

Mind the gap

note on recent works by Lucie Noel Thune by Jean-Louis Poitevin

Silence

A certain kind of silence has always surrounded Lucie Noël Thune's art work. Her recent sculpture are covered in a particular aura that highlights and projects this feeling. In spite of this aura of silence, we can't avoid thinking that these objects are talking to us. Hence the feeling of oddity



emerging from these works. What surprises and disturbs us is the link between silence and speech. We are surprised because what is being offered to us rather than shown to us are things and therefore not really works of art. We are disturbed because these things are obviously copies, artefacts, duplicates of the missing objects and so may be then, in spite of everything, they are works of art. The silence surrounding this work and what the objects are trying to tell us both laden our perception with changing intensity.



Here and there



An apple, eraser and binocular are wax artefacts, accurate copies, more accurate than any drawing, photograph or sculpture could be since they are casts of these very things. On the artist's desk, in her studio were the things themselves, an actual eraser, her sketchbook and the binoculars which belonged to her grandfather. The artefacts are made of wax, an unstable material, far more unstable than glass or bronze, for instance, materials from which she also makes a 'single copy' of each object for collectors. This very fragility of wax is what enables us to avoid the trap of the infinitely recurring questioning about representation, reality and fiction. These works open up another path that winds between here, where the copies that we can see are and there , where thought unfolds.

Instability



We know without being able to perceive it that things are not what they are when observed through the lens of quantum mechanics. What the undeniable existence of that level of reality enables us to understand is that the instability of atoms does, by no means, prevent a certain stability of things. We cannot grasp an atom, but we can contemplate the gap between the resistance of the material and quantum instability. The relationship between the object and the artefact is of the same type. The sturdiness of the original object answers to the fragility of the wax copy. This 'response' in the musical sense of the term is precisely what enables us to consider unsteadiness no longer as a danger but as part and parcel of our thinking. There, presented with these wax copies of objects, we have no other choice but to begin to think differently.

Non-art

We can neither see nor touch the original object at the exhibition. We can only try to conceive it mentally or, if you wish, reconstruct it by way of thought as if it were a memory. This anamnesis is made easier by the presence of the copy which takes the place of the work of art. The copy enables us to reach what is at stake in this work. The memory of a missing, yet present, thing takes us to a new level, that of thought. What we are seeing is a nonfunctional object. We could neither drink out of the cup nor erase with the eraser nor see through the binocular. Although they are being displayed as works of art, their status as 'accurate' copies makes them non-art objects. The meaning of these works lies in that gap.

Words



We are therefore facing the very paradox of any creation in its connection to existence : we can grasp the absence of things as well as the presence of their reproduction through words. Words are a material both more ancient than all others and more unstable than wax as we can never determine what is being understood from what is being said. Without that material, none of this could exist. And it is the only one at our disposal which enables us to be attuned to the instability of things : a mental and psychological swinging which is formal, rhythmical and musical between the thing in front of us that we want to grasp and the idea of something elusive becoming thinkable and even more, that we can experience. The difference between the object and the copy has less to do with a linguistic sign than with the raw material with which thought is revealed to itself. The mystery

being revealed to us is that word is the other material haunting any creation without our being aware of it. It is not only a brick of thought. Without it, art couldn't exist or thought be understood within ourselves and the never-ending dance of sensations and emotions couldn't unfold in the quivering air.

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Of course, there is the artist who chooses and carries out the different operations leading to the making of the artefacts. Yet, we will use the same word to name either the object itself or the copy. Therefore, the I of the artist and ours, the thing and its copy, the word and its meaning look totally connected and so they are at a particular point : the exhibition. We can then guess that, suddenly, this nodal point has to be converted by us into a kind of turning point. Once our mind has been set into motion, we can then catch a glimpse of what is essential : between thing and nothing, between word and meaning, there lies an infinite space, some gap. That is where only thought can slither and thus lead us to perceive the instability at the core of what is stable and how to link both. And what does Lucie Noël Thune tell us then ? Be careful ! Mind the gap.

