



Timeless memories

The adventure of artist Frédéric Nakache is the exploration of a space that incorporates a fragile border between human beings and their environment. The various artistic territories he travels through, the multiple disciplines he practices, all brush past each other, echo one another, and merge through the setting up of indescribable transitional zones ; it is precisely this particular perception that comes out of the observing and the reading of his works and scenographic proposals when they are displayed.

Photographs are the pivotal point of his work. Photographs : it is not merely photography we focus on, but the plurality and complexity of a contemporary multidisciplinary approach, encompassing, but not limited by, the distinctions made between documentary, narrative or pictorial veins. The artist's repertoire of expressions also includes video-making and sculpture.

His shots with models can be regarded as narrative objects ; others involve objects/characters functioning as models ; some constructions turn into compositions. In all of these *mise-en-abîmes* and themes interconnect and are displayed to the viewer by rigorously and precisely staging the artist's photographic act.

In the frequent absence of any setting, the subject occupies all of the available space, and, sometimes, is multiplied into becoming the very setting.

The various props, from masks to different utensils, mate with the models' bodies and faces, so much so that dissociating them turns out to be impossible, as they become blended in the same mutant entities. As anonymity and some sense of the unknown become part and parcel of the characters and objects, the viewer is faced with simple and yet vital questions : are these endowed with some sort of history, some memory or reality ? Do they play a part ? Frédéric Nakache's answers unleash a strange vision that submerges the viewer through the combined interaction of framing, subject, precision and size of shots : we are then opened to the sheer reality of his images. Such extreme realism is no hyperrealism and yet, it gives the viewer a deep insight into Frédéric Nakache's work, a territory where everything becomes possible. As an intermediary, the artist gives sense to a network of inversions, junctions, and compositions between models and objects, and unveils a space where human and societal evolution translates as the acknowledgement of the pioneering fantasies born by each one of us.

Comparatively, Frédéric Nakache's approach of sculpture is manifold. The heterogeneous series of the Compositions breaks with the tradition of a unique subject. The various obsolete, commonplace, anachronistic objects which swamp the consumer society are placed into sophisticated compositions so as to present the viewers with some memory of art through time, bearing a strange resemblance with XVIIIth century still-lives.

Each single detail from these artworks can redefine new artistic proposals. Whether re-used or not, they function as a kind of directory, keeping in memory the artist's perception of the world.

Some sculptures/installations invite themselves into the exhibition rooms by way of clusters of translucent bubbles, sometimes tinted in magenta or cyan hues, which link different parts of the space from floor to ceiling, or fill in a room angle. By doing so they reveal the frailty of space, as if the artist had suspended their movement in time.

Some of the objects/volumes are extracted from the frames of photographs back into the reality of their initial matter and function. They are linked with their genuine identity when the artist places them and uses them as evidence of the presence of realism in his exhibitions. The Compositions series reintroduces bits and pieces of information conveyed by various objects, from two encircled forms to what seems to be a skull, to an orchid.

Consequently, photography seen as the artist's sole viewpoint is able to reclaim sculpture, altering and virtualising space as if the viewer had to face a mirror in which the image takes the form of a still illusion.

The other end of his artistic spectrum, video-making is a discipline that Frédéric Nakache likes to deal with in his own way : in his images, he creates a hardly perceptible movement which by analogy breathes life into his pictures. This mode of expression is a reflexion as well as a synthesis of his work as a whole. The video sequences he produces feature characters or short digital scenes that meet and converge in the common perception of time they offer. The two video pieces respectively entitled Rebecca and La Caresse display repetitions of slightly out-of-sync gestures : here lies the oxymoron of a possible yet improbable narrative piece. L'Attente comprises four video sequences, illustrating barely suggested movements in noisy rain sounds. These four pieces could well picture three crucial preoccupations central in writer Maurice Blanchot's reflexion : man's relation to time, characterised by his vain effort to make progress, even as he does move forward, is the first one. The second is the theme of waiting, with the conclusion that waiting becomes an exposure to absence. Finally, they evoke the ineffable human relations that each of us must find, beyond words and images.

As a result of permanently blurring the lines between his different artworks, and by securing the relevance of their titles, the artist compels us to abandon any form of distance with the treasure hunt that has devised for his audience. For all of us, the need and desire to decipher his work become compulsory, since its richness is finally revealed once all of the different clues disseminated here and there have been comprehended. Frédéric Nakache's art questions the present and stages the modernity of our times. This strange perception we can feel becomes a source of wonder : could it be that human beings and their environment are inseparable and indeterminate ?

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