

Lyn Carter *exhale*

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LYN CARTER, *exhale*

la *différence* et la *répétition*, affirment une volonté de mise en procès de leur signification même, d'où l'intérêt et la qualité de leur effet de présence. Sommes-nous devant l'étalage d'un commerce de tissus exposant ses spéciaux et nous invitant à choisir et à acheter quelques coupons? Ou encore s'agit-il de rideaux couvrant les fenêtres d'un logis — celui supposé de *M.INTIMITÉ* — et préservant le privé et le patrimoine familial des regards des curieux? Quoi qu'il en soit, ces ready-made constituent une entrée en matière sur la surproduction des biens manufacturés, et sur notre pouvoir d'achat toujours lié à la nature fictionnelle de la construction de l'identité.

En écho à ces écrans muraux de fibres textiles synthétiques, deux gigantesques tapis de coton tressé *home-made*, d'un blanc laiteux et bordés d'un contour bleu, lancent un clin d'œil à la sculpture post-minimaliste et à celle mise de l'avant par l'art pauvre qui, à la fin des années soixante, renouaient, contre les diktats des minimalistes, avec la manualité du faire artisanal (assemblage, couture, piqûre, etc.), les formes anthropomorphiques et organiques, de même qu'avec l'utilisation de matériaux souples, facilement malléables et fortement texturés. Ces deux tapis étendent au sol leurs formes planes, synthétiques et sexualisées, lesquelles se concrétisent dans la représentation différenciée de personnages masculin et féminin nommés « Pat et Tique ». En considérant la correspondance spatiale et relationnelle de ces tapis occupant une grande superficie au sol et les dix-neuf écrans-textiles au mur, force est de constater le souci de l'artiste de constituer un espace symbolique ambigu qui, tout en ne s'affirmant pas comme une installation, s'y apparente. Sommes-nous dans le logis de ce couple « de coton » ou dans une boutique d'artisanat? Une fois de plus, Isabelle Laverdière réussit à faire intervenir les renvois à la culture populaire du *low art* et à la consommation de masse — qui n'a déjà eu chez lui un tapis de coton tressé? —, ainsi qu'à la consommation de biens artistiques — ces deux sculptures sont aussi des marchandises —, de même qu'elle ouvre une brèche sur le rapport différentiel qui unit les protagonistes sexuels du cou-

ple, soit ce rapport au masculin/féminin à travers lequel les acteurs de la vie au quotidien se rencontrent dans la plus grande altérité.

