

Ben Kinmont's exhibition at Air de Paris will present new material from two of his most ambitious on-going projects: *On becoming something else* and *Sometimes a nicer sculpture is to be able to provide a living for your family*. Both works investigate the boundaries between what can be considered an art practice and a non-art practice and how one can sustain such an activity.

Begun in 1998, *Sometimes a nicer sculpture is to be able to provide a living for your family* consists of an antiquarian bookselling business specializing in early books in gastronomy. The project has been shown in many spaces dedicated to contemporary art[1] and numerous international book fairs[2].

For the current exhibition, Kinmont will show *Grimod's Meditations, a shelf for Ben Kinmont Bookseller*. Presented for the first time, the shelf is taken from an engraving of Alexandre Balthasar Laurent Grimod de La Reynière (1758-1837) that was printed as a frontispiece in the fourth volume of his seminal work the *Almanach des gourmands*[3]. In the image, Grimod writes in front of a trapezoidal shelf piled high with food. Grimod was the first restaurant critic in history and it is unknown if the shelf represented in the engraving ever existed or if it was simply imagined by Dunant, the engraver.

From the same project, Kinmont will be issuing a new catalogue entitled "Gastronomy. A Catalogue of books & manuscripts on cookery, rural and domestic economy, health, gardening, perfume, & the history of taste. 1530-2013." Printed letterpress and offering 114 items for sale, the catalogue is published in an edition of 600 copies by the Antinomian Press. Copies will be available during the exhibition.

The second major work in the exhibition will be *On becoming something else*. Begun in 2000, the project considers artists who have left the art world in the pursuit of their art practice. After a private event organized with Air de Paris at the restaurant Chapeau Melon, the first public activation of *On becoming something else* was for the Nouveau Festival at Centre Pompidou, both in 2009. In that iteration Kinmont worked with seven different chefs to represent seven biographical paragraphs about artists who had left the art world. Each recipe was written as an homage to a particular artist and the dish was offered on the restaurant menu of the given chef[4]. In this way, visitors to the Pompidou could take a menu and then travel to the restaurants to eat the representation of the paragraphs.

During the current exhibition, the *On becoming something else* archive will be on display and available for handling. Presented on a table designed by Kinmont, the archive contains hundreds of

objects including correspondence; sketches; documentary photographs taken by Bruno Serralongue; audio interviews; drawings; a box of multiples made by San Francisco high school students; recipes; and letterpress broadsides.

Also being issued within the context of *On becoming something else* is the first bilingual edition of *La Plastique culinaire*, written by the famous anarchist and art historian Félix Fénéon. In the essay, Fénéon discusses the history of the *pièce montée*, recipes and representation, and makes an argument for ephemerality in artistic practices. Translated by Rachel Stella and with a preface by Kinmont and an introduction by Fabien Vallos, copies of the essay will be available during the exhibition.

[1]Centre d'art contemporain, Albi and FRAC Languedoc-Rousillon in Montpellier (2002); Kunstverein Amsterdam (2011); Kadist Paris (2011) and San Francisco (2012); Fales Library New York (2011);

[2](1999-2013), Syndicat National de la Librairie Ancienne et Moderne book fair at the Grand Palais.

[3](Paris: Maradan et Chaumerot, 1803-11)

[4]The chefs participating included Yves Camdeborde (Le Comptoir du Relais)/Hans de Vries , Inaki Aizpitarte (Chateaubriand)/Bridget Barnhart, Raquel Carena (Le Baratin)/Ravio Puusemp, Olivier Camus (Chapeau Melon)/GAAG, Robert Vifian (Tan-Dinh)/Lygia Clark, Alain Passard (L'arpège)/Laurie Parsons, Jérémy Rosenbois (Cru)/Gretchen Faust. Artists discussed included Hans de Vries, Ravio Puusemp, GAAG, and Bridget Barnhart. The project was then reactivated in 2013 with the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and seven additional chefs.

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