

Dear Anne-Valérie,

Hitler's mother's doctor was called Kafka. He was a distant cousin of Franz. Absurdity, despair, distinctive relationships and unresolved questions are hidden in the intimate. Forgive me for starting this preface to your catalogue on a note of tragedy, but since the day I first came across your work I've experienced it in all its gravities and necessary hesitations it runs the gamut of flights into the unseen things of the world. Your work, with its diversities of proposals and resources, deals with that which resists being pinned down; that which appears and disappears; that which is said, and which evades expression through language. «Standing apart from things, to the point of blurring many of their details, adding a lot of looking, so as to see them again or looking at them from a certain angle or positioning them in such a way that they deliver themselves up only in a breakaway or again, looking at them through coloured glass, or in the gleam of the setting sun or, finally, giving them a surface, an epidermis that is not quite transparent.» (Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*)

Writing about your work cannot be a linear process. During your travels you draw together scattered clues which you subsequently incorporate into your projects and installations. The Danube, with its perpetual meanders and divagations, comes to mind. Watering huge territories, it is the opposite of those rectilinear rivers that rush headlong towards the sea. The image is of a thought process or a work that is going to surround us, disorientate us and uncover us in the same movement, faced with the landscape of our existence, its silences and ruggedness.

You've returned from Budapest, and soon you'll be taking part in the Warsaw biennial. The reference to the Danube also expresses our shared feeling for eastern Europe *Mitteleuropa* which has witnessed excesses in the past, but also contradictions and contractions in our own day. Eastern Europe, whose borders, origins and history are in a constant state of fluctuation, and where the present is a subject of improvisation, reminds me of Heidegger's dictum, «To be truly in the present is to be in a future memory», or again Robert Antelme's comment on «the silence of ashes strewn over a plain [where] under the pressure of that which no longer appears [...] these few fragments of day and darkness burst forth.»

«Sapping» is one of your «strategies», and it illustrates certain facets of your work. In the light of the photographic and topographic investigations you carried out on the site of the Budapest ghetto, it is just the right term.

In another «strategy», i.e. «Enlistment», your dresses, with their disproportion and delicate folds representing the vagina (that eternal flight), are worn with delectation by elderly ladies in a retirement home in France, and hieratic caretakers at the Budapest Galéria, allowing the unconscious mind to find expression, and to free itself from necessity. The micro-events (or, better still, the epiphanies) that you make use of, or create, give a true account of signs that are dispersed, sometimes dissimulated in the disturbing banality of the everyday, the non-adherence of the world and its images. During your investigations in the public buildings of Budapest you became acquainted with those dangerous lifts that go by the grave and ironic (absurd?) name of «paternoster». They recited the interminable litany of office workers ascending and descending. Without special effects, but with the radicality of astonishment, you filmed the comings and goings of people caught in the itinerance of an incomprehensible activity between heaven and hell, basement and upper floor, work and relaxation.

Your perceptions of the world can be matched up with a martial vocabulary. The apparent irony in the titles of your works also evokes your unflinching struggle to emancipate a depiction of reality. In fact, you implicate yourself in the world, and give yourself up to the risks of errancy, and error.

The artist in a permanent state of siege, hemmed in by the nature of things and that of images, continues from the very first day, with obstinate rigour, to transform the blocks of

consistency of that which surrounds us, and marks out our space in infinite blocks of feeling.

«The thinker, enclosed in a cage, paces interminably between four words.» (Paul Valéry)

Dear Anne-Valérie, these discontinuous lines are for you. I've attempted to define my displacements and observations through your «pre-occupation» with unbounded spaces.

«Given that we construct our worlds by combining phenomena, I would not be surprised if, right at the start of time, there was a gratuitous, recurrent association that set out a direction within chaos, and laid down a certain order.» (Cosmos, Witold Gombrowicz)

Eric Corne, Paris, September 2005