

H 8X12

Ruimte voor Actuele Beeldende Kunst
Space for Contemporary Art

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“CONCOMITANT”

Vincent Halfants

Leen Lybeer

17/04/2010 - 02/05/2010



Vincent Halflants

°1934 Lubbeek

- 1958: Hoger Instituut Ter Kameren, Brussel, atelier beeldhouwen
1958: onderscheiding 'Prijs Jonge Belgische Beeldhouwkunst'
1961: vermelding 'Prijs Jonge Belgische Beeldhouwkunst'
1962: studiebeurs Unesco, Salzburg
1963: prijs Berthe Art ; deelname Koopalprijs
1964: onderscheiding 'Biennale de la Sculpture', Parijs
tweede prijs biennale van het 'Erasmushuis'
pers.tentoonst. 'De Plukvogel', Brussel
1965: achtste Biennale Middelheimmuseum, Antwerpen
1966: verhuis naar Speelhoven
1967: pers. tentoonst. Galerie Vanderborght, Brussel
1968: onderscheiding 'Prijs Jonge Belgische Schilderkunst'
pers.tentoonst. 'Helicon', Hasselt
1969: werkbeurs Ministerie van Cultuur
laureaat 'Prijs Jonge Belgische Beeldhouwkunst'
1970: pers. tentoonst. Callebert, Roeselare
1971: pers. tentoonst. Flat5, Brugge
1976: 'Kunst in Brabant', Brussel
'Kontakt I', PNT, Tienen (catalogoog)
1978: pers.tentoonst. ICC, Antwerpen (catalogoog)
'Performance Art Festival', Beursschouwburg, Brussel (catalogoog)
pers.tentoonst. New Reform, Aalst
1980: 'Occupation', Brussel (catalogoog)
performance 'Procession de la Différence', Grez-Doiseau
1982: 'Instal', Brussel (catalogoog)
1983: 'Speelhoven'83', Aarschot (catalogoog)
1997: pers. tentoonst. Ciap, Hasselt
1997 - 2006: mede-organisator cyclus 10 tentoonstellingen op Speelhoven, Aarschot
2006: monument stad Aarschot 'De Man en zijn Schaduw'

Pedagogiek

1970 - 1993: leraar keramiek Molenbeek,

1985 - 1990: gastdocent Hoger Instituut Ter Kameren

1970 - 1993: stichting van 2 paramedische ateliers in de kliniek van Tienen en Diest
waarvan sedert 1976 een vaste verzameling ontstaat genoemd Procreart :
talrijke manifestaties en tentoonstellingen o.a. in 1987 'Afwezige Kunstenaar', Modern
Museum, Brussel; in 1989 'Open Mind', Smak, Gent; in 2005 'Singula Vision', Bozar
Brussel; in 2008 'Loss of Control', Marta Herford Museum, Herford



"De man en zijn schaduw" (Aarschot), brons-corten, 2006

Vincent Halflants

Sedert geruime tijd maak ik onderzoek naar een overspanning in de ruimte.
De kabelspoorweg, vervoermiddel voor stenen, in een berglandschap hebben me steeds geboeid.
De kabel trekt de kar in de stilte van haar reis.

De tekening van 2008 toont, in een gesloten ruimte, een metalen profiel uit drie aan elkaar gelaste elementen, lopend van de ene muur naar de andere.
Dit profiel draagt een grote "linceul".
Deze "linceul" van 3m60, gelijkvormig aan een gletsjer, onbeweeglijk, draagt in zijn ziel hetgeen zijn herinnering kan zijn.

Voor deze tentoonstelling zijn er twee nieuwe opstellingen :
- een tweede versie van "linceul", via tekening '09 , bestaat uit witte plaasteren doeken op een metalen draagstructuur
- via tekening '08, opstelling van een trajectoir van één muur naar een ander : een blauwe piramidale vorm in aluminium platen op twee metalen staven.



"Zonnewende", 2006



"De man op de sokkel van zijn leven", ijzer-plaaster-houtskool, 2003



"Linceil", betonijzer-lood, 2008



Ontwerptekening voor tweede versie van "Linceil", potlood-stift-pastel-houtskool, 2009

Andreas Weiland

Vincent Halfants, Sculptor from Flanders

Sculptor of the Condition humaine in the Era of Neoliberal, Turbo-Capalist Globalization

Among the works of Vincent Halfants whose striking intensity touches me deeply are such works as 'Duchamp Villon' (1962) and 'Geleerte voet' (1968). But also, among the later works, the terra cotta model (60 x 150 x 20 cm) made for 'face à face I' in 2000. Often, Vincent Halfants' titles in themselves are telling. The first one hints at an (emotional and/or intellectual) affinity to these two provocateurs, Duchamp, the visual artist close both to surrealism and to concept art, but at any rate prone to shock, and Villon, the bard who rebelled in his own sensuous way, betraying a closeness to those of low rank that even Bertolt Brecht admired in him. 'Learned feet' is a work which reveals already in its title a certain surrealist humor.

