

VIRGINIE BARRÉ,
LES FORMES CLAIRES, *la vie à la mer*

21.09.2018 – 13.10.2018

In 2012, Virginie Barré, assisted by Claire Guezengar and Florence Paradeis, wrote and directed her first film, the short subject *Odette Spirit*^{e1}. The artist, born in the year François Truffaut's *The Wild Child* was released, has never made a secret of her love for cinema. Right from the beginning, her artworks have shown its influence, but going behind the film camera marked a turning point in her work, especially in her relationship to the object. As soon as she made *Odette Spirit*^e, objects became an essential part of her films, as abstract symbols and bearers of meaning, as accessories and actors. Most of them return over and over again as motifs from film to film, marking out her personal territory. Many are familiar or domestic objects, which she buys new or used, usually without transforming them. Others are made from scratch in her studio. Meanings, even denouements, spring from their associations on the screen. The ones that were best known in her work – mannequins and drawings with fine lines – were already governed by the principles of montage. Since then, a major change has occurred: disrupting categorical landmarks and disturbing the boundaries between dream and reality, the camera has breathed life into objects thought to be inert – wrongly.

Barré's films are short and characterized by topics dear to her – childhood, dreams, faraway places, death and disguise – but they have different registers. Some, like *La Forme des Rêves* (*The Shape of Dreams*, 2013) and *Les Vacances d'Avril* (*April Vacation*, 2016), take a personal approach, in almost direct contact with real life. Others required the creation of a film set and show a happy penchant for collaborations and collective experiences. Examples are the first season, in seven episodes, of the series *La Cascadeuse*² (*The Stuntwoman*, 2018), which she has just finished, with Romain Bobichon and Julien Gorgeart, and *Le Rêve Géométrique*³ (*The Geometric Dream*, 2017), shown here for the first time in Paris. The latter film plays with the dream of one of her two daughters, who is shown sleeping on a beach towel. A procession soon forms as a whole community of costumed people carrying brightly colored banners, umbrellas and hoops prepare to start moving. Their choreographed movements, the compositions they orchestrate with their gestures and their bodies create a new kind of living assemblage of forms. The play of shadows created by their silhouettes, with large dark patches on the sandy expanse, are reminiscent of the artist's original drawings.

Barré's installations, sculptures and drawings anticipate, intersect with or extend the world of her films. On the occasion of her solo exhibition at the gallery Loevenbruck, we discover the movie posters, as well as two mannequins, *Joséphine* and *Simone*, created after (or rather, based on) *Le Rêve Géométrique*. Along with her early films, a new type of abstract installation appeared in the artist's work. *La Table Japonaise* (*The Japanese Table*, 2018) exhibited at the gallery, creates a tableau of various objects. The choices that dictated the arrangement and their rhythm contribute to the impression of a narrative. But this seemingly meaningful organization is, once again, comparable to the dialectical conflict governing the process of montage. Begun in 2009 and already underpinned by a strong curiosity about Japan and its traditional arts, the *Charades* series prefigured certain features through a combination of heterogeneous elements in small suspended modules.

Marie Chênél, June 2018. (Translation: Heidi Ellison.)

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