

Fragments

by Delphine Burtin

Opening: Saturday, Dec 1st 2018 from 2 to 6 pm, in the presence of the artist
Show: December 4th 2018 - January 26th 2019

FIFTY ONE

Gallery FIFTY ONE TOO welcomes back Swiss artist Delphine Burtin (°1974) for a new solo show, featuring her two latest series *Fragments* and *Longueur, largeur, hauteur* (2018). Burtin, who trained as a graphic designer and photographer, uses simple, everyday objects to create powerful sculptural images that balance between fact and fiction, thus unveiling the limits and ambivalence of human perception.

Fragments came into being during a residency at the Centre d'Art GwinZegal (Guingamp, Brittany). During her wanderings along the Trieux river, Burtin photographed the surrounding nature and collected plants. Back in the studio, she started manipulating the plants: she painted them white, covered them up, folded leaves of grass, cut up flowers, perforated an oak leaf... She subsequently photographed these volatile creations, preserving and magnifying them on print. Thanks to the play of light and shadow, the liveliness and three-dimensionality of the objects is also preserved. At the same time the plants have become discursive objects; artifacts that represent the ambiguous relationship between man and nature. Instead of showing nature in its original form, Burtin isolates one element of it and presents it to the viewer in an artificial, manipulated form. It is an illustration of how human kind always tries to keep a certain level of control over its natural surroundings. The artist sharpens this contrast by putting her lapidary creations next to outdoor images of a wild and abundant nature. In series such as *Sans condition initiale* (2014-2015), we have seen Burtin using this kind of procédé before: she appropriates everyday objects by combining them into alienating sculptures or "visual accidents" that are far removed from their initial condition.

For the series *Longueur, largeur, hauteur*, Delphine Burtin, instead of using digital, reproducible photography, resorts to the cyanotype for the first time, creating unique works. She places optical calcite stones on cyanotype paper in the sunlight. The forms and imperfections of the stones cast their shadows on the paper, thus printing objects that have in fact never existed. The titles of these blue pieces correspond to the dates and hours of exposure. In the artist's own words: "I yield my image-producing power to the crystal, to the sun and, a little bit, to chance."

Delphine Burtin has experimented abundantly with the emptiness and deception of form in earlier series as *Polyèdres* and *Le point aveugle*. For this new exhibition, the artist has successfully allowed 'uncontrollable' elements (space and time, chance, nature,...) into her practice. She loosens her grip, setting the stage for a 'hidden dimension' to be conjured up in the eye of the beholder. Even more than *Fragments*, the *Longueur, largeur, hauteur* series is a collection of cunningly developed trompe l'oeils that remind us of the elusiveness and ambiguity of our reality.

Delphine Burtin lives and works in Lausanne (Switzerland). After studying graphic design, she worked as a designer for several years. In 2013, she graduated as a photographer at the Vevey School of Applied Arts. The previous year, her *Disparition* series was presented at Photoforum PasquArt (Bienne) and Les Boutographies in Montpellier, amongst others. *Encouble*, her graduation series, met with immediate and wide success: it was shortlisted for PhotoBook of the Year Paris Photo, won the first Prize during the Selection exhibition at Photoforum PasquArt, and was the recipient of the Prix HSBC 2014. The series has been shown in the US, Germany, France and Belgium (Gallery FIFTY ONE, 2016).