It is no secret that the COBRA group, and before them surrealism, left their imprint on the artistic consciousness of several contemporary Belgian artists, among them Vincent Halfants, especially in the earlier phase of his work. A work like 'Hammer' (which is shown here) is apparently a tongue-in-cheek, contemporary homage to the spirit of pre-war dadaists and surrealists. Robert Filliou, in the early 1970s, would create an image of the Place d'Etoile in Paris, replacing the Arc de Triomphe by a bowler hat. The idea, the concept underlying the 'Hammer' drawing, obviously a sketch for a weird sculpture, is informed by a very similar humor.

In 2003, Vincent Halfants created a figure made in plaster, entitled '**De Man en zijn sokkel II**' (The Man and his Plinth [or pedestal] II) which is not shown here. Its dimensions are very nearly those of the sculpture he envisioned at the time, the height being 123 cm, the width 15 cm and the depth also 15 cm. He added the note:

"uit te voeren in plaaster of brons op 140 cm h"

"execute in plaster or bronze, with a height of 140 cm."

The title chosen reminds us of that of another work, 'De Man en zijn schaduw' (The Man and his Shadow).

Why the change of the title? Obviously because at one point in the work process, the artist discovered the shadow thrown by the sculpture he was creating, or had already created, as an essential and integral part of the work. For some artist, such a realization may have exclusively aesthetic implications. But for Vincent Halfants? An almost existentialist exploration of the condition of man in our time seems to give a second, non-aesthetic, yet very essential meaning to the 'shadow' thrown by our life, our very existence, our thoughts and our words and our physical praxis.

Perhaps, this shadow thrown, a shadow in fact physically visible in one of the photographs of this work, metaphorically implies the way others see us, and the impact this creates. Or the historic trace left by us. Or the dialectic interplay between both us and the Others, the trace we leave and the trace which the look of the Others has left.

At any rate, we should perhaps refrain from negating the possibility to ascribe any other than an aesthetic meaning to the project to make a work that incorporates its shadow as an integral part of it.

Next to a photograph of 'The Man and his Shadow', Vincent Halfants wrote:

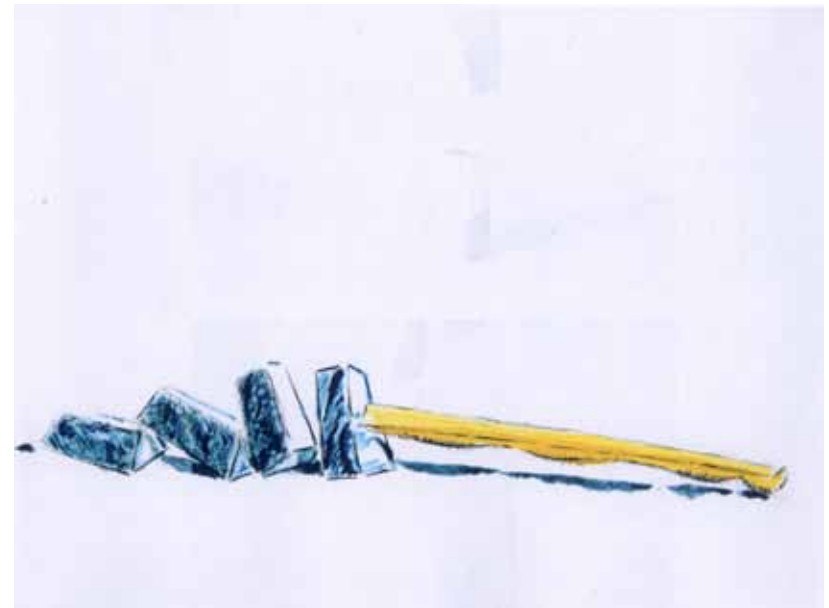
"beschouwing over een existentiële tegenwoordigheid van een person, geplaatst op de sokkel van zijn leven, stabiel of niet stabiel, en vergezeld van zijn schaduw die zijn geheugen is"

"view [perception, sight, (Ansicht)] of an existential presence of a person, placed on the pedestal of his life, be it stable or not stable, and joined by his shadow that is his memory"

Interestingly, the term for 'presence' used by the artist, 'tegenwoordigheid' (or, in German, Gegenwertigkeit) is a much stronger word than its English equivalent, implying a greater sensuality, a less abstract concept of "being 'there' (vorhanden), spatially, physically, bodily, in the present moment."

