

We have seen nothing, heard nothing

An approach to the work of Élisabeth Ballet via its documentation

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BCHN is inscribed in a modular font. Abutting the artist's name, it reads like a technical reference, which specialist origin would then explain its sibylline nature. The label on the white plastic pouch indicating an ISBN number on the back distinguishes the volume from the kind of school exercise book also used by artisans. It opens to show an axonometric drawing in black and white representing what the brain, having made it pivot a little, finally accepts is a levitating balustrade. On the next page, in thicker lines, the mind distinctly recognises a skimmer and a hinge in slight perspective representing that strange portal slightly ajar. Over some thirty pages we see a succession of geometrical forms, flat or in outline, full or cut out, more or less legible as plane or volume, with no caption to guide or interrupt our viewing. They segue into the second part of the book with no obvious logic, unless we see an explanation in the double page with the two rectangular strips and the low-definition image of an orthogonal structure in metal. The plot thickens in a photographic scenario that does not comprise views of the exhibition at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, but instead unrolls a sequence of cinematic motifs close to the thriller genre: a clearing, a cage, the pale lighting of offices at night, then, outdoors during the day, an old stone building. Finally, the corridor with its red carpet appears. It is followed by a series of CCTV images in abandoned spaces, like attempts to capture a ghostly presence.

Behind this dramatically ambivalent appearance, the catalogue marking the beginning of the collaboration with graphic design duo M/M introduces a certain orientation in the editorial handling of the exhibition, that is to say, in the relation between those two forms of mediation of the work, of which one is traditionally the review of the other and is, for this reason, regarded with suspicion. In this regard, might *BCHN* serve to instil a strategy of confusion – as it may blur the reading of the commentary below – by giving the name 'sculpture' to both an exhibition and a book? The mode of the police investigation or the file containing evidence does not claim to muddy the waters of the work precisely where one would expect them to be clarified. On the contrary, in its form, *BCHN*, as well as *Night*

Roofline and *Vie privée*, which form a suite running from 1997 to 2002,¹ seems to offer an analytical approach to the work that cannot be de-correlated from its conditions of appearance. To this end, it articulates three kinds of formulations by the addition of drawings, photographs and, in the third section of the book, the precise inventory of each piece in the register of ‘nomenclatures Élisabeth Ballet’ accompanied by the artist’s own notes.

The three exhibitions corresponding to the three publications designed by graphic artists M/M, were not seen by the members of Syndicat, who were responsible for this book, or by myself. Likewise, we have missed most of the opportunities to experience Ballet’s works. We know them from the documentation. And that is the case with most of the artworks and patrimonial objects that make up our culture. This state of affairs, which is not affirmed here as marking a casualness of approach, let alone a conceptual invention, is something that began long before the dissemination and consumption of images and information on the Web. The institution of the exhibition as the dominant vehicle for making art public (and, in the century that followed, its development and the facilitation of travel) may have been enough to discredit an intellectual approach to an artwork that does without the actual physical experience of the piece. If the members of Syndicat and I have any generational specificity, it concerns the evolution of our disciplines, which means that a document has never been presented to us purely for the information it contains, but also for the information contained in its inherent qualities or in the reasons for its existence. In this regard, the duo contributed to the elaboration of a project titled *On ne se souvient que des photographies*² in reference to a common perceptual phenomenon whereby the memory of an event disappears behind the memory of its representation. Note that the expression could also apply when considering the feelings linked to the memory of all the photographs of events that we never experienced. The researcher who originated this project, Rémi Parcollet, set out to show how such documents influenced the writing of art history and theory by examining the viewpoints of the writers. That is how we need to think about the photographs of Rudy Burckhardt, which created a definitive vision of Robert Morris’s sculpture, as well those of Marc Damage, who has

¹ *BCHN*, Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, 1997. *Night Roofline*, Thiers, Le Creux de l’Enfer, 1999. *Vie privée*, Nîmes, Musée d’Art Contemporain, Le Carré d’Art, 2002. This text draws on these three catalogues, rather than on an exhaustive selection of publications on Ballet’s work.

² ‘On ne se souvient que des photographies’ [We only remember the photographs], 13 September–23 November 2013 at Bétonsalon, Centre d’Art et de Recherche (Paris), curated by Rémi Parcollet. Online publication: <http://betonsalon.net/IMG/pdf/onssqplowdef-ok.pdf>

photographed numerous exhibitions of contemporary art in France, including several photographs of works by Élisabeth Ballet.

