

GALERIE CRÈVECOEUR

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Julien Carreyn

*L'atelier des filles*

03/22 - 05/26

*L'atelier des filles* is Julien Carreyn's second solo exhibition in Crèvecoeur.

Originally, the title *L'atelier des filles* (*The Girls' Workshop*) served only as a pretext to document the cultural activities of an imaginary MJC (Maison des jeunes et de la culture / French Youth & Cultural Centres). But, step-by-step, this story tinged with a "municipal" aesthetic slipped into uncharted territory, though not denying signs of an almost everyday banality. Appearing one after another, young women play the role of the academic model: dressing up in nondescript sportswear, smearing their bodies with oil, whilst assembling some curious paper cutouts. The decors succeed each other like theatre sets, with a pronounced taste for "making do" with "whatever is to hand", like an electric radiator, or a television covered with a doily. Or else in a certain "stylistic flux", with - for instance - laundry drying near a CD rack, leading to an African statuette. The action always seems to have occurred just before or shortly afterwards, the cut/torn paper shreds piling up on the floor, walls decorated in patterns reminiscent of dominoes. The climax is elsewhere, and the narrative laconic, with ideas gliding over one another like clips from non-existent films. A series of images progressively overlap and fadeout, arranged like the "flat-plan" used to structure the pages of a magazine.

*Mina-Ha-ha*, or *On the Bodily Education of Young Girls*, a novella by Frank Wedekind (1906) may lie at the origins of such descriptions. In the book, girls are educated in complete ignorance of the outside world, like Eglée in Marivaux's play *La Dispute*. Of Wedekind's novella, we know - beyond its fantasies - none of its opaque intentions. Just as impenetrable are the series of photographs entitled "Girls" by the photographer Kishin Shinoyama, a seminal work.

"Here are the instructions : The two of us must gaze into the mirror, keeping eyes fixed on empty space, as if something much further away were just perceptible, something uncertain and ethereal that slowly passes without changing position. Must dress each other up by draping ourselves in ripped or too-short veils, knotting the fanciful stuff around the hips. Must make a dress out of curtains. (...) Read a silly sonnet together. Affect a very romantic tone to utter obscenities, without ever ceasing to look at ourselves in the mirror." *Rêveries des mineurs séquestrées entre fenêtre et miroir* (*Reveries of minors sequestered between window and mirror*) by Alain Robbe-Grillet, another key narrative in this process. It's about imaginary games in which the rules are continually changed or reversed. An illustrated soft erotic version by David Hamilton exists in a 1972 edition.

Then, Courbet's *The Artist's Studio* (subtitled *A Real Allegory of a Seven Year Phase in my Artistic and Moral Life*), a large painting teeming with characters conceived as a story to decipher, might - in fragmented and dispersed form - sum up *L'atelier des filles*. Now, indolent figures take turns appearing in small rooms, and are apt to disappear in transparency, ecstasy, abandonment and disorientation. The story is implicit, in the accumulation of clues and in the gaps, reflecting an endless play of mirrors.

Technical tools also participate in this duality of appearance/disappearance with the vaguely stylised quality of laser-prints compressed on flattened coloured papers, the dull grain of graphite drawings and the profound density of screen prints in extremely pale pantones. Lyot, at the Frac Champagne-Ardenne (2011) encompassed previous projects, forming a kind of review of the production. *L'Atelier des Filles*, initiated in June 2011, saw the purchase of a LaserJet 5200 tn printer, the replacement of the Leica d-lux 4 by the d-lux 5, the introduction of colour, the reconfiguration of the production studio and renewal of the formats and textures of images, thereby launching a new chapter.