

On the occasion of a recent show in Vevey (Switzerland), Caroline Mesquita went to Gruyères to visit the house/ museum of HR Giger. Controversial surrealist painter and sculptor and best known for designing the anthropomorphic creature for 1979's *'Alien'*, Giger is the author of biomechanical creatures and extraterrestrial landscapes characterized by a fascinating blend of erotic beauty and brutality. The gloomy universe of HR Giger, the fantastic series by Moebius and science fiction masterpieces such as *'Star Wars'* are for Caroline Mesquita significant repertoires of fantastic worlds and characters. Deeply inspired by these creations, the metallurgical experiments of the young French artist seem to belong to another dimension and to an undefined time. The human size of her sculptures allow the artist and the spectator to establish a more intimate, physical and sometimes affective relationship with them. New forms full of tension and energy are placed in particularly dynamic positions and then 'petrified' at the very moment they are about to move, fall or take off.

*'Night Engines'*, Caroline Mesquita's first solo exhibition at T293, transforms the gallery into a sort of 'auto-show' populated by futuristic vehicles similar to original and bizarre spaceships. The desire to create something that could not be reconnected to any familiar model and which was not understandable from one single point of view required an intense preparatory work and numerous subsequent interventions. Caroline Mesquita uses metal for its intrinsic properties of brightness, malleability and reaction that allow an immediate response from the material. While in her recent projects the artist has mainly experimented brass and copper for their chromatic reactions to oxidation processes through chemicals, for this exhibition Mesquita chose to use the steel, most brilliant and resistant. In order to obtain light, sometimes soft volumes, the metals undergo complex manipulations through cuts, folds and welds. She often had to change the positions of the sculptures and even overturn them in order to get the right direction. During this production, the artist acted more like an intermediary than an author, giving life to forms that needed to come to light.

The new creations, at the boundaries of reality and fiction, looks like singular and strangely beautiful extraterrestrial spaceships, curious totems belonging to an unknown but technologically advanced culture recalling the provocative mechanical creations of Eduardo Paolozzi and the Spomenik, the futuristic and majestic monuments invading the countryside of the former Yugoslavia. Surrealist and oniric suggestions inspired, among others, by the vision and style of the movie director M. Night Shyamalan also emerge in the video *'Night Engines'*. The protagonist of the video, entirely shot at night, is a taxi driver who, in a full moon period, drives alone and meets with mysterious characters all played by the same actor: 'I like to change the identity of someone

and to question genders, personality, sexuality, marginality, eccentricity. I like to imagine a more open sensuality'. (C. Mesquita).

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