

AURORE SCOTET, *By Accidents*

Aurore Scotet organizes little catastrophes, mini-accidents in the form of ephemeral, almost ridiculous performances. The explosion of a giant cone filled with black pigment splattering and blackening the whiteness of a standard exhibition gallery, the famous "white cube ». Elsewhere an explosion sets loose clouds of white feathers, and finally, a precariously balanced barrel filled with water falls down violently onto the floor of the exhibition space after a flaming candle has burnt the restraining string and unleashed the disaster. Explosions, catastrophes, and disasters are certainly nothing new in art history, nor in contemporary art. They are the very stuff of history, past and present. Catastrophe is always imminent. It's a "fertile" ground, multiple and inescapable. But far from being an apology of catastrophe or an aesthetics of the end, Aurore Scotet's « mini-accidents » are approached as an everyday phenomenon, as a metaphor of art, a site of experience.

Her little catastrophes resemble less Warhol's disaster paintings, Anne and Patrick Poirier's ruined architecture, Roman Signer's explosions, or the video *Dial H.I.S.T.O.R.Y.* by Johan Grimont a veritable encyclopedia of televised blowouts than the tragi-comic works of Peter Land, whose slow-motion videos show the artist falling out of his chair, off a painter's stool, or down a stairway. The materials and techniques that lead to these accidents (black pigment, white feathers, popcorn, water, wax, and tar, fuses, candles, explosives) are psychoanalytic metaphors. These little "catastrophic" experiences are references to the world of children, of teenagers, with their fascination for the ambience of Gaston Lagaffe's comic strips or Tex Avery cartoons where the recurrent catastrophe central to the scripts is never dramatic but always playful and always leads everything back to the original state. The catastrophe is not inscribed in time but simply disappears, as though by enchantment, to create an even stronger effect of eternal return. It is in this sense that the artist jubilation accepts a certain clumsiness, preparing for "disorganization" rather than suffering it.

Introducing accidents and dysfunctions into the art system (inundating a museum, blackening a white cube). Pushing the limits. Far from being terrorist attacks, these little accidents are also reactions, questions, interventions concerning the position of women in the system of art. In Aurore Scotet's work, the materials confirm that the explosion or the catastrophe are not fetishized or simply employed in the raw. They partake in the chance encounter between painting, space and event, between everyday life and the work of art, between sculpture and the constraint of reality.

Each of these performances is ephemeral, lasting only as long as an explosion. Their operating systems are simple and enigmatic : a cone linked to inflammable fuses, a bucket full of water hanging at eye height in a hammock with one of its

ropes beneath a candle flame. Set ups which play on a permanent suspense, all the way to their climax. The results are often dazzling and spectacular. It is only after the catastrophe that the space is occupied, constructed. When the balance is broken because the sound punctures the silence, when the emptiness suddenly becomes dynamic, when energy frees or disperses the dirty, wet, aerial material. In the face of the silent traces that fill the space, the video loop replays the history of the catastrophe.

When an explosion of blackness rocks the white cube that she has approached like Pandora's box. When a cloud of feathers emerges from a bird cage in fluttering of wings gradually invading the entire space. There is nothing emphatic in these performances, if not the sound and the irremediable catastrophe, the clumsy moves, the accidents. And just like in the absurd but playful world of the cartoons, life goes on, as though nothing happened, so another catastrophe can spring up again, and again.

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