The artist's brief and, indeed, concise reflection seems to confirm the initial intuition that his approach is deeply existential, dialectically joining matter and spirit, social circumstances (OUR history, our material conditions, situated historically) and consciousness: the consciousness of an individual, first of all - his condition, his memory, his history, his afflictions and his praxis. If the intuition is in a way 'confirmed' that for this artist, the 'shadow' has a second, not simply aesthetic meaning and indeed points to, and 'implies,' something (memory, the 'history' of an individual situated in time and space, in

the social world), than I may also be courageous enough to speculate that the 'sokkel', the support of the sculptured figure also has, above all its aesthetic implications, a 'second meaning' and alludes to the (safe and stable or risky and unstable or perhaps ambiguous, both stable and unstable) social foundation of the man sculptured, a man who may be this one individual thought of by the artist or, more generally, the 'man of our time,' contemporary man - perhaps in Flanders, in Belgium, in Western Europe. Perhaps in today's human universe.



"Mise en position de chute, dessin", houtskool en acrylverf, 1999



"De man en zijn schaduw" (monument te Aarschot), brons - corten, 2006

But it is risky to begin with such interpretative speculations, necessary as they may be at some point. Let me therefore go back to the essentials, to what I see, what is there for me to see.

Confronted with this work, I immediately note the simplicity, the reduction to clear, elementary forms, the nakedness of this man sculptured which strips him of all insignia of wealth or poverty, high, medium or low status in society but not of his glance, his posture, his sex.

The traits of the face are only hinted at; they reveal a reserved curiosity, perhaps an anxious aloofness, a skepticism, a double movement of outward going (positive) and reserved if not withdrawing (and thus negative) confrontation with reality: sharply awake, open, almost smiling, and yet unable not to expect catastrophes.

The texture of the chest, the navel, slight belly, testicles and sagging penis - everything testifies to the presence of an artistic approach that lets us perceive the vital, the physical presence of man, as the artist seems to be unable or unwilling to reduce the body to a much too simple abstraction, a 'pure form.' And yet it is clear to us when we confront the sculpture from another angle that a simplification, a certain amount of abstraction has taken place.

Much attention has been paid by the artist to the support of this sculptured figure of a man, a support which is itself an important element of the sculpture - an element that appears as if composed of largely geometric segments that have been placed on top of and next to each other in a way that often jars, that produces twists, hard edges, 'incongruities' of a sort that contradict every imaginable effort to produce a single, 'smooth' form. The contrary is the case. We perceive elements. We see their edges, outlines, surfaces. And still, the 'support' has a clarity of its own, attributable exactly to its geometric planes, its often straight lines, a small sphere and a certain number of clear curves (of minor wight, perhaps, but still of importance).

Despite the perceptual clarity of this 'support,' it is difficult to 'read' it. Why does the upper element rest in just this way on the lower one? Why does the stabilizing element that seems to hold both the upper and lower part of the support in place, rest on the small sphere, and thus a most unstable foundation?

Why does the sculptured man need such a high support? In order to see better, to perceive more clearly, to look into the distance rather than in myopic fashion at his feet or into no more than a book?

Or does such a support add to his importance?

Or rather to a sense of insecurity, of being exposed to the winds of time? To the looks of Others?

The material surface of the support, like that of the sculptured figure, shows the traces of work, the traces of the time this work took - in a way, the traces of history. The entire work is solid, sturdy, infinitely structured when looked at closely. But seen from afar, its clarity and stability are countered by an unmistakable sense of the inherently provisional, inscribed into an existence that is exposed to hazards, perhaps from without as much as from within? And from within no less than from without...

It is remarkable and in fact 'telling' that this sculpture was raised 'on a high pillar' (in fact, a pre-existent chimney, made of brick) so that it came to stand high above the roofs of houses, confronting, full of awake, perhaps even challenging self-assuredness, the spire of a church.

I sense a loneliness, but also a lot of strength, a rebel mood, a defiance both in the posture of this male figure, and in the position in which it places itself (or is placed, by the artist).

