
SITE GALLERY

Centre for Contemporary Art



Marie Cool and Fabio Balducci

3 May – 14 June

This exhibition of work by artists Marie Cool and Fabio Balducci receives its UK premier at Site Gallery, comprising a series of actions performed by Cool in the larger gallery and video works projected in the smaller gallery. The exhibition enables Cool and Balducci to work for an extended period of time in the gallery space, exploring the relationships formed between the live actions in one space and the mediated performances on video in the other. The videos show Cool performing actions, some of which she regularly performs in her live work; others are completed, or continued by Cool in live performance, but this live work is not filmed and the filmed action is not projected as part of the live performance; the remaining videos show actions which are never performed live and exist therefore only in video format. In this manner, Cool and Balducci foreground the passage from one form of physical existence or matter (the video) to another (Cool herself). As such, their work *reconstructs time* and reveals the participation of the spectator as only *one moment* in the space-time of the work. The exhibition continues even when there are no spectators; the actions continue when there is no one there; things exist independently of external interaction.

In *Untitled* (2007) shown on the projection screen, a lamp casts a thick ray of light across the table. Cool slowly pushes a piece of white paper into the beam and we watch as the paper passes into the light, and then passes away as it encounters the white light, the table.

This is the very space-time of art: the time of the transformation of matter and the site of form; where vision realises itself upon an elemental, material base. The white paper, in its elemental encounter with other matter, is the beginning of creation, the *history* of art. In another action (*Untitled* 2004) Cool pushes sheets of paper together across the flat surface of a table. As their edges meet, the sheets of paper rise up in tectonic movement, before falling back over the artist's hands. Here, in the mirrored space where one gesture decomposes and a new image draws its first breath, we note how the *person* retreats from the scene of creation, leaving behind only a body which is seen as just matter in contact with other matter. Conversely, the matter (of the paper) *moves* and *becomes particular*. All agents in this action are therefore equal; the *artist* disappears and, as we try to seize her (or position her as the agent of the action), her very being (as artist) escapes us, calling us to draw into question in this case the very validity of the term 'performance'.

Cool and Balducci's work exists not in the world of signs, codes or concept, but in the elementariness of matter. As such, their actions are articulated not in the register of the image or representation, but rather as *expressions* (in the sense that Giorgio Colli understands expression as the very substance of the world, its origin and immediacy, an *unfinished fact*). Slipping deliberately through the interstices produced by the historical division of intellectual and affective cognition, the actions are neither descriptive nor demonstrative; they engage, quite simply, with the 'nothing that is' (G.Colli).

Marie Cool will be present in the gallery throughout the exhibition – Wednesday to Saturday between 11.30 and 5.00 pm. Visitors are invited to enter the gallery and watch the action taking place at any time.

Marie Cool & Fabio Balducci (French, b 1961 & Italian, b 1964) live and work in Paris. They have been working together since 1995. They presented their performances in public for the first time in 2000 and have since given them notably at the South London Gallery, the Swiss Cultural Center in Paris, the Centre National de la Danse, Paris, the Festival of Avignon and the Performa Festival at PS1 in New York. Solo exhibitions include Catherine Bastide Gallery, Brussels, Attitudes, Geneva and MUDAM, Museum of Modern Art, Luxembourg