All of Edith Dekyndt's work is made under the umbrella of what she calls Universal Research of Subjectivity, an enigmatic project concerning the place of the subject between the categories of science and fiction. Characterized by their visual and technical simplicity, her works inquire into how the notion of subjectivity changes once confronted with the possibility of a sensible machine. An other-worldly perspective on natural phenomena begins to challenge our cognitive coordinates.

This Source Book is accasioned by Agnosia, Dekyndt's solo exhibition at Witte de With in the Spring of 2009. Asked to consider her artistic sources, Dekyndt listed personal inspirations in literature, film and music. From these, we have excerpted a chapter of Norman Mailer's Of a Fire on the Moon (1971), which offers a precise poetic key for the artist's blend of scientific inquiry and subjective reverie. Her way of working is further illuminated in a candid interview with Amira Gad. And a selection of her own texts and images evokes her desired interplay of the spaces of the gallery the book and the mind. Lastly, essays by curators Renske Janssen and Wim Waelput depart from close encounters with Dekyndt's work towards meditations on blankness and time machines.



Witte de With

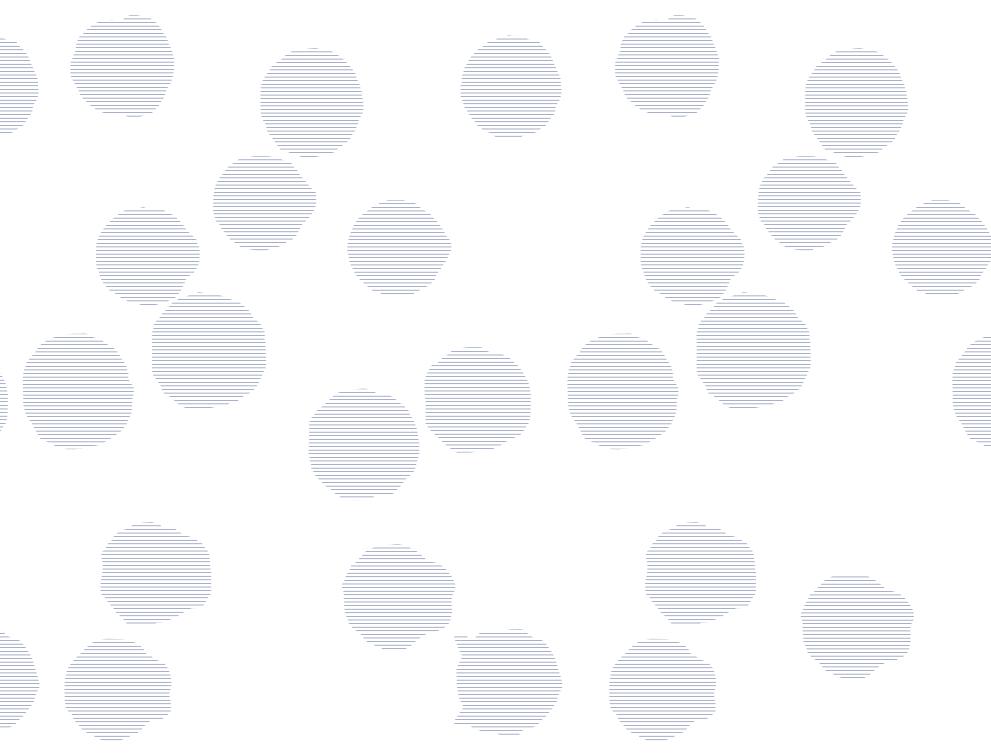
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Source Book 8/2010



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Introduction

Juan A. Gaitán, Nicolaus Schafhausen and Monika Szewczyk

This, the eighth in our ongoing Source Book series, focuses on the work of Edith Dekyndt, an artist whose quiet, persistent work has been a source of fascination for us. It follows her large-scale exhibition, *Agnosia*, which took place at Witte de With in the Spring of 2009. At the time of this exhibition a major catalogue was being produced in Belgium: *Edith Dekyndt: Remember Earth* (Facteur Humain, 2009). Thus, we chose to take some time to develop a book that would contribute to the existing discourse on Dekyndt's work, while utilizing the particularities of the Source Book format. Dekyndt herself approached the project from a characteristically open and direct perspective and, at the very outset, asked us to clarify: "What exactly do you mean by *Source* Book?"

Each of the past seven editions of Witte de With's signature pocket books have reformulated the answer to this question. If the books are to function as we wish them to – as poetic and critical tools for accessing the work of artists – then this requires a different operation every time. But the question of sources is perhaps particularly challenging when it arises around an artistic practice that takes non-knowledge, or agnosia, as a point of departure. How to divulge these sources while preserving the particular affect of Dekyndt's work, which tends towards a state of radically open perception?

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Faced with the challenge, Dekyndt began in the simplest form, by making a list of books that had been of particular influence, mostly fiction or science fiction, all tending towards a new form of realism. Arranged alphabetically, the titles assert the full potential of the simple gesture, which is a point of departure for most of Dekyndt's work. Save for one, none of these named texts made it into this Source Book, but the list remains, both as information as a set of poetic relations. The one text that is republished here, from Norman Mailer's Of a Fire on the Moon, stood out for the fine balance it maintains, in the art of storytelling. between fact and speculation. Mailer's text is an account of the Apollo 11 mission, the mission's place in the contemporary imagination, and of the innumerable variables that, rather than known, had to be guessed at. It is a wonderful account of the position of humanity between two worlds the scientific, on the one hand, the fictional on the other and of the difficult process of establishing which of the two follows which. We have excerpted the first three sections of the first chapter entitled *The Psychology of Machines*, which end with a beautiful provocation that seems to speak directly to Dekyndt's work: "Who indeed has not felt the force of his own personality before a sensitive machine?"

The second text in this Source Book is a condensed version of a far-ranging interview conducted by Amira Gad. This interview touches variously on the title of the exhibition, *Agnosia*, the suggestive meanings that this concept brings to Dekyndt's work, and the relationships she hopes to establish with the viewers. An important section touches on the choice of Mailer's text and on Dekyndt's parallel interest in the place of humanity between science and fiction. The interview is illustrated with a floor plan of Witte de With, which the artist chose to treat like a two-page spread of a book and as the two halves of the human brain.

A selection of short, factual texts follows the interview: This form of writing is clearly inspired by Mailer's prose, yet is distilled through modernist notions of poetry and the more prosaic informational tone of the radio announcement. The nine statements chosen specifically for this book evoke what could be heard when the gallery visitor put on the helmet of *Any resemblance to persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental*. This work may be seen in the accom-

panying installation images; the stills of abstract, mutating circular shapes are extracts of what could be seen while wearing said helmet. Printed in this book, in the midst of installation images, the texts may be used as sources of reflection on all of the works chosen for *Agnosia* at Witte de With.

A third section of the Source Book focuses on images that stress the specific layout of Dekyndt's exhibition, showing the individual works, her unifying treatment of Witte de With's exhibition space with translucent curtains, as well as the relations of bodies to the projections and sculptural phenomena distributed across our galleries.

The last section of the book gives voice to two curators who relate their personal experiences of the artist's work. Renske Janssen narrates her encounter with Dekyndt's exhibition through references to her art historical interest in the High Renaissance, and her curatorial travels to Berlin and Los Angeles. Wim Waelput walks the reader through a new installation by the artist that he curated as the director of KIOSK in Ghent. In both accounts the subjective experience of the work and its phenomenological force come to the fore.

This book thus comes to address both Dekyndt's own sources for her work, as well as the condition of that work as a source of inspiration for more subjective form of curatorial writing. Both the book and the exhibition constitute our participation in Edith Dekyndt's "Universal Research of Subjectivity," a key concept as well as a generous production platform, which aims to rethink creative agency and offers space for novel collaborations. We wish to thank all the contributors to this volume and all those who worked tirelessly to mount *Agnosia*, most especially the artist.

Sources

Edith Dekyndt

1984, 2666, After Dark, A Home at the End of the World, The Air-Conditioned Nightmare, A Love Affair, A Meeting with Medusa, A Prayer for Owen Meany, Ask the Dust, Blue of Noon, Blood on the Moon, In Cold Blood, Boredom, Concrete Island, Depths, Dangerous Liaisons, The Disk, The Double, The Erasers, The Falls, Flags in the Dust, Fugitive Pieces, Girlfriend in a Coma, The Great Gatsby, Invisible Cities, The Island of the Day Before, Lamb to the Slaughter, The Lathe of Heaven, Less Than Zero, Locus Solus, Madame Bovary, The Magic Mountain, The Magnificent Ambersons, The Man Without Qualities, Memoirs of Hadrian, Misery, Moby Dick, Moderato Cantabile, Morel's Invention, The Murder of Roger Ackroyd, The Music of Chance, Mystic River, Neuromancer, The Night of the Hunter, The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge, Of a Fire on the Moon, Oscar and Lucinda, Our Need for Consolation is Insatiable, The Perfect Day, The Picture of Dorian Gray, The Plague, Platform, The Purloined Letter, Ripley's Game, Roadside Picnic, Second Thoughts, The Shape of Things to Come, Solaris, Solar Lottery, The Sorrows of an American, The Stranger Beside Me, Strong Motion, Theorem, The Thirty-Nine Steps, The Tortilla Curtain, To Die For, Trailerpark, Transparent Things, The Turn of the Screw, Twins, Ulysses, The Unnamable, The Waves, White Noise, The Wild Ass's Skin, Wrong Move.

Selection from *Of a Fire on the Moon*

Norman Mailer

CHAPTER ONE The Psychology of Machines

1

In the study of literature, much usually depends on direct confrontation with a work. Who would dare to approach *A Farewell to Arms* by a synopsis? It is only natural to distrust a literary experience if we have been guided too carefully through it, for the act of reading should provide as its product a feeling of truth upon which our senses will later work.

But the study of science is different. Much like the study of history, it begins with legends and over simplifications. Then the same ground is revisited, details are added, complexities are engaged, unanswerable questions begin to be posed. A scientific account is a story which can always be retold, for the line of the narrative in scientific writing is to be found in the deepening of the concept.

So if we embark once again on the trip of Apollo 11, if once again we proceed to ascend from the launching tower and fire the astronauts into orbit, even take them again to the moon, if in fact we will launch them again and yet still again, let us recognize that we are enlisted in scientific methods of instruction where our pleasure can be found only by returning over the same ground in order to discover that the story steeped in further detail has become some-

thing like another account even as a day recaptured in a dream has acquired the reality of a more extraordinary day. It seems we are off on a journey with mysterious routes for the implication is unmistakable that a study of the trip technology took to the moon may as well commence in the inner space of the dream.

2

To speak of the unconscious is to call up the trance into the set designer of one's imagination. He bows. Caverns and grottos appear, underwater palaces, the circles and amphitheatres of hell, the rites of barbarians in all the dark forest; we think of witches, and sniff the communions of mood in a church. Yes, the wealth of the theatre is here, but it is not all that is here. Something also suggests a domain as closed from light and spectacle as the sombre shelves of a library at night - it must be that part of the unconscious which serves as the servant of everyday life. From the depth of its files will it produce on demand, at a rate daily established, the varieties of practical information the conscious mind has requested. It will solve problems, offer analysis of new situations presented by the difficulties of life without, even provide working estimates of how equipped we are to encounter some contingency or meet a crisis, and if the matter is novel enough or dangerous enough, or involves preparation for the most artful kind of work, this instrument of the psyche may even send appeals for information to the mansions, theatres, and dungeons of the deepest unconscious where knowledge of a more poetic and dreadfilled nature may reside. So this dark room, this functioning appendage of consciousness, is obviously the living organic embodiment of a computer: one cannot even begin to contemplate the function of the dream until one recognizes what a complexity such a computer must possess in its nightly dialogue with the deep.

