

TEXT //
CHARLOTTE SEIDEL

GENERAL BIOGRAPHY CHARLOTTE SEIDEL

Charlotte Seidel, born in 1981, in Hamburg, lives and works in Paris. Her works were presented in many exhibitions places, as well as film festivals, in Paris (not. Palais de Tokyo, Fondation Ricard, Biennale de Belleville, Centquatre, Fondation Gulbenkian), Geneva (not. Piano Nobile), Berlin (not. 48h Neukölln), Dallas (Dallas contemporary), Hiroshima (Hiroshima Art Document). She participated in residencies like Le Pavillon, in Palais de Tokyo, and Embassy of Foreign Artists, in Geneva.

GENERAL WORK CHARLOTTE SEIDEL

Creating small intensities emerging from the continuous stream of events and images surrounding us, Charlotte Seidel uses the reality as material, a sometimes banal everyday life, common histories, isolating familiar elements to which we do not necessarily pay attention. Changing a little (barely) reality, she proposes to shift the perspective, to question our perception and our way of apprehending the world.

Often evoking the absence, her works suggest the warmth of memories and recall the depth of a moment. By stripping all superfluous, they seek to an abstraction creating openings to be invested by anyone. The mostly discreet and subtle works play on interstices and offer space for the deployment of thoughts and possibilities.

Encouraging people to take a closer look on our environment, the practice of Charlotte Seidel made, piece by piece, something that could be called *poetry of everyday life*.

Isaline Vuille

the noise of things

a solo show by Charlotte Seidel

October 10th - November 14th 2020

Sometimes we wake up in the middle of the night, with eyes full of sand, persuaded that the entire earth is against us. Starting with those famous “ things ”: the clock’s unbearable tick-tock that decided to creep into our latest dream, the glass frame over our cousins photographed a few years ago and which appears to have moved in the semi-darkness, the wind filtering through the windowpanes whispering spiteful rumours. Conversely, “ things ” may also be more comforting: last year’s chocolate Easter egg suddenly reappears from behind a book on a shelf, or Grandpa’s grigri we thought we had lost finally falls out of the pocket of an old wallet, coming across the shapeless sweater forgotten in a suitcase that still has the sweet scent of a chimney fire months later.

For Charlotte Seidel, *the noise of things* contains all that at once: soft murmurs and disturbing rumours. She is not afraid of oppositions or confrontations. Certain things she works on are deliberately opaque (a darning egg), fenced in or enclosed (books), crumbling to pieces and transformed (pencils). On the other hand, others reveal themselves in their absolute transparency: unframed windowpanes, drops of water, crystal glasses, double-faced adhesive tape barely visible on the white walls of the gallery... And then there are the more ambiguous “ things ”, like the petals of opalescent flowers that cover faces and bodies on old photographs.

Charlotte Seidel always welcomes them with generosity, although she never convokes a flashy Guard of Honour to do so: the egg is manipulated delicately and in silence, the crystal glasses are lightly caressed in rhythm to the vibrations of the place, and the four-leafed clovers, far from being exhibited as small random victories, are hidden inside books from a public library, that the artist has put back on shelves. The second discovery of the clovers will happen during the private moments of anonymous readers, informally.

These things discreetly conserve their mystery: could a wooden chick break through his wooden egg one day? Could the window panes removed from the artist’s apartment reveal due to imprudent gossip all the images and all the times people looked through them? Could the double-faced adhesive tape, with the traces of various types of dust, hair and fingerprints, decide to get rid of them to go back to its original transparency? Could the resinous drops of water finally fall? Undoubtedly, all of this could happen just when we’d least expect it to, behind our backs, with surreptitious movements. Charlotte Seidel’s things are like children’s bodies when they play “ What’s the time Mister Wolf? “: they move when our eyes are closed. Once we have opened them again, they stay still, as if nothing had happened. But we shouldn’t be fooled by their apparent fixity: things shiver and whisper. They live amongst us.