Man, in the 20th as in this beginning 21st century, is still a lonely creature, separated from others, at best a rebel, defiant, resisting the powers that be (including, in Flanders, the age-old ideological prowess of "the Church"). But he is also, consciously or intuitively, aware of the "stable and unstable" material foundations of his existence. Any reflection of this dual quality invoked by Vincent Halfant's work must arrive at a worrisome list of concerns that haunt us, to a greater or lesser extent, day by day. This list might well include: A society increasingly polarized, characterized by the increase of centrifugal forces, close to falling apart. An economy undergoing the deepest crisis ever of capitalism, that is, of the still dominant mode of production that has contributed to such an immense and shocking development of both its productive and destructive potentials. A long post-World War II "peace" guaranteed by circling bombers carrying nuclear arms, by missiles ready to be launched any second, a make-believe peace, in fact, that has seen scores of "small" wars erupt, including such terrible ones as the wars in Korea, in Vietnam, in Iraq, in the Congo, in Afghanistan. And, last not least, while world hunger continues to haunt us, we can no longer deny that we inhabit a planet plagued by diminishing bio-diversity, polluted oceans and soils, sick forests, desertification, global warming, the increasing destruction of the delicate chemical balance of its atmospheric 'hull'... Man, a defiant thinker, but more than a pure consciousness, and clearly situated, in a risky ("both stable and unstable") way, is left with an awareness of his situation, is standing on (both solid and insecure) ground. And he is left with his memory, the memory of his deeds and misdeeds, his achievements and his guilt, his love and his lack of love. Is that what 'The Man and his Shadow' is showing us? But as always, it needs, perhaps, ears that hear, and certainly "eyes that see"... So look for yourself! And try to find out what YOU see.



"De man en zijn schaduw" (monument te Aarschot), brons - corten, 2006



"De man en zijn schaduw" (detail), brons - corten, 2006

Another recent work of Vincent Halfants, a work that perhaps is untitled and that I refer to as 'Man on a Stretcher', has also occasioned a commentary by the artist. There exists a sketch of it, probably predating the sculpture, and the artist added the words:

"Le 'linceul' de 3,60 m, semblable à un glacier,
étiré dans sa longueur; immobile,
porte dans son essence
ce qui peut être sa mémoire."

The sculpture is made of lead. Indeed, the feeling it produces is that of a terrible coldness, the psychic coldness of a metaphorical glacier and the bodily presence of a real glacier: of a body, a human body thrown into such terrible, cold and above all, immense isolation. A Heideggerian 'Geworfenheit' - an existential loneliness as it is only experienced perhaps when we are a fraction of an inch 'away' from death, when perhaps a fraction of a second separates us from death. A death which may catch up with us, or spare us this time, withdrawing his claim to our existence for the time being.

To be put there, on what I call a stretcher but what could also be a bridge between life and death, is to be thrown into a situation full of ultimate anguish. Not because death is so close, maybe. But because the body is made immobile, immobile like a glacier; immobile like a large solid piece of lead formed into a human shape under a blanket, under a cloth, covered by cloth. It is as if we see everything, hear everything, sense this and that - but the body, hidden under its cover, does not 'obey' us, it does not move anymore. Immobilized, I said, like the glacier the artist imagined, we confront ourselves in our loneliness. Is it the ultimate separation, the ultimate distance, that opens the gulf between us and the Other, us and 'life'? Is it the moment when, in almost unbearable clarity, with an undesired rigor, we confront what the artist calls our "essence" - that essence which may, in fact, be nothing but "our memory"?

Stretched out in full length, immobilized, imagine yourself, lying there, covered by a thin white cloth that becomes unbearably heavy. Imagine yourself, unable to rise, unable to move either hands or legs, condemned to think and feel your utter loneliness, your ultimate way of being thrown back upon yourself, encountering yourself, your essence, your deeds and misdeeds, your loves, your guilt, in one word, your memory, the memory of a life lived, a lived life that confronts you in its entirety while death may only be an inch away.

Is that what the sculpture tells us...? Is it...?

