

Keitelman Gallery

Sur le fil, Lucile Bertrand

Like a stunt acrobat leaping onto the tightrope, recklessly and gracefully defying the laws of gravity, *Sur le fil* is the culmination of an intense concentration and manipulation work.

In this exhibition, Lucile Bertrand deals with a multitude of similarities between thread and line, suspension and continuity, space and point, tender feelings and thirst for knowledge.

Over the past two decades, Lucile Bertrand's approach has been characterized by her drawing skills, the way she explores assemblage, and a sensibility for political as well as poetical issues. Such phenomena and commitment particularly show through her de-hierarchizing of the organic and the structural. The delicate materials (white feathers, Lilliputian iridescent pearls, transparent or pink to red shaded threads – O flesh, oh blood that constitute the living) and absolute shapes (vertical, square or cubic) do not precede or take precedence over each other. Materials and shapes are intermingled, they enhance each other, emphasizing not only their fundamental differences, but also their respective indisputable potential.

“HOVERING WORLDS BETWEEN FEATHERS AND PEARLS”

Mesures Impossibles consists of a network of vertical threads. Within this aerial net, the artist has hung a mass of feathers among which are buried small labels inscribed with red numbers, thus combining the cosiness of intimacy with the bureaucratic rules established in art since the advent of Conceptual art. The piece is displayed in a one square meter Plexiglas box, the lightness and luminosity of which have been worked out so that it acts as a window or opening. The use of such monochrome variety and dense feathery mass, together with the relevance of the numbers and the strength of the square, mark the start of a new stage in post-minimalism, bringing rigour and emotions together.

In a new series of works, a similar set of vertical threads is randomly embroidered with uneven iridescent pearls. However, the reference to nesting or to canvas painting vanishes, giving way to a cosmic perception. The infinitesimal conveys the idea of the infinitely great and the pearls look like slowly moving meteors. Or do they rather seem to be suspended in the void like raindrops full of light? The carefully choreographed space between them fosters the illusion of gliding, while our constantly renewed interpretation of their micro-relief evokes the Mallarmean constellations that turn readers into poets.

“CRUMPLED WORLDS”

Along with those “Mondes flottants” (hovering worlds), Lucile Bertrand has also developed what she calls “Mondes froissés”, or crumpled worlds, by exploring the potential of paper porcelain and bisque porcelain, in an attempt to express her fascination for the worlds of flowers and flavours. She has created delicate objects, gathered in families of ossified poppy petals and curled up, crumpled bits of paper resembling discarded scrap paper or tissues. This work titillates the sensory perceptions accumulated in one’s memory... But only sight relentlessly oscillates between what it identifies as something familiar from previous encounters, and what it gradually discovers, such as the trickles of pastel colours leaking out from the baked material. These illuminations in shades of ochre, blue or red bring about the naming of the different groups of artefacts as rivers or deserts.

Also on display is a new version of the *Je-ne-sais-quoi* tarlatan magnolia leaves.

Set in a specially dedicated space, the work entitled *Les absents* is an invitation to discuss, with Lucile Bertrand, in touch with the world and its malfunctions, and simultaneously demonstrates its tremendous delicacy, which Roland Barthes defines as follows:

... Delicacy would mean: distance and consideration, absence of weight in the relationship, and yet, intense warmth of the relationship ...

Véronique Danneels

April 2012