

Effacement versus oblivion

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The drawings of Lucile Bertrand are the first and favoured space of her work. They allow her to approach the very nature of what she seeks to show. Her works may seem disparate, but a number of them are connected by links which it is up to us to recognize.

Preparatory studies, sketches of small sculptures of tarlatan with hair, installations made of feathers or sculptures of petals made of paper... Observational drawings of feet, of insects found dead, or quinces... The various subjects are divided between lightness and heaviness, between flight and falling. It is a diaphanous art that speaks more of the twig than of the forest, while not forgetting that the second would not exist without the first.

For all that, despite the differences, the artist navigates relentlessly over papers of infinite shades, moved by the pleasure obtained from the act of drawing. The medium is selected with care. In the same way, a great concern for accuracy is put into the choice and the variety of tools used. Thus certain apparently simple areas are in fact the fruit of a multitude of colours or shades of grey. The drawings are mainly in clear lines. The strokes that define the contours reveal the magic of the blank areas and create sometimes fluidity, at other times softness. The curves make use of a studied balance.

A number of the drawings are at the limit of effacement. In these the pencil is very hard. Its point traces wakes of the ghostly presence. The colour merges into that of the paper. This strange presence/absence forces the viewer to approach the work or else to risk losing sight of it. The line is like an imprint, a testimony, like the passing of the shadow of a thread. Lucile Bertrand is Ariadne's sister. She seeks not to lose the memory of instants so light that they disappear into the air. She also weaves, gathers, and puts together bouquets, in the same way that one organises albums of souvenirs or intimate diaries.

In fact the fear of loss is at the centre of Lucile Bertrand's preoccupations. Dresses, hammocks, fruits, needles, feathers, posts, so many things that attach themselves, link themselves, graft themselves. Paradoxically, it is through effacement that she succeeds in fighting against oblivion and disappearance. Lucile Bertrand does not erect monuments in memory of such and such... She has long been aware of the strength of the fragment. The latter may take you back to the roots of memory, more forcefully than an insignificant replica of the memory. It is the strange position of the tightrope walker who prefers the singularity of the wire to the comfort of the ground, who chooses the subtle over the obvious.

- Christophe Veys, art historian