When I first saw it, I remembered. I remembered the history of mankind as I know it, as I have learned to 'know' it - from Sodom and Gomorrah, from Lot's loneliness and his wife's isolation (as she turns and dies, for what reason, what unspeakable, unacceptable reason?) way into the presence: Guernica, Oradour, the burning synagogues full of crying people in Fascist occupied White Russia and the equally occupied Ukraine, devastated by war; and finally, Auschwitz, Hiroshima, Nagasaki, the refugees killed under the bridge by American soldiers in the Korean war, the dead grandmas and babies of My Lai... It was all present in my mind, and superimposed on it, the image of an individual, a man on a stretcher, covered by a cloth, his head hanging down from the stretcher like a piece of flesh, numb. It might have been a slaughtered cow, as well. Or a dead horse, I thought. But to be focused on "memory" implies something else. Not the dead horse. The dead cow. The glacier, though seemingly still, moves infinitesimally. And the sculpture aims at this, the presence of immobility and subterranean, infinitesimal life. The living mind still working. The moment between life and death. The loneliness when faced with it. At its gates, looking back at a life lived.

(Feb. 9, 2010)

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"Linceul" (detail), betotijzer en lood, 2008



"Linceul" , betotijzer en lood, 2008



Andreas Weiland

A poem written on the occasion of seeing a sculpture made by

Vincent Halfants

Lot's wife is said to have become a staccalite
Or a sculpture, made by fate when she turned -
A form fashioned by the invisible hand
Of history, out of salt, they say
When, terror-stricken, by the unnamable occurring behind her back
She turned.

Lot, we know, did not turn
Lot is not lod, is not lead is not plomb either
He is living flesh, in our memory, still
That goes back centuries and centuries and centuries
To arrive at their Sodom.
Ours is named differently, it is called
Guernica, it is called Coventry
Oradour, it is called
Nanjing Dresden it carries the forgotten names
Of more than four hundred
Places in the Ukrainian landscape
where they burned killed extinguished
Whatever was found alive
But today it was the figure of a man
In a hospital
The frozen corpse on a stretcher
That was exhibited in front of our eyes
Lying there, lying on that stretcher
A stretcher suspended in mid-air
A stretcher hanging on iron chains
I saw his head had become invisible
I saw it hang down
No longer on the support that carried the mighty corpse
I saw it like the hidden head of a man
I saw it like the head of a cow an ox about to be slaughtered
I saw it on that stretcher
The covered corps its head under the cover
On that stretcher, I saw it
The stretcher suspended in mid-air
I saw it, yes I saw it
The covered shape
Of a man

Nov. 10, 2008
(slightly revised on Nov. 11, 2008)

LEEN LYBEER

°1937 Roeselare

Individuele Tentoonstellingen

- 1972 Auditorium Inno, Brussel
- 1976 I.C.C., Antwerpen
- 1976 Galerie Hedendaags, Knokke
- 1978 Performance Beursschouwburg, Brussel
- 1979 New-Reform, Aalst
- 1980 Sint Lucas Galerie, Brussel
- 1986 Warande, Turnhout
- 1986 C.I.A.P, Hasselt
- 1994 C.I.A.P, Hasselt

Groepstentoonstellingen

- 1971 Textiel, Sint Pietersabdij, Gent
- 1973 Verworven kunstwerken, Ned. Cultuur, P. vr Sch.K., Brussel
- 1974 Stichting Veranneman, openingstent., Kruishoutem
- 1978 Film "Lieva, Lena, Tapta" door Jan Coulommier
- 1979 I.C.C. Antwerpen, "Kunst met Papier..."
- 1979 "Materie in haar oorsprong", Kortrijk
- 1980 "Bezetting", Brussel
- 1982 Vechta-Biënnale, Vichte
- 1983 Mede-inrichting en participatie "Speelhoven'83", Aarschot
- 1984 "Sculpturaal Oppervlak", Brussel
- 1985 "Dierlijk en Plantaardig in Hedendaagse Belg. Kunst, Brussel, Aken, Apeldoorn
- 1986 "Niet Samengevoegde Materialen", Brussel
- 1986 Festival d'Été, Le Havre
- 1988 Retrospectieve New-Reform, Aalst, Antwerpen
- 1995 Intern. Triënnale of Tapestry, Lodz
- 1997 Common Space II, Bratislava
- 2001 Tempus Arti, Eliksem
- 2003 Tempus Arti, Eliksem
- 1997-2006 Mede-organisator cyclus 10 tentoonstellingen Speelhoven, Aarschot
- 2006 One*More*Time Speelhoven'06
- 2008 "Ogenblik" Gasthoven, C.C. Aarschot
- 2009 "Clinamen" De Markten, Brussel

Prijzen

- 1969 eerste Prijs Provincie Brabant (textiel)
- 1974 eerste prijs creativiteit "Interieur", Kortrijk
- 1976 Bronzen medaille Europa-prijs, Oostende
- 1977 vermelding Jonge Belg. Schilderkunst, P. vr Sch. K., Brussel
- 1978 weerhouden Prijs Stad Knokke
- 1997 eerste Prijs Vlaams Brabant

2005 kunstitgave (van 1960 tot 2004), collectie Baudouin Oosterlynck



"Cylinder", gedroogd en versneden gras, 1988



"Gevroren", asse van hagebeuk, 1986

'OKSELLANDSCHAPPEN'

Griekse, Romaanse, Gothische, Renaissance bouwkunst, Romaanse en Gothische miniatuur-kunst hebben een sterke invloed op mijn gevoelsleven en op het vervolg van het creatie-proces.

