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fendre
LA CRIÉE Les
CENTRE D'ART
CONTEMPORAIN
RENNES-FOURS

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LICHENS NEVER LIE

JOANA ESCOVAL

Exhibition from 10 June to 14 August 2016

Curator: Sophie Kaplan

Production: La Criée centre of contemporary art, Rennes

With the support of Calouste Gulbenkian foundation and Camões Mission –
Institute for Cooperation and Language, Portugal



La Criée is a cultural equipment of the city of Rennes which benefits from the support of the Ministry of Culture and Communication - DRAC Brittany and of the Regional and Departmental Councils of Ille-et-Villaine

Lichens Never Lie is Joana Escoval's first solo exhibition outside the Iberian Peninsula. Here the young Lisbon artist gives spare, fragile expression to the endless ephemerality of the living world and its host of mysterious meanings.

Since she graduated from the School of Fine Art in Lisbon in 2008, Joana Escoval has mainly been making sculptures, with occasional ventures into sound and video installations. Involving minimal intervention on her part, Escoval's works are most often assemblages of materials that are rudimentary – metal, terracotta, etc. – and/or collected from the natural world: leaves, shells, stones and sometimes whole trees.

Escoval is especially attentive to her venues and the visible and invisible currents running through them, which she sees as integral to what is being shown.

Comprising for the most part works never shown before, *Lichens Never Lie* revolves around the notions of passage, transition and transmission: from one state to another, one belief or knowledge system to another, one culture to another.

Thus certain pieces, such as *Impossible obéissance* [*Impossible Obedience*] (5), indicate pathways that are feasible but always open-ended. Laid out on the floor, this piece consists of different metal assemblages whose shapes are inspired by vegetal and mineral motifs the artist has observed in the natural world and chosen for their capacity to generate associations of ideas, the way symbols do. At the same time the work has an alchemical side: the metal is an alloy created by heating gold and copper to a very high temperature.

Her research into the possible combinations of metal and mineral lead Escoval to explore the vitality – the energy, the flow – of the elements, one example being *Our myth is not self evident because it is a mystery* (2). Hanging on a wall at

La Criée, this is another gold/copper mix: after fusing the metals, the artist physically tested the strength of the alloy by drawing it out into a filament; she then cut the filament up, prior to reassembling it by gold-soldering the segments back together and thus accentuating the impression of a fragile equilibrium. The result is a composition evocative of a chain reaction, of the mix of fluidity and fracture of a lightning flash.

This enigmatic feel recurs in the title of *Rational or irrational or rational or* (1). Made from industrial copper rods, the work comprises two arches forming a tenuous, vulnerable transition: the first is a precise curve, while the more organic shape of the second is suggestive of a change of state.

Other works explore the boundaries between Nature and Culture – or between different cultures and their implicit intertwining. *Neither bounded nor static* (3), brings together an unfinished sculpture of a head Escoval found on a market in Lisbon and an acupuncture needle. The wooden head is placed on the floor with its missing ear downwards, as if plugging into the earth, while an acupuncturist has placed the needle at the point of the "third eye" – between the two actual eyes, at the nub of conscience and spirituality. The positioning of the sculpture on the floor generates a special kind of attentiveness, a concern with caring for the things and elements around us.

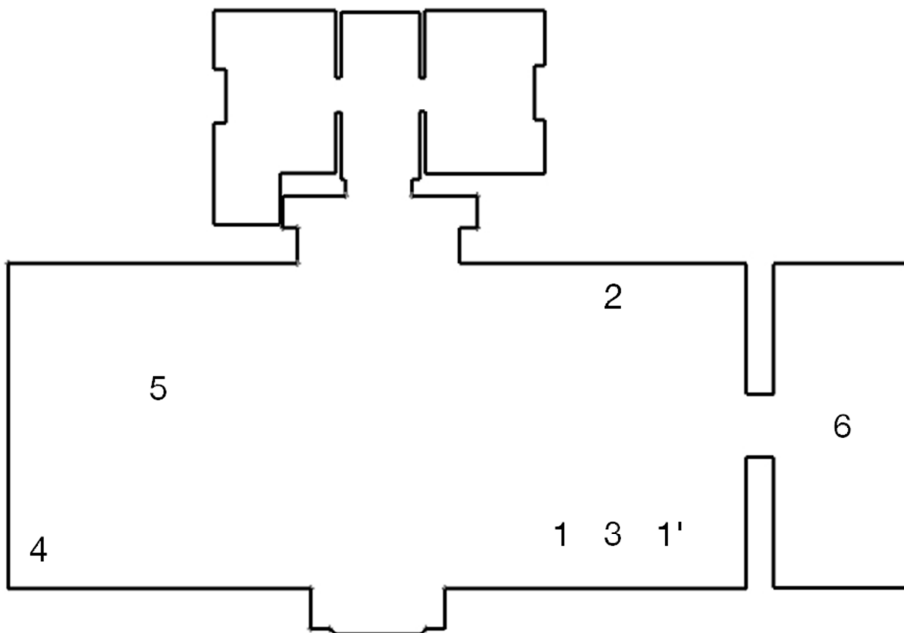
This idea of according care and attentiveness to both the visible and the invisible is likewise raised by the work in the second room, *Untitled (for André)* (6). The title pays tribute to a close friend of the artist, while leaving interpretation open-ended. Escoval has re-envisioned the exhibition space by creating inwardly curving angles that seem not only to embrace the viewer, but also to observe him or her through the "eyes" of two small shells set into the wall.

