

Moments between brackets

If art exists, it is surely because of the passionate quest for the extraordinary through which human beings have always sought to go beyond their daily routine and fill their lives with wonder. Paradoxically, it is precisely this banal and ordinary daily routine that inspires art. For the extraordinary does not exist without the ordinary. And what is lacking in one is exactly the object of desire of the other. The extraordinary and the ordinary are the two poles of a single space, in which insipid but sometimes unusual, anodyne and often memorable moments accumulate, float and overlap. These moments, without importance and yet miraculous, are all meant to give meaning and value to our existence.

These are the moments, at once so ordinary and so exceptional, that Éveline Boulva and Sophie Privé evoke in the exhibition *Des instants entre parenthèses*. Through a rebound effect of two purposes and two distinct and timeless themes, landscape and the portrait, these two artists and long-time friends join forces to think about drawing and its delicate temporality. In precise terms, Boulva and Privé use the interaction of drawing and painting to expose us to the complexity of the process of remembering. Their images are fabricated in large part using digital photography. In this work, the initial image is subjected to transformation for, in the end, it becomes the trace of a photographic projection or the imprint of a model on the painting. The stuff of the initial image thus obliges the artist to control the spontaneity of her drawing without losing its expressive force. Clearly, this process invites reflection on our conception of temporality in the image

and its symbolic presence in various media, and thus on the complexity of cultural and iconographic references that this temporality can evoke when it becomes part of a visual configuration.

In a destabilizing dialogue in this work between true and false, sequence and totality, absence and presence, loss and preservation and the multiplication of moments and their superimposition in a space-time unit, photography and painting act not only as two media, as two distinct techniques which mediate between different temporal and visual realities (one documentary and the other fictional, one indexical and the other invested), but also as a single, unique gesture through which art and life are placed in constant metaphorical circularity. It is precisely this process that becomes a mooring point and a force of amalgamation between two bodies of work which, despite their common concerns, also have many specific qualities.

Thus we see in Sophie Privé's work narrativity, fixed in everyday, urban and banal moments (friends meeting at an outdoor café or the depiction of various people, including herself in the form of a self-portrait), become the pretext for a complex reflection on different temporalities: one historical and ephemeral (our own) and the other rather more symbolic (that of painting) and inevitably frozen in an endless march through time. Superimposed in a single space, that of a painting, these two temporalities force us to recognise our own troubling instability. Nevertheless, what touches us most in this work is the vibrant transparency of the images which,

like Gothic stained-glass windows, confront us, through the force of their bustling symbolism, with a veritable topology of the everyday whose poetic power is affirmed by the very act of creation.

In a much different vein, the work of Éveline Boulva, which deals exclusively with landscape, is a process whereby reality is fragmented. Here, the vulnerability of the present moment in everyday life is superimposed on the decontextualised temporality of painting, or more broadly of the image. Through the symbolic screen of painting, Boulva's work reveals, in a very powerful and astonishing manner, two dimensions beyond any historical speculation: the duration of the image and the duration of the landscape. By means of the plastic specificity of the image, in a phenomenological and immediate relationship with what lies before our sight, we penetrate a tragically broken and yet ever so complete, immense and eternal moment. For a landscape is always transparent and different from what it depicts. It is undoubtedly for us the mark of a very precise moment while at the same time, paradoxically, only an image outside any temporality. It is simply the visible measure of our passage. Most of all because human temporality, unlike that of the temporality of a landscape, has neither stability nor future but only the imperative of disappearing.

More than all this existential or sociological discourse, however, what touches us in *Des instants entre parenthèses* are the material boundaries of drawing and the organisation of its intimate and specific space. This stands to reason, because the great strength of this work resides in its ability to

take us to the essence of painting—to what we could describe, I believe, as its intimate, authentic and signifying impulse. Éveline Boulva and Sophie Privé thus remind us that it is always pointless to look for the meaning of a work of art beyond what its mere presence can reveal to us in a moment of wonder, a moment which is, perhaps, art.