

By gathering Rebecca Brewer's, Liz Magor's and Marie Voignier's works, the exhibition we are building looks like these covers using the technique of patchwork quilt and its capacity to bring together heterogenous elements. The works presented in the exhibition are the results of a thought and practice of abstraction modulated by the contact with perceptible references, such as familiar or intimate objects. At the same time they remain sufficiently open to allow different potential readings and tune in with other nearby forms. If those works had arms, they would lock them together to intensify part of our memory and prevent repression or oblivion of any kind. Nothing could be sweeter than celebrating the gallery's fifth anniversary with this joyful and radically-open exhibition.

IA : I would like to start this discussion with Marie Voignier's film, which we are showing. This mute ballet of female tour guides, evolving in different places, in an unidentified Asian country, makes me wonder about representations of the "Other". We could well interpret the fact that Marie literally suppresses their speech as a form of violence. On the contrary, I think that taking away the "official" speech that these North-Korean guides embody liberates our glance. No indication is given to the European spectator about the country where these scenes take place. We are thus freed from the prejudices we usually grow towards North Korea, this great "Other" of Western democracy. What remains is a group of bodies that are constrained by the setup of visits, but that appear also very graceful at times. Marie Voignier allows us to appreciate what speech would have immediately disqualified. She also allows us to dream and to digress from these images. It is contrary to an essentialist representation of the Other, it rather represents the artist's wish to open radically the possible interpretations of these images.

CB : It's true that, with this film, a different reality is represented. Marie Voignier's films are dealing with the unspeakable--not with a view to hiding something or to hiding oneself--but she is trying to address, in the contrary, questions that are veiled by daily life, and to seek in the heart of an individual's life what determines and oppresses it, whoever the "Other" is, whatever kind of exoticization we practice so she may seem closer to us. By filming the immediacy of life, Marie Voignier investigates the alienated forms it can take. The lack of speech makes these bodies seem more autonomous, I agree with you on this. By withholding part of the reality that can be recorded on the spot, Marie Voignier is showing us characters who are able to act as subjects. The being doesn't give itself away as a trompe-l'oeil. The presence of these autonomous bodies, revealed by an active silence, conflicts with the universe of production and with the caricatured life that is a characteristic of consumer's society. In a context complicated by a totalitarian logic the individual starts to look like a puppet imitating passions, just like in the film within Marie's film. I think Liz Magor's work puts forth the same voice of the invisible, so significant issues can emerge. Marie's

and Liz's works never raise their voices, so to speak, never force their effects. They are able to position themselves at a certain distance from so-called "reality" where everything is comedy, and to intensify its uncanny quality. But the path they take might lead to a vertiginous solitude, which we might perceive in the way Magor talks about a certain relationship to nature, which she interprets from her own situation.

IA : It is exactly what struck me when I met Liz Magor in Vancouver, where she is based. The direct confrontation to nature in the Western part of the American continent is such that it becomes inevitable for artists to deal with. Liz was telling me about the fantasy of a possible return to nature that her college mates had, something that would be linked to the figures of the Canadian bushwhacker and of the First Nations people. The Other seems to be the object of both fantasy and regulation (as First Nations' claims are somehow heard), which helps Canadian artists question their set identity much more often than French artists do, for example. What I find very touching is what I am interpreting as a subtext to her works. Some of them replicate objects of the daily life of a Western woman emotionally attached to her papers, her blankets and her furniture. They form the ghost of an exoticized Western identity. I find this very beautiful and I am particularly struck by the way she underlines the fabrication of Western identity, like a mask one can wear. At Art Basel this year, she showed a photograph of a college friend playing an "Indian" in the woods. In parallel, her sculptural works stage the isolated life of a Western individual, living among (fake) objects. As soon as we conceive an identity we are fixing it and it is becoming a mask, which gives almost no information about reality.

