

Galerie Louis Gendre

Garance Alves / Les fragments du réel

Fragments of Reality - a Haptic Universe Branka Bencic

Encompassing the period of the past three years, Garance Alves has produced an impressive body of work realized in different media – such as photography, objects, installations, texts, books or textiles, that are seen as a means for the artist to explore different issues and layers of identity. Her methodology and visual language ranging from visual notes to documentation, materiality to subjective interpretation, explore and translate possibilities of visual representations of reality and its fragmented structure.

The human body, its physical presence, a fragment, an imprint or a trace and in particular the absence of the body, the void, abandoned shapes of a negative space we imagine was once inhabited, embodied, corporeal, these are some of the central positions of Garance's artistic interests explored in the exhibition Fragments of Reality through a constellation of several recent and intertwined works. Such appearances of the body, not only as a subject to be represented but also as an absent instrument, made evident through a mixture of traces and objects, register the physical presence. The thread and the fabric, being both a material and a metaphor that shape ways identities are constructed and also something used to cover, protect and conceal the body are imagined as a red thread, a line that guides our way through the exhibition, unfolding its layers. Hence the interest in the second skin, the manifestations evolving around the use of fabric and garments, cocooning the body, engulfing it, protecting it. What is missing is the physical human body, images and spaces are haunted with a suspended presence.



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contact@galerielouisgendre.com - www.galerielouisgendre.com

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Fragments of Reality, was built up as a constellation of different positions that clothes, as manufactured artifacts or imagined ones and documented as found objects, have in our culture and everyday lives, reflecting individual and collective gestures, social and cultural contexts.

One of the earliest works which was devised as a book format, *Sous toutes les coutures* (2017), functions as a starting point. It gathers a collection of photographs and accompanying textual notes about the customers of a local dry-cleaners in Brussels. Developed over a period of several months, such a consistent approach to documenting, describing, listing and indexing people and their belongings reflects their different backgrounds and generations as their paths intersect at one local place. *Sous toutes les coutures* is a collection of visual documents of the human condition, capturing everyday fragments of private lives, as constructions of identity. It is a book project from which the following works *Inconnu intimes* (La collection) (2018) and *Inconnus intimes* (microscope) (2019) evolved. Here Garance Alves continues to explore a certain voyeuristic approach, close-up viewing and an interest in unknown people and how they are remembered or defined by what they are wearing, clothes deposited at the dry cleaner's shop. As a metonymical figure a garment represents a person. On the other hand, the installations interpret and reproduce the ways in which the garments are organized, stored and displayed. *Inconnu intimes* (La collection) and *Inconnus intimes* (microscope) relate to the indexical order of the book, the cataloguing presence. Furthermore, such documenting, indexing, cataloguing and exhibiting, images pinned as collections of butterflies in the displays of a natural history museum sees the artistic practice as one similar to curating and collecting, and resonating with „forensic aesthetics“, exploring and imagining the identities and narratives of a person from their documented belongings.

Unfolding the representation from images to objects the installations *Trouble* and *En Creux* deal with fabric itself, as a fragment of the incomplete, absent, suspended whole. The transparent fabric or textile fragment still remembers the tension between the absence and the presence of the human body, the unnamed protagonists. The thread is a primary element that defines linear shapes of *Continents Corporels*, large scale wall drawing that unfolds as a cartographic image. Bringing into mind maps and continents, evoking a larger scale, depicting shifts of historical geological masses of land, continents in flux. Shaped as a similar configuration, *En Creux* and *Continents Corporels* recall a constellation of fragments, the structure of debris, defining territories, boundaries, landscapes.

Shifting between different scales, representing at the same time a total view, and an intimate proximity of a human body, the artist is engaging with the tactile materiality of fabric, shaping a haptic universe. Further narratives may be inscribed into the fractured, fragmented landscapes of indigo blue of *En Creux* that bring into mind the history of trade, migrations and the deep blue sea. Indigo becomes a reference to both the carrier (the sea) and the carried substance.

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White boats and white shirts are the central objects constituting the new installation La Traversee. Boats are carrying as passengers what seem to be headless human bodies. Here the artist plays with contradictions around conventional representation by turning upside down the scale and relationships between objects. This loss of perspective relates to the idea of losing ground and feelings of insecurity and uncertainty as a reference to the geopolitical context of the Mediterranean. The drastically asymmetrical geopolitical power relations existing between the states bordering the sea today and the reshuffling of spheres of interest around them have built up an undertow which forces tens of thousands of desperate people across uncertain waters in order to survive.

Historical geography also has undergone the process of fragmentation, which can be noted in relation to our perception of space and time. As a consequence inscribed in such crises of representation Fragments of reality by Garance Alves unfolds individual and collective frameworks that reflect a wider global, social and political crisis embedded in a contemporary momentum. A reorganization of the sense of time and space indicates the position of a de-centered and unstable subject, the fragmentary character of our identities and a process that encompasses contingency. Constructed by means of language and representation, identities are not a stable unity but a changing thread of different positions built as a temporary meeting point of subjects and codes on the crossroads of different social formations and personal histories.

Exploring questions of individual and collective existence and a subjective and fragmented structure of the

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world, the works by Garance Alves are subtle and fragile. Shaped as a mosaic of fragments, objects, images, textiles they are manifestations of tensions between narratives and destinies, possibility and impossibility of articulation and ways to establish the disconnected relations of expectations, gestures and negotiations, as possibilities of a journey through an itinerary of everyday reality.



Les Fragments of Reality Garance Alves

Opening Tuesday September 10th 2019 -6pm.
Exhibition : September 11th – November 2nd 2019.

Gallery hours : Wednesday 2pm – 7pm, Saturday 10am – 6pm.

For further information, please contact:

Mariko	mariko.kuroda@galerielouisgendre.com	33 (0)6 17 03 57 58
Louis	louis.gendre@galerielouisgendre.com	33 (0)6 04 15 64 95

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