

Geert Goiris

12 mars - 18 avril 2015

The most striking thing when discovering this exhibition is the diversity of the formats of the less than ten images it includes. The question that comes to mind is to figure out how this functions: are these all on the same footing? To say it differently, what status does the artist give them? Confronted to this ensemble, what position can be adopted by the viewers, what is the role assigned to their gaze? Here we are obviously far from a linear installation, where a succession of images of the same format would make sense.

An exhibition of Geert Goiris' photographs has to be taken point blank, such as the impressive one the M. Museum in Leuven devoted to his work in 2013. We are immersed in it from the get go, without asking ourselves any other question than trying to find a link, a thread that would connect these works to each other, even though a narrative dimension is absent from his photographs. This link, for a good part, points to the content of the images, whose density leaves almost no way out. Goiris's images are saturated, their perspective missing, hence the strange, immediate effect that emanates from them.

The most striking example is *Outside Academy*, in which the vegetal form –for how else can this tortuous tree be described– sees its living environment obstructed by the façade of the building obscuring the entire background, as if it was dissolving itself into a juxtaposition, an erasing of their two own distinct levels. The only exception is a Los Angeles landscape seemingly reluctant to perspective, yet with a well-defined horizon, weighed down by a sky crushing the urban landscape with all the might of its own gravity. From this point of view, the other images visible here could be considered as mere details from this megalopolis –which they are absolutely not– here a palm tree, there an interior, a bit farther down some earth ground, but with very little anything actually recognizable. Such as the body of a car only reflecting God knows what, in a deep, dark atmosphere just barely illuminated by the effulgent colors of a Northern sky as strange as it is disturbing; as if it was announcing a natural disaster from which a young black woman seems to seek protection from.

We don't know what makes her more troubling, whether it is the lower part of her face, masked by a white piece of fabric, or if it is the depth in her eyes staring at us with an anxiety-tinged pride.

If Geert Goiris's images trigger such trouble, it is because nothing in them is staged or fabricated. They all come from the reality of our own world, no doubt foreign to the eyes of many, but familiar to the artist's. It is the essence of his work, operating at the limit between natural and urban landscapes, reality and fiction, nature and humanity, by bestowing an actual dimension to the utopian.

Bernard Marcelis