Camille Paulhan
Translated in English by Emmelene Landon

INTÉRIEURS (INTERIORS)

a solo show by **Charlotte Seidel**

December 09th - December 23rd 2017 // January 09th - January 27th 2018

Maybe you won't believe this. A little clover has grown out of the stem of another four-leaved clover linked itself to a five-leaved clover (*366*, 2017). What incredible luck and fortunate coincidence were combined to allow for such a godsend? Between two downpours, surprized by a ray of sun, a rainbow has been formed. Now it has been brought into the gallery (*arc*, 2017), just as fortunately as the clovers, while the sun captured on film kisses a tree, imposing its authoritative presence by erasing part of the trunk (*small kiss*, 2017). Looking up to the ceiling, one perceives an enigmatic, stunningly simple sentence. Addressed to a solitary, elevated spectator, its evocative power fills the nostrils and brings him/her down to the ground : « summer rain on asphalt » (*toi et moi*, 2017). Water has been poured into two glasses; the hem of liquid ready to gush forward is held in a fragile balance on the crystal surface to merge in a febrile trouble spot (*nothing ever happened*, 2014). Another quite as enigmatic phenomenon can also be perceived: plants are shaken by silent laughter (*folie*, 2017). From the Taiwanese jungle to the German forest, what kind of a strange sweep of gestures, facts and absent objects – a priori – of any quality, has **Charlotte Seidel** choreographed here?

The artist has taken luck into her hands. She has searched for as many four-leaved clovers as there are days in the year. She has looked – and we look with her – for “what is the most difficult to discover”¹. She has come across what is neither a region nor a locality, even less so a spectacle. “Insignificant”, “without truth, without reality, without a secret”², with neither subject nor object, “with no event”³, where apprehending everyday life seems impossible. The moment one lives everyday life, it remains “unperceived”⁴. Could this be one of the reasons for **Charlotte Seidel**'s commitment? Steeped in an everydayness that we ignore, we can only make sense of the ordinary by enrolling it into a coherent whole, a posteriori. Besides, Maurice Blanchot acknowledges that, at most, we can “review everyday life”⁵. Impossible to see for the first time; once it has taken place, it has already been missed. Do the works presented here allow us to review it?

In the gallery's basement, the walls breathe, and the tide seeps through what could be assimilated to the crypt of an Early Christian church. **Charlotte Seidel** has chosen to display an empty cloche here, which no longer protects anything. The glass is blurred by traces of mineral salts, suggesting evaporation. And not just any evaporation : that of water from Lourdes. The miracle has disappeared. All that remains is the mark of an absence, presented as an apparition (*sans titre*, 2017). Would that also be what the empty seat, still warm from a vanished presence, suggests (*Joseph*, 2005/2017)? The artist asks us to believe her, in the manner we believe in the everyday rituals that rule our lives. Coins have rusted on a sheet of watercolour paper. They draw a deficient composition, dancing on a musical score on which the notes are spoiled, leaving the mark of their passage as if they were at the bottom of a fountain (*Il arrive qu'on aperçoive les étoiles*, 2017). The circles formed by oxidation remind us of the ochre stains on old photographs yellowed by time – the time it takes to make them disappear and lead us think of what has been (*Yesterday*, 2013). At the same time, *travelling* (2013) takes us right up close to a blurred image whose very slow apparition almost extinguishes it. Do **Charlotte Seidel**'s works honour something aside from themselves? Could their manifestation serve an exterior finality? Her works bear something religious within themselves and appeal to our credulity. Located in our everyday life, born from the most indistinguishable ordinariness, they allow us to review the vacuity of our beliefs, our superstitious gestures and forms of bigotry. Like *memento mori* placed in a space inhabited by something similar to the sacredness of a church, these works reveal the obsolete beauty of the ordinary, the incapacity to escape time's grasp, and the vanity of having believed in it.

Sophie Lapalu

Translated in English by Emmelene Landon

¹ Maurice Blanchot, *La Parole quotidienne* (1962), in *L'Entretien infini*, Gallimard, Paris, 1969, p. 355.

² *Ibid.*, p. 357.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 363.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 358.