

Thoughts on the recent works of Geneviève Maquinay

“Les idées, vous savez... Si j'interviens parmi les choses, ce n'est pas, certes, pour les appauvrir ou exagérer leur part de singularité. Je remonte simplement à leur nuit, à leur nudité premières. Je leur donne désir de lumière, curiosité d'ombre, avidité de construction. Ce qui importe, c'est de fonder un amour nouveau à partir d'êtres et d'objets jusqu'alors indifférents.”

René Char

With her recent works, Geneviève Maquinay invites us to relive the poetic and enchanting path of ideas, facts and objects and reminds us that we have the power to inhabit them. She directs a specific and delicate vision over both man-made and natural objects, which have been or are being discarded. In doing so, she extracts whatever mystery, aesthetic, symbolic or poetic genius that inhabited these items.

Geneviève takes us on a stream of creativity in the best sense of Umberto Eco, Julio Cortázar and Octavio Paz. This itinerary is weaved by the point and counterpoint of sensitive reasoning and spaces previously meditated, and allows surprising mental associations to ensue. First comes an identification of natural or urban elements, followed by a careful layout and installation in the workshop. The result is a confrontation, assemblage or composition of units or objects endowed with a powerful unity and poetic quality.

While Geneviève's works refer to Marcel Duchamp's vision, they are also significantly different from his school of thought and from other minimalist currents. Her work reminds the viewer of the real possibility of one's own mental construction (in this sense, her work is the starting point of an individual poetic adventure). It also brings a lively and powerful content framed by a reduced and solid material construction.

Geneviève has assembled elements in her work that originate from very different places on Earth. Thousands of miles, climates, landscapes and cities separate them, but they are intertwined with Geneviève's coherent and revealing gaze, harnessing their inadvertent natural and material oneness. The result is the universality of a strongly attractive content that entreats emotion from the viewer.

The works question the double problem of scale: its physical relation to the human body and their imagined relationship. From that vantage point, the viewer is exposed in front of the work, and is capable of projection without bodily limitations. This perspective, an adjustable mental scale, establishes a relation to the viewer's position in space and the power of imagination.

In a time in which technology allows and almost forces everyone (artist included) to feats of extreme complexity and monumentality, these concepts are subversive. The notions of large dimensions and technical sophistication should not replace meaning and content.

Geneviève voluntarily places her intimate work squarely against this tendency, reaffirming the urgency to rethink permanently the essence of art, and, by extension, the essence of human actions.

Jaime Castellanos