CB : In Magor's works, the Canadian landscape is rendered without romantic illusion. It is covered with information and comments. We can spot historical reminiscences and traces left by men. These are landscapes about which we could say, borrowing the phrase from Adorno, that someone has "run fingers through their hair". Magor's works allude to work and rest, to the intimate depths of living through replicas of domestic objects which solidify and objectify a certain fatality between the human body and materiality. This work evokes a sensuality of rainy days, when things are blurry, polished or porous, softened, folded, crumpled, abandoned, hallucinated for a moment, or fiddled with by a manic or an uninterested hand. Every work seems to question memory by a gesture that is both impotent and authentic. This association of words makes me think of the position that is devoted to painting today in France. It is a barbarian that we should beware of, so people address it in a defensive and indirect mode. Rebecca Brewer, just like Varda Caivano whose work we showed two years ago, is a painter who accepts the lie of painting. In a single work, she renders her own digestion of the contradictory movements of art history, starting with the gesture of covering to that of cutting and plowing, so the attractive diversity of the medium never dissolves and the work time

is never either abstract or interchangeable. It is a manner of painting that enjoys jumping in time to assert personal contradictions (i.e. the absence of masks) and to surpass oneself. To a certain extent, the artist is reminding us that the others should be perceived for what they are and not according to what we wish they were.

IA : I have been feeling for a long time that painting has been this great Other for me, and maybe for a lot of people who are knowledgeable about contemporary art. The Other that is so difficult to talk about, as we fear we will appear cheesy because we make use of outdated terms of analysis—because we don't know what it means to be a painter today, to limit oneself to one medium when contemporary times are about being transversal. Rebecca Brewer's painting is not about being fixed on the medium. She explores the limits of figuration and abstraction, with the means of modernity, thus expressing a relationship to wilderness, and maybe incarnating a pre-historical figure of the painter. The shape of the large piece of felt that she painted on, where we can see the pigment clinging with difficulties to the woolen material, makes me think of the sketched drawings of the Pech-Merl cave and of the experiments that children can make before they acquire any artistic, technical know-how. Rebecca Brewer prefers to assert these expressive attempts, instead of controlling the expression through the reproduction of admitted forms. This is where her strength lies I think. I had this impression in her studio. She seemed to be trusting her work very much, and this contrasted with her discreet character. She is confident that she expresses herself best with painting, when the artistic scene in Vancouver is obviously not supporting that medium in particular. Her independent spirit, which is highly visible in her works, liberated me from any pressure to find words to talk about her painting. We talked about expression, colour, about her relationship to history and feminism. She has in common with Marie and Liz a subtle commitment to an art of honesty, stemming from a clairvoyant vision of their identities, and aiming at dispelling masks.

Rebecca Brewer was born in 1983 in Tokyo. She lives in Vancouver, Canada. A graduate of the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design and of Bard College in New York, she is represented by Catriona Jeffries in Vancouver where she did a solo exhibition in 2014.

Liz Magor was born in 1948 in Winnipeg, Canada and lives in Vancouver. Her works were recently shown at Presentation House, Vancouver and at Triangle, Marseille (cur. Céline Kopp). The Power Plant in Toronto organized an important exhibition of her work in 2003. She participated to numerous collective shows at the Vancouver Art Gallery, the National Art Gallery in Ottawa, the Seattle Art Museum or the Wattis Institute, as well as Documenta 8 and the Venice Biennale. She is represented by Catriona Jeffries in Vancouver and Susan Hobbs in Toronto.

Born in 1974, **Marie Voignier** lives in Paris. Her video works were part of several exhibitions in 2014: at Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, at Centro Cultural Caixa à São Paulo (Os Tropicós, cur. Tobi Maier) and at Frac Poitou-Charentes in Angoulême. She participated to the Triennale at Palais de Tokyo, to Biennale de Rennes (2012) and to the Berlin Biennial (2010). Her film *Tourisme International*, which received an award at the last Festival International du Documentaire de Marseille (FID), is shown until January 11, 2015 at Museion in Bolzano, at the occasion of *Soleil politique* (cur. Pierre Bal-Blanc).

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