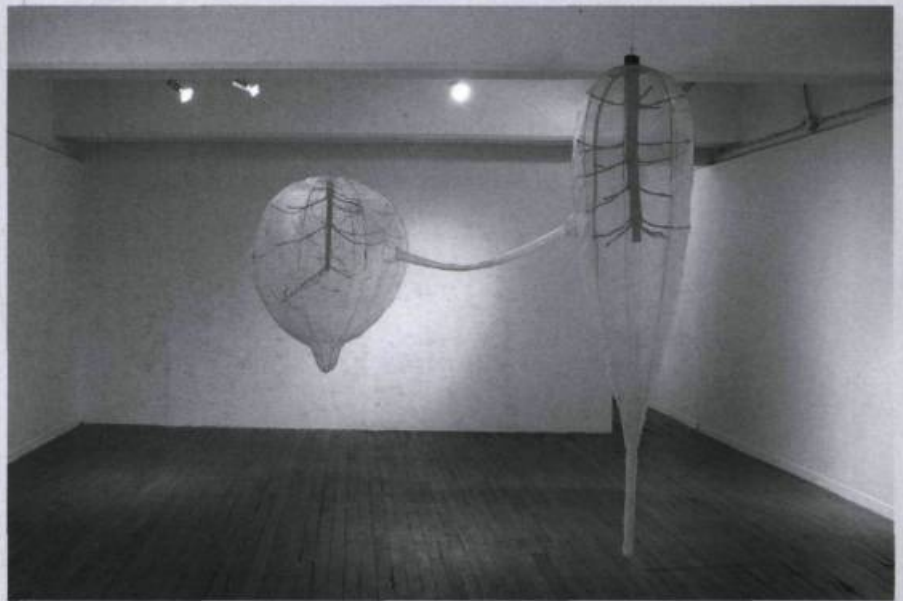
Sur le mur adjacent à celui où sont montés les écrans-textiles, elle nous fait voir le dessin encadré d'un ballon de soccer dont la surface en *plywood* est parsemée de motifs floraux. Or, dans un autre coin de la salle, qui connote l'aire de jeux et de convivialité qu'est la cour, on retrouve cet objet réalisé en trois dimensions et déposé au sol sous une cage d'oiseau construite avec le matériau réfléchissant qu'est le miroir. Posée devant une partie des écrans-textiles, la cage redouble l'image de ces derniers. Ainsi absorbés par la surface réfléchissante du miroir et soumis aux effets de la distorsion visuelle occasionnés par les déplacements du spectateur, ces écrans-textiles prennent maintenant l'allure de cordes à linge, tandis que leurs rayures se déforment. L'intérieur de la cage est éclairé et recouvert de papier peint, ce qui lui confère un aspect domestique et nostalgique. Sommes-nous des intrus prolongeant notre visite dans la cour de la famille de *M.INTIMITÉ*, dont le mobilier nous indique une référence à la *middle-class*? Enfin, un immense caddie, trop profond pour être réellement fonctionnel — je pense ici aux meubles défonctionnalisés du sculpteur Richard Artschwager —, nous ramène encore à l'univers de la consommation associé à celui de l'univers domestique. Ainsi, le trouble visuel, produit par le léger grossissement de l'échelle de l'objet, amplifie la dimension critique défendue par l'artiste, en ce sens où il renvoie à l'idée de surconsommation. Il s'agit, ni plus ni moins, d'un objet à remplir d'objets pour mieux combler le vide existentiel régnant dans le logis. Or, si j'ai mentionné plus haut que cette production récente de Laverdière sous-tend un questionnement mettant en parallèle les problématiques de l'identité et de la consommation, alors tenez-vous bien, car le titre ironique de cette pièce mobile est *Modern Mother*! ←

Isabelle Laverdière,
M.INTIMITÉ
Galerie Rouge, Québec
8-25 novembre 2001

The first thing we see when entering The Red Head Gallery is *Swallowing Roses*: a delicate sheer fabric "vessel" encasing a mesh of wires sus-

pended from the wall. An apt frontispiece, the work, viscerally and by name, reflects on the dual aspect of pain and beauty inherent in human experience. We can imagine the desire to incorporate a perfect rose and simultaneously the grating passage of thorns against the insides of our throats. We feel the object as almost ephemeral, despite knowing that the wire within is fatal.

itself protected by sheer fabric. As the title of the show suggests, Lyn has considered the act of breathing — inhaling, exhaling, and the space in between — and envisioned in her objects and drawings the tenuousness and unconsciousness of this ubiquitous act, which is yet the very premise for life. The rich brocade of *Pouff* underlines the object's preciousness and malleability. Will we sink into it if we sit? Will we observe the slight swell as the piece performs its intended function? It resembles an odd little creature, a discarded and renewed piece of furniture. Hung large into the middle of the



References to the body are rooted in Carter's work, yet with this new exhibition she has moved away from the more literal forms that we saw earlier to take on abstracted pieces that encompass a more lyrical and open-ended interpretation. Lying on the floor is *Pouff*, a sculpture so evocative that we want at once to stroke it and to perch in its gentle folds. The odd shape recalls both lungs and bellows, tapering out into a narrow end that is encased in a small round metal stand,

gallery is *Airbags*, a somewhat pedestrian name for so poetic a piece: large-scale sheer fabric encasing arid branches, the entire piece suspended from the ceiling. One form is more oval and elongated, tapering off into a thin "tail," while the other, connected through a narrow, hollowed "umbilical cord," is round, with just a small teardrop shape at its bottom. What we perceive as branches within the two structures is in fact a tree, the top part in the longer form, the bottom

LYN CARTER, *Airbags*, 2001. Organza, tree sections. 2.7 x 3 x 1 m. Photo: Peter Mac Callum.

SCOTT EUNSON

filling the round one. What was stacked becomes adjacent, complexifying the concept and making lateral what might otherwise be hierarchical.

