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“ The visibles themselves are only centred around the nucleus of absence.”

The appearance of Caroline Tapernoux’s works immediately brings forward a place of sensorial encounters. The blending of light with materials, which the artist cuts, heats up, drills through, curves, melts and assembles, maintains an epiphany, in which vision spontaneously immerses itself, and within which the visible increases.

Indeed, the many refractions and diffractions, which the light organizes on the surfaces it lands upon, outline the transfiguration of the materials themselves, while going beyond them. Not only do the ensuing luminous membranes animate the exhibition space, but they also appeal to everyone’s imagination. So, on the edges of these opalescent compositions, one alternately comes across a wave, a cloud, a piece of linen, a drapery, some foliage, or a simple fold... These are all as many illusions that the volutes of light can multiply as much as they wish and that our visual memory can never tire of interpreting. This contemplative, meditative and dreamlike stage corresponds to a first encounter, a meeting during which things are seen in a playful way, with an aim to recover, locate, recognize, and even recreate a familiar figure within the visible. But this is not where the totality and the purpose of Caroline’s work can be found, and even less its refinement. She knows, as we know, that: “Art does not reproduce the visible; it makes it visible.”² What is reassuring here is that, on the other side of this liminal visibility, beyond appearance, apparition happens, the “nucleus of absence” pointed out by Merleau-Ponty.

We can then ask ourselves a question: what is left of the visible, once this dialectics of form is completed, once the deictic potential is exceeded? The issue is a vast one, certainly too vast. The question remains nonetheless, and we must at least attempt to give it an answer.

A first impulse of the vision originates in the visible of these objects, especially in the reflections in the ‘Priplaks’ and in the shadows cast by some of the ‘Suspensions’. This impulse identifies and exemplifies, but nowhere does it meet the quintessence of the works, which stay in the background, on the fringe of the visible. This is not without reason: “Anything of the sort is its own veil, [and] wraps itself, so to speak, in the evidence that hides it,” as Roger Munier expresses in his essay, on which our title is based.³ It is the same with Caroline’s pieces. What is meant here is that the palpable presence of the substances she uses [Altuglas, polyester, glass, mirror, iron, aluminium...] and their protean projections produce a visibility, which temporarily obstructs the access to the foundations of a sculpture whose genesis is undeniably along the same line as other art forms (we are specifically thinking of architecture and photography here, however far removed these may seem.) Light, life and emptiness become closely bound to architecture. This triad in the works, which comes directly from transparency, is also a metronome for the architectural space. A place’s pace of life, its lighting and its breathing, are so many factors, which the hangings echo and extend. Some of them are permanently installed, and function as bookmarks of air movements, or as sundials. They are indicative presences of the space they occupy; barometers of light and air, in other words of the visible and the invisible...

Similarly, is it necessary to add that many of the sheets of polyester film, put under glass and framed in white, look like architectural models? This seems obvious. Let us say, to combine an acknowledgement of the forms with architecture, according to the shadows randomly generated by these films, that one sometimes finds Alvar Aalto’s glass vases here, or that the organic appearance

of some of the reflections in the hangings come close, just for a second, to the curvatures of Eero Saarinen's floating roofs, and to the feeling of beating wings that they give [cf. Trans World Airlines terminal, New York]. But again, let us repeat that the meeting point between these sculptures and architecture occurs in the pneuma, in the breath within the works.

Besides, Caroline occasionally includes a soundtrack in her installations, which has the effect of orchestrating a vibratory rhythm of the light, which in turn gives 'body' to the Hertzian waves. The magic comes from an oscillatory encounter between waves of the same family, which make themselves visible [a paradoxical appearance of sound in transparency, and vice versa] by translating one another. An allegory of architecture arises from this encounter. It is a successful compilation, whose bareness is only equalled by its extreme inventiveness.

Another poetic connivance above-mentioned: photography. The mark of the luminous element, its varying quality and diverse effects refer, almost etymologically, to the medium. Its black and white aspect and semi-values certainly sustain this connotation. But if we consider the action of the light and its evolution in the work more closely, it would turn out instead that these constructions form a reverse side of the silver image. Indeed, Caroline's sculptures lubricate light and bring it to life, whereas photography dries it up and holds it back. These objects reflect the movement of light, whereas flat pictures fix it. While one slowly tames, the other instantly captures. Having said this, we are not trying to value the former by reducing the latter. There is nothing pejorative about it all. Each medium has its own intrinsic values. However, the designation by their opposites of these two modes of relating to light, of these two worlds, comes closer to an oxymoron than to a comparison.

Finally, a rare phenomenon occurs in the organization of shadow and light [epicentre of the artist's work]: the separation of shadow and light – an ultimate feat that we cannot resign ourselves to keep quiet. Particularly obvious in the hangings, in which the wall projections are divided into 'projected shadows' and 'projected lights', the material traces its shape on the walls, but also its nature, its outline and its thickness, its right side and its wrong side, its negative and its positive, all in a joint movement, which seems to retranscribe a floating and imaginary choreography, where the protagonists never touch... but always look at each other.

Similar to Wenders' film "Wings of Desire"⁴, Caroline's work interests those who believe in the visible, but is essentially of concern to those who believe in the invisible. The transition between appearance and apparition never ceases to be replayed in her work, which seems to throw the desire to see ahead of what can be seen, that is to say the work of art's 'Other'.

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1] MAURICE MERLEAU-PONTY, *Le visible et l'invisible* [The Visible and the Invisible], Gallimard, Paris, 1964, p.285.

2] PAUL KLEE, *Théorie de l'art moderne* [On Modern Art], Editions Denoël, Collection Folio/essais, p.34.

3] ROGER MUNIER, *L'apparence et l'apparition*, Deyrolle Editeur, 1991.

4] *Der Himmel über Berlin* [Wings of desire], Wim Wenders, 1982. Let us note that this film is mostly in black and white [colour is only used to indicate the angels' passing into mortality], and in it, the desire of the senses outweighs immortality. - English translation by Lucy Pons