Although these considerations point in the direction of a sharing of authority over the territory of the artwork, it can be said that Ballet integrated this dimension by including M/M in the creative process beyond the actual book object: witness their collaboration on the techno soundtrack played at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris to accompany visitors crossing the *BCHN* corridor, which undeniably made them co-authors of the work. But this shifting of the cursor of authority is of less interest to us than the variable time-space coordinates in which the work takes place. And *BCHN* is a prime example of a work that exists only in the time of its exhibition. In the Paris show there was indeed a note mentioning its destruction, informing visitors that this was the second version of the sculpture made two years earlier under the title *ZIP* (1997) at the Offenes Kulturhaus in Linz (Austria). In light of which, we may recall that double page in *BCHN* showing on one side the drawing of the plan of *ZIP* and, facing it, an indexical image of the assembly of *BCHN* at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris.

Imagine all Ballet's works being subjected to this intermittent and variable ontological regime. The entry on *Bande à part* (2000–02) offers perhaps the best example of the sculpture's metamorphosis in the course of its various exhibitions: 'When it went on show for the first time in New York, the barrier (it was called *Mouth*) was screwed into the wall. When I showed it in London for my "Bande à part" exhibition, I put it together with a grey breeze block construction to disassociate it from the gallery walls. At the Carré d'Art, the breeze blocks are white, the museum's fine marble floor tiles on which the piece stands were turned over and reset in the original metal frame, to show the galvanized steel back.' It was perhaps because she wished to counter the reception of her early sculptures in some quarters as sophisticated objects extending a bourgeois branch of minimalism that the artist insisted: 'I consider that my work is not finished when it is exhibited; I can go back over it, make it change, transform it. The viewer must feel that if in the place where he sees it the work is certainly "finished", it is complete in this phase of exhibition, but it could be taken up again later.'³ And she adds that '[my] work has a more shifting, less definitive form, it strikes me as lighter, in the sense that it doesn't fill the space so much.'

³ Interview with Élisabeth Lebovici for the exhibition *Entrée dans la cour* at the Centre National de la Photographie, Paris, 2000, in *Ateliers 1997-2002*, Paris: Centre National de la photographie, 2002, p. 87-89.

The presentation of Ballet's works problematizes their condition as objects displaced and adjusted to the exhibition space. This is evident in exhibitions on the theme of the double or mirror. Her *Sept pièces faciles* in the exhibition at the Grand Café, Saint-Nazaire, in 2007, were 'conceived to be presented in two successive places'. In 2008, they were reconfigured for *Lazy Days* at the Serge Le Borgne gallery, also acquiring by virtue of their trip to Paris from the Loire estuary the unspooled soft *Road Movie* (2008). *Night Roofline* in 1999 came in three successive versions: at the Creux de l'Enfer in Thiers, at Le Parvis 3 in Pau, and at Le Parvis in Ibos. The entry explains: 'The *Night Roofline* project was carried out in three exhibition spaces: the Creux de l'Enfer (Thiers) and Le Parvis (Pau and Ibos). I was very much interested in the prospect of experimenting with three hangings using the same works each time, and that fitted nicely with my desire to continue a process of reflection already begun but suspended all too soon by the disappearance of the *BCHN* corridors in Paris. I transferred my observations by constructing small and medium-sized sculptures, and I chose materials suited to a light fabrication process.' Unfolded, the exhibition is symmetrically mirrored in the making of the catalogue. If we unfold the four flaps of the cover – in three opening actions – the three iconographic terms appear in a lesson of non-equivalence: *BCHN*, having disappeared, appears in a drawing on the left and in a photograph (taken at the ARC) on the right. The double page is framed by two shots of the room, with the first and last exhibitions of the triptych *Night Roofline*. Printed on the front and back inside covers,⁴ we again find, among other things, the pictogram of *Pièces détachées BCHN* and *Fabrique I* and *II* deriving from the observations on *BCHN*.

In his book *Quand l'œuvre a lieu, l'art exposé et ses récits autorisés*,⁵ Jean-Marc Poinot examines the status of the documentation surrounding the visual presentation of artworks at a time when these new forms were revolutionising the ways art was shown. At the turn of the 1960s, documentation and authorised narratives⁶ were sometimes tasked with the material and symbolic survival of the work when this had ceased to exist in a physical form. It

⁴ The other two floor plans, that of the second level of the Creux de l'Enfer and Le Parvis 3, can be found on the two inner covers at the centre of the book.

