

LIBERTY OF LIAISONS

Matthieu Cossé, Florent Dubois et Éléonore False

Exhibition from 30 June to 27 August 2017

Opening reception Thursday 29 June at 6:00PM

For several years, a phrase by Novalis is jotted down in one of my notebooks, lifted from *Fragments* (1795-1800) : « The liberty of the poet in his liaisons, makes him limitless. » Intuitively, I liked the way in which the author brought together the art of combination, of arrangement that suggests forms that are open and unstable, with the idea of liberty. That is when I stopped asking myself what a free art would be – because it precisely escapes any definition – I thought about its conditions, the fertile ground on which it can express itself, where possibilities are multiplied in droves. And even the title of the Novalis collection itself was illuminating : *Fragments*, relative to that form that finds its completion elsewhere than in its finality. That is perhaps where the breeding-ground of a free art could be found, in this desire to never finish, to play again and forever. Even if the objet ends up partly escaping the control of its creator and appears in the guise of a multiplicity of forms springing from intention as well as intuition, surprises and happenstance.

Enrique Vila-Matas, in his story *Paris ne finit jamais* [Paris Never Ends] evokes the joy that he sometimes feels by not grasping the meaning of what he is reading, to be confronted by ambivalence, the equivocal or even the mysterious. By leaving the story voluntarily open, meaning partially escapes from authors as well. Nevertheless, the work of art is constructed and coherent, in the image of a landscape painting by Monet, for example. I am thinking of it after recently having had the experience. The strokes of paint in contrasting colors, isolated from one another, marvelously depict an atmosphere, through the sensual vibration of light through the foliage of trees.

Perhaps I digress, but it seemed to me that I was approaching, in the most synthetic manner, that complex relationship between the fragment and the whole, dissonance and harmony. And what to think of ornament – outside of an academic frame of course – that comes and attaches itself artificially to

an already-defined form, without any other function than embellishment ? Is the pleasure in going further evidence of a free gesture ? Speaking of which, I learned that the motifs on butterfly wings do not correspond to utilitarian criteria, while everything would lead one to believe that nature, because it is well-designed, responds inevitably to specific needs.

The possibility of going further, without necessarily using this power, is that the condition of liberty ? It is perfectly imaginable to do less and to experience a real satisfaction from it, except that this pleasure would be determined by a specific context where all things would be possible.

While the poet practices his art through the possibility that liaisons offer to him, the exhibition brings together artistes whose practices full under fairly different universes. This is a practice that is fairly common in the programming at the art center Les Capucins, which favors encounters rather than family dinners. However, even if it is not a thematic exhibition, the artistic practices here reveal shared intuitions, notably concerning the art of combination. Liberated from academic ponderousness, they manipulate images, transform them, make associations, multiply their sources of inspiration, and pass with a disconcerting ease from sculpture to two-dimensions, and vice-versa, without the frontier between them being perfectly clear. I am especially thinking of the stiffened images (prints on metallic supports) by Éléonore False and the invasive wall paintings by Matthieu Cossé, that veritably inhabit the space. But also the composite ceramics of Florent Dubois that seem to come directly from a collage. Above all, there seems to persist a common impression in front of the works by these artists : They seem suspended as if they actively contained, the possibility of infinite liaisons.

Solenn Morel