For years, Aquarius had had the concept of just such a guide somewhere in the human head who – on the basis of what information was available – was usually capable of piloting a man's life through everything from the small decisions of a day to the critical dilemmas of the age. He had given to this pilot a name: the Navigator. The Navigator had varieties of conscious and unconscious information available on request. He was, if one were to think on him

crudely, a memory bank of reference to everything which had been learned and was still available to recall, as well as a cerebral library of the opinions and judgements of respected authorities outside oneself. On the basis of one's acquired experience and those worldly guidelines one was ready to accept from without, a future course of action could be estimated, and large and little decisions could be taken. The Navigator was thus the agent of the ego in the unconscious, the dispatcher at the switch.

Over the years, it proved to be too simple a model, and Aquarius was obliged to add some conceptual accessories. To cope with that large variety of daily experiences which were not easy to anticipate or to comprehend, yet were not terrifying so much as confusing, Aquarius now added to the Navigator the services of a Novelist. It seemed to him that everybody, literate and illiterate alike, had in the privacy of their unconscious worked out a vast social novel by which they could make sense of society. Obviously, each novel was different. Obviously, some were better than others. But whether each unwritten novel was a comprehensive work of art, or an unhappy one, the psychic fact was that as life presented new evidence, the book was altered in its details. When such large events as births, deaths, marriages, divorces, successes, failures, social cataclysms and social revelations were sufficiently unexpected to indicate the conception one had of society - that conception so often forged by inferior art and entertainment - was faulty, then the outlines of the novel would be drastically revised; in effect the Novelist was for ever drawing up new social charts upon which the Navigator could make his calcula-

In its turn, the dream provided another sort of information for the Navigator. It ran simulations. Perhaps they were not unlike the simulations put into the computers in Mission Control at the Manned Spacecraft Center. Indeed Aquarius began to think the dream might be some psychic equivalent of those equations of celestial mechanics which find it impossible to plot the trajectory of a moving rocket precisely because there are too many unknowns. The earth is in movement, and the moon. Their gravitational effect upon the rocket is for ever shifting. Besides earth and moon have special eccentricities in their motion which forbid precise prediction of position at any instant. In turn, the spaceship is not a precise object either. While it is built with-

in narrowly defined specifications, still within such limits it will always prove to be a miniscule bit smaller or larger than the specified size of the rocket. These variations, while minor, will have effects on the trajectory. In such a field of imprecisions (where everything is known approximately but nothing exactly) the problem is best attacked by inserting thousands of imaginary or simulated trajectories into the computer, each with slight variations in position and velocity assumed for the earth, sun, moon, and rocket. From these thousands of simulated trajectories come a series of imaginary but definitely plotted routes from earth to moon. By such calculations, and by the aid of data which track the path the rocket is actually taking, it is possible to estimate the direction in which it will next be moving, and so determine whether it is likely to stray out of the limits of those many thousands of arbitrarily calculated trajectories. It is as if an artist drawing the curve of the arm had chosen in preference to one line, a thousand light strokes none in itself the outline, but taken all together a clear picture of an arm was present.

That was one kind of simulation. Another category of simulation was to present flight conditions to the astronauts. They worked in specially built cockpits outfitted exactly like the Command Module and the Lem, all dials and instruments in functional replica. Thousands of possible problems. dilemmas, and unforeseen breakdowns were played off before them in the simulators over the months of training. We can listen with profit to Collins. 'People think we're baked in heat chambers and whirled in centrifuges until our eveballs fall out, and there is a little of that, but essentially we are learning an incredibly complex array of machines - all the nuts and bolts and wires - and learning what to do if some of it doesn't work as advertised. We go through the intended missions tiny tedious bit by bit to make sure that we understand it and that the equipment is right and what its malfunction modes are and what our alternate plans are.'

Aquarius had long ago decided, long before he had been introduced to celestial mechanics or the workings of mission simulators, that dreams, yes all that mighty symbolic and theatrical equipment of the dream could not possibly be limited to so meagre a function when all was said as wishfulfilment. If there were desires which were near to unmanageable, and the imprisonment of those desires left the

body charged with psychic wastes which had to be eliminated, then certainly the dream would serve in the way Freud had declared - certainly most dreams, indeed some part of every dream, must be a wish-fulfilment, but surely all that panoply, horror, and pleasure, that intimation of worlds beyond worlds, that explosion of ogres in every corner of endeavour, could hardly exist in the paraphernalia of the dream merely to serve as some sort of small and large intestine of the psyche. Indeed there had been intellectual knots in all those long careful arguments through which Freud laboured in order to transpose nightmares over into scenarios of wish-fulfilment. No, Aquarius thought, there was a statement in the nightmare all direct, a clap of psychic thunder, a vibration from the deep. There had to be more to the dream than Freud had ever given it - the dream was like the third eye of the Navigator, it looked into many a situation the eyes of reality could hardly assess. Perhaps the dream was indeed a simulation chamber where the possible malfunctions of life tomorrow and life next year could be tested, where the alternate plans could be tried. That at least must be one essential function of the dream. For as one moved through the situations of the day, reality kept giving intimations to the senses that reality was not what it appeared to be, not altogether. A crack in a man's voice might give a clue to an incoming disease, an odd laugh in a friend could leave its echo of possible treacheries and deceits. Sometimes in the middle of racing across the street in front of a car, there might be curious hesitations in one's gait as if unvoiced but large areas of the psyche were ready for an accident. A thousand such intimations of a reality subtly beneath reality, yet ready - it was possible - to become outer reality before very long, was apparent in everyone's waking day. And this reality was more exciting, more threatening, more demanding and more rewarding than the easier reality of working-day surface. So as these pieces of extra-real information were noted, so might they be stored, so might they be marinated in the vats of the imagination; later that night they could be served in the dream as the ingredients of a scenario which would look to test and explore a hundred possible avenues of that subterranean future which had been offered so many curious and sometimes threatening intimations in the previous day. It was possible that in the dream, one travelled through a scenario where one was his own hero,

and in the dream one might learn how one would react to the death of the man with the crack in his voice, and conceivably have glimpses of reaction to one's own death as well? Reliving the joke with the untrustworthy friend, his laugh was now, yes overtly treacherous. So did one face up to him, dare him, cow him? Or was one more afraid of him than ever conceived? Was there murder at his base? Running in front of that car, one was now running in a nightmare. Whole schisms of potential suicide were revealed in a more glaring light: the Navigator could recognize that matters internal were worse than his previous estimate. So next day, the charts of the Novelist would be redrawn for the trip through the social world, new reefs to avoid laid in, new channels discovered and marked. Now subtle changes in the person might be evident in his relations with the sick man, the friend, or in his own actions as he crossed the street.

That had been Aquarius' measure of a new approach to the dream, and he liked it. It explained much. It gave dignity to the dream and to the dreamer. The dreamer was no longer consoling himself. Rather he was exploring the depths of his own ability to perceive crisis and react to it; he was exploring ultimate modes of existence in sex and in violence, in catastrophe and in death. So the real substance of the dream was a submersion into dread. One tested the ability of the psyche to bear anxiety as one submerged into deeper and deeper plumbings of the unknowable until one reached a point where the adventurer in oneself could descend no longer, panic was present – one was exploded out of the dream. But a dangerous shoal had at least been located.

3

Yet even to think of the dream as a set of simulations which explore into dread is to open some obvious comparisons with the trip of Apollo 11 to the moon. For if it is in the nature of our lives to explore for meaning not only in the duties and surprises of a working day but at night in the alleys of the unconscious (where revelations of terror beyond the terror we already know suggest the very perils of our soul), what force resides then in the parallel thought that our voyage to the moon was finally an exploration by the century itself into the possible consequences of its worship of technology, as if, indeed, the literal moon trip was a giant

species of simulation to reveal some secret in the buried tendencies of our history. It was as if technology had determined to invoke the god of magic it had already slain, even as a priest might step via his nightmare into the powerful passions of sexual instinct so primitive he had once cast it out, and wished to see if he were powerful enough to cast it out again.

Such remarks are large, they are grand, they roll off into the murk of metaphysical storm. Still there are quick clues to be sniffed and landmarks in the murk. If the title of our chapter is The Psychology of Machines, the bewilderment of the reader at the notion is a hint direct to the anxieties of technology. For if machines have psychology, then technology is not quits with magic - technology is founded on the confidence that magic does not exist and so machines may be designed to perform the most extraordinary acts. It is the premise of magic that if the same act is repeated ceremoniously enough times, it will invoke a spirit. Or at least it will if the conditions are appropriate, the servants are possessed of no unruly forces, the gods are sympathetic, the animals and maidens to be sacrificed are virgin, and the equipment is unpolluted. It is the premise of technology that spirits do not exist, and the same act repeated in obedience to a system of procedure and well-oiled machinery will produce not a spirit, but in fact, the same result as the preceding occasion. Whether the gods are well- or illdisposed, the car will start, the rifle will fire, the stereo will play. Actually, there are any number of occasions when the car won't start, the rifle jams, the record-changer on the stereo develops a mind of its own. A mind of its own! That is the threshold of the psychology of machines. For such a psychology exists, or it does not exist, and technology is founded on the implicit belief that machines are not possessed of psychology; the rifle jammed because of a speck of dirt in the breech, the car engine was flooded by the nervous foot of the river, and the record-changer, far from having a mind of its own, rather had its record-changing procedure altered by careless handling. For every malfunction there is a clear cause, technology must argue, a non-psychological cause: psychology assumes free will. A human being totally determined is a machine. Psychology is then a study of the style of choice provided there is a freedom to choose. Even a title like The Psychology Machines assumes that the engine under study, no matter how completely fitted into the world of cause and effect, still has some all but undetectable horizon between twilight and evening where it is free to express itself, free to act in contradiction to its logic and its gears, free to jump out of the track of cause and effect. Since such events take place, if they do take place, on those unexpected occasions when no instruments are ready to examine the malfunction, the question is moot. No one alive can state to a certainty that a psychology of machines exists or does not exist - indeed it would take a theoretician of the dimensions of Einstein to prove the presence of such a psychology or, indeed, what would be even more dazzling, prove definitively that such a psychology could not conceivably exist. If it is the passion of technology to live as if such a proof were already here, there is a primitive residue in man which is far from convinced, face to face with the presence of a machine, that the engine is not possessed of a variety of spirits benign and wicked. Indeed the practical experience of everyday life is for ever suggesting that complex machines behave in more extraordinary fashion with complex and highly-charged operators than with calm and easygoing mechanics. If rational arguments sweep in immediately to speak of the lack of science in such observation (indeed even the lack of simple organized observation in the observation itself) still the enormous anxiety of technology remains. Either it has extirpated magic, or it has not. And if it has not, if magic still exists amid machines, then the reign of technology could be ended at a stroke, for where there is a little magic, there can be a mighty magic, even as the first fission of the atom inspired the terror among physicists that a chain reaction might occur which would destroy the earth. If one machine became sufficiently magical to set out on a life of its own, who could be certain that a resonance producing similar activity might not appear in all similar machines everywhere?

