

Hélène Fauquet

Phenomena

“In ancient Greece, the butterfly symbolizes the soul, the so-called psyche.

From the Greek, butterfly: psyche.

What is this association between the insects and the human soul?

Is it because of the multifarious mystery of them both?”

When Hélène Fauquet projected herself into the exhibition space, she kept thinking of the eponymous film by Dario Argento. Through this obscure film, it led her to observe the backdrop of the place and how the concept of ambiance or some atmospheric elements could act upon us. Paying attention to the ability of the eye to capture and store certain images in memory, the series of “shrines” or “altars” present in this exhibition questions the way in which information is stored. They represent how, from a retinal point of view, an observer receives this information, but also how an image “sits” within a system of objects.

Phenomena (1985), the most “ecological” film by the *giallo* master, was filmed largely in Switzerland (Säntis region, Thur waterfalls, Lake Zurich), revealing impressions and visual similarities with the environment of the canton of Glarus. It is infused by the Foehn, a wind very particular to this region, which is said to cause snow avalanches and madness. Argento has said that he could feel the Foehn on his skin when writing the script. In the film, various forces of nature converge, including the theme of the psychic powers of insects, differences, and putrefaction, with the will to live emerging as the most powerful force. Argento stylized this nature with a heavy metal

soundtrack and Armani outfits to portray an inhomogeneous, dreamlike space dominated by crime and secrets. His films are marked by a certain auratic exigency, in which reality is often enigmatic and its governing laws appear like signs of a large-scale conspiracy. The film's title is taken from the 1984 *Phänomena* exhibition at the Zürichhorn, a natural science exhibition that featured environmental phenomena and experiments.

In another transfer, Fauquet works on images related to marketing processes, such as those used in producing images for perfumes or other luxury goods. With manipulated representations of “blobs” and “bubbles” she creates new constellations of images whose appearance tends to portray abstract concepts of beauty, transparency, or youth as unidentified forms. A bubble is a globule of gas inside a liquid. The reverse, a globule of liquid surrounded by gas, is called a droplet. These globular phenomena are the subjects represented in the works of Hélène Fauquet in this exhibition. Bubbles are visible because they have a different refractive index (RI) than the surrounding substance. In the case of bubbles which are not a globule of a medium immersed in another medium, such as soap bubbles, what is visible is a thin membrane which diffracts and reflects light. These globules are, in other words, the visible encounter between two homogeneous volumes: one void inside another. The staging of the “beautiful” image and its manipulation mingles with the allusion to the paranormal, the invocation of visible and invisible forces and the ultimate strangeness that results from it.

b. 1989 in Saint-Saulve, FR, lives and works in Vienna and Paris.

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