

## **Groundless floating #1(-8)**

Not too long ago I visited Kusseneers Gallery in Molenbeek on the occasion of a new exhibition. It was a difficult time. The winter months were starting to take their toll on my spirits. Paul and Suzy Kusseneers' new gallery in the heart of Molenbeek is somewhat secluded behind a heavy, black door, but once inside the space overwhelms you with light. This is a place to let in imagination and wonderment, far away from the bustle of the busy streets of Molenbeek.

There I saw the work of Caroline Van den Eynden, an upcoming artist from Antwerp. Her work is light, aesthetic and also, at times, melancholy. An impression.

## **Architecture of lightness**

Upon entering, one is immediately struck by the 'Memories' series. Glass cubes neatly arranged on pearly white walls, inside rigid maquettes in black and white. But then it hits you: outside of the cube everything also continues ... into nothing. Staircases, a hallway, doors, a balcony, a basement, ... The spaces challenge you, put you on the wrong track, but above all they ask pertinent questions about transparency, emptiness, about that which you cannot see. The work shows an architectural poetics where space lingers to breathe, to dream away ... But it is an architectural poetics that does not want to lie to us.

Looking at the work 'Memories', one cannot but be moved by the maquettes, which fascinate by the way in which they have been constructed. They break through the glass cube in which they are represented. The fine handicraft of the black iron handrails and white marble steps, tiny white bricks and a pitch black floor are the decor for our imagination. The title suggests nothing less. Or, put differently: preserves under glass to let our imagination wonder.

The series 'Plans for the North I-05-aab', which was also on view at the exhibition, is composed of gold leaf plates suggesting blueprints for the old basilica, the old Roman villa, a religious space. Further on, 36 wooden blocks neatly stacked on top of each other, with the title 'Plans for the North II-02-aab'. Charred on the one side, unblemished on the other. It is a unique object that throws us back to the elements of nature. But this time with a little gold leaf rim.

This series is shown together with an installation 'Parliament III (concept for an outdoor speech area)', a search for a new temple of culture where debate, discussion and consideration could take place. Five pliable series with little doors opened, closed, meticulously placed around finely engraved pentagons in the table top. The material implies affluence, elevation, wisdom and beauty. The artist appears to be looking for something, wanting to represent something, but comes across something entirely different. An elevated golden table on which are imposed the possible constructions for these spaces lets us drift off into artificially 'unique' expanses. Here once more, a new preserve for wonderment.

## **Architecture of the unbearable lightness**

A visit to the artist's website makes it clearer: at times her work is also hermetic, cool and calculated. Take the work 'Pool house, 1:1' of 2014. An at first sight full-size concrete structure

of a pool house that rather resembles a mausoleum of death. The water is petrified, everything enveloped in darkness.

The list of works is a beauty to behold. It mainly shows the dual world in which this young talent is situated. And yet there definitely is a central theme to her works: the wonderment of architecture as unique objects that surround us, and how to give them an aesthetic and even ethical interpretation. It is a form of coming home to a 'groundless floating' (Heidegger), for which she creates spaces, at times light, at other times unbearably light.

It is precisely that tension that is pronounced in the artist's young body of work and that keeps the observer alert. When looking at the works, it is first of all clear that we are dealing with youthful art. Art that nevertheless already defines itself in this exhibition, and takes a position. But simultaneously searches for something. Above all it represents the adage of our times: just do it!

It is not easy to bend this 'just do it' attitude into a different reality that allows us to drift (off), glide (away) into a different aesthetic reality. But the work of this artist more than fulfils its promise.

B. Vissers  
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