

ENCOUBLE

Delphine Burtin



Opening: Thursday, April 28th from 6 to 9 pm

Show: April 29th until June 11th 2016

GALLERY FIFTY ONE is pleased to announce the first solo show by the Swiss photographer Delphine Burtin (1974), called "Encouble". The title is a typical Swiss-French word meaning "to stumble or to trip on" and gives away the leitmotiv of the artist: a visual play of (re-)arranging daily used objects in still life compositions, in such a way that they undermine the spectator's perception of reality completely. Her work balances between fact and fiction.

In 2013 Delphine Burtin completed a post-graduate course in photography to extent her artistic vision, being a graphic designer for the past decade. Her profession completely formed her "photographic gaze" as being very constructive, linear, technical and sombre.

During this course she created two series. The first one is called "Disparition" (2012): 12 portraits of waste items carefully selected of Burtin's own produced garbage during one week. She positioned each residue like a fish-bone, an empty roll of toilet paper, a degrading banana peel, etc. in front of a two plain velvety-coloured background in the studio, using a technical camera for its accuracy. With this form of presentation the artist elevates their status and questions the idea of the futility of our consumerism. The result is surely referring to the 17th and 18th vanitas paintings: the waste as contemporary "vanitas motiv" and the setting as timeless compositions.

The second and graduated series is called "Encouble" (2013) in which she created "trompe-l'oeils" made in natural daylight (outdoors) or with artificial light (in the studio). The distinct feature of light and shadow defines the objects in her compositions visually by creating certain shapes, but can also by amplifying optical illusions. One of the "outdoor" images presented in the exhibition is the arrangement of three concrete staircases in front of a pile of sand at an industrial zone (image#19). Due to the specific light intensity this group of staircases appear rather flattened, than the normally expected sculptural characteristic. The studio photographs are the results of the artist's interferences on different levels through analogue graphic techniques: folding, (re-) photographing, printing, cutting etc, ... Some of these manual manipulations can be seen in the "Clementine" (image#5). First the artist photographed the Clementine and printed it out. Then she has cut into the image and folded a small part of the printed fruit and re-photographed and reprinted again. Once aware, it becomes obvious, but otherwise it is often difficult to distinct how much an image is reworked and transformed.

Like her series "Encouple", her latest series "Sans Condition Initiale" (2014-2015) is also balancing between photography and sculpture. Here Burtin investigates the status of assembled daily objects in three-dimensional spaces and vice versa. By appropriating the items to new structures their individual initial condition is left out, creating an unfamiliar visual language in which she questions conventional representations. One of the presented photograph, an image of a filled-up bag from close-view (image#5) will be reused again, covering a large cube in order to add an additional, new distortion within its specific space.

In this short period of time as a photographer, Delphine Burtin received a lot of attention and won several prizes. The series "Disparition" was shown at the festival Boutographies in Montpellier, France. "Encouple" won the first prize at Photo Forum PasquArt, Bienne, Switzerland and this series was also produced as a book by Aperture, which was nominated for the First Photobook prize at the 2013 Paris Photo Fair. She was also the laureate of the French Prix HSBC pour la Photographie in 2014.