To the technician this fear is no more outlandish than the private terror of doctors that the whole human race may abruptly debouch into cancer. For so far as the human body is a machine, a cancer cell exhibits evidence of magic (or what we have been calling The Psychology of Machines), since the cancer cell has left the organization of human flesh and is exhibiting a mind of its own. If the doctor knows fear of a cancer plague because of the guilty departure of Twentieth Century medicine from the controls and safeties of the past – we prescribe pills before their side-effects are

even detected - so the technologist has another kind of dread. He knows that technology, having occupied the domain of magic, now has a tendency to invade every last social taboo. Indeed, what is technology if it is not an ability to photograph the act and put it on television so that we may study our own creation? 'Son, that's how Ma and me were moving when you were conceived.' Yessir, that's technology, that's where the box office is - the century is so full of dread at the godlike proportions man has assumed, that the only cure for dread is to extirpate every taboo and see which explosions fail to come. Yet all the whole we root out the taboos. everything primitive in us which still gives credence to the taboo, all the unspoken and conceivably tribal experience in the ducts of our dream rush up primitive, even primeval findings into our profoundest simulations. So the century feels a profound anxiety. That anxiety lives like the respirations of a clam in the clammy handshakes of all too many technologists and technicians. They know their work is either sufficiently liberating to free man from the dread of his superstition-ridden past, or their work smashes real and valuable taboos, and so becomes sacrilegious acts upon a real religious fundament. Could this not yet destroy the earth as it has already disrupted every natural economy of nature? That is the primary source of the great anxiety of the technologist as he stands before the idea that a machine may have psychology.

So it is to be expected that a discussion of the psychology of machines has more fascination for a physicist or a serious engineer than for the average student of humanities. Aquarius, armed by his four years as an engineering student, would sometimes try to tease intelligent ladies and literary critics out of their supposition that science was an exact study with certain knowledge. On the contrary, he would assure them, there was no final knowledge whatsoever in science. We knew that gravity was an attraction between bodies, and we could measure that attraction, but why they chose to be attracted to one another was nicely out of our measure. We knew that energy was required for all work and that it sometimes took the form of light or heat or electricity, we knew it was stored in fuels and in explosives, we could measure energy in its various forms. measure it as majestically as the tides of an ocean, or gauge it so finely as the drops in the sea, but we did not have the remotest notion of what energy might look like. Nor did we

know what electricity was. We knew how to use electricity, we could use it with precision in uncounted different instruments, but finally we knew no more about its nature than to say it was usually present as a flowing stream of electrons in a wire, and we did not know what electron looked like. Certainly we did not know why passing a wire between the poles of a horseshoe magnet would have so magical a result as to cause an electrical current to run through the wire, any more than we understood why any electrical current in a wire would in its turn produce a new field of magnetism. The entire world of communications was built on electricity, yet we did not even have the right to say that if magnetism was mood, and someone interrupted your mood, the quick impulse of irritation you might feel was electricity in your nerves. We did not know. We did not understand the ultimate nature of electricity. Nor did we comprehend time. There were numerous theories of time, but time remained as fundamentally mysterious as the notion that space was infinite, or matter consisted of individual atoms whose make-up was as complex as solar systems, and then proved more complex. Each year the number of subatomic particles discovered was greater. To laymen who had grown up on electrons, protons, neutrons and positrons, there were now mesons, and photons and mu mesons, still more names and concepts no layman could follow, and science had less certainty today about the periodic table of the elements and the structure of the atom than at the turn of the century. The list could continue. If the nature of time was not comprehended, nor gravity, nor magnetism nor the final meaning of the word electric, what did we know finally about sound? We could say that sound was caused by waves, but we could not explain why the waves made sound in the ear. That was still a mystery. So, too, was touch if one thought about it, and smell, and taste, and pain, and death, but these were all beyond physics, ves, somewhere between sound and smell the domain of physics ended. Small matter. Even in the very centre of physics, before the phenomenon of light, darkness abounded. Nobody could be certain whether light was composed of little pellets, or travelled like sounds in a wave, or was both. Both! When it came to ultimate scientific knowledge we were no further along than the primitive who thought light came from God. Perhaps it did. No physicist could begin to prove it didn't. So we didn't even know what a flame was.

We had forgotten the majesty of fire, the impenetrable mystery. What indeed was a flame? A burning gas, we were told. But why did a gas burn with a light? And from where did a gas come? Savages had looked once at fire and knew. God was in the wood of the trees and in the core of everything which burned, but now one could hardly remember that to look into a fire hot as the manifest of immanence might be equal to staring into the fires of Apollo 11 as the ship of flames began its way to the moon. What confidence was in that fire.

No, nothing was known at the root of science. To worship science was like being married to a beautiful woman who furnished your castle, bore your children, decorated and illumined your life, filled your days, was indispensable. Yet all the while you did not know the first thing about her true nature. Was she in love with you or a masterpiece of hate? There, in the centre of the dream, was not an answer but an enigma. Was light corpuscular or a wave? Or both. Both!

These ultimate matters, before which the most sophisticated scientist could feel consummate ignorance, were subtly troubling to the technologist because he above all men was married to the beautiful woman and had relations with her every day, near to predictable relations, he was ready to devote his life to her predictability, and yet anxiety remained profound for he knew enough to know what the psychology of machines was not necessarily a fiction since even the function of an ordinary radio was not without its element of savage awe. If an electro-magnetic wave could travel for hundreds, or thousands, or millions of miles at the speed of light and all invisible, and be detected by an apparatus of no great complexity when all was said, being occasionally so simple as a length of wire whose end was attached to an ordinary crystal, and in any case no matter how elaborate an apparatus, one which consisted finally of endless refinements of that wire and that crystal, well, who was to say that the incredibly complex and artful networks of the brain fed by all the electricity of the nerves could not send electromagnetic waves as well (or some not yet detectable variant of them) and receive extraordinary communications in return. One did not have to be a champion of telepathy to recognize that if wireless communication was so simple, nay, so basic to the physical order of things, then telepathy might be more simple to conceive in its presence than in its absence; if one added to this thought a recognition of all the metal conductors in the rocks and in the earth beneath the magnetic fields of the atmosphere, and the unalterable fact that any metal form which passed through a magnetic field would generate electro-magnetic waves which might be received by another form somewhere else sympathetic to it - well, the existence of natural receivers, of organic radios in every square mile of earth and God knows what unknown forms of psychic electricities still undetected by any instrument of measure but radiated in messages between every insect, blade of grass, and tree, the possible existence then of the earth as one giant communications bank of invisible transmitters and receptors! - it was enough to knock a technologist on his ear if he began to think too much of the psychology of machines. Indeed the electrical phenomena of electrical machines were so often so incomprehensible in small but painfully inexplicable ways that the astronauts and Capcoms and commo engineers at NASA used the word 'glitch' to account for an unaccountable electrical phenomenon like the light on an instrument panel suddenly turning on when the machine it serviced was most definitely off. That was sometimes not merely hard to explain, but impossible to explain. So they called it a glitch. God's own luminescence was in the switch! Give a better explanation! 'I just threw a glitch into the light when I was turning my warning lights off and on,' said Gordon Cooper during the flight of Mercury-Atlas 9 when a gravity signal showed on his switchboard during an orbital free fall. Cooper was renowned for his phlegm, but one butterfly of the night must have beat its wings in his throat when he looked at a dial which showed the force of gravity was present at a time when he knew he must be without weight. Yet note: whether it is with vanity, woe, or awe, he still takes credit for throwing the glitch. Who indeed has not felt the force of his own personality before a sensitive machine?

Brussels, Saturday, 27 March 2010, 1:15 p.m. to 4:20 p.m.

Edith Dekyndt interviewed by Amira Gad

Amira Gad: I would like to begin with the experience of your exhibition at Witte de With, and perhaps you can tell me more about your title, *Agnosia*?

Edith Dekyndt: I chose the title because I didn't know exactly what the project would be – I didn't yet have a clear idea. Agnosia is a cognitive disorder whose primary symptom is a deficiency in the ability to recognize things. The subject affected perceives a stimulus, but cannot translate it into a concrete concept. This disorder, this difficulty with perception, in a way resembles the initial uncertainty of a project. Things appear slowly, like the answer to an enigma that gradually unveils itself; elements are added and others are eliminated.

AG: Did your definition of agnosia change in the course of making the exhibition?

ED: No. I merely appropriated the word, but it undoubtedly influenced the choice of the works, and perhaps, even more, the way of presenting them, with the intention of disrupting vision and orientation. I had in mind a kind of book, the pages of which one turns while walking around the space. I think this is why I wanted to hang curtains, rather than build walls.

The space at Witte de With is symmetrical. When you enter, at the top of the stairs, you very quickly get an idea of the layout. I liked the symmetry, but I wanted to unsettle it, while simultaneously maintaining the notion of a mirror. Related works would be placed diagonally opposite each other across the exhibition floor (In the Northwest corner *Ground Control* and in the Southeast corner *Martial 0*; in the Northeast corner *Dreamachine* and in the Southwest corner *Usedom*, and so on...). The resulting layout changed somewhat, but it still functioned like a kind of symmetrical labyrinth or a brain (see actual layout on the next pages).

AG: Could we say that, as a mental condition, agnosia might serve as a kind of principle for your work?

ED: In French, *agnosia* is pronounced agnosie. Agnosia could be a flower...

AG: A perfume...

ED: Yes, a perfume, when it is in fact an illness. And I very much liked this aspect, which is, at the same time, a feminine word, which looks feminine, at least in French, and which has a floral connotation – strongly perfumed – but which is, in fact, the name of a perceptual disorder. I liked this kind of confusion and ambiguity in the word.

This is undoubtedly there in the works, where we don't really know what we are looking at or what it is. This moment of uncertainty is what interests me the most; in other words, creating a visual interrogation of what we are looking at, why it is made the way it is. For example, I never do any postproduction when I use filmed images. The only thing I allow myself is slow motion, or acceleration at times. I always record entirely real things, but what interests me is that one has an impression that the image does not refer to reality. So perhaps, in this sense, there could be a relation with agnosia, but it's not a rule.

AG: There is indeed a compulsion to search for underlying rules when encountering the work of an artist, but when we think of agnosia, it is as if the only rule is the abandonment of such coordinates when thinking of how things come together.

ED: Things often come together by themselves, beginning with a memory, a moment that resurfaces. I try to amplify this and, at the same time, to simplifying it, to make it visible, without being too precise; to make it into an intimate and universal experience.

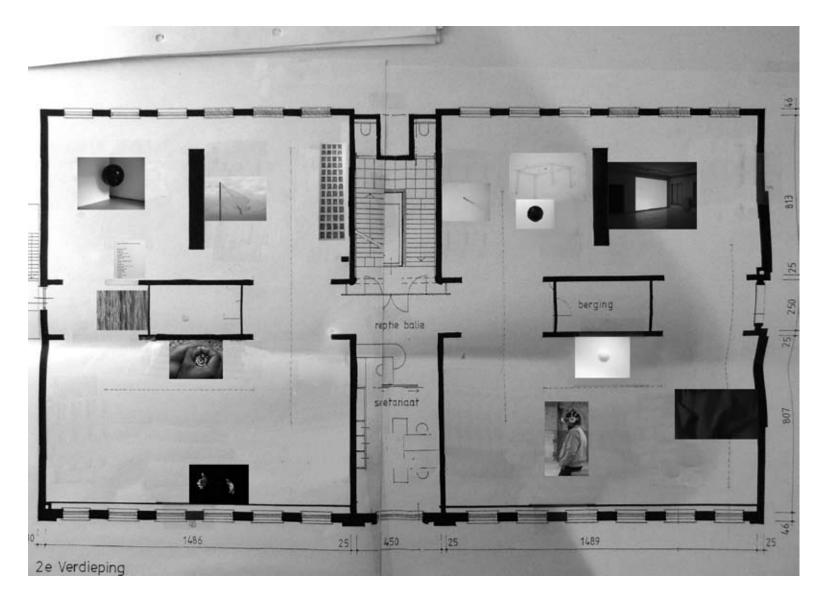
AG: Uncertainty and misunderstanding are, to some extent, what you're drawn to as universal experiential conditions...

