

PRESS

vraisesemblances

Exhibition from 26 May to 22 June

Private view Saturday 26 May from 3 pm.

Group exhibition with: Valérie Belin, Sonja Braas, Petros Chrisostomou, Zelda Georgel, Dionisio Gonzalez, Scarlett Hooft Graafland, Carine & Elisabeth Krecké, David Levinthal, Vik Muniz, Claire-Lise Petitjean, Philippe Ramette, Boyd Webb

Right from the beginning, photography has had two possible directions: on one side, the description of the real world, at which it excelled; on the other, the invention of fictive worlds. While the former became dominant, the latter remained marginal and intermittent. It was the same in the cinema, with the dual heritage of the Lumière Brothers and Georges Méliès. Still, from the self-portrait of Hippolyte Bayard as a drowned man to spirit photography of all kinds, from tabletop installations to image processing software, photography has never ceased to explore its capacity for invention and illusion.

Today, the dividing line between truth and illusion is thinner than ever. This is an age of suspicion, of true-false passports, of faked TV reports, of life-size simulacra and simulations, of generalized unrealism. Some photographers are trying to rehabilitate the notions of the document and of description as part of a somewhat moralistic effort to re-found their discipline. But the rot has set in. Some artists prefer to laugh at or play games with this reality. They create "fictive realities" or "lifelike illusions" that can be seen as so many little viruses attacking the big, anaesthetised body of the real. Admittedly, that means giving up the heroism that goes with the wide-open spaces of truth and opting for a miniaturised, modelled world (in both senses of the term: abstract model and scale model). But why bother to make unreal worlds rather than delve into the infinite strangeness of the real? For the pleasure of invention and performance? For the point is not to re-double what already exists, even if this may itself resemble a totally fabricated illusion. What is at stake here is the creation of worlds that are at once weird, out of phase, playful and obsessive. Each one is like a modest triumph over the heavy authenticity of things. Every degree of illusion can be found here: classic or comic *trompe l'oeil*, *mise-en-scène* or performance, trick photography and plays on scale. Here is the whole panoply and all the accessories of a practice that, we should not forget, is made for photography, and is therefore doubly illusory, and that for this reason miraculously retains something of the magic of the fairground attraction.

Régis Durand
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