⁵ *Quand l'œuvre a lieu, l'art exposé et ses récits autorisés*, new expanded edition, Dijon: Les Presses du Réel, collection Mamco, 2008.

⁶ This term designates all the linguistic elements written or produced by the artist, relating to the exhibition or publication of the work: 'Here is a possible list: release, accompanying note, list, presentation, description, caption, reading note, project, announcement, commentary, interview, declaration, "statement", etc.' *Ibid.*, p. 273.

seems incongruous to relate Ballet's work to a conceptual approach, precisely when its material dimensions and formal qualities are so important a part of what it is, and yet it is when we look at it from the angle of its 'authorised narratives' that the question 'where is the work' is metaphorically posed.⁷ The entries in the first catalogue always specify – after the title, date, material and dimensions – the place and first construction of the sculpture, fixing it in the space and time of this first state, where it no longer exists. For example, '*Corridor noir* (1994), Steel, polyester, 180 × 600 × variable depth, installation: *Europa 93*, M.O.K, Munich, Germany'. We know, at the time of preparing this catalogue, that the sculpture *BCHN* will be significantly changed and reconfigured for the space of the museum, but also to remedy possible damage to the piece. This is a common step which affects all those works that have a physical existence and whose material integrity is nearly always subjected to the reality of transport and storage⁸ – in this respect, might the most formalist propositions be less stable and more shifting than conceptual works? What happens when the catalogue shows works that are not in the museum, are installed elsewhere, have temporarily ceased to exist or have not been made? The text by Élisabeth Lebovici links them, finally, to the set of works as a whole, as the *missing piece* in the critical apparatus.

These, then, are some of the issues implicit in this catalogue, matching those involved in a retrospective exhibition. For that putting-into-perspective of the artwork is redoubled by this exercise in which, if we think about it, the re-exhibited work re-exhibits its exhibition. With a sensation of dizziness, we perceive the echo produced by the title which designates the distribution of the works between the MAC VAL exhibition space and its exteriors, while the figure three could also be a plural referring to all the *missing* works or to the three additional units constituted by the catalogues mentioned above. 'All in one plus three' could, finally, formulate the equation whereby we can apprehend the three sequenced terms of the documentation – drawing, photographs, text: that is to say, a non-syntactical whole whose addition offers, by means that are more or less objective, a transposition of the work onto

⁷ The question is raised by the author with regard to Lawrence Wiener taking the example of *Many Colored Objects Placed Side by Side to Form a Row of Many Colored Objects*, chosen for the sarcastic definition of the exhibition contained by this utterance. Wiener rules, as we know, that the work cannot be made and is made only for the purpose of its public presentation, which on each occasion gives it a difference appearance. *Ibid.*, pp. 125–137.

⁸ This is the goal of the ambitious project titled *Le musée domestiqué* begun in 2013 by the artist Gregory Buchert, which he reformulates in performances and in other forms. See also *La vie et la mort des œuvres d'art*, Christophe Lemaître (ed.), Nevers: Tombolo Presses, 2016.

pages, while their reception continues to buck any attempt at equating text and image. Among the definitions found in the artist's writings, we may note this one: 'sculpture corresponds to the experience of crossing corridors.'

Like the preceding ones, this book is subject to two constraints: on the one hand, the need for the catalogue to be published for the opening of the exhibition, and on the other, the decision not to use artifices or visual tricks to achieve this. That is what gives it a particular status. In the same way, the book *BCHN* was later mentioned, by a curious effect of intertextuality, as the '*BCHN* manual' that could be consulted at the end of the exhibition at the ARC, in its white plastic notebook sleeve. First of all, the typological indeterminacy mentioned above is something it has in common with the artist's book, as that singular manifestation of art in everyday life has been identified by Clive Phillpot,⁹ among others. Afterwards, even if this means feigning opportunism, the catalogue leverages the demands of the calendar by signalling its presence at the source of the exhibition (of which it could be seen as the tutorial). On the poster for the ARC exhibition, it appears in the foreground in the form of a pictogram by a producer of flat-pack furniture. Rather than overshadow the sculptures, this way of promoting the catalogue determines a certain use value. Like other editorial choices already mentioned, this vision behind the scenes of the exhibition, in photographs of models or video captures of mounting the show, authorises a meta-reading. It translates a mastery of the image of the artist's work in which the demystification of creation is combined with a certain *mise-en-scène*, by effects of encryption (due to the low definition), of what emerges in the darkness (that of doubt and technical constraints). Rather than mediate, publishing becomes a stand-in for a veritable annex of the studio. For while acting as the laboratory of the exhibition by compiling different elements that make it possible to project it (plans, etc.), the book contains a set of tools that help to conceptualise the work. For if the drawings and texts relating to the exhibitions are published, one might say, a catalogue late,¹⁰ then that attests to their reflexive value: they are all ways for Ballet to analyse the work that has been done in an exercise in schematisation and verbalisation after the event, and something to refer to as she continues her work, in which a new creation is always