ED: A little bit – but uncertainty in the exploration of things, in the way of grasping them. We are a part of the civilization of reason: Cartesian reason. And I think that the precision that we have obtained, the precision to name everything, all the details, right down to the atom, shuts out a lot of imagination, and also shuts out the way in which we can perceive things.

AG: Your works give the impression that you explore the moment of ambiguity between the abstract and the real, and that you place the spectator in this particular limbo. The question of where to draw the line between the abstract and the real arises but is never answered...

ED: There's not a great difference between the two. Everything depends on the distance, the point of view, what we are thinking about at that moment, or what we have been encouraged to see...

I find abstraction interesting when it is a question of experimenting with concepts. When I say concepts, I mean philosophical or mathematical concepts, where we truly experiment in a realm that is impossible to grasp. I'm not a scientist or a philosopher, but in my opinion, there is something that happens at an abstract level. We understand a lot more in terms of music, for example. I don't know how music touches people. In my mind, music is abstract, and, above all, it is something that touches us profoundly at the levels of experience and feeling. The notion of abstraction is more difficult to grasp in visual art, but I think we understand it better if we speak about music. In terms of ambiguity, the confusion and uncertainty that it implies amplifies the sensorial, and this allows for the creation of future memories.



Final floor plan: Edith Dekyndt's *Agnosia* exhibition at Witte de With, Center for Contemporary Art, 2009 Courtesy the artist

AG: Can we say that your works function like a *tabula rasa* or like blank pages that leave the possibility for the spectator to complete them – to add, not only their own experience or perception, but also their own interpretation?

ED: Yes, exactly. That's a very nice definition. In order to allow the interpretation to develop, I remove as many things as possible that would give any precise leads. It is as if things have been cleaned up. I'm from a generation that followed Minimal art, and so it is clear that I've been highly influenced by Minimalism. It is a movement that has had a lot of repercussions for my generation. Having inherited this late modernism, I nonetheless position my work by beginning with something that comes from my lived experience, something that has troubled me.

AG: Is the aim to render this unsettling factor visible?

ED: Or render it perceptible, because it can be a question of almost inaudible sounds, extremely long distances, or infinitely small entities. These elements are around us, in us, but in a dimension other than the one that we can easily perceive.

I'm always surprised by gravity, for example, it's an incredible phenomenon – the fact that we find it perfectly normal that this chair is there on its four feet. While in fact, you only need the slightest change in the planetary system for this planet to be no longer in the same gravitational field and for the chair to be ten centimeters from the floor. So many factors had to come together for this particular situation of the chair on the ground to take place, and we are not even conscious of it – we find all this entirely normal. I'm always thinking that reality is such a surprising thing, out of the ordinary. Also, I'm pretty certain that there are several space-times. The physicists say so and I believe that there are very small life forms right in front of us, only we are incapable of seeing them. I'm somewhat intuitive when it comes to such parallel spaces.

AG: The more we remain fixed on the real and the more we analyze it, the less real it appears...

ED: We inhabit a world that produces a lot of images, as if each of us was compelled to prove that he or she exists to

convince her or himself: "Yes, I'm alive, and look at me I'm not an abstraction!" We realize that we are an idea and that, before we existed, there was nature and this will exist after we're gone. Everyone thinks this is normal, but it has always astonished me. Similarly, the notion of power is something that is completely beyond me. How can you have a desire for power, knowing that everything we can possess is completely ephemeral?

AG: Do you think that power is inscribed in a system of knowledge that we have constructed or acquired? Is it a question of the power of perception or is perception so deceptive that it cannot have any power?

ED: That's a good question. I never thought about what kind of power is most important... I do believe, for example, in the power of psychics, sages, shamans, in the idea that they are capable of perceiving things that we've lost. Perhaps all artists share this intuition...

AG: I have the impression that silence is a motif that often appears in your work, perhaps to access this intuition.

ED: It is true that I like silent images, like those, for example, from the seventeenth century: Flemish masters, domestic scenes immortalized. There is in those tableaus a way of painting the air as if it were moving smoothly across the objects and figures.

AG: There is no emptiness. Nothing is in reality empty. There is always something, just as with silence, there are our thoughts, for example...

ED: Like many people of my generation, I was very influenced by John Cage's book on silence. His idea is that air transports sound and that we, in turn, transport air particles. All the emptiness that surrounds us is not at all empty. It serves as a means of transport for light and sound. It is in this way that silence interests me.

¹ John Cage, Silence: Lectures and Writings (Middleton: Wesleyan University Press, 1973). First published in 1961.

Perhaps emptiness is also something that we've lost; we fill up everything: time, space, the air... As a result, time, space and silence become the ultimate luxuries. Then, when you think of architecture, there is a focus on structure, whereas architecture is the art of constructing emptiness, or a way of dealing with emptiness. Silence is more of a limit. John Cage explains this well in his book, when he repeats that total silence is impossible or that total silence is death. But silence is also visual: Consider being confronted by a blank surface. I'm particularly interested in working on the gaps where, all of a sudden, nothing seems to be happening, yet in this nothing, there's always the possibility of filling the void.

AG: To tie these notions of emptiness and silence to the title of your exhibition – *Agnosia* – you seem to be playing with ambiguity and non-knowledge when using loaded symbols, like the flag in *One Second of Silence*, which may be taken to have a rather political meaning.

ED: The flag is a very simple entity: a piece of canvas, a pole, air. And, at the same time, it is a complex and burdensome object. It normally carries highly symbolic images and colors, collectively affiliated with a territory, a religion, a sports team, or God knows what. It is an object I use regularly, and I strip it of this weight. The flag in the Witte de With exhibition, *One Second of Silence [Part 3, Rotterdam]*, is a local variant of a transparent, silent flag that I film against the sky almost everywhere I go. A silent transparent flag is one that says nothing, that prompts us to contemplate the sky and I found this to be very pictorial.

I love painting. It is something that is particularly important to me as a reference. And the painting of the sky is a very particular problem that has been a source of inspiration throughout all periods of art history. The same goes for the representation of drapery. With a transparent flag, we see both drapery and sky. I love to pass the time simply filming the sky and this kind of flag. And I like to see what happens in the morning or in the evening, to see the different tones at different moments of the day.

AG: How do you translate this space of making to your relationship with your public?

ED: I always try to put myself in the place of the person who will encounter the work: What will be the first impression at the moment that a person stands before *One Second of Silence*, for instance? And what will happen in the imagination afterwards? The way of situating the work in space is, therefore, as important as the work itself. Moreover, when you show works in an institutional context, it is a question of public space, so I always specify the scale accordingly. I have made very few works that are monumental in scale. In general, I tend to work on a human scale, establishing a 1:1 ratio between perceiver and work.

AG: This gives a sense of proximity that seems timely.

ED: Yes. To be contemporary is to find it difficult to perceive things from a distance. I'm not making a moral judgment – we're all more or less complicit. We can merely try to be a little self-critical, to try to understand how the things around us are arranged.

AG: It is a question of research, of exploring without seeking answers...

ED: ...perhaps of simply asking ourselves how things work, both in terms of natural phenomena and also in terms of the structures that we have created ourselves. For example, vast cities: How is the circulation of water, cars, electricity, air and gases organized? All this, more or less, functions day and night. We're inside and part of a gigantic organism. Cities, airplanes, satellites, and spaceships fascinate me, quite probably for one same reason: Everything is created for thousands of people and we no longer have any concept of a whole; everything works, but we only understand it in details and fragments.

For me science fiction is a very powerful paradigm. As a child of the 1960s, I understood things in terms of progress. My generation was told that progress would develop exponentially. We were told that in the year 2000, we would have cars that could fly and we believed it. We felt really invested in this kind of fantasy of modernity. And the notion of progress was very concrete. It meant everyday comfort, for example. For a generation ten or twenty years later, it seemed natural that you had a bathroom and central heating. In the 1960s, however, few people had these comforts.

I think there are a lot of people whose work is marked by these past convictions about the future. I find it interesting that younger artists are now revisiting this particular question of progress, because we experienced it as it was being formulated. We were surrounded by this idea. But the notion of progress now is different from the one we knew then, in ways that I cannot fully explain.

AG: Does this fascination with progress explain the choice of materials used – the use of the video or still camera?

ED: It's not exactly the notion of progress that draws me to photography or video, and technique doesn't interest me as such. When I decide to produce something, I first ask myself if I could do it without filming. If the moment, the duration or the movement are important and need to be recorded, then I choose the appropriate technical means.

AG: Material as a means for achieving a goal, rather than an example of progress...

ED: Yes. But there is also the discovery that technology employs a particular language, one that doesn't fully belong to us. When you use a video- or a still-camera, you are aware that it doesn't record what you see. This particular difference interests me. You have to accept and adapt to the machine, you have to admit to yourself: "The camera doesn't see the same way as I do, it has its own way of recording the world, which is not at all how I see it." Something escapes us, and this gap generates chance.

AG: Perhaps I will leave this question of chance open and ask you, in closing, about the excerpt of Norman Mailer's *Of a Fire on the Moon* (1972), which you chose to reproduce in this Source Book. Why did you choose this particular book and the particular chapter on the psychology of machines?

ED: At first, there was the thought that I would write a text for the Source Book, but in fact I write very little. If anything, I write facts and some of these are in this book. But then, the summer before the exhibition I read Mailer's curious book, which is not a novel, it is not fiction, but it is an adventure about a moment of progress that my entire generation witnessed. Norman Mailer received his diploma

from Harvard in aeronautical engineering and *Of a Fire on the Moon* is an account of the Apollo 11 flight, which he was commissioned to write on by Life magazine. This is the flight which landed the first humans on the moon on July 20, 1969. I clearly remember the day when we saw Armstrong on television. It was the beginning of the ideology of the image. Now, part of the process of most artworks involves seeing how a machine will generate images.

In Mailer's account, we can see how the gap between the real and the imaginary - represented by the urgency of those men in sending three astronauts to the moon - is part of the story of humanity, comparable to the quest for the Holy Grail or the crusades. Nothing in this venture was rational, but the author tells us how and why what appears to be rational in the second half of the twentieth century (science, technology) is put to the service of the irrational. In the chapter I chose - "The Psychology of Machines" - Mailer brings together the material and the immaterial. Reason separates them, but our unconscious brings them together. You need a certain attitude in order to feel the temperament of a house, a car, a sewing machine, shoes and clothes, etc. We know or we feel this, but we rarely know how to articulate such sensations. In my opinion, Norman Mailer succeeds in doing this. He evokes the invisible things that cross the earth, the air and our organisms, the electrical, electromagnetic and terrestrial waves, those oscillating phenomena.

Translated from the French by Dean Inkster

Any resemblance to persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental...



The Black Body
is an idealized object.
It absorbs
all electromagnetic radiation
that falls on it.
No electromagnetic radiation passes through,
none is reflected.
Because no light is reflected
or transmitted,
the object appears black
when it is cold.

There are no strictly Black Bodies in nature.



In October 2000 the U.S. District Judge, Claude M. Hilton ruled that the Moment of Silence Law was constitutional.

