

MARTIN D'ORGEVAL *REVOIR*

15 Nov. 2014 – 6 Jan. 2015

“- *How does a photograph act? How does it enter into dialogue with your sensations, your perception, your attitude, and which level does it reach in this exchange? Revoir (to see again, to meet again...) is about the importance of our desire to touch, our desire to believe, the importance of ellipse, shadow, space, immateriality.*”- M. d'O.

Almost three decades after the publishing of Benjamin Buchloh's canonical essay *Allegorical Procedures*, the dialectic between the 'art world' and its 'institutional' other has perhaps never been under more sincere speculation. How do we assume ourselves in an institutional exhibition space – gallery or museum? How can we undo the frameworks we legitimized and expand our degree of freedom in the relation to the works in the space?

It is within these parameters of thought that one would primarily locate Martin d'Orgeval's exhibition *Revoir*, a series of visually poetic photographs depicting—in spartan terms—abstracted geometric provisions. At surface value, the images are almost puristically monochromatic, with layers of white, tinted only slightly towards the grey, unfolding into shadow. They function thereby as visual tools working towards the levelling of distinctions between respective objects in the space. This ambiguation exists on two scales, at that; within the photographs, the chromatic and compositional uniformity challenges the distinction between image and frame, in such a way that allows the work to withdraw into its overall spatial context.

Contextually, the photographs seem to operate in relation to the space by assimilating to it; in other words, d'Orgeval engages in a process of internalization, in which his works are—elementally, at least—assumed as historically and ideologically immanent to their conditions of display. The legacy, surely, lies in the strategies of the historical avant-garde, yet d'Orgeval moves the works into a closer proximity with current philosophical debates by stripping photography to its elemental bare minimum, in order to deliberate the frameworks that we hold as imperative.

Yet whilst the exhibition suggests a revisioning of operational strategies developed by those working with institutional critique in the late '80s and early '90s, *Revoir*—and its concomitant elements—aims to position the viewer in the space between object and subject, rather than at one end or the other of a hegemonic order. In d'Orgeval's conception, a discrete and wholly separate outside does not exist, but for the acts of bordering we have ourselves engaged in, nor does its deliberation seem to befall him as a productive concept.

Rather, he situates himself in an intermediate space within which pre-conditioned meanings collapse and the techniques of the observer become fluid and open. Through an ambiguation of the spatial premise and architectural motifs in the photographs, the totality is experienced as deconstructed—in other words, as unbound from its prescribed contexts. D'Orgeval strays from the traditions of photography precisely in order to set it free. Yet this freedom is not novel: it reveals something anterior to photography as a medium in and of itself; a place, or perhaps a *non*-place, more specifically, within which the viewer is urged to take exile and therein see photography through its structural build. Within this, both representation and reflexivity are eschewed, allowing for each piece to appear as infinitely open to the world which they cohabit, yet unconstrained by its dialectical frameworks.

- Sabrina Tarasoff