

COLETTE BRUNSCHWIG

papiers

February 18 - April 02, 2016

Opening on February 18, 2016

open from Tuesday to Saturday, from 11AM to 7PM and by appointment

Recourse will now be a constant, enigmatic force: it seems ageless and derives from no mere appearances. It goes... and spreads. It never seems to intercede, yet it sets itself between the fall-outs of time. Our eyes can see no better, they just sense that the recourse swells and that solitude would be incapable of speaking of it without "occasional faults, linear, surficial or volumetric faults" (it is thanks to them that the eye can bear the crystalline power that haunts it and, thus, abandons nothing of the atrocious ideal), experienced, only, so that the work may continue, each point needing to be considered, and the whole needing to be separated from any form of stupefaction.

Colette Brunschwig's extremely recent works stand on this "path"; they reveal what it brings – fine deltas in which reefs and recitals mutually obliterate each other before an idea of nothingness deposits an open voice, allowing for a drift towards effacement's tumour. "(...)The colours proper to life deepen, dance and detach themselves around this Vision in the Making" (Rimbaud, 'Being Beauteous', in Illuminations).

The path on which dread fades away runs beside the Vision, not without seeing it or grasping its attraction, but also excelling it with unsuspected surroundings. There is no ignorance, no denial, no misunderstanding of the Vision's powers, arising from all time like an admirable, constantly restarted mirage, ever deeper, spiralling like an insane interjection: "Oh, the ashen face; the escutcheon of horsehair, the crystal arms!" But the Vision sets a threshold at the heart of the Making, and it thus needs to be multiplied by other levers, backing up the irreducible law of apparently insignificant things, minute tremblings, refrained, legitimate and invisibly transcended fears. The Making is also the space and time of a deafening song, a silence levelled up to it, a home so vast that it is capable of resisting even the most abrasive powers. It is a resistance alien to any adversity: it knows itself to be endless and wipes this word away from the terrain it needs to cross over and discover. It is a deleted end, becoming broader and subscribed. Colette Brunschwig engraves its instance and insistence, from a point where all ends seem disconcerted: History, though so vital, steps aside before the borderless laws of the instant – in its long version.

The path of recourse is not that of a return (be it eternal); it does not disparage it, it takes it over and coats it in never-seen-before amplitude, like light gravel scattered between heavens and earths, shifting at each footstep or stroke of a hand, inscribing and dis-inscribing, before any telling time, any trace which might have sworn to descend or come to rest there. Colette Brunschwig has that ability to record the pause which impatience drags beyond its own time, but without destroying it. The ever-so-exercised eye finds there its "continuation" (or the set of its resting places). The eye needs to wander and let itself drift, giving itself up to unequal rhythms which are still borne up by constantly rewoven, watchful sails, by a "headiness" untouched by the sun, coursed alongside by lands like constant thoughts, so that it is, once the senses have fled, consenting: this new time is made of space and space opens up when the as-yet-unwritten poem and painting, become a field of utter legibility unto itself, slip together towards this gravity point which is the centre of no constellation, but instead the unhoped-for quality of days yet to come.

Who could describe and name the waning of (destitute or miraculous) signs which, from one moment to the next, provide a recourse or, to be more precise, offer one? "Nobody".

But the time of nobody and their silence, in the end beyond all ends, are so light that they are what matters, when both things and beings fall away. There is a weighing of each paper, each canvas, each drawn or inked line, in every colour, coming from farther off, somewhere more ardent, with a hopeful basis. A weighing that crystal or glass arms have the ability to raise, warned by this mortal surfeit that threatens the human body (there, in a "dark wood" squatting in the folds of the night, where translucent forearms stretch out, spring into view, then let go without a cry). It adds nothing to the weight of what is, just subtracting from it an unacceptable load, which encumbers time and makes it opaque.

"True, the new era is nothing if not harsh.

For I can say that I have gained victory; the gnashing of teeth, the hissing of hellfire, the stinking sighs subside. All my monstrous memories are fading. My last longings depart, - jealousy of beggars, bandits, friends of death, all those that the world passed by. - Damned souls, if I were to take vengeance!