The Law was enacted for a secular purpose.

It does not advance or inhibit religion nor is there excessive entanglement with religion.

People may think as they wish, and this thinking can be purely religious in nature or purely secular in nature.

> During a moment of silence participants may typically bow their heads, remove hats, refrain from speaking or moving for the duration.

A person officiating or presiding over the gathering will be responsible for the declaring and timing of the period of silence.



Time took on different shapes according to social categories.

Through the progressive learning of the minute then of the second and then of the hundredth, then the thousandth of a second.

In the countryside it took longer because of the rarity of clocks.

The most common tasks
were estimated
in accordance with the length
of the Lord's prayer.



It was a silent film.

It was produced by Charlie Chaplin in 1926

It was directed by Joseph Von Steinberg.

The shooting was long.

It was projected in one go
before a restrained audience.

John Grierson Steinberg,

who was in the audience,
later said that it was a series of long shots of the sea,

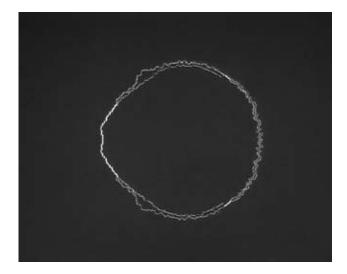
with no characters,

no animals.

Chaplin voluntarily destroyed the film.

He burned the only existing copy.

Sound takes one second of imperceptible silence to reach a person who is 370 yards away.

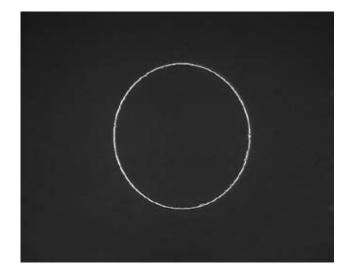


The second
has always been defined
according to the technical possibilities
of each time.

It was initially regarded as a fraction of the average terrestrial day.

Since the 1967 **General Conference** on Weights and Measures [held in Paris] which took into account the irregularities of the movement of the Earth, the second has no longer been defined according to time, but by comparison to a property of matter that is equal to 9192631770 periods of radiation, corresponding to the transition between the two hyperfine levels of the fundamental state of the cesium 133 atom at rest at a temperature of 0 K.

This detail underlines the fact that at 300 K, in relation to its theoretical value, the transition in question is subject to a displacement of frequency due to the effects of the Black Body radiation.

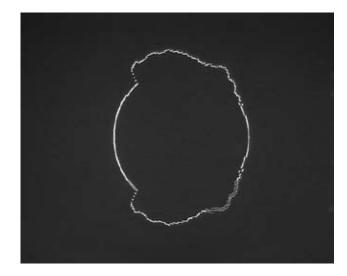


In 40,000 years the Voyager spaceship will come near another star, meaning in this case within around 1.7 light-years distance.

The ship is transporting sounds and images selected to portray the diversity of life and culture on Earth.

It is intended for any intelligent extraterrestrial life form or for humans in the distant future who may find it.

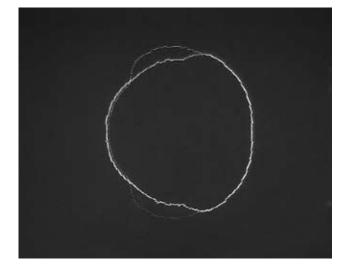
It is now in empty space.



Land
ownership includes
the ownership of what exists
above
and beneath.

Real estate
takes the appearance
of a conic shape
whose summit is at
the centre of
the Earth,
whose surface holds
the appropriate plot of land
and whose content holds
unlimited space in height.

By purchasing land
one becomes the owner
of the column of airspace
that rises to the sky
within the bounds of the plot of land
as well
as of all the matter
that covers the ground.



Birds and turtles
detect the Earth's magnetic field.
They use it to navigate during migration.
Cows align their bodies north-south
in response
to the magnetic field.

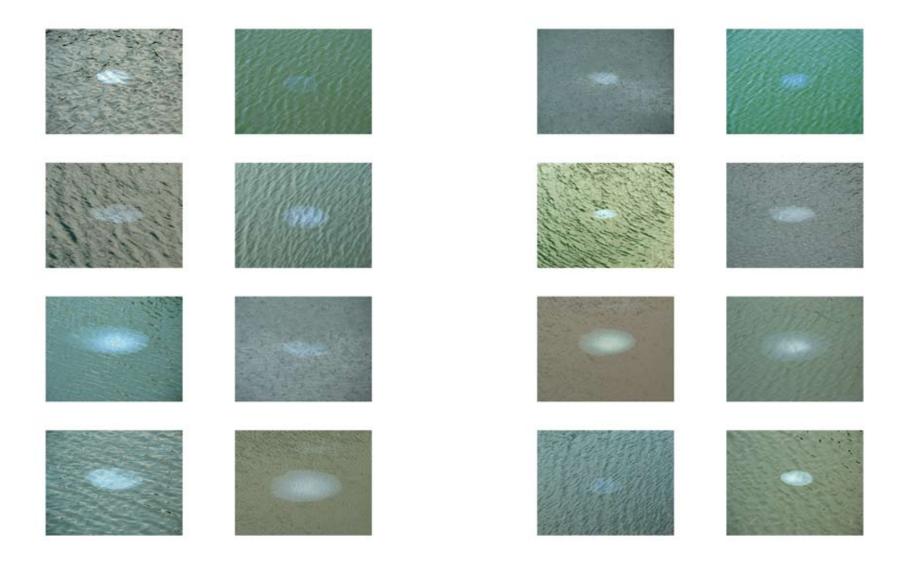


Installation view: Edith Dekyndt's Agnosia exhibition at Witte de With, Center for Contemporary Art, 2009 Photo: Kirsten de Graaf (KdG) p.58 Source Book 8/2010 p.59 Works





Installation view: One Second of Silence (Part 03, Rotterdam), 2009 Looped video projection, 21' Photo: Pierre Henri Leman (PHL) p.60 Source Book 8/2010 p.61 Works



Details: Gowanus, 2008 Photos: courtesy the artist (ED) p.62 Source Book 8/2010 p.63 Works







(Opposite page) Installation view: Ground Control, 2008 Polypropylene structure filled with Helium and Oxygen (KdG above and PHL below)

Installation view: Static Sound, 2004 Video projection with sound, 4'18" looped (KdG)

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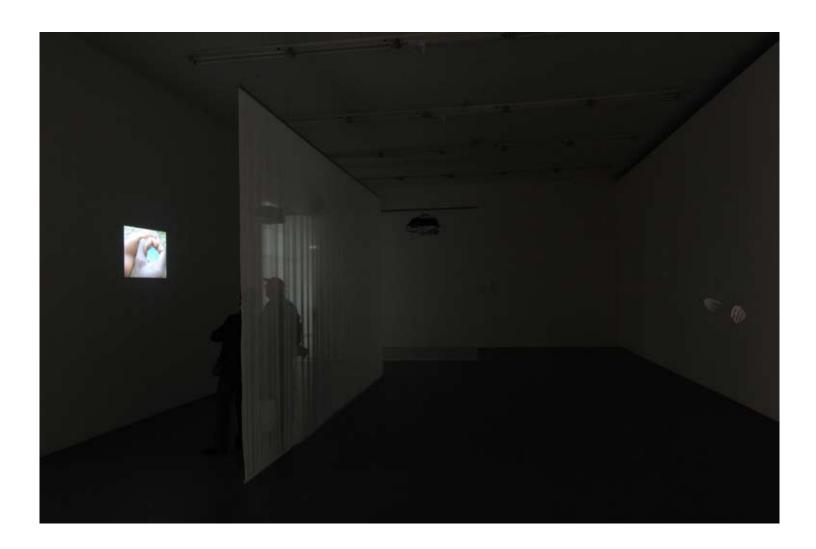






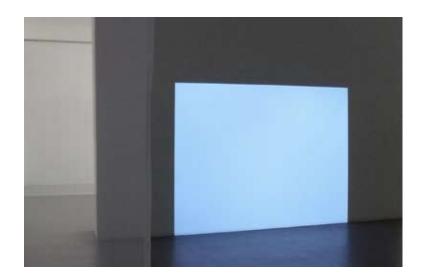


p.66 Source Book 8/2010 p.67 Works

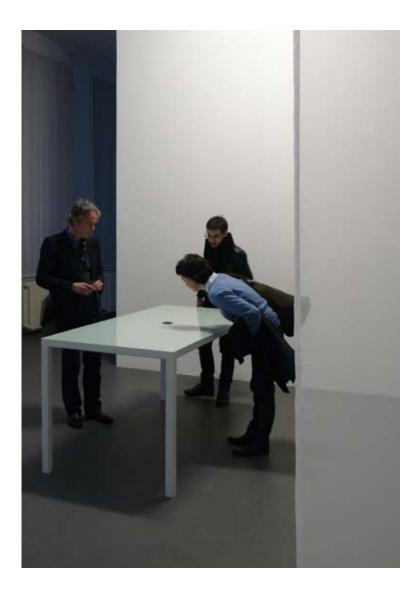


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Installation view: Martial 0, 2007 Glass table, magnets, motor, iron dust (PHL)

p.72 Source Book 8/2010



Blank Flag

Renske Janssen

Do you want to be *covered* or do you want to be *seen*? -

And the garment – how it becomes you! starry with the eyes of others, $% \left\{ 1\right\} =\left\{ 1$

weeping -

Jorie Graham

"Notes on the Reality of the Self" from Materialism (1993)

p.74 Source Book 8/2010 p.75 Blank Flag

As I start writing this text I am thinking: "How to write about an image or a set of images when, already, another picture has planted itself with severe persistence in the back of my mind?" It has been there without me knowing it, waiting patiently to be covered or to be seen. It simply resists forgetting and currently insists on becoming a central figure in this story.



Giorgione da Castelfranco, *Portrait of a Young Man*, ca. 1505, oil on canvas, 58 × 46 cm Gemäldeqalerie, Staatliche Museen, Berlin

The picture in question is titled *Portrait of a Young Man*. It was painted around 1505 by an Italian painter of the High Renaissance, Giorgione da Castelfranco. I first encountered this fairly small portrait in the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin, not so long ago. As I wandered by myself through the huge galleries full of paintings made centuries ago, now hanging in dark and decorative frames or just on wooden panels, with hardly any free space on the walls, I thought over my professional life as a curator of contemporary art over the past few years. "What ever did it mean?" I thought, and "Would all the contemporary images I have seen so far become a part of history one day as well – enlarged in frames

or placed in spaces like this?" From this thought, many other thoughts emerged, as I travelled into a more personal fantasy of the future, a complete fiction of course, because what I was longing for had not yet occured. What images will survive time, which ones will disappear and why? Giorgione's portrait lodged itself into my loose train of thoughts, forcing me to find myself back in the here and now. The sceptical gaze of the young man followed me around the museum and it has yet to leave my mind. The painted boy has a somewhat distorted right eye (the left for us viewers), which is slightly out of focus as it gazes to our right. What was on his mind? Did he continue to look this way at Giorgione, while being painted? Was this a thought he expressed in a single instant that the painter managed to capture so well? Or was it, perhaps, Giorgione's attempt to render his own complexity that produced this picture? Is this a self-portrait? Over the past months, I have started to identify with Giorgione's young man - his look of distrust towards the one who paints him. For some reason, when someone takes a picture of me, I get that same feeling; you never know where your image will end up and when I see the picture of myself it is not usually how I see myself. But more to the point, the ambiguity of it all compels me to think longer about the image. Whose story is imbedded in it: that of the boy, the painter, or myself?