Het is interessant bezig te zijn met deze architecturale vormen en hun werkzaamheid binnen de beweging van de mensen.

Het eerste werk hier getoond ontleend haar vorm aan ramen en deuren in de vroegmiddel-eeuwse bouwkunst : een rechthoek bekroond met een halve cirkel.

Het tweede werk is ontleend aan het halfcirkelvormige trappengestel bij Griekse opluchttheat-ers en aan sommige apsissen en ingangstrappen bij vroegromaanse kerken.

Het publiek neemt geen plaats binnen het podium doch het podium is nu het schouwspel.

Er is samenspraak tussen de twee gebruikte materies die zich onderscheiden in gewicht, dicht-heid, soepelheid, warmte en intentie. Er is dualiteit, contrast, vergelijking, herhaling, spiegeling. Het denken ligt binnen haar vorm, haar plaatsgeving en haar symbool.

De reservoir aan vormen uit vroegere tijden is een onuitputtelijke bron. Steeds worden deze vormen verlegd, opnieuw gebruikt in eenzelfde of een andere samenhang. Het ene genereert het andere. Het is ook steun, beweging, rotatie, doorgang, afsluiting. Dit alles zijn stuk voor stuk actoren bij het monteren van denkbeeldige vormen.

Door observatie ontdek je de perspectivische gedragingen van constructies, de plaatsing van elementen boven, naast, achter of voor elkaar : zowel in de werkelijkheid, fotografische voorstellingen en tekeningen.

Ik zorgde steeds voor het behouden van de stilte van de materialen en haar plaats binnen de vormgeving. De principiële eenvoud en het volgehouden minimalisme sluiten aan bij de bruik-baarheid van de gekozen materie. Het gaat om een compositorisch evenwicht als om de uitdrukking van een rechtstreekse verhouding met deze vroegere structuren en symbolen.

Het verband met mijn vorige werken ligt in het gebruik van dezelfde inspiratiebron, het incorporeren van een compositorisch evenwicht en het plaats geven aan leegte.

Plaats geven aan dat wat er niet is, alterneren van iets naar niets.

De benaming 'Oksellandschappen' omvat een aantal werken en bevat enkele kleine rubrieken zoals 'Podiums'.

Voorstellen en positioneren van mijn landschappen.

Beweging geven aan de verbeeldingskracht.

Binnen de geest zoeken naar een aanlegplaats.

Leen Lybeer



"Podium II", ijzer en fijne compost, 2006



"oefening op ultramarijn I", koud getrokken ijzer en pigment, 2008

Andreas Weiland

THREE INSTALLATIONS BY LEEN LYBEER

1 - An installation evocative of time passing ?

I have recently seen a surprising work of art. It's a circle, parted by its diameter in the middle, constructed perhaps in a way that is a bit complicated. For this is not an abstract circle; it is a circle made of sand or some such material that is very fragile, very uneven, very fascinating and rich in its complexity. It's a sort of cake, the way children make it, attached to a load-bearing support, perhaps made of glass, which is also round and a bit elevated: between earth and sky (or the ceiling), thanks to a supportive pillar made of the same material. A constructive idea which takes considerable courage.