One must be absolutely modern.

Never mind hymns of thanksgiving: hold onto a step once taken. A hard night! Dried blood smokes on my face, and nothing lies behind me but that repulsive little tree!... The battle for the soul is as brutal as the battles of men; but the sight of justice is the pleasure of God alone." Rimbaud, 'Farewell', A Season in Hell.

Let the once-taken step return, let the unregistered hugeness of spaces, it will never cease to cross, reach and stretch out. Then, return from it to work and to the Making in the attempt to see what is unsuspectable (and even above suspicion) about it all. Say to ourselves or each other that, between them, silence never betrays the silence of their pact: free-handed work, an open making, in plain view: not building anything unneeded... -absolute and immemorial modernity stands in their sites, where farewell is the title, though it is alone, far away in a sense, being vigilant that a sentence may not replace extreme severity, which is a (physical not mortal) threshold, state or station of what has, in fact, not been taken (and should not be).

Colette Brunschwig has seen (once and perhaps for all time yet to come) the degree that should not be crossed, or desired as an ascent, and even less enthroned. On a text by Malevich, entitled "Final Progression", she writes this: "(...) Arriving at what he thought to be the end of his painting, he attempted the passage towards the third dimension, that of architecture... the glorious architecture of the future city, around which the surrounding infinity can organise itself, having at its centre an accomplished mankind, reconciled with society. This impatience was soon to give way to the shock of experience: in 1927, Malevich only had time to transfer to the West a part of his work and of his theoretical writings, so that their radiance was to remain long hidden from public view. He was to return to his work place, on which were soon to be placed the seals of silence: his final, sole city, his coffin, that of a solitary man, returned to a solitude whose joints he had for a brief moment thought he could tear apart...".

There is an obsessive rhyme in French formed by these three words: seuil, deuil, cercueil (threshold, mourning, coffin) from which we need release, by breaking or upsetting it, unstitching it, so that our eyes, once more, will have access to a recourse and can break the fascination of the maze, with the meanderings of its unroofed architecture, in which we sink as though into the sifting of quicksand or rarefied air. Colette Brunschwig points out that this wandering should be done alone, "with no Ariadne, nor Minotaur either".

To think that, today, Ariadne might paint? At least she will then have stopped waiting, suspended on a single thread (or rope). She would then have found her strength and decided to pull on other, previously invisible ones, to weave them into filaments (a word so like the firmament, and yet so distant from it) while just being careful that no mortal knot should tighten the fragile passage of their breathing. "The infinite is constellated with pointless, indecent knots," wrote Reb Sabi." (Edmond Jabès, *The Ineffaceable, The Unperceived*, Gallimard, p.18)

What is written there smoothes and flattens out nothing. The indecency in question would be that of a life which work had abandoned. But, for Colette Brunschwig, work unshackles; its provisional ends are just there to untie bodies in pain, cramped zones, overly compact bundles. It follows the path we wished for, or thought was closed, which runs on elsewhere and which we sense will come afterwards, once the apotheosis or apocalypse has reached time's dark screen. After that... Let us listen to what Colette Brunschwig writes at the end of her text 'On Claude Monet': "(...) A moment of relief given to the watcher, a moment of stupor before the unleashing. Right now, 'the sun goes down' very fast. The horses have been let loose, the shadow spreads, the movement quickens, and speed, here as elsewhere, overcomes this world like a wave, running away to where space seems to change into time, in an apotheosis of negative light. Claude Monet: 'the light is going down so quickly that I cannot follow it.'"

Let us listen with our eyes closed: the apotheosis is letting through a line, a life-line which is immune to its sparkling light, which returns to this tin point where the denuded rush of yearning is drawn out. Such a long undertaking finds in this work of painting a strength that cannot fade: which does not know how to flee but instead floats and engraves the water with a wave that drowns nothing of its emerging characteristics.

Daniel Dobbels (27 January 2016)

Trad. Ian Monk