Finding out more about the story behind this young man's gaze could take me to well-kept archives somewhere in an old, Renaissance library in Venice Italy, where I may be able to study the sophisticated lifestyle of Giorgione himself. In Vasari's *The Lives of Artists*, I can read that Giorgione played the fiddle to accompany his own singing voice, and that he was a much-admired musician and performer.\(^1\) Maybe the painter even performed while he was taking breaks from painting the portrait of the young man, acting a bit funny in front of his subject, causing the young man to look at him and us with slight mistrust. Or maybe Giorgione was not such a good musician after all and the boy's gaze should instead be interpreted as rather critical. Regardless of his musical talent, Giorgione's picture has a perfect pitch. As a

¹ Vasari, De levens van de kunstenaars 1 (Amsterdam: Pandora Pockets, 1995), 303.

p.76 Source Book 8/2010 p.77 Blank Flag

painter, he performed in such a way as to capture the best pose of his subject, his opponent, or perhaps even of his alter ego.

One trigger which brought *Portrait of a Young Man* to the surface for me was Edith Dekyndt's *One Second of Silence [Part 03, Rotterdam]* from 2008. This is a fairly small video projection showing a singular flag attached to a pole, waving in the wind against the backdrop of an overcast sky. The flag contains no colours, no symbols; it is blank and transparent. Both Giorgione's and Dekyndt's images were taken from a somewhat low angle. Both concern solitary figures, subjects or objects, which in their appearance turn themselves slightly away from the viewer. They cause the total image to become more indefinite, more mysterious and, as such, perhaps more real, as only reality can have this sort of impact. Only reality plants itself in the back of your mind. And for that reason I take these images very seriously.

Earlier this year, before seeing Dekyndt's image, but after my trip to the Gemäldegalerie, I travelled to Los Angeles, where another, more contemporary picture recalled my very first encounter with Giorgione's young man, and gave rise to an even more intense encounter with Dekyndt's One Second of Silence. It was a photograph by Monica Nouwens, a Dutch artist based in Los Angeles. In her photograph, entitled Kyle (2009), a dandyish guy plays a game of pool. In looking at this image, what springs to my mind is the rejuvenated idea of dandyism or bohemianism, where individuals who revolt against mainstream society are still willing to be part of it, but use it for the means of personal or financial profit, thus unleashing a critique from the inside with ironic means. This stepping in and out of the system could be considered as a game of pool indeed. Waiting and thinking about what his next move will be, Kyle bends slightly to the left, effecting a subtle diagonal turn in the composition of the picture. Nouwens was able to capture this critical moment, when the pool player is obviously no longer aware of her presence. She has become an unidentified agent in space, miraculously managing to take the best shots because she appears as a natural part of the interior of the bar. She is, what we might call, "one with her subject." Such a position can only be assumed by someone who does not want to acknowledge his or her position as being performative and who, instead,

performs as a method actor would – someone who shifts easily between different roles, between different identities, interiors and exteriors, like a nomad claiming no space at all. The artist blends in, becomes invisible and with that appears perfectly natural.



Monica Nouwens, Kyle, 2009 Digital lightjet print, 34×50 cm Courtesy the artist

What on earth do these three images have in common?! Why won't they leave my thoughts? And why are they connected? While writing these very words, I am being gazed upon by books on shelves, where many critical theories await implementation, theories dealing with the possible nature of contemporary image production something that, if I have to say anything about it, seems to be more complicated today than ever before. I am not sure who to quote or how to choose between the many authors on the subject of images. If I were certain, perhaps I would also include the Other too easily into this discussion, thereby losing my subjective trajectory, one bent on answering why these images do something to *me* in particular. What might it mean to have no fixed state, no space or location to claim and only to fill the spaces inbetween?

p.78 Source Book 8/2010 p.79 Blank Flag

In all cases, the artists in question seem to be most comfortable when working in this in-between space, between subject and object, between performance and spontaneous act. They master their images like a sorcerer might master his object in the moment when he makes the rabbit in the hat appear and disappear, for better or for worse. In the case of the artist's work, the image is his or her material - it is where "location" may be claimed - and portraits (of the self, the individual, or of others, the collective) are precisely the assertion of a location for a subject or object. In sorcery, ambiguity (or mystery) is required and in science one tries to explain and "solve" ambiguity. Indeed, sometimes an artist is more a scientist than a sorcerer. Some are more analytical, sincere, frank even, while others choose to create confusion and - perhaps for heightened suspense - choose not to explain or show everything. The artist makes sure that the image floats in-between different meanings and remains applicable in different contexts. Is there someone who *knows* exactly what he or she is doing or what the best picture must be and why, and equally is there someone who knows why these images have such a huge effect and why they might be able to change the way we look at other things? It is this role of the maker, the picture maker and the editor, that fascinates me, as well as how my own memory works in relation to their creations. The artist's role can be extremely powerful and should therefore be continually questioned, as it overlaps science with sorcery.

In a 1964 letter to Werner von Braun at NASA, the artist James Lee Byars, who levitated like no other between mysticism and science, inquired whether it would be possible to employ a government rocket or satellite in order to send into space a folded piece of white paper, measuring eight miles by four inches. This paper was meant "to be dropped to fall on our beautiful prairie at its flattest point using international instantaneous Tel-Star announcements."² Mixing scientific means with artistic experiment, Byars seems to question the relationship between universal and subjective perspectives. In his proposal, both of these realms

(which are often opposed in the world at large) carry an equal weight. He thus provokes a perspective where science and art are equal partners so to speak. In this work, Byars comes close to Edith Dekyndt's reductive visual strengths but also her talent to overlap the subjective with the objective.

The moving image of a lonely transparent flag waving persistently in the wind is hardly distinguishable from the image of the air and sky itself. It is air. Captured here is an image seemingly without an author; it exists on its own. Sometimes it moves fast, sometimes slowly. For me, the nature of a flag lies in its indication of boundaries, between the land and the seas, in the mind and between people. But when a flag is void of symbols, being loosely attached to a pole where its cloth is almost taken away by the wind into sky and space, one can only conjure new land and think about a new future. A land and a future in which there are no histories (and where none are promised), no memories. no wars, no death camps. Thus, transparency also implies negotiation and openness. It is a word often used against another word: corruption. In theory, this image should be incredibly democratic in its nature; everybody should be able to project his or her own fantasy onto it.

Or is transparency ("democracy") just a contemporary, convenient verbal veil in which one is allowed to hide one's true motivations and avoid naming things? It is sometimes easier not to speak about things than it is to give them a real name. When the word is out, there is nothing to hope for, nothing to delude oneself with. Should I perhaps be silent for a moment in order to think about what this appropriation of a traditional flag really means?

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One Second of Silence is an invitation to pause, and perhaps also a simple means to experience freedom of thought. If I start to think about what the title might mean to me, what it evokes, I end up thinking new thoughts. Could the real value of social beings and what they have been producing over centuries be revealed in one second? One second is not just a second. In one second you could get killed. One second is a measure of time, and time is a true value here. It seems that, when the artist is using a universal symbol such as a flag, she is also guiding us through centuries of human

2 Klaus Ottmann, "The Art of Happenstance.The Performative Sculptures of James Lee Byars," Sculpture Magazine 21 no.9, (Washington, D.C.:

International Sculpture Center). Article available online www.sculpture.org/documents/ scmaq02/nov02/byars/byars.shtml p.80 Source Book 8/2010 p.81 Blank Flag

political history. One second in Dekyndt's artistic perspective is more like one hundred years, and thus a metaphor for timelessness and infinity.

Silence, however, seems to be a more conflicted idea. Silence is a restraint from speech, a total lack of audible sound, and even inarticulate phonetics are not allowed in the space of silence. Dekyndt's video is silent. Traditionally, a flag is used to mark the land and even to announce its violent seizure, but when silence is mentioned in the context of Dekyndt's flag piece, it is more likely to evoke the practice of honoring victims. Silence becomes a warning against what strong symbols bring forward. Implicitly, silence might lead to nothingness, the air and sky, aphasia. Silence is the same as death in the eyes of some. Dekyndt brings forward an ambiguous image, which shows both the potential for abandoning all familiar symbols of power and for creating new spaces and meanings, perhaps even liberation. But the emptiness that her image leaves behind is frightening.

One Second of Silence might be understood as a reductive, minimalist follow-up to an earlier work by Edith Dekyndt entitled Alpha-Zulu (2004, referring to the verbal and phonetical alphabet that is used in police and army communications. For this short video, Dekyndt collected all the national flags she could find, including those of countries not acknowledged by the United Nations (such as Tibet and the states of the now-defunct Soviet Union, as well as those of nomadic societies). The flags were then shown in alphabetical order, each appearing for one quarter of a second, a speed at which the image is hardly perceptible to the human eye. The video has something of an hypnotic effect; it makes you feel numb and somnolent at first. But the fact that it has been implanted in my memory (I only saw it once in 2004) means that it is an active image in the long run.



Alpha-Zulu, 2004 Silent video projection, O' 31" looped (ED)

Each image was once made in a certain context and for a certain reason, but when it is propelled into the present, it can take on another meaning. To become new, fresh and ready to be reconsidered all over again, the image has to question the flow of time. The continual depiction of the transparent flag, which is so temporally named, *One Second of Silence*, as well as the renaissance painting of the young man's immediate, direct and distrustful gaze, or the poolplaying dandy who is in and out of the game – all these images invite a constant reconsideration of our own present and presence, of the things we already know or think we know.

There exist images that, when you start questioning them, make you question your own position in turn, forcing you to evoke this with greater radicality and vigor. They evolve the self. And they leave an eternal imprint. When watching Dekyndt's *One Second of Silence [Part 03, Rotterdam]*, there come moments that a bird can be seen flying right through the transparency of the flag. The depicted object is life-like as well as dreamlike. It looks absolutely logical and yet one never sees a bird flying across a flag. A bird often symbolises freedom as it flies unimpeded over countries and conti-

p.82 Source Book 8/2010 p.83 Blank Flag

nents, and it makes the flag even more honourable and timeless. After watching the video for a while, I "wake up." After some daydreams, there comes a moment when all things in the world seem absolutely logical and clear, and life makes sense for once. But then, just one second after this soothing revelation, the contentment turns into absolute confusion, in which it is difficult to remember what day it is. Who am I now? Whom and what was I resisting again?

The idea of redefining one's identity, redefining one's conditioned knowledge, is the essence of Dekyndt's One Second of Silence. And because of the void this moving image stirs up, all kinds of other images are able to do the same. These images make you experience freedom because their ambiguity forces a subjective reflection. In this sense, the image might depict a crisis of the subject, of the eye / I. I begin to think of a moment when there would be one flag for the whole world, instead of thousands of different ones. one flag for humanity, a giant transparent global flag, depicting a universal future. The transparent quality of the flag leads me to rethink worn-out notions of anarchy, or what freedom means today inside this oh-so-liberal late capitalism. The flag transforms all kinds of institutions, and it compels me to feel what it is to be a non-state actor, critically detached from the state of things.

