

## ***Species of Spaces and Other Pieces***

"This is how space begins, with words only, signs traced on the blank page." George Perec

The title *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces* is the English title of an anthology of writing by the French author George Perec. Apart from using the title from Perec's book as the frame, the exhibition also takes inspiration from the manner in which Perec negotiates the act of looking, placing, categorising and creating associations. Space for Perec can be anything from something you can write on such as a cigarette package or the margin of a newspaper, to the kind of spaces that exist in order to delimit and facilitate human activity such as the staircase, the street, the bathroom and many, many other things.

Taking our cue from Perec's way of looking and creating associations, space can be perceived as the main connecting principal for the exhibition. From here it is possible to create a tree like structure of sub headings like: time; does the work speak of a specific time, does it re-visit the past, a here and now or a hypothetical place in the future, or geography; is the artist dealing with space as a specific geo-political area, as a geographical place or an abstract idea of space, or reality and fiction: is it an actual space or an imagined space, depicted, constructed or documented, is the work communicating any particular social structure, does it have a mood attached to it and so on. The different works can also be perceived as interlocutors- using each other as stimuli they may be capable of provoking an infinite series of thoughts.

In the photographic series *Dimora* Anne Tallentire considers how objects are deliberately placed or sited and how placement can configure space to provide the construction of a functioning social arena, a workspace or a decoy. The word *Dimora* can mean 'dwelling' and the site at the edge of the Outer Ring of the Industrial zone in Reggio Emilia (Italy) provided a context to explore these ideas. This abandoned building, transformed subtly into a living space by 'migrant' workers, appeared at first sight to contain nothing more than a random scattering of everyday obsolete items; beds, armchairs,

cookers, tiles, broken doors, clothes racks etc however it had been carefully designed to provide distinct areas designated for sleep, play and communal life. In *Photositings 01-09* (2007) Tallentire continues to explore the materiality of the found, investigating the scene with the camera as a framing device to privilege two views of the chosen objects.

The diptych *Departure of a Stranger* by Eline McGeorge is part of a larger body of work that investigates the use of structure and materials to delineate space both in formal and thematic terms. Using materials that were sourced during a residency in Prague, McGeorge was interested in how meaning and locality can affect the making process. In McGeorge's photo collages *Combination for Improved Devises 1* and *2* the idea of space has become more concrete, looking at the way 1950's photographs of mountains combined with found architectural imagery create a hybrid and reorders our sense of perceived spatial normality.

*Some Where Out There* by Pia Rönicke is a collage of heterogeneous sounds and images offering a commentary on urban structure and the modernist conception of the city and the environment. Like samplings, the work designates and underscores the points betraying the montage and manipulation of such varied materials as film music, photos, comics, images from magazines and her own drawings of cityscapes and gardens. This work could be read as a permanently evolving composition in which each part is at once autonomous and constitutes a global narrative on the space of living, on the relation between nature and culture, and on architecture as camouflage.

Michal Budny's *Border* is a cardboard outline of Great Britain. Part of the work's rationale is the idea that visitors at the private view would knock and walk through the flimsy material, providing a conceptual counter point to the idea of closed borders and the ideological apparatus of the state.

Anja Kirschner is best known for her video work such as *Polly 2* (2006). In her pencil drawings from the *Outlaw* series Kirschner depicts imaginary scenes from the history of the 'wild-west', stripped of individual markers the drawings point towards an ambiguity both in the status of the characters and the method of representation, situated somewhere between cartoon and

storyboard. In stark contrast *Drinking Fountain* presents us with an emblem of institutional architecture. *Evening Cloud* nods towards Kirchner's interest in genre - playfully looking back at the impressionists or even Victorian academic painting. Using sickly pink, the sky sits between sunset and catastrophic meltdown.

Andrea Büttner has painted part of a wall brown- starting with one horizontal line across the wall with the height determined by how far Büttner could reach with the brush, the space below was then filled with brown paint to create what she terms a 'shit space'. Büttner's presentation consists of several elements: A screen print *Grill* capturing the vantage point from which she has drawn nuns of the Carmelite order on a regular basis. Only two of these drawings from Büttner's sketchbooks are on display. Alongside *Grill*, is *Braunes Grid* -a painting done behind glass that reveals in Büttner's words 'a trick of instant beauty'.