⁹ Director of the library at MoMA from 1977 to 1994, the artist's book specialist Clive Phillpot did not know what to do with the 'bizarre brochures' he received in his office. As for the book that precedes the exhibition and is its authentic locus whereas the exhibition is one of its editions, he knows several famous examples, including *January 5–31 1969* by Seth Siegelaub.

¹⁰ Again, the entries in *BCHN* bear on works from before the exhibition while the text about the exhibition *BCHN* is published in *Night Roofline*.

dialectically positioned in relation to the previous one. In this sense, the book is a manual for the work, a plan for the exhibition, and the trace of the exhibition too.

The catalogue *Tout En Un Plus Trois* follows on from the three others, and uses their graphic vocabulary. Its dynamic connection with the exhibition being prepared is elaborated in the book's very architecture. It is arranged in strata, or 'as a sandwich', to use Syndicat's expression, around a central section whose substance is the given of the exhibition: the available space and the area in the rooms to be occupied. The time constraints for producing the publication are placed in relation to its corollaries, namely the set of material relations on which the production of an exhibition depends, and which is summed up, finally, in the question of *bulk*. The sections will thus be assembled around this core but will not be endowed with images of the exhibition (which has not started). In the meantime, the photographs of works are treated in such a way as to be integrated into the MAC VAL exhibition plan. The superposition of filters representing the area they occupy on the floor gives an image of the work (as an exhibition that has been and gone) through the project of its implementation. The first views of the exhibition will constitute, *in extremis*, the outside layers of the sandwich in such a way that, freshly off the presses, it is allegorically bitten into at the end. This figure of the loop or roll, present in Ballet's visual vocabulary and in the conception of her work, in fact inspired the initial idea of a circular book with spiral binding.

I therefore wondered if this might not be a way of resolving the paradox of an exhibition in a book, in which the works appear in the flat surface of the images, while elsewhere the artist repeats that the prerequisite of a sculpture is that one should be able to walk around it – which was why the Louvre moved all the marble sculptures away from the wall in the Cour Marly at her request.¹¹ The dialectic of opposites is frequently invoked in discussions of Ballet's work: 'Inside or outside. Immobile or moving. In order or disordered. Seen or seeing.'¹² Another polarity is cited in the artist's writings, one possibly analogous with the *exterior–interior* dichotomy that characterises the sculptures assembled in the category of enclosures (*enclos*), and which have acquired the biggest critical apparatus.¹³ Involved here is a twofold quest for sculpture and for a back-and-forth in its reception, an

¹¹ *Le contrepoint de la sculpture*, Musée du Louvre, Paris, 4 April–25 June 2007.

¹² Michel Gauthier, 'De la relativité des places (la leçon d'Emmanuelle)', 2002, reprinted in this catalogue, p. ???.

¹³ See Michel Gauthier, 'L'œuvre en lice', in Michel Gauthier, *L'Anarchème*, Geneva: Mamco, 2002. Or Jean Pierre Criqui, 'Un moment dans la cage', in *Trait pour trait, Élisabeth Ballet*, Bignan: Domaine de Kerguéhennec, 1993.

ideal whole whose two parts mutually repel each other (all in one plus two): physical space and mental space. In the space of this study, let us postulate that the mental space of the work is situated in the space of writing. We could consider the entries and other texts written systematically by the artist as part of the experience of the work. Written after the event and going back over the stages of conception of each piece, they extend its temporal surface by adding to the intense time of the experience – which is what Ballet’s sculpture seeks – the stretched and continuous time in which ideas take shape and the work is thought.