Suspended, *Airbags* speaks of interconnection: intricate systems interrelated to form a complex apparatus suggesting the body. The tree within demonstrates the miracle of growth and speaks of death — just as breath is a fundamental and significant thing demarcating the time between birth, life, and end. Through scale and material, Carter has taken the reference and moved it beyond the body to address issues of natural cycles, growth and decay, and to embody something essentially invisible: air. Who has seen the wind? The hardened wood within the translucent fabric grounds the piece and keeps experience central, creating a relationship that is physical. The sensation of the materials plays a large role in this piece, where the way materials react when placed next to each other plays back to the viewer's presence and gives it new context: material of the body to material of the organic (tree), the light encasement referencing skin and tissue. And space: how the work (conceived site-specifically) relates to the space, and how we, as viewers, change our relation to space and negotiate it differently, according to the objects placed therein.

Concurrent to *exhale*, Carter is showing *Swallowing Roses I*, *Two(lung)*, and *Two(heart)* at the Textile Museum of Canada. The latter two come from a period where the body was much more literally present in Carter's work: showing hollowed bodices in rich fabrics, one in the form of a lung, the other in that of a heart. Here again, she addresses the aspect of breath, as these chests swell out and internal organs become the external form. *Swallowing Roses I* is a much more visceral counterpart to the piece shown at

the Red Head. Where that was light and lethal, held in delicate grey and sheer hues of the fabric and wire, this counter piece is a rich red brocade reaching fully from floor to ceiling. Perched on a curved, squat wooden stool, the bottom bulges slightly over the edges of the wood before settling into its form. From this seat it rises upwards, growing into a narrow, slim form and finally attaches firmly to the ceiling. There is less grating pain in this piece than in the second: the beauty of the rose fabric, the vibrant colour, and the evocative form smooth over the connotations of blood and the aching stretch of the throat. The bottom grows corpulent as if well-satisfied, and drops its deposit as if it were a nest enclosed within the gently curving stool. Desire and ecstasy are quite tangible in this work, which fills the room with a powerful sense of serenity, even glory.

Again, the work exemplifies what Carter excels at: measuring the viewer's body against that of the sculpture to form a relationship. The long thin fabric looming above does not oppress us, but inflicts the sense of distance, of having a long way to travel. The continual use of fabrics reinforces the tactile quality of Carter's work while also touching on clothing, furniture, things that touch our skin and cushion our bodies. These objects derive their strength from their dual nature, at once wondrously comforting and yet painful and constricted. Carter remains both direct and ambiguous, for she requires the viewer's interaction to complete the impact of the objects' growing presence. ←

Lyn Carter,
exhale, 2001
The Red Head Gallery
Toronto

SCOTT EUNSON,
Untitled, 2001.
Construction #8.
Photo courtesy of the
artist.

"[...] the story of art could not be told without a reference to the architectural background."

— E.H. GOMBRICH, *THE STORY OF ART*

Scott Eunson is a young sculptor, not quite thirty years old. A native of Toronto, he studied at the University of Toronto, graduating with his degree in architecture in 1996. His first few years after finishing school were spent exploring various types of construction, including carpentry and cabinet and furniture making.

For the last two years though, Eunson has been creating and exhibiting his unique and original wall sculptures. This development — from architect to visual artist — came about naturally from his desire to investigate the physicality of our material world in an intuitive way.

Eunson's material of choice is found plywood, concrete, aluminum, and pieces of broken glass. These materials are the fabric of which our modern structures are constructed, something with which any student of architecture is undoubt-

edly familiar. This "debris" is then assembled — both singularly and combined — into new arrangements that are striking in their formal simplicity and metaphoric possibilities. With most of his work being untitled, it is difficult to specify which work in particular is being discussed. This, however, is intentional on the artist's part. To choose to leave something unnamed allows the viewer greater opportunity to make his/her own observations about the nature of the work. The viewers must use their intuition, and can bring personal experience to the sculptures in order to make sense of the work. The work then involves as much the viewer's personal vision and points of reference as the artist's. It also insists that one read the body of the work as a thematic whole, comprising separate yet integrated pieces. This thematic overview is consistent with the artist's technical modus operandi.

For example, one image Eunson repeatedly uses is that of various constructions consisting of thin wood, broken and assembled in complex overlappings that verge on but never reduce themselves to an orga-