Walking through Edith Dekyndt's exhibition at Witte de With, upon my return from Los Angeles, I had the sense that the works - comprised of photographs, videos and objects, spread out over the mirrored space of Witte de With's second floor - were functioning like notes on a sheet of music. Each could be read individually, while hearing another melody that wove all of them together. Some images (such as the transparent flag of One Second of Silence) were situated high on a wall, while others (such as the magic hands of XY 02 (2008) which conduct a thin, almost invisible, thread in the air) were cast at evelevel of the "average" visitor (measuring about 170 cm tall, like myself). At times, and mostly at high noon, when the daylight coming in through a back window was most intense, it occurred to me that the projected image almost disappeared, or grew quiet. The beaming light of the projectors faded drastically in comparison to the daylight, but as soon as the sun disappeared behind Rotterdam's cloudy sky, the image reappeared in sharp intensity. The

sudden shift drew my eyes to the projectors, which had a reassuring physicality that guarded against disappearance. Dekyndt's works are all connected with an invisible thread. But like the aforementioned thread of *XY 02* or, even more magically, like the voluminous, helium-filled, black rubber ball of *Ground Control* (2008), they all float gracefully as individual image-objects. Each occupies space and time, each within its own rhythm. They exist individually. Yet in drawing attention to what lies outside the image, Dekyndt's works gain in individuality and graceful presence.

And just like Giorgione who, besides altarpieces and portraits, painted pictures without visible allegorical content, Dekyndt refuses to tell a story. Her works simply embody form and color, perhaps implying moods of lyrical, political or romantic feeling, much as a musician might embody sounds. The title that Dekyndt gave to her exhibition, *Agnosia*, refers to similar states of being and to the even more tragic neurological disease of *a-gnosis*, "non-knowledge," or loss of knowledge – the loss of ability to recognize objects, persons, sounds, shapes, or smells while specific senses are not defective, and while there is no significant memory loss. We see things, but we are unable to attach any knowledge to them. This estrangement sets the mood.

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Edith Dekyndt's work tends to question the state of our knowledge, to address our living memory by imposing "transparency" on us, and to propose an open field for the viewer to fill. The fragmentation of narrative that comes out through the experience of the exhibition is indeed a result of an imposed agnosia, of a non-knowledge, of the artist's refusal to create a comprehensive story; and this seems to be a necessary artistic strategy. Faced with a blank flag, the viewer attempts to give it meaning somehow. This is a risky undertaking as one is simultaneously forced to tell a story of the Self, or of a complete fiction, or of a space of ambiguity in which no clear choice can be made. Yet while *not finding* the one meaning of such an image, many new things plunge in and out of sight: "Oh mind, what you're doing!"

March 2009

The Device Isn't a Spaceship, It's a Time Machine

Wim Waelput

I had the pleasure of working with Edith Dekyndt in the context of her recent exhibition at KIOSK entitled *Get out of My Cloud.*¹ During this collaboration, I became acquainted with the way the artist works and closely followed the creation of *Carousel*, a new installation that Dekyndt conceived specifically for this exhibition. In retrospect, the story of the creation of *Carousel* may give us insight into Edith Dekyndt's practice as a whole.

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Carousel (2010), which was first presented between the 8th of May and the 13th of June, 2010, took advantage of the semicircular spatial qualities of the central exhibition space at KIOSK. Dekyndt created a relatively sober presentation with a rather ingenious intertwining of visual and audio components: Physically, the installation is largely made up of a Kodak slide projector, the familiar Carousel model made for 80 slide transparencies, which can be shown, one by one, at fixed intervals. In this case, the slides are unusual in that they are actually glass slide mounts that have remained in their original container for over fifty years, before coming into the possession of the artist. Each 35 mm

¹ KIOSK is an exhibition venue on the grounds of the Ghent Art Academy (KASK) which I have directed since 2006.

mount holds two glass plates to protect the developed film frame that awaits insertion; some of these plates seem to have been coated with an emulsion or lubricant that had dried and crackled over the decades. Despite the fact that the packaging has never been opened, minute dust particles have penetrated the boxes and adhered themselves to the glass. Dekyndt takes these as readymade "images," created not by people exposing film, but by time itself. At KIOSK, these non-human images were presented on a large scale, projected onto a white wall one after the other, in a continuous loop, while the clicking sound of the projector was heard throughout the exhibition space, amplified by various speakers.

Thus far, we may observe that *Carousel* is modest and requires minimal physical intervention on the part of the artist, though, in terms of content, it demands multilayered interpretations. The artist seems to have positioned her installation on the boundary between prosaic representation and poetic form, opening a complex world to her audience, a world that shifts back and forth between clinical coolness and a profound subjective tension.

Also included in the installation, on the backside of the projection wall, was a flat-screen monitor playing a fragment from the recently created cult American television series, *Mad Men.* The fragment in question is a short monologue from an episode entitled *The Wheel.* Only the sound and the English subtitling were shown – the visuals having been entirely removed. One heard and read the words of a sentimental Don Draper, the series' main protagonist, who ascribes almost magical powers to the Kodak Carousel projector:

Teddy told me that in Greek, nostalgia literally means the pain from an old wound. It's a twinge in your heart, far more powerful than memory alone. This device isn't a space-ship, it's a time machine. It goes backwards, forwards. It takes us to a place where we ache to go again. It's not called a wheel, it's called a carousel. It lets us travel the way a child travels. Round and around and back home again, to a place where we know we are loved.

As an installation, *Carousel* requires consideration within the framework of an ongoing investigation that Edith Dekyndt has pursued since 1999, which she refers to as "Universal Research of Subjectivity." Dekyndt's terminology is certainly unconventional. In English, it is customary to speak of research "on" or "into" something, rather than research "of" something. The incorrect formulation nevertheless relates two supposedly conflicting domains – research (which implies objective observation) and subjectivity (which implies the personal vision of the observer). It also suggests the field of tension in which Dekyndt places her art as a whole: At one pole are worlds that can be indexically registered and at the other pole lie our personal, subjective or sensual perceptions.

On entering the semicircular KIOSK gallery, *Carousel's* viewers are immediately confronted with the white rectangular wall, centrally placed, with the light from the Carousel projector (behind them) projected repeatedly onto its surface. One might simply walk past this without connecting what is on view to any form of reality. The projected images may appear to be empty, giving the impression of a cumulative "nothingness." On longer view, however, a more specific response might follow as the particles and the craquelure in the slide mounts strike the viewer – razor sharp and microscopically enlarged. We are suddenly confronted with the enormous pictorial power of these images and see a wealth of variations and subtleties.

At this level, Dekyndt's work has elements in common with the visual vocabulary of certain works that bridged the Minimalist and the Conceptualist experiments of the 1960s and 1970s. A comparison with the work of Nam June Paik quickly comes to mind. In Paik's Zen for Film (1968), a film shot without lighting is shown in a repeating loop. We come to see that this moving image is made up of the light from the projector, which also reveals the damage to the film and the dust that has settled on the celluloid. Edith Dekyndt's Discrete Piece (1997), in which the dust particles floating in a space are captured by a projected light and seen onto the surface of a wall, has a similar visual aesthetic, which emphasizes making something out of seemingly nothing. In both instances, we perceive a microscopic representation of time going by. Dust accumulates over the hours,

days and years; and as such, it may be called the physical trace of time, aiding time's poetic visualisation.

The work of Edith Dekyndt tends to disconnect perceptual phenomena from their indexical basis, entering the domain of subjective perception as the very object of representation. Thus, while they may bear the appearance of a series of clinical observations, the artist's practical experiments do not aim at empirical results. The factual character of the recorded image has a different purpose: Namely, it aims to sensitize her audience, to sharpen the spectators' sense of perception. Thus, in *Carousel*, while Dekyndt makes barely perceptible dust particles visible to us, the works' stimulus is not for the eyes alone. The countless visits that the artist made to KIOSK, during her preparations prior to the exhibition, have undoubtedly contributed to a spatial integration and an experience of presence. With each of her visits, the work gradually evolved into a whole, one that explicitly commanded its own place and which took full advantage of spatial characteristics inherent to the gallery. Even more than the spatial integration of the Carousel projector, the addition of the sound component was of essential importance in that it intensified the experience of presence via sonic delay: As Dekyndt amplified the clicking of the projector, the sound was held up by a fraction of a second, en route to the various loudspeakers. This did not result from extra manipulation on Dekyndt's part. Rather, simply by using a wireless microphone, which amplified the clicking sound, the poor acoustics of the hemicycle space produced an echo. Such direct aspects of sound and image recording and transmission are a notable priority in Dekyndt's work. She often starts from an elementary registration using remarkably simple technological means. It is the spatial context of the presentation, which becomes important in embodying the technical sensitivities of the media at hand.

Along with the repetitive clicking of the projector, we also hear the sound of the video fragment. Here, organ music accompanies the aforementioned sentimental narrative spoken by Don Draper. The combination of music and voice entice viewers to look behind the wall, where the television fragment is being played. In addition to this initial objective of attracting the audience, the audio component also plays

a role in the visitors' experience of the space itself. Organ music echoes throughout the space, taking on an almost religious dimension, with the neo-Gothic architecture of KIOSK reinforcing that experience. This aural effect adds subtlety and nuance to the enigmatic and minimal visuals which initially confront the visitor to the gallery – it brings a prominent emotional aspect into play. This juxtaposition of the cerebral and the emotional sets the tone for a new openness to the subjective experience of the work of art, in which aesthetics, conceptualism and sensitivity reinforce one another for a better un-derstanding of reality.

If, in the reserved way that it relates to its environment and in its simple and pure formalism, Edith Dekyndt's work is indebted to Minimalism, she sees no contradiction between the Minimalist principles of material facticity and simplicity, on the one hand, and complex human and emotional factors, on the other. She bends the process of reduction and limitation, so that the metaphysical dimension and contemplative aspects of "nothingness" can take on new and more pregnant meanings. Here, we no longer recognize an abstraction or objectification of reality, but rather grasp the complex realism of what, on first glance, appears abstract. With her work, Dekyndt undermines the binary contrast between materiality and immateriality, between hyperrealistic reproduction and poetic image. The artist creates the conditions within which our perception of reality does not need to be understood by way of the traditionally opposed relationship between object and subject. The observer becomes a part of the installation. She situates her work in this expansive domain, so that each element of our sensual experience plays a role and the subjectivity of each individual viewer is offered all the space it requires to confront its own processes of perception.

Beyond the aural and the visual there is also a temporal dimension. The clicking of the projector may thus be understood to set a pulse in time, relating to the viewer's own actual experience of the present, yet accompanying the works of many years past: In contrast to the presentness of the clicking, there is the unpacking and projecting of the old glass of the slide mounts, which, over the course of more than 50 years, have been registering the atmospheric conditions to which they were subjected. Each click in real time

announces the presentation of a time capsule. And this time compression is subjected to further changes, starting from the moment the work is first shown to the public in 2010. The act of taking the slide mounts out of their packaging exposed the glass to new atmospheric influences, with a new future condition already being introduced. With this idea, *Carousel* creates a specific relationship with time. The process of change in the images continues into a future that cannot be measured.