Jean-Marc Poinsoot observes a literary characteristic of the authorised narratives that ‘say only what it is appropriate to say’.¹⁴ This efficiency of language can be found in Ballet, too. In the late 1980s, her entries proclaimed their primary function as providers of technical information about materials and the making of the pieces. They continued to explain the reasons for each form, type of material and colour in a transparency that might be taken to recall the rigour and literality of Minimal and Conceptual artists. Soon, however, their concision gave way to a broader discourse, as the continuing descriptive function was now combined with ideas allowing for the retrospective identification of groups of works. Regarding *Des idées* (1988), the text is introspective in tone: ‘It is the first of a series of enclosures that includes *Bande à part* (2004). I had a more or less confused understanding of the relation between the two pieces: two pieces that were clearly visible but not accessible, one overhead, the other on the ground.’ In 2008, the entry for *Leica* gave the artist the chance to come up with a definitive objective statement about the relation between the works in the corridors (*couloirs*) group and those in the enclosures group articulated in a definition of her sculpture. Couched in a style of speech that conveys great sincerity, the notes on each work or exhibition make evident a continuum, a logic of repercussions and consequences, but also a ‘dreamy, playful logic’ that has rarely received much attention.¹⁵

Why not read them together, chronologically, as if they constituted a single narrative? Some of the titles constitute sentences in their own right: *Des idées, Que l’esprit ajoute, À celles qui sont précisément signifiées, Par les mots* (four pieces from 1988). The insistence of the ideas gradually makes itself felt through the mildness of the puns (*Lazy Days*). The chapters feverishly call to mind the places (Naples, Rome, Berlin) or the extractor in a château kitchen. Is the scene set in a wood (*Dans un bois*), an office (*Dans un bureau*), on a beach (*Sur une plage*) or in a cave (*Dans une grotte*, 1990)? While we can no longer see the

¹⁴ Source citation ???

¹⁵ These are the words used by Philippe-Alain Michaud in his text ‘Court-circuit’, written for the exhibition ‘Immersion’, Musée des Beaux-Arts et d’Archéologie, Imprimerie Céas, Valence, 2011.

faces of *Emmanuelle* (1988), *Joëlle* (1988) and *Jeanne* (1989), there is no doubting that something has happened to change the course of events in *Schlüterstrasse, Berlin matin et après-midi* (2000), where a naked man appears at the window: 'I work on the first floor of this building which is otherwise completely deserted at weekends; I am alone with him, I wait, and I film him. He has come to me and inevitably this was the beginning of a story.' The narrative is informed by cinema, notably the Nouvelle Vague and Hitchcock, and the window motif soon comes to exert an irresistible attraction: 'The first time I saw this room, I went straight to the window and lost interest in the interior.'¹⁶ She introduces an idea of painting at the same time as sculpture is displaced towards the medium of film when 'the smooth surface of the Plexiglas recalls the moments of shutter release between the 24 images per second'.¹⁷ Descriptions of what is outside the frame become increasingly detailed: 'Behind me, as I am filming, there are very close trees, then a gully, a view, the sun . . . and lots of wind; between what I am filming and myself, there is a road.'¹⁸ And the experience of this out-of-frame world, of roadsides that could stretch all the way to Kerouac's California, becomes increasingly heady: 'going through landscapes, observation, both vagueness and preciseness, imagination, pleasure, music, sounds, smells... and so many other sensations'.¹⁹ If this were a narrative, its plot would be guided by self-knowledge and emancipation, like in a Beat Generation novel with sculpture as its hero. Among the more recent pieces, *Smoking & Brillantine* (2011), *Flying Colors* (2010) and *Road Movie* (2008), for example, are all driven by a stated desire to be 'free of the usual formal constraints of sculpture' and by a 'need for freedom and space', a dream of 'what is beyond the place' – a utopia, therefore, and in this instance a utopia that is 'sculpture in motion'.

In his text for the catalogue *Face-à-main*, Éric Troncy described the frontality asserted by Ballet's sculptures, despite the characteristics usually attributed to the medium: 'Usually, the predominance of the form is tempered by its immediate affirmation; walking around it, it seems, would bring no surprises, no discoveries: the form has nothing to hide. The volume brings nothing other than an occupation of space. Once again, what is to be looked at shows itself immediately in its totality, just like painting.'²⁰ And it is precisely in this stunning obviousness that Ballet's pieces retain something in the order of the unsayable; it is by

¹⁶ *Night Roofline*, 1999.

¹⁷ *Flicker*, 2007.

