MOUSSE

Emily Wardill at FRAC Champagne-Ardenne, Reims

by mousse

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The philosophical, political and psychoanalytic concepts form the very essence of Emily Wardill's films. They retrace a history of thought by means of multiple narrations, embellished with numerous soundtracks composed by the artist. Her filmic grammar is mysterious, to say the least, because the classic codes of interpretation are obsolete. We therefore have to penetrate into what seems to be a fascinating representation of the unconscious. Several levels of narration intertwine, often evoking Fassbinderian forms of melodrama, and allowing us to associate an eminently political idea with more popular visual references. All of her work thus seems to be a vast scientific experiment that catapults the spectator into a suspension between the initial premise and the final result, there, where the irrational becomes a requirement for being able to understand a given situation.

For her first exhibition in a French institution, entitled "The Hands Of A Clock, Even When Out Of Order, Must Know And Let The Dumbest Little Watch Know Where They Stand, Otherwise Neither Is A Dial But Only A White Face With A Trick Mustache", Emily Wardill notably presents her latest film, *Fulll Firearms* (90′, HD), commissioned by If I Can't Dance, I Don't Want To Be Part Of Your Revolution (Amsterdam), Serpentine Gallery (London) and Film London's FLAMIN Productions, and co-produced by Arts Council England – Film London Artists' Moving Image Network and City Projects (London) with support from M HKA (Antwerp), Badischer Kunstverein (Karlsruhe), FRAC Champagne-Ardenne (Reims), the Culture Programme of the European Commission (Brussels) and the Mondrian Foundation (Amsterdam).

Emily Wardill's new long form film utilizes the form of the melodrama to tell the story of Imelda, a woman in her 40s who inherits a fortune from her father, a successful arms manufacturer. With her inheritance she sets about building a house to accommodate the ghosts of the people killed by weapons produced by her father's company. Whilst the house is being built a number of people move in and squat the half finished property. Imelda's perception of the squatters is skewed – she isn't hostile to their presence because she simply sees them as the ghosts she expected. The film's narrative is built around the relationship between Imelda and the architect she hires to design the house. He indulges her every whim despite being aware that she is delusional. *Fulll Firearms* cleverly interlaces the themes of deception, storytelling and displacement. Elements related to the film complete the exhibition.

The exhibition also introduces the film *The Pips*, 2011, (3 min 39 sec, 16mm) as well as a series of sculptural digital prints of silk related to this fascinating work. *The Pips* explores movement and the materiality of it, the instigation of one and the duration of the other. Shot in black and white on 16mm, then transferred to a digital projection, this film focuses on British gymnastics champion, Francesca Jones. The film begins with a straight depiction of Jones' routine; the patterns created by her ribbon baton trace her movements in the air. It is a reflection of her actions, imitating her and existing because of her. Near the end of the film, the gymnast's body becomes stretched, elongated and distorted ultimately breaking into a series of mutant parts. Her face remains unfathomed and she gives no acknowledgement to her own decay. As Jones's becomes still, her actions take on their own identity; their materiality deconstructed by Wardill's emphasis on the physical replication of movement. The body and its motions become contained in the object, revealing an inherent plasticity in the gymnast's performance.

Curated by Florence Derieux

at FRAC Champagne-Ardenne, Reims

through April 22, 2012

Exhibition views of Emily Wardill's exhibition at the FRAC Champagne-Ardenne. Photo: Martin Argyroglo