June 2010

Translated from the Dutch by Mari Shields

EDITH DEKYNDT

Born 1960 in Ypres, Belgium Lives and works in Tournai, Belgium and Strasbourg, France p.94 Source Book 8/2010 p.95 Selected Exhibitions

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2010

- KIOSK, Ghent, *Get Out Of My Cloud*, curated by Wim Waelput

2009

- MAC's, Grand-Hornu, Les ondes de Love
- Meyer & Riegger Gallery, Karlsruhe, *Soleil Public*
- Karine Günther Gallery, Hamburg, At Night I Lie
- Les Filles du Calvaire Gallery, Paris, The Transparent Ceiling
- Witte de With, Rotterdam,
 Edith Dekyndt Agnosia,
 curated by Juan A. Gaitán
 and Nicholaus Schafhausen

2008

- Parker's Box Gallery, Brooklyn, One second of Silence, curated by Alun Williams
- Program Gallery, Berlin,
 Present Perfect
- Galerie Les Filles du Calvaire, Brussels, *Present Perfect*

2007

- Project room, Galerie Les Filles du Calvaire Gallery, Brussels, *Martial M*

2006

 ARCH 2 Gallery, University of Manitoba, Faculty of Architecture & Plug In Institute of Contemporary Art, Winnipeg, Two White Pieces, curated by Richard Perron and Neil Minuk

2004

- Detrois Studio, Brussels, Zap & Provisory Object 03, curated by Yolande de Bontridder

- Porte 11 Gallery, Brussels, Edith Dekyndt
- B.P.S. 22 espace de creation contemporaine, Charleroi, Edith Dekyndt, Any resemblance to persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental

2003

- Le Comptoir du Nylon, Brussels, *Soleil Public*, curated by Frédérique Versaen
- Centre d'Art Chapelle de Boondael, Brussels, Before Life (Myodesopsies 01)

1999

- Plug In Institute of Contemporary Art, Winnipeg, Edith Dekyndt, Probable Pieces & Chris Dorosz, Recent Work, Curated by Wayne Baerwaldt
- Les Témoins Oculistes, Brussels, *Probable Piece*

1998

- Or Gallery, Vancouver, Edith Dekyndt & Damien Moppett/ Discreet Piece, curated by Reid Shier and Kitty Scott
- Espace l'Escaut, Brussels, Worthlessness, curated by Olivier Bastin

1996

- Galerie Oeil, Forbach, Edith Dekyndt Installation
- c/o Christophe Lezaire, Herinnes, *Laboratory 02*

1995

- Galerie L'Escaut, Brussels, Laboratory Ol

1993

- Themistocles Gallery, Mexico City, To Clean a Room

1992

- Galerie Koma, Mons, Nihil Novum Sub Sole

1990

- c/o Klaus Haas, Leuven, *Leg-enda Aurea (details)*, curated by Klaus Haas.

1989

- Galerie Koma, Mons, Ad Quadratum

1986

- Galerie Koma, Mons, Tout doit disparaître, Eric Muller et Edith Dekyndt

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2010

- Museum of Modern Art, New York, On Line. Drawing Through the 20th Century, curated by Catherine de Zegher and Connie Butler
- Centre national d'art contemporain, Roubaix, Art Belge Contemporain, Le Fresnoy, curated by Dominique Païni
- The David Roberts Art Foundation, London, *The Moon is an Arrant*, curated by Oliver Martinez Kandt
- Galerie Sequence, Saguenay, The Shape of Time, curated by Nicole Ginaras
- Musée de la mer, Biarritz, Ocean, curated by Florence Guionneau-Joie
- The Richard Massey Foundation for Arts and Sciences, New York, Opening Exhibition
- La Villa du Parc, Centre d'Art Contemporain Annemasse, Before Present
- FRAC Lorraine, Metz, A 1' ombre d'un doute, curated by Beatrice Josse

- Galerie Poirel, Nancy, Drawing Time, curated by Marie
 Cozette
- Kunsthalle Exnergasse,
 Vienna, Make the Most of Now,
 curated by Max Benkendorff
- Parker's Box Gallery, Brooklyn, Unidentified Living Objects, curated by Hélianthe Bourdeaux-Maurin
- Centre d'Art Neuchâtel, Composite Visions
- Exit Art, New York, Waterpod: Autonomy and Ecology
- FDC Satellite Gallery, Brussels, Speed Dating, curated by Lilou Vidal

- Contemporary Art Museum, Hiroshima, Silence, a composition, curated by Tanja Elstgeest
- Meyer & Riegger Gallery, Karlsruhe, Edith Dekyndt & Michael Stevenson
- Robert Miller Gallery, New York, *In Time*, curated by Tim Goossens
- Dialogue of Four Cultures Festival, Lodz, Anabasis: Rituals of Homecoming, curated by Adam Budak
- Waterpod, New York, *Waterpod Powow*, curated by Eve K. Tremblay and Mary Mattingly
- Artnews Projects, Berlin, The New Easy, curated by Lars Eijssen
- Musée Réattu, Arles, Chambre d'écho
- Cul-de-sac, Venice, curated by Lino Polegato
- F.R.A.C. Pays de Loire, Carquefou, *Le sang du poète*,

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- curated by Laurence Gateau and Adam Budak
- S.M.A.K., Ghent, Faux-Jumeaux, curated by Hans Theys
- Galerie Les Filles du Calvaire, Brussels, There is No(w) Romaticism, curated by Lilou Vidal
- De Garage, Mechelen, Not Nothing, curated by Edwin Carels as part of All that is solid melts into air, a project of MuHKA, Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst Antwerpen
- S.M.A.K., Ghent, Faux-Jumeaux, curated by Guillaume Désanges
- F.R.A.C. Picardie, Amiens, Acquisitions 2007 - 2008
- Museu da Republica, Rio de Janeiro, *Nos (Us)*, curated by Daniella Geo

2008

- KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, Political/Minimal, curated by Klaus Biesenbach (travelling to Museum Sztuki, Lodz in 2009)
- Brussels Biennial 1, Midi Station, Brussels, Show Me, Don't Tell Me curated by Nicolaus Schafhausen and Florian Waldvogel of Witte de With, Rotterdam
- F.R.A.C. Lorraine, Metz, (A)pesanteur, récit sans gravité, curated by Béatrice Josse
- Palais de Justice de Bruxelles, Corpus Delictis
- Parker Box Gallery, Brooklyn, Mortal Coil, curated by Alun Williams

- Amores Theatre, Athens,
 Performa(c)tivity, curated by
 Katerina Tselou
- Hessenhuis, Antwerp,
 Prospect 58, curated by Pieter
 Vermeersch
- La 6e Biennale internationale de la Photographie et des Arts visuels de Liège, MAMAC, Liège, Térritoires

2007

- Galerie Les filles du Calvaire, Brussels, *Plier*, *Déplier*, curated by Edith Doove
- De Garage, Mechelen, Commitment, curated by Luk Lambrecht

2006

- MuKHA Media, Antwerp, Welcome Back, Mister Paik!
- Galerie Frédéric Desimpel,
 Brussels, Suite Fibonacci,
 curated by Christophe Veys
- Leonard & Bina Ellen Gallery, Concordia University, Montreal, *Tracer, Retracer 2*, curated by Nicole Gingras
- Anspach Galleries, Brussels, Crossing Anspach, curated by Sprezzatura
- Witte de With, Rotterdam, Satellite of Love, curated by Edwin Carrels
- Aline Vidal Galllery, Paris, Science Fictions
- LipanjePuntin Contemporary Art Gallery, Trieste, Catodica Ol, curated by Maria Campitelli

2005

 La Criée centre d'art contemporain, Rennes, Faire Signe, curated by Larys Froqier

- MAC's, Grand-Hornu, *Le Tab-leau des Eléments*, curated by Denis Gielen
- Tyler Art Gallery, University of New York, Oswego, *Locations*, curated by Julieve Jubin
- Krinzinger Projekte, Vienna, Brussels South Airport, curated by Pierre-Olivier Rollin
- Archétype Gallery, Brussels, Fermeture pour le Futur
- Matrix Art Project, Brussels, Emergency Biennial, curated by Jota Castro
- Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Valenciennes, M.T.R.O.

2004

- Porte 11 Gallery, Brussels, Un choix d'œuvres dans la collection de Christophe Veys
- Galerie Liane et Danny Taran, Montréal, *Le Temps qu'il* fait, curated by Cate Rimmer
- Espace Culturel BBL, Brussels, Act, curated by Michel Dereymaker
- Charles H. Scott Gallery, Vancouver, The Weather, curated by Cate Rimmer

2003

Porte 11 Gallery, Brussels,
 Papiers d'identités, curated
 by Christophe Veys

2002

- Espace 251 Nord, Liège, *Le* colloque des chiens, curated by Laurent Jacob
- Museum of Garden History, London, *Diversion*, curated by Danielle Arnaud
- Museum der Bildende Künste, Leipzig, Malerei ohne Malerei, curated by Dirk Luckow

2001

- Passage du Retz, Paris, Instants Fragiles, curated by Les Témoins Oculistes
- Tour & Taxis, Brussels, *Ici et maintenant*, curated by Laurent Jacob
- Pallazzo Franchetti, *La Trahison des Images*, curated
 by Laurent Jacob
- Les Témoins Oculistes, Brussels, *Things*

- Koninklijk Museum van Centraal Afrika, Tervuren, Exit Congo Museum, curated by Toma Muteba
- Etablissements d'en Face, Brussels, *Beyond Seasons*, curated by Eva González-Sancho
- Les Témoins Oculistes, Brussels, Histoires d'un monde éphémère
- 3. Biennale d'art contemporain, Centre Culturel d'Ottignies Louvain-la-Neuve, La conscience du monde
- CEAAC, Strasbourg, La frontière en tête
- Städtische Galerie Villa Streccius, Landau, Die Grenze im Kopf

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2009

- Gielen, Denis et al. Edith Dekyndt, I Remember Earth, Brussels: Facteur Humain. (exh. cat.)

2008

- Bonduel, Charlotte and Rodney LaTourelle. Edith Dekyndt, Subjects (Preview). Ghent: MER. Paper Kunsthalle. (exh. cat.)

2000

 Dekyndt, Edith. Programme for a Cold Place, Universal Research of Subjectivity, Tournai, Artist's Edition of 10.

1998

- Dekyndt, Edith. *Provisoires*, Artist's Edition of 50.

1996

 Dekyndt, Edith and Philippe Bertels, Les Délices (suite), Artist's Edition of 20 (signed and dated).

1995

- Dekyndt, Edith. Edith Dekyndt, Galerie L'Escaut, 1995, Artist's Edition of 20 (signed).

1993

- Dekyndt, Edith. Venise, Artist's Edition of 10, (signed and dated).

1992

 Dekyndt, Edith. Nihil Novum Sub Sole, Artist's Edition of 35 (numbered and signed).

1987

- Everaert, Louis. "Epiphanie", Fondation de la Tapisserie, Bourse de Recherche, Artist's Edition of 3

1986

 Dekyndt, Edith and Eric Muller. Tout Doit Disparaître, Artists' Edition of 40 (numbered and signed).

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This publication is occasioned by the exhibition Edith Dekyndt: Printed and bound in the Agnosia (28 February - 26 April 2009), curated by Juan A. Gaitán and Nicolaus Schafhausen at Witte de With, Center for Contemporary Art in Rotterdam.

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Additional Proof Reading

Thomas Cuckle

Graphic Design

Kummer & Herrman, Utrecht

Images

Installation views by Kirsten de Graaf and Pierre Henri Leman. Additional video stills and images courtesy of the artists and collections noted.

Publisher

Witte de With, Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam

Printed by

Veenman Drukkers, Rotterdam

ISBN: 978-90-73362-90-1 Netherlands.

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Special thanks to

Jean Adamoski, Pierre Henri Leman, Jeffrey Pasternak, Monica Nouwens, Lawrence Schiller, Galerie VidalCualietta (Brussels), Galerie Karin Günther (Hamburg) and Parkers Box (New York)

Distribution

International

Idea Books, Amsterdam, +31 (0)20 6226154 idea@ideabooks.nl

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Witte de With is an initiative of the Rotterdam Arts Council and is supported by the City of Rotterdam and the Dutch Ministry of Culture

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All paperback, published by Witte de With Publishers, designed by Kummer & Herrman and on sale for 10€.