

GALERIE ALBERTA PANE

MARIE LELOUCHE

I AM WALKING IN...

14.11.2015 - 30.01.2016

Opening Saturday November 14th 2015 at 4pm

Alberta Pane gallery is delighted to present the second solo show of the French artist Marie Lelouche at the gallery. The title of the exhibition refers to her last installation, developed in collaboration with several institutional and private partners* and presented until December 13th 2015 at the Fresnoy, Studio national des arts contemporains in Tourcoing, France.

A conversation between Alberta Pane and Marie Lelouche

Alberta Pane: When we first met in late 2007, you were still a student at Beaux-Arts de Paris. Back then, you were creating large glass sculptures, and I've been immediately attracted by the maturity of your work, by its complexity and poetry despite your young age. Could you tell us more about this?

Marie Lelouche: I've started to work with glass for a piece that was called "Inebriation". No matter what media I use, I seek to benefit from all its potential meanings. Every material's history is influenced by technical evolution that alters its appearance and usage: How is it shaped? Who is processing it? To what gestures, and habits, does it refer? What approach to the world does it offer at a precise moment? Subsequently, I try to find a form to evoke those aspects of the material that appear meaningful to me.

I've been working with glass for some time longer than with other materials because of the multitude of techniques that can be applied to it, and because of the physical and temporal commitment they demand.

Today, I still choose the media for my work with that same attitude.

When working with glass, I was greatly interested in tools that tell of the creation process, the mould for instance. Today, I'm concerned with technologies that seem to model, and to form, the world in different ways.

AP: Your fascination with media has led you to working with glass, but also with porcelain, cardboard, fabric and other objects that you cover in chalk...

I'm under the impression that you're particularly interested in objects that are marked by a special fragility...

ML: It's true that I prefer to work with materials that constantly remind us of the fragility

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of their “existence”. Materials whose weaknesses are familiar to us. They reveal a precarious state of affairs; just like dropping porcelain, a misplaced folding in a cardboard would be irreversible, and we are aware of it.

In my work with chalk, precariousness is all the more evident, as chalk immediately starts to vanish the very moment it is applied.

I think this is telling about our relation to space and objects, entities that we constantly try to render immovable. To me, this vain approach to perennial forms seems at the same time beautiful and charged with sense, with regards to our contemporary societies that paradoxically never cease to produce “events”.

AP. Marie, now I'd like to talk about your relation to traveling. You have travelled a lot, from Brazil to Korea, Italy, and, most recently, Canada. Could you tell us more about your travels, your experiences, residencies and the influence they've had on your work, and on yourself as an artist?

ML: Each journey has presented me with an occasion to reconsider my practice. Whenever I arrive somewhere new, in a new “structure”, it's with the intention to let this new experience change and remodel my understanding of the world and my views on art. The modification may be minuscule, and it often takes between six months and a year before I realize what has been subjected to it. But I think, this enables me to keep my work in constant evolution, always attentive of what's going on around me.

I perceive new spaces of work and life as conditions for their renewal. It is in this sense, that I try to choose them in accordance to my current needs for evolution, e.g. when applying for a residency.

AP: It seems as if this approach to things has been of special importance during your residencies in South Korea; you have tried to absorb the country's rites and customs, and immediately afterwards we presented your first show at the gallery. The works have been inspired by landscapes and architecture, but also by that country's traditions; please could you tell us more?

ML: I'm not interested in traditions as isolated elements, but rather in a culture's contemporaneity that finds expression in History with a capital 'H' as it's told and taught directly, but also in a society's customs, traditions and organisation.

I'm particularly interested in architecture because it's an expression of the need to lend

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structure to customs, and it reflects the respective governments' politics. There's also a part of it lying outside of the architect's and the sponsor's influence: The local population will take care of the construction, and later those who actually use the building will make changes to it. Architecture is a complex system that never ceases to influence my work, be it by structural analogies or by everyday experiences.

AP: Your work has much evolved since. What projects have you realised lately?

ML: I've developed two parallel approaches. One of them I consider as studio related, and the other as *in situ*. The first one has led me to create in a temporality that is defined by the medium and the persons who are involved. The second relates more directly to the precise context of a creation.

AP: Could you tell us about your 'Instantaneous Sculptures', and, for instance, the 'Project ° 360'?

ML: The 'Instantaneous Sculptures' series is still an on-going project, in the sense that my artistic research of today draws on questions raised by it.

In these works, I apply more strongly than before my interest in the issue of a sculpture *in situ*, that attacks the utopian idea of objects as unalterable forms by the very means the sculpture is created and presented. I've also sought to overthrow my creative process and to reassess my position in it. It was necessary to furnish spaces in which somebody else could potentially intervene.

The experience of '° 360' was particularly strong. This publication, which I've created with *Septembre Tibeghien* in the context of one of the 'Instantaneous Sculptures', has allowed me to give expression to a discourse, and to introduce the appearance of an object that I define as a work of art playing on the ambiguous status of a document/fiction, as well as to experience the limits of my attachment to a piece. Actually, there is a notion of abandon in the act of leaving space to somebody else in the creative process. I've learned a lot about my proper limits, and about what lies effectually at the heart of my interest. The publication involved an exchange, in the course of which our respective positions of critic and artist faded away, in favour of a multitude of tales and affects that may accompany the "life of a sculpture".

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AP: Are these the lines of research that will define your future projects?

ML: Yes, absolutely. I think a lot about the evolution of sculptural forms. I've furthermore begun a PhD project at *Fresnoy* and *Uqam* that allows me to combine theory and practice even more. This is the attitude of an artist who tries to surprise herself, to shatter her understanding of things, and eventually to discover how a sculpture in its new forms can find the means of subsistence.

AP: Talking about sculptures and their form, the new pieces that you're showing at Alberta Pane Gallery have been created with the help of several institutional and private partners. They do not only deal with sculpture but also with installation and interaction. Sound is fundamental to the project; how does it fit into your research? What is its role?

ML: This concerns a sculpture/sound device. I've collaborated on this installation with scientists and engineers who are interested in the emerging technologies linked to the perception of space. The project is truly experimental, the interactive device as well as the audial experience.

For a long time, I've wanted to address space with the means of sound. We learn of space quite intuitively, for example via the echo of our own steps on the floor. Even with our eyes closed we know whether we're entering a small room with a tiled floor or a vast felted space.

I offer the spectator, or, if I may say so: the listener, the experience of a double circulation inside the installation: he may perceive the sculptures in a "classical" way - fullness, emptiness, material, proportions - or travel from one to the other thanks to sound.

A generative composition is gradually perceived in a space of every volume, depending on the spectator's position. This is an unusual experience. I thus imagine we could "understand" a volume with our hearing to the same extent as with our other senses, comparable to what cinema is offering today in the relation of sound and image.

I could add that the experience is similar to that of an architecture model: We succeed in projecting ourselves into it, and we imagine what the experience of the building would be like. In this case, it's the sound you would hear if you were inside a volume.

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