

## ***Displaced Fractures***

As monuments, or rather as prototypes for monuments: this is how Kristine Alksne sees her most recent works: a series of landscapes grafted onto massive concrete bases. The installations have been made out of open books which have been carved into the shape of a landscape and then covered with layers of cement. The books are chance finds that have been salvaged; they are encyclopaedias or texts on economics that represent, admittedly, the culture and civilization that we have created over time, but whose energy seemed to have reached the end of the road. Apparently exhausted objects that have nevertheless been preserved from the rubbish heap; thus their life has been extended in the poetic act that is the work.

The short-circuit is evident; Kristine Alksne's gaze is light, crystalline, unrhetorical *par excellence*. Her panoramas are made up of islands, promontories and archipelagos; they are fragmented, rarefied, presenting themselves as entities in the process of composition or disintegration, or as enigmatic apparitions on the point of vanishing; and her mountains, rather than remaining anchored to a fixed point, seem to rise into the air. These panoramas seem to have had their weight taken away. But they are not evanescent. On the contrary: in Alksne's work vagueness and precision, lightness and definition are combined; her landscapes, realized in great detail, have indented coastlines and precisely delineated rocks.

Alksne's works have their origin in a series of pieces of visual information that the artist picks up from her surroundings, in the reality she lives from day to day: a reality made up of natural phenomena observed in their organic transience and in the most minute detail; and comprising many movements, be they long journeys or minimal changes of location. Under her attentive gaze neither the routes we walk along every day, nor the landscapes that we watch unfold beneath us from the window of the airplane while we fly from one continent to another, pass unobserved. Elements and details drawn from these visions are recorded and recomposed in these vibrant maps of imaginary landscapes.

Thus the artist creates a genuine cartography; a cartography that, in its veins and in the stratification of its forms, can reveal assonances with what is known to us, while in reality it comprises places that cannot be visited, characterised by atmospheres and emotional intensities rather than by concrete data: maps that are not scientific and informative, and certainly not exhaustive, but evocative; spaces of the mind rather than areas to be traversed or journeyed through, that do not speak of goals to be attained, but of distance; that recall the idea of time, of growth, of development and duration; and generate effects of memory. But these images seem to emerge from a different way of seeing. It is as if, in the attempt to free her own and others' vision from the superfluous and the excessive, Alksne had pruned the visible of all excess, had eliminated the background noise. For this reason her landscapes seem to be made of a finer fibre; for this reason they are indeed monuments, but unrhetorical, vital, resonant monuments, capable of containing within themselves the idea of change and transformation, and therefore of

possibility.

In this sense Alksne's monuments, with their paradoxical union of weight and lightness, vagueness and precision, are an expression of an invaluable exercise of independence of the gaze: as if to say that when vision renounces rhetoric, when it can no longer be reduced to mere eyesight and criteria of objectivity, when it is not aimed exclusively at the gathering of data or practical information, it becomes possible to see wonders.

In this sense her works can be understood as resonant monuments for the future.

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