

Catherine Grout - *Traversals* (excerpts)

Sur le pas, La Fabrique Sensible ed. - translation Charles Penwarden

[about the exhibition Suite 1]

Temporalisation

The spatialisation of the chromatic surfaces and luminous atmospheres is indissociable from the temporality of the exhibition, for this show, entitled *Suite 1*, is open from 15:00 to 19:00, and the luminous «score» has been programmed in relation to the intensity of the afternoon light in early summer, when the days are long. The light we see will thus vary with the meteorological conditions and time at which we visit. And if we stay all afternoon, we can see the joint passing of the hours, the sun and the visitors to the gallery. (...)

Thus Caroline Duchatelet did not conceive of her work as a fixed form with permanent, ideal lighting, but as something in time. The composition, as a modulation of space-time, is therefore not limited to the space defined by the walls, floor and ceiling - by the interior. For one thing, the light, by its changes of intensity (due to the time of day and the presence, or not, of clouds) and its movements, indicates to us its own passing, which *overflows the frame*. For another, we can sense the place expanding. The place and the work together are amplified with what is around them, for they develop meaning with their neighbourhood, with the urban structure, with the courtyard and its housing, with the colours of things and trees, with the quarter and its inhabitants, with the passers-by in the street. Moreover, the moment we hear the sound of a swift flying overhead, the ceiling of the exhibition room becomes one with the sky. And the ensemble (ourselves, the place, the storeys of housing, the quarter, etc.) is all taken within the movement of the world. (...)

The landscape has no limit and hardly any foundation in the ground, being more of an exchange between beings, things and the moment. In this sense, the landscape is broadening and respiration. (...)

Attaining the impalpable

The two works on the wall are sheets of plywood covered with a white coating prepared by Caroline Duchatelet in order to achieve a shade capable of evoking certain facades in Marseille and at the same time playing off against the white walls of the gallery. Their tactile surfaces suggest a slow elaboration, a sequence of actions. Thus what we see also contains something invisible (all the previous coats are hidden, yet at the same time are present), along with all the sensorial information that the artist transmitted in the material when she was preparing it. Referring to the phenomenologist Jacques Garelli, we can understand how manual work is a relation (or energy system) between two forces (hand and material) and that this in-forms, that is to say, creates meaning. Caroline Duchatelet speaks of her sheets as «receptacles». Doubtless they are receptacles not so much of her actions as of the ambient luminosity, whether direct or indirect; no doubt, not so much captures in a closed vessel as a temporal making-visible of the little there is to perceive, or of the visible, without any symbolic justification. At the same time, the peeling of the plywood, achieved by tensing the sheet, seems feasible only if the actions are gentle and sensitive, this being the only way of avoiding breakage or cracking. Likewise, the way of placing the sheets against the wall seems to have continued the long work on the layering of materials leading to this surface whose mattness condenses and assembles its powdery matter. At one moment, one of the sheets comes away from the wall, at another, in contrast,

it is one with it. By virtue of the relative positions of the detached areas and their placement in relation to the movement of the sun, they never appear as either exactly identical to each other or as completely opposed. Also, when we move alongside the sheets, our perception of the resonating light, of the echoes, reflections, the shadows of architecture and humans (including ourselves) all modulate, endowing the interrelation between the elements with a dynamic quality. (...)

Non-objectifying vision

Whenever we discover a place, or see someone for the first time, we have an immediate impression that corresponds to the place or person, before we get to know them. Even before entering the OÙ gallery, I sensed a clear, light spatialisation, with no precise limits. Caroline Duchatelet's composition places us immediately in a non-objectifying mode of vision, in a luminous dilation. This non-objectifying vision then continues with the passing of the light through the duration of the afternoon, including its various more or less noteworthy events. In the afternoon, a switching occurs with the passing of the sun's rays, one that modifies the chromatic exchange with the reflective surfaces (walls, floors, sheets, the edges of the plywood sheets and the shadows). This switching and exchange are heightened by the variations in warmth of the modulations from the artificial light. The sense of non-distinctness is also manifested by the fact that there are no words to define the colour-matter of the surfaces which, being placed in the time and in the exchanges between the natural and artificial light, appears as above all luminosity or texture.

The quality of time, with its accents and inflections, also corresponds to the fact Caroline Duchatelet is interested less in objects than in events, in the meaning of what occurs. That is to say, she thinks of her works as one set of elements among others, elements that partake of what is (the place) and of what will occur (light, people with their movement and their cast shadows sounds and words, and of the landscape as a moment that occurs, etc.).

The appearance of the works plays on such slight perceptual ranges that even when we are used to their presence, and have honed our perception in order to analyse their materiality, our mode of being will still be in a non-objectifying relation. (...)

Caroline Duchatelet's art is thus accomplished in exchange and occurrence, and if reification happens then that is not the goal. This is affirmed all the more clearly since it now implicates what is outside it. It takes us there, even when we are in the exhibition space. The «pause» that the exhibition may constitute in relation to the city's bustle does not mean that this is forgotten, but instead offers a moment simultaneous with the other rhythms and movements (geological movements, the circulation of pedestrians, the constant passing of motorised vehicles, the construction and demolition of buildings, etc.). Open over 360° the landscape is everything that is around us.