¹⁸ *Eye Shadow*, 2007.

¹⁹ *Eyeliner*, 2007.

²⁰ *Face-à-main*, Paris, Galerie des Archives, 1990.

seeming to hide nothing that most of them intrigue us.²¹ This tension could be heightened by the transparency asserted by the artist's notes, which formulate her intentions at some length and give a window onto the studio to tell how the forms come about. Take the case of the metre rule *Ça m'intéresse* (1999): 'The idea of its construction came to me when I was looking for contours in wooden sculptures. Instead of making a small model for myself, I felt happier handling planks placed on my studio floor. I put them together in such a way that they created corners directed at all the positions. They became a simple work tool.' With *Ça m'intéresse* and *Olympia* (2000–02), objects enter the exhibition that refer explicitly to the elaboration of the sculptures in the studio, in what is a kind of expanded tautology, while the discussion of the work's logic in the notes is paralleled by an attempt to identify the emergence of the ideas. The pins in *Olympia*, for example, 'mark that specific moment of daydreaming that foreshadows further sculptures: the promise of a future to pin down'.

The minimal information given by a standard note – date, materials, dimensions – already indicate a sensorial approach, by suggesting for example a relation of scale, textures and smells, all aspects for which a photograph cannot do the job. Ballet's notes take particular care to describe different aspects of the physical experience of the sculpture, by emphasising non-visual perceptions and even inner sensations, while photographs are either absent or deferred. For *Deux bords* (1993), looking at the pictogram based on its plan in the 'nomenclature', she notes: 'If you touch the surface of the plastic, you can feel the air circulating, and a slight humming can be picked up, caused by the exhalation. The sculpture vibrates slightly even though its hanging system is extremely taut.' The boom operator positioned in the Marly courtyard, initially titled *Bump Piece* (2007), indicates the importance attributed to the sculpture's aural aspect and the linking of listening and movement. Heightened by the musical piece that accompanied *BCHN* at the ARC, it was present as of the first version of the corridor in Linz: 'The noise of our movements is absorbed by the floor. When you leave the corridor, footsteps start echoing again on the room's wooden floor; the space of the room and its particularities regain their customary qualities.' This note introduces the preponderance of daylight among the structural elements in the exhibition space, and of its variations in the moving experience of the sculpture: 'In the daytime, coming from the north-facing windows, the gentle, constant light between the walls of the corridor suddenly changes when one comes out into the room where the south-facing openings make it unstable.' In the note for *Flicker* (2007), the artist calls the reflection in the Plexiglas plaques, 'The missing

²¹ See Michel Gauthier's extensive writings on the figure of the void in Ballet's work

third of the sculpture'. In this way language acquires the capacity to reconstruct part of the form, into which it incorporates one last component, the image of the viewer's body, a body that up to now has been the perceiving subject of this phenomenological approach. In *Contrôle 3* (1996–2002), 'the visitor perceives the reflection of the surroundings and, superimposed on them, her own silhouette: watching oneself seeing.'

It is by this observation of what the work does to the mind and the body that we approach a definition of sculpture – sometimes described as a *cosa mentale* – as a space expanded beyond its contours. For *Flash* (2007), the evocation of what is not seen gives rise to one of the definitions that punctuate the narrative: 'Sculpture cannot really be apprehended with geometry, and what are its real limits? Where does the inside start and how is the outside a part of what I can see? How far? I can describe what I can see, but this isn't enough to give the idea of the sculpture, for the environment is also a part of what the sculpture reflects.' Grasping the idea of sculpture would thus come up against the limits of sight and language. Might this space 'as abstraction', as the artist describes it several times, be another addition without a sum of its contours, plus its surroundings, which are perceptible, what is not, what can be moved through, what is inaccessible, and what, always, is a space of projection. In the corridor under Plexiglas in *Leica*, 'you can project yourself internally and mentally'. And from the texture of the narrative travelled through, steeped in memory, sensations and emotions, we grasp that this abstraction of space is an abstraction that is eminently affected, on the contrary, by a literality of emptiness. This emptiness – like 'those waste grounds not used by the city [of Berlin which] were places where [she] could empty her eyes as well as her head' – is a space of projection as much, it seems, as a reflective space – two properties found in the escape offered by *Leica*. In this double sense, it therefore refers to the practice of sculpture itself, before and after, where, in the emptiness of the spaces to be occupied and of 'idle days', ideas come.