

"Good work," he said, and went out the door. What work ?We never saw him before. There was no door." Richard Brautigan, *Loading Mercury with a Pitchfork*, Simon and Schuster, New York.

June 2011

Legend has it that Mount Fuji can be seen from anywhere in Japan. On several occasions we tried to check this hypothesis. People had told us you could glimpse it from the train window going to Tokyo. That in clear weather it revealed itself from the upper floors of certain buildings in the city. That in the Five Lakes region, you could not miss it. That if you took such and such a train, boat or cable car you were sure to discover it in all its serene and conical majesty. Yet we saw nothing of Mount Fuji. The experience of contemplating it vanished every time behind thick layers of mist. Replaced by the even thicker layers of its representation, drawn, photographed, sculpted. Reproduced on prints, posters and post cards, in Zen gardens, on restaurant menus and bank notes. By standing in for the experience of it, its permanent and symbolic presence underpins the legend: Mount Fuji can be seen from anywhere in Japan. Everywhere and nowhere, at once. Tantamount to saying it does not exist.

~995 – 1005,

Things that pass by rapidly

A boat under full sail.

Age.

Spring, summer, fall, winter.

Sei Shônagon, *The Pillow Book*

June-July 2012

Mount Fuji Does Not Exist. What we tell, we take it from experience, our own or that reported by others. Together they marry some of the contours of this exhibition, bringing together artists with a preference for a relation to the work as process, experience lived and shared, making way for a host of appropriations and interpretations. The artistic gestures that it encompasses are situated as much in their formalization as in the stages, which take part in their execution, and in the situation, which

they may give rise to. This relation to art in constant motion, beyond fashions and the need to produce an object that is “art”, lies at the heart of this exhibition. A discreet art, sidestepping all ostentation and spectacularization, in favour of actions undertaken in the daily round over and above their representation. With no end purpose, the work of art here is thus at once everywhere and nowhere, in its object, its experience, and its memory.

The works on view therefore waver between a collective dynamic based on gestures dodging all need for productivity, a descent into the everyday probing the nature of existence and the substance of things, a mysterious handwritten letter that is addressed to you, a longing for perfection, everlasting and furtive, a reflection in a window pane, a walk embarked upon 43 years ago, a quest for the void, a few grams of gold mined from tons of electronic waste, a ground in bits whose fragments are so many draughts. Appearing in different modes and time-frames, they try to describe this permanent displacement between here and there: from the evocation of a one day exhibition in 1967 to a collection of books, from a small ad published in a daily newspaper to a set of photographic documents recording ephemeral actions, from a musical composition in the making to a drift on the Seine.

Sometimes, a work of art has that astonishing character which time has no hold over, imposing itself all the more lastingly on the memory, by the way it leaves its recipient, the concern for shedding light on it, creating more depth for it in the light of its own experience. So everyone has the potential to become the trustee of a precipitate of experience, which we can thus take away, conserve, and bring forth when we feel the need.

Elodie Royer and Yoann Gourmel

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