

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