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Interim

Rebecca Niculae / Gwenneth Boelens

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opening November 23, 2024 14.00–18.00h

PRESS RELEASE

Nine years ago, during my studies, Gwenneth Boelens and I had many conversations about my work. I now initiated this exhibition as a means of exploring the connections between our practices. We set out some possible combinations, discussing them and their initial thoughts through an exchange of letters.

“...it is not common for me to write about this. There are often thoughts that you keep to yourself, or that one hopes to become visible in the work.” [R.N.]

We talked about how certain works circulate around others and provide a contextuality that is non-linear. The philosopher Maurice Blanchot approached art as something that is constantly concerned with its own origin: “In doing so, it increasingly discovers that its origins lack any stability.” The work then draws back upon itself, confronted with its lack of stability—as if it carries an inherent reformulation. This thought may relate to questions of a practice, or broader, to the existence of other objects and how one is in dialogue with them, aspects that relate to both of our works. Sometimes directly arranged, at other times through translation. With regard to seeing, Blanchot writes:

“Seeing presupposes distance, decisiveness which separates, the power to stay out of contact and in contact avoid confusion. But what happens when what you see, although at a distance, seems to touch you with a gripping contact, when the manner of seeing is a kind of touch, when seeing is contact at a distance?”

In one of Gwenneth’s letters she made the analogy between touch and seeing, seeing being a kind of touching with the gaze. We talked about how forms of contact can take place in a work. How non-literal things are present; like the tone of a work and proximity.

Blanchot writes:

“Distance is not excluded from it, but is immeasurable. Distance here is the limitless depth behind the image, a lifeless profundity, unmanipulable, absolutely present although not given, where objects sink away when they depart from their sense, when they collapse in their image.”

The distance in works of art seems just as inevitable as their closeness. They may offer a resistance to visibility, a non-linearity (referring to other structures and times), and yet their materiality, texture and tone are directly present to affect us.

Later, in the exhibition space, Gwenneth and I considered some potential correspondences between the works. The particularities of the space, ways of installing... a rubber work combined with textile pieces, sculptures on the floor; arranging things in one's head when thought of them in the exhibition room. Gwenneth used the term ‘hollows’ to describe parts of her sculptures and I thought about it later in relation to my practice and the exhibition.

“The definition of a *hollow*¹ I thought of as something that is made of the material itself but not as such physically there—something else that one describes through language and in relation to what it is part of. An inner thought process.” [R.N.]

I chose to show the rubber work *Untitled* and the pigment print *Untitled (turned red)*. *Untitled* is a work that in its abstracted form corresponds with different objects, leaving the specific dimensions of those behind and articulating a new formulation of it in a small piece of engraved rubber. Both of the works carry the notion of translation, in which ‘hollow’ relates to the modification of properties and narrative structure. Gwenneth proposed to complement these with a new textile work that responds to the window, illuminating her piece from the back while manipulating the interiority of this residential space, playing with inside and outside. In a sketch, the work bore resemblance to a closed eye. The thought of a new work excited me, as did the implied difference in size of the three works.

Why strays that precious tear? (guileless note 1831) is a continuation of Gwenneth's large round, folded shapes in earlier sculptures and photograms. In it she uses historical textiles which she then rearranges and alters. While the small dimensions of the gallery emphasize the size of this work, both our practices give rise to questions of the material and of properties outside the physical object itself. By bringing these works into dialogue, their specificities may emphasize each other while others remain less accentuated. The intimate setting of the exhibition space allows for a concentrated viewing: a tactility that lies in seeing.

– Rebecca Niculae

¹ A hollow is like an intervening time, an interim; the title of the exhibition.