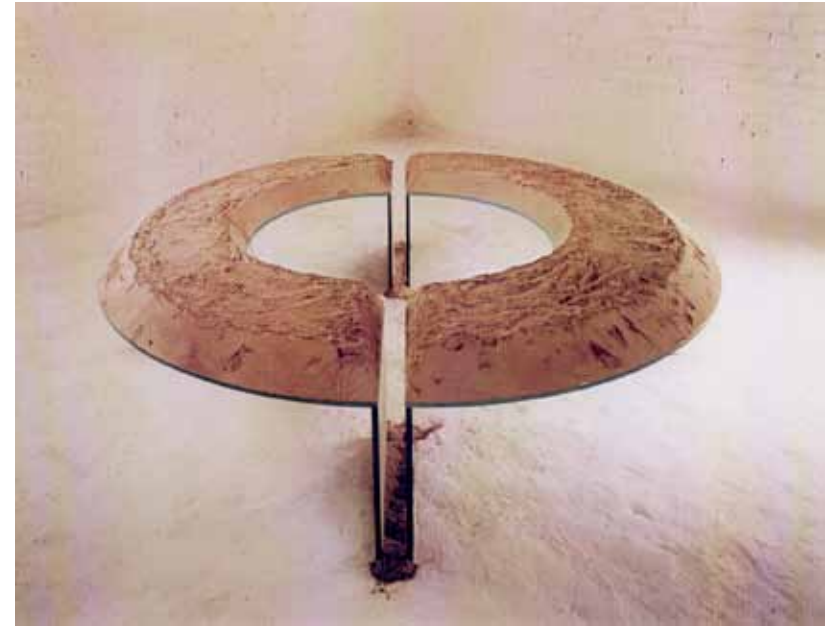
As one sees, this entire construction incorporates an opposition: There is the technologically modern support which is clear, constructivist, abstract. And the cake, made of sand. Which seems mystic, like the Greek ómphalos, the umbilicus, archetypal image of all ORIGIN. And which, simultaneously, appears like a mixture of the abstract (the circular, the abstract form of the circle!) and the irregular, almost organic (a quality of sand).

This strange object has been (dis-)placed into an irritating situation: it is surrounded by a brick wall, its archaic appearance -while the floor of this place is probably covered by sand, as well. What does it mean? For me, the evocation of the image of an excavation site is very present. The installation is charged with energy because of its montage of opposite elements: the ancient, represented by the impression that one is seeing an ancient location that has been excavated •and the modern, suggested by the clear and rational support made of glass. And given with this support, placed on this very structure, there is the thing made of sand - simulation of an exhibited objet trouvé, which is certainly breathing an archaic spirit. The irritation caused is considerable; the past is present; but modernity is also present. This very modern work of art, this installation has integrated an element that is ancient or that is about to turn ancient, a fragile moment (to put it differently) which, by its tenderness and vulnerability, must evoke the consciousness, the realization of the awareness that everything modern must turn ancient, in another time, in our future.

2 - Tennis Court Art. Another installation by Leen Lybeer

This is a mystic form, a magical form which I have discovered in the midst of a strange nature, a sort of virginal forest where a small clearing is visible. Much of this clearing seems to be blue almost, it is of a blue verging on lilac, and the contrast with the green of the surrounding trees, a dark green, and the other green which is a light one, is of great beauty. The blue form appears as a contrast in another sense, too. It is abstract and, on first sight, because of its homogenous color; it appears like a man-made substance: artificial and, by consequence, not organic like the trees or a clearance. It is limited by a metal band that is a bit shiny, which accentuates the impression of seeing a non-organic object. But all this is only a first impression. An impression which certainly incorporates a moment of truth but which ignores the process of constructing this installation, its history which is also the history of its site. And it ignores the concept, the thoughts of the artist, her goal, her intention that may have been pre-consciously present, perhaps. If I have been able to view this ensemble a bit like a situation that is comparable to that of a temple inserted into the rain forest of Guatemala, a temple abandoned today, a temple left alone by itself, without men and women, without being used, practically abandoned to the wind and the rain, this is a description of an emotion caused by this work of art. But, on the other hand, the facts are clear: As starting point, we have nothing but a tennis court, the site of a tennis court abandoned to nature. This human creation, inserted into a space covered by trees as a rectangular place, and insofar abstract, but changed by time and nature which have given to this site a cover of green grass, is also changing our "reading" of the art work that has been incorporated right here. A work, made of peat (that is colored?, at any rate, ephemeral) and of metal, that is in some way derived from a definitive form used earlier on by the artist in another context. It is the form of an architectural model, a maquette of the semicircles of seats in a modern or ancient theater, and it appears like a design reduced to its extremely abstract essence. Putting it differently, one may say that it is the abstract (the form of this maquette) inserted into something abstract which has turned more organic, more like nature (the rectangular tennis court, transformed by time, the wind, etc.).

