

## Present Perfect Tension

Actions which started in the past and are still continuing

In the solo show *Present Perfect Tension*, Heidi Voet transforms three areas of the Sint-Lukas gallery space into a walk-in kaleidoscope of material and mental impressions.

By altering two separate rooms and their adjoining foyer with additional architectural features and DVD projections, Heidi Voet allows the viewer to venture within an eschewed course of thoughts-turned physical.

Referring to the installation's title, each of the three videos reveal themselves within the pitched dynamics of the altered spaces, merging an element of the present-infinite (represented by the perpetual, blind workings of nature, such as bodies of water or clouds) with an element of perfect tension from the present-foregone (depicted through a photographed tree, a toy globe or the frozen figure of a statue). The meeting point between these two aspects of the current moment becomes a fragile sanctum that separates the concept of the present into dual halves: a universally active continuation of nature and a static continuation of nature's representations.

Clouds pass at all times in the sky. They always have and always will remain the undercurrent linking past, present and future. Just as a surface of water, whether tranquil or at times rippled by feeding birds, shows us the unvarying constants of our world, oblivious to the thoughts and associations they might inspire within a psychological realm. Yet a photograph of a tree depicts one single instant that has been captured from an immeasurable number of others. Within the parameters of its disincarnated frame it has "stopped" the progression of time. Likewise, a statue's frozen stance holds forever a unique gesture, singling out a precise instant, freezing a particular distribution of mass, force and acceleration into a ultra-persona, forever exempt from the constant pull of the present.

Yet in order to occupy this moment "outside of time", the photographed tree and the sculpted figure or even the geography of a miniature globe, whose continents are excused from the subtle shift of plate tectonics, find themselves within a zone of absolute tension. They exist as captured nuances, perpetually poising their inertia against the flux and flow of the world around them. Within this sequestering of continuation a subtle discord between motion and non-motion is achieved; a discord that resonates within the theatre of mental emancipation.

A portion of tiled flooring, which has been laid at an acute angle in one of the rooms, shifts the basic floor plan out of place. This reallocated "floor" cracks and shatters under the weight of the viewer's foot. Here, one actually treads the unstable crust adjoining material consistency with implied annexation. What may have only amorphously taken shape, as a peripheral illusion, becomes a real, enameled-paved penumbra leading the viewer's eyes to the point of a low projection against a wall. Tenuous lines and optical factors created by the rooms' logical dimensions are granted illogical characteristics. By modifying the architectural dynamics of the exhibition space, Heidi Voet transplants an element of her videos' estrangement into the real world. And just as the banal rules of practically perform a similar reconstructive surgery upon our wishes, rendering them compromised versions of the original, a misplaced wall saws a hallway in half, wide passages find them self sliced

into claustrophobic crevices, lowered ceilings into oppressive hollows, as if the weight of Heidi Voet's schematics were composed of compressed time or disenchantment, showing us rooms drafted and designed by the ambiguous laws of consequence.

Perhaps within the refuge of these settings time itself is opposable? Though immobile, the statue of the figure still exists as an article of the present. Though stationary in its scene, the photographed tree continues to ride the crest of a "now". What we ultimately see is a juxtaposition of the real against the unreal: vibrant atmospheres against the stagnancy of a photograph, flowing water against a rigid gesture and a tiny, plastic planet Earth spun by an artificial axis against the whole of an open sky.

These areas of cognitive incongruence, appearing throughout Heidi Voet's installations, go on to create their own spatial logic, tilting equilibriums and challenging one's concept of perspective, while granting mental impressions Herculean abilities over matter.

Her interventions warp our innate compass. They reset longitudes and latitudes, vanishing points and foregrounds. Just as the brain superimposes its mental holograms upon the fabric of the random moment, able to conjure a tropical daydream from a living room or imagine a garden within an attic room, Heidi Voet's constructions transform floors, walls and ceilings into permeable membranes.

Somewhere between conception and elution, our fantasies undergo a disfiguring journey, coaxed into shape by the perfect tension of convention. Ideas, dreams and wishes manifest themselves into a series of corporal paradoxes that open the way for immeasurable, intuitive dimensions.

Alice Evermore, May 2005