

Amélie Scotta

Curtain Walls

Who knows this city knows them all

Thomas More, Utopia, book II, chapter 1

« Curtain Wall » is a technical architectural term for non-load-bearing walls, placed as a light facade on an already stable structure. The curtain wall, without ensuring the stability of the building, contributes to its aesthetics and protection against inclement weather. Though a non-fundamental item, it is the first thing to be noticed about the building. It can be compared to a membrane fixed to a framework, like a skin enveloping a skeleton. In Amélie Scotta's artwork, the surface - or the skin - takes on such a scale, that it turns itself into architecture, combining in a poetic manner the margin; being that part of the architecture that is not supposed to be visible; and the walking; being the way of physically experiencing the city; consequently, accessing the reality through the senses. And, like the skin, it can be interpreted by its texture, its folds, its light, and its lines woven by the drawing, according to the double meaning given to this term by etymology: until the eighteenth century the word "disegno" makes no distinction between artistic drawing and design in the sense of "project". Based on this correlation, the (architectural or artistic) design lines, structure the whole and by anticipation, maintains it over time. In her series of drawings and installations, Amélie Scotta precisely considers the relationship of the built environment from past, present and future history. In the treatment of these now generic city artefacts, a form of synthesis occurs. The artist also interprets the various forms of porosity in the urban network: each architectural feature is perused like a body part, where an orange pencil sometimes marks it as the subject to be observed. The link between architecture and human form is a key factor in her work, a link that has been made for centuries, through architectural philosophy: the body is considered as architecture, aqueduct in Platon's *Timaïos*, and, reversely, Vitruvian develops the idea of an architecture based on the behaviour of the human body.

From this reference of a living architecture, another one emerges. Architecture consists of what is not always revealed, meaning everything surrounding architecture, which comes before and after exposes its feasible utopia or dystopia. Unseen and unforeseen parts are stakeholders, to the detriment of the solely visible. In this sense, architecture includes the history of preceding architectures, as well as unfinished work, creative processes and the construction site. All these elements form an architecture of their own, and their characteristics go against the principles of classical heritage: temporary, poor, impractical.

In a kind of symptomatic way the artist uses non-noble and reused supports: like blank newspaper from a printing factory or rolls of cash register receipts. The concept of "construction" needs to be reconsidered, it is a term that literally or metaphorically defines the execution of the necessary tasks for an edifice. Scaffolding, excavations, rubble chutes: the construction site and the drawing belong to the city just as much as the completed buildings. A significant example would be the use of tarpaulins, a modern archetypal form of veils and drapes. In Amélie Scotta's drawings, these tarpaulins are stripped of all advertising or false modesty which consists in reproducing the image of the monument, hidden by the work. Inextricably linked with a progressive or inchoate aspect, the construction is beyond control and finish, and refers to the artist's treatment of it. With her attention to moving architecture, Amélie Scotta's graphite drawings are intentionally left unfinished, observed from a future time, the subject matters as motif and statement. If the vegetal and versatile facade of the Choux de Créteil can be guessed from one drawing, the vast majority of the patterns

abstract themselves from a social, geographical or political context, to focus on the symbolic and the archaic. Their historical reality has been erased in favour of an iconic concept. The architectural image can finally reveal its true nature.

Original text from Elora Weill-Engerer, translated by Michèle Schoonjans

Résumé

Amélie Scotta, born in Nantes in 1983, is a visual artist working in France and Belgium. After graduating from HEAR in Strasbourg, and obtaining a master's degree in drawing at the school La Cambre in Brussels in 2016, she continued her studies and research in various artistic residencies: including among others The Moonens Foundation in Brussels, the Casa de Velázquez in Madrid, the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris, and the RAVI in Liège. Amélie Scotta won the Cocof Prize and the Carré sur Seine Prize in 2020, and the International Art Prize of the City of Tournai in 2021. Her work is regularly exhibited both in Belgium and abroad.

USEFUL INFORMATION

Exhibition dates : 16.01 > 26.02.2022

Public Opening : Sunday 16.01.2022 • 11am-7pm Rivoli

Late Night : Thursday 27.01.2022 • 12noon-9pm Rivoli

Open Sunday : Sunday 06.02.2022 • 2-6pm

Private viewing : by appointment - contact the gallery

Michèle Schoonjans Gallery

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Open Thursday, Friday, Saturday from 11am to 6pm and by appointment.