A last work, *There is a fake stone among the other ones* (4), takes a witty look at pretence or sham. The very shape of this sculpture sets us wondering about its reality. Is this a real or a fake stone? For the viewer the mystery can be left intact or solved by guesswork. In actual fact the block of granite has been sculpted using a fake resin stone as a model, then hollowed out in an invisible shedding of weight.

Spotted by the artist on a laboratory noticeboard at the University of Rennes 1, the exhibition title *Lichens Never Lie* refers to an organism at the origin of living systems. At once algae and fungus, lichen embodies Escoval's interest in nature's interconnections. Both fragile and tough, it also gives expression to the notion of caring that permeates the exhibition.

The things Joana Escoval makes are at once evocative enough to offer our ideas ready purchase and development, and nebulous enough to let them roam free: works open to undomesticated thinking, you might say.

WORKS LIST



1 – *Rational or irrational or rational or*, 2015

Copper
240 x 65 x 1 cm

2 – *Our myth is not self-evident because it is a mystery*, 2015

Copper and 1% gold
240 x 25 x 37 cm

3 – *Neither bounded nor static*, 2016

Wood and acupuncture needle
8 x 19 x 13 cm

4 – *There is a fake stone among the other ones*, 2016

Granite
30 x 30 x 30 cm

5 – *Impossible obéissance*, [Impossible obedience], 2016

Copper and 1% gold
Variable dimensions

6 – *Untitled (for André)*, 2015

Seashells and walls with rounded corners
Variable dimensions

GREEN FLASH

Echoing its exhibitions, La Criée offers throughout the year events, called Green Flashes, that explore the points of contact between contemporary art and other creative fields and knowledge, through concerts, shows, performances, readings, etc.

It arises not from any cause, but from the cooperation of many

Performance

Reading performed by Pedro Gomes. Excerpts from Carolus Linnaeus' *Lachesis Lapponica, or A tour in Lapland*.

Friday 24 June 2016, 6:30 pm

La Criée centre of contemporary art
20 min

An actor, lied back is reading excerpts from the Swedish naturalist Carolus Linnæus's *Lachesis Lapponica, or A tour in Lapland*, being massaged by a foot massage machine.

The performance reflects Escoval's questionings about mutual surprises from a culture to an other one and the links between the body and the spirit.

EVENTS

SPECIAL VISITS

> Meeting with Joana Escoval

Saturday 11 June 2016, 15 pm

La Criée centre of contemporary art

> Crosspiece visit by Micro-sillons

Sunday 26 June 2016, 2 pm > 7 pm

La Criée centre of contemporary art

Micro-sillons, an artistic collective of sound creation, gives a free rein to Chloé Sanchez to imagine an original workpiece inspired by Joana Escoval's work.

> Group visits

Visits are scheduled on demand

On Tuesdays and Fridays between 9:30 am and noon, and on Wednesdays until 6 pm for children groups.

From noon to 6 pm for adults groups

ACCESS FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

> Descriptive and tactile visit

For blind and partially-sighted people

Thursday 23 June 2016, 5:30 pm

Booking: 02 23 62 25 11 – c.brulard@ville-rennes.fr

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

OPENING HOURS

Free admission

From Tuesday to Friday: noon to 7 pm

Saturday & Sunday: 2 pm to 7 pm

Closed on Monday

Open 14 July: 2 pm to 7 pm

Solo visit

Our operators are available to answer your questions, to guide you throughout the exhibition and to exchange on the artist's work.

Group visit

For both free and guided visits, groups are welcomed only on demand.

INFORMATION / BOOKING

Visitors service

Carole Brulard (students and adults)

02 23 62 25 11 – c.brulard@ville-rennes.fr

Amandine Braud (children and teenagers)

02 23 62 25 12 – a.braud@ville-rennes.fr

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