

BRUSSELS, SEP 4 – Around the year 2000, I was going almost daily to the flea market at the *Jeu de Balle* in Brussels. I seem to remember that at some point Jonathan Monk and I ended up there together. Why was he in Brussels at that time, I can't remember. In any case, I had come across a small series of postcards on which the senders had marked with a pen precise spot within the image: a beach, a window, a street, and so on, thus indicating to the recipients the exact locations where the senders of the card had been.

Jonathan and I were immediately taken with these interventions. Probably because, in our eyes, they represented the quintessence of what we considered to be the zero degree of creation, and perhaps even the 'perfect degree' of creation: an intervention without artistic intention, carried out by a spontaneous gesture, yet producing an artefact endowed with both an obvious plastic quality and a meaning that was light, almost anecdotal, and yet profound. In short, a perfect work. This also echoed, very nicely, in the work of artists we admired, such as Douglas Huebler's *Location Pieces* or Stanley Brouwn's *This Way Brouwn*.

At that time, Jonathan and I were exchanging a lot of ideas and were already involved in producing co-signed works. So we decided to make this series a joint project and to expand it with a more substantial number. Did we already plan to show them in our joint exhibition *Our Trip Out West* curated by Ramundas Malasauskas at the CAC Vilnius? Here again, I do not remember. But although we were each supposed to collect as many postcards as possible to constitute the work, I do recall that Jonathan, after a lengthy and persistent effort, finally did most of the findings. We then simply made a selection, since it was clear that we should do nothing more than present them as they were. The only intervention left to us was to give them a title. The logic behind this title is, I believe, obvious, or should I rather say that it is obvious that this title is purely logical. *I was not there* is a direct expression of the simple fact that the experiences to which these postcards refer belong to others than ourselves.

Today, I realise that we may never have checked whether, by chance, one of these cards did not in fact represent a place where one of us could have been.

Text by Pierre Bismuth