And this form of abstract or conceptual art inserted here is also going to change, sooner or later, in the same direction. This abstract form, derived from the modern theater, derived from ancient theater, is, in the last analysis, more than a mystic form, more than a universal form which appears like a tree leaf made simple that has changing meanings, in history and in different cultures. Derived, logically and consciously, from the ancient form of the Greek theater (the amphithéatron), it has incorporated the logic of constructing this type of theater - a theater



"Monument voor een gedooit landschap", glas en asse van hagebeuk, 1986



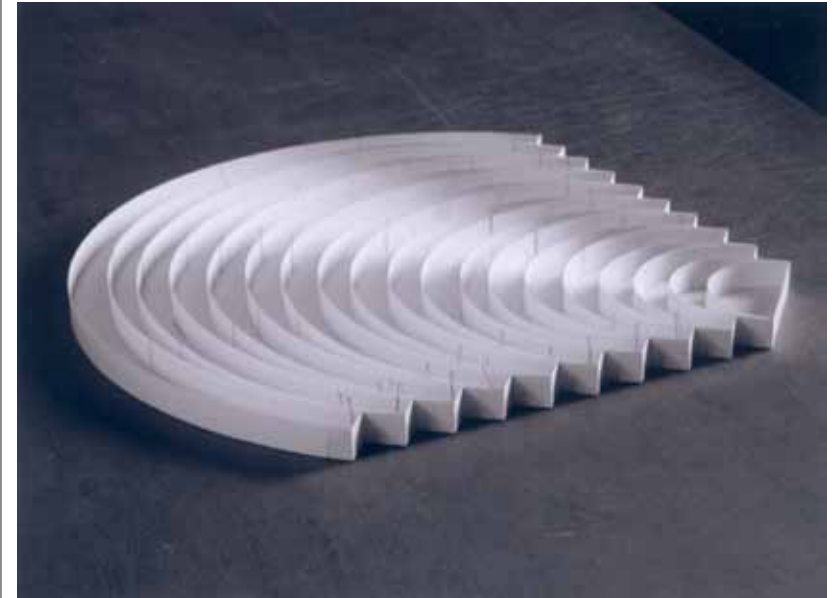
"Podium II", ijzer en fijne compost, 2006

of the kind which I have seen in Delphi, inserted plausibly in the sloping nature of the hills, as architecture organically adapted to the topography. In other words, the fact is decisive that the derivation of the constructivist form of the blue and mystic "icon" has been obscured in the history of the process of its construction. The mystery is nothing but the forgotten praxis [practice] of human ingenuity; it is the forgotten fact that the abstract, clear, constructivist thought of the architects and the artists is derived from the act of observing (organic) nature; it is the forgotten fact that the respect for the function (of the theater, in this case), the respect for the needs of people (the Greek men and women, in this case, which made use of their theater, inserted into the hills) was at the origin of a form that turned abstract. The mystification, the mystic or magic impression of the object results from the fact that one has forgotten the origine, that a caesura exists, an isolation from the past and a concentration on the moment. Its presence. It is true, there exists also -within the ensemble of this installation composed of a nature exposed to the dual insertion of a tennis court and an esthetic form -this anticipation of the future, departing from a presence which knows the anticipation of finiteness. But nothing beyond this. In this moment of a look embodying all one's concentration which aids the isolation of the things perceived, the impression of a fascinating combination, the montage of a mythic object with an irritating nature can result. It is the reflection of the production process of a work of art and of its historical preconditions which dissipates the myth in a certain way. But not without "enriching" our esthetic experience by making our perception of the work of art richer and more complex. And this, certainly, without responding, in any way, to all of its questions, to all of its potentiality.

3 - The installation exhibited in Bratislava by Leen Lybeer

In Bratislava, Lenn Lybeer created another installation that is also integrated into nature. This installation is using a natural material, as well -straw. A square or rectangular space has been formed by straw around the green grass growing below a tree. The edge of the space covered by grass is not straight but runs in irregular fashion. The limit of the added space is abstract, clear and regular. This work amounts to an act of montage and also an act of confrontation of culture and nature, of a form made or produced by the artist with a form spontaneously produced by nature. The boundary where the two spaces meet is of considerable interest. It is the meeting point, the line of osmosis between the man-made and the other which escapes, to some extent, the control of man if he is prepared to let nature pursue its course. But this is not all. Another force is going to intervene, the force of time, the forces of the wind, the rain. Without the repeated intervention of man, the artificial and abstract addition (made of a material as transitory as straw) is determined to change its character; its destiny is no other destiny than that of a metamorphosis. Which will transform the entire ensemble, all of the installation, by an indeterminate or random process, into a bit of nature.

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"Maquette voor Podium II", karton, 2006



"Kader rond artificiële hevel", versneden gras, 1997



“Podium II”, ijzer en fijne compost, 2006



“Podium II” (detail), wildgroei, 2008