore how this may trigger a new science in exploring art and its thinking, as well as a new whole set of terms and a logic for a truly new way of discovering our being part of art from the point of view of the ‘art-I’ and not only the human ‘I’.

And so, this form of conceiving the pieces represents a bold and interesting step toward a different understanding of knowledge through art. It is one that takes into account processes that do not represent the past or the good action versus the bad, but rather the possibility of sensing the communal history of our societies in a different way in order to discover an experience of freedom necessary to reinvent the social contract through art.

Chus Martínez a reçu une formation en philosophie et en histoire de l'art. Elle dirige actuellement l'Institut des arts à l'Académie FHNW des arts et du design à Bâle en Suisse. Elle a auparavant occupé le poste de conservatrice en chef à El Museo del Barrio, New York, et celui de chef de département et membre du noyau dur de la DOCUMENTA (13). Elle a aussi été conservatrice en chef au MACBA à Barcelone (2008–11), directrice du Frankfurter Kunstverein (2005–08), et directrice artistique du Sala Rekalde à Bilbao (2002–05). De plus, Martínez était la commissaire du pavillon chypriote lors de la 51^{ème} Biennale de Venise (2005) et a pris part au Carnegie International, ainsi qu'à la 29^{ème} Biennale de São Paulo en 2010, en tant que conseillère des commissaires d'exposition.

Chus Martínez has a background in philosophy and art history. Currently she is the Head of the Institute of Art of the FHNW Academy of Arts and Design in Basel, Switzerland. Before she was the Chief Curator at El Museo del Barrio, New York, and DOCUMENTA (13) Head of Department and Member of Core Agent Group. Previously she was Chief Curator at MACBA, Barcelona (2008–11), Director of the Frankfurter Kunstverein (2005–08), and Artistic Director of Sala Rekalde, Bilbao (2002–05). For the 51st Biennale di Venezia (2005), Martínez curated the National Pavilion of Cyprus, and in 2008 she served as a Curatorial Advisor for the Carnegie International and in 2010 for the 29th Bienal de São Paulo.

Biographie de l'artiste

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Sorbonne, Paris*

Expositions individuelles
Solo exhibitions
2014

*21 Proposals for the Kunsthalle
Tropical*, in collaboration with
Marcel Meury, Mödrudalur

*48. There are things I want to
do but until they have a place,
they remain necessarily vague
and indeterminate*. Museum
Haus Konstruktiv, Zürich

www.cornercollege.com, Corner
College, Zürich
2011

*56 Räume / 56 espaces /
56 spaces*. Projekt Da, Berne
scenery change. Pahl!project,
Fribourg

*how to build a space with two
legs*. Station 21, Zürich

De part et d'autre. Galerie du
théâtre, Vanves

Biography of the artist

Expositions collectives
Group exhibitions
2014

I never read. Printed matter's,
LA Art Book Fair, Museum of
Contemporary Art, Los Angeles
2013

Werkschau 2013. Fachstelle
Kultur Kanton Zürich, F+F Schule
für Kunst und Mediendesign,
Zürich

It's all in the detail. Cur.
Sabine Schaschl, Kunstmuseum
Baselland, Basel*

Staging Point. Cur. Marie-Ève
Knörle et Madeleine Amsler,
Piano Nobile, Genève
2012

Uno, Interno 4. Bologna

Jeune Création. Le 104, Paris.*

*Je veux danser, je veux penser,
je veux danser, je veux penser*.
Cur. Geraldine Tedder, Hinterhof,
Basel

*The Presence of the Past in the
Future*. Stedefreund, Berlin

Corso Aperto. Cur. Andrea
Lissoni, Fondazione Ratti, Como*

Master Fine Arts Degree Show.
Migros Gebäude Herdern, Zürich
Joëlle Allet, Delphine Chapuis
Schmitz, Esther Kempf.
Dienstgebäude, Zürich

Mit-Ohne. Urgent Paradise.
Lausanne

2010

Basement Projects 1. Kunsthau
Aussersihl/Museum Bärengasse,
Zürich

Bourses & prix
Grants & residencies
2013

Prix d'art du canton de Zurich
Art Prize of the canton of Zurich
(Werkbeitrag Fachstelle Kultur
Kanton Zürich)

2010

Bourse du fonds pour la culture
de la ville de Salzburg
Grant of the Kulturfond der
Landeshauptstadt Salzburg

*

avec catalogue
with catalogue

Notes

Notes sur l'origine
des textes
Notes on the origin
of the texts

Certains des textes présentés
sont repris de travaux antérieurs
de Delphine Chapuis Schmitz:
*Some of the presented texts
are taken from previous pieces
by Delphine Chapuis Schmitz:*

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Loop 11' 5.1. Installation audio
cinq canaux, lecteur audio, cinq
haut-parleurs, *5 canals audio-
installation, audio player,
5 speakers*, 11 min., loop, 2013

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To whom it might concern, texte
publié dans / text published in:
Uno, ed. Interno4, Bologna, 2012

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Manifesto #2, vidéo projecteur,
diaporama, *video projector, slide
show*, 4'40, loop, 2010

p. 11–12, notes d & e

Extraits de / excerpts from: *Why I
cannot write a diskursive Arbeit*,
texte / text, 2012

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Not Yet Titled, roman / novel,
work in progress, 2013–

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*D'après / after: 48. There are
things that I want to do but
until they have a place they
remain necessarily vague and
indeterminate.*³¹

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d'exposition, 2014
*Collection of texts, audioguides,
adhesive numbers, spaces of
the Museum Haus Konstruktiv,
Zürich, over two exhibition
periods*, 2014

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Clouds, 2012. Publié dans /
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Öffentlichkeit, No. 4, 2014,
Kunst–Stadt–Normalität

Marque-page / Bookmark

Song, 2014

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