Espace Sculpture

Angus Bungay

Ed Varney

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mouvement à même la frontière où se déploient des instruments de la mécanique, d’une part et de l’autre, le temps des êtres animés. D’un point de vue phénoménologique, Merleau-Ponty insiste : « ce qui donne à une partie du champ valeur de mobile, à une autre partie valeur de fond, c’est la manière dont nous établissons nos rapports avec elles par l’acte du regard... La relation du mobile à son fond passe par notre

nous voyons est toujours à certains égards non vu : il faut qu’il y ait des côtés cachés des choses et des choses “derrière nous”, s’il doit y avoir un “devant” des choses, des choses “devant nous”, et enfin une perception », avancait Merleau-Ponty.

Enfin l’art — et plus manifestement — l’art cinématique — incarne l’idée de mouvement, sa victarice. En fait, l’œuvre complexe de Morosoli resscape le temps à même l’espace, lui donnant lieu à travers toute une série de motions qu’elle fracture et recompose inlassablement. Lieux de séjour et de passage qu’elle fait être, qu’elle bâtit. Nous voilà retrouvant le sens du bâti qui veut dire aussi habiter, comme le démontre Heidegger. « Bâtir est déjà, de lui-même, habiter », nous assure le philosophe — selon l’histoire sémantique, avant d’ajouter : “Je suis”, “tu es”, veulent dire : “j’habite, tu habites... être homme veut dire : être sur terre comme mortel, c’est-à-dire habiter”

Ainsi le regardeur, séjournant dans cette architecture du temps qu’il arpente nécessairement. Corps en marche qui errer, exilés, déportés. (R)appelons. Question d’être, Entre passer et demeurer, nous nous déplaçons dans ce lieu non seulement où nous sommes mais qui nous habite et nous meurt.

NOTES
   Architectures le temps
   — Architecturizing Time. Une publication parue aux Edishons d’Art et Le Semail accompagne cette rétrospective. Le texte est partagé en deux temps : Jocelyne Connolly porte un regard analytique fouillé sur l’exposition tandis que Joëlle Morosoli commente fort judicieusement sa production, au fil des œuvres reproduites.
5. Ibid., p. 321.
7. Ibid., p. 173.

artists aren’t told what to do, they have to figure it out for themselves. Sure, other artists, gallery owners, critics, family and friends all have opinions, but most artists seem determined to go their own way, to create objects and ideas that well up out of their individual obsessions and that they themselves only partially understand. Perhaps it is this central ambiguity which makes it art — a transaction between the artist and the viewer that can’t be summed up by words, a phenomenological experience that only comes out of direct apprehension of the work.

Angus Bungay’s sculpture asks a lot more questions than it answers. Ambiguity and contradiction coax the viewer to allow their own prejudices to surface and to recognize that their response to the work is totally the result of what they bring to it, not what is latent in it. These sculptures use extremely subtle devices to allow our deepest emotions to bubble up to where we can turn them over in our psyches and examine them.

Bungay’s sculpture has centered on life-size representation of the male human head and, occasionally, torso and arms. He often covers them with irregularly sized pieces of black leather, meticulously attached with small brass nails, and uses various found objects to suggest bizarre experiments, restraints, archeaical medical apparatus, and prosthetic devices. The faces themselves are disturbingly unemotional, placid, despite what might seem to be painful manipulations and interventions. Are these the faces of madmen, who have to be contained and caged, or are they the faces of saints who, despite mutilation and torture, endure with an inner peace?

Bungay, a British expatriate who has lived in Vancouver for the past ten years, is a warm and gentle man. His sculpture, for the most part, would seem to emanate from a somewhat morbid sensibility, but closer examination reveals that it is we, the viewers, who project our own interpretations onto the works. The cast faces are calm, caught in a peaceful and contemplative mode. There are various objects, such as household items, cones, horns, etc., attached to the heads with leather straps, harnesses, and chains. Although black leather and chains suggest punk and biker culture, bondage and sadomasochistic rituals, electroshock and other medical restraints from the 1800s, this range of possible associations itself points to the multiplicity of interpretations of the work.

Hammer Man (from 1997 series Leathered Heads) presents a head and torso, clad in what looks like leather protective armor, standing in a sea of nails and holding a hammer. His face is also covered with black leather and there are various objects (which could be read as tools of torture) attached to the armor. He presents an ambiguous figure — is he muscularly tense or is he contemplating a job well done? Is the leather outfit some sort of pro-
ANGUS BUNGAY,
Courtesy of the artist.

Confessional, 40.6 cm. Photo: 50.8x63.5 cm.

Arm's Length) incorporates an eight-foot life-size aluminum cross with leather forearm and calve bindings. At first, this piece looks like a piece of quasi-religious bondage apparatus, but the viewer soon sees that there are castings of the exposed hands and feet in the leather bonds, you can’t use this apparatus because someone, for the most part invisible, is already there.

Bungay’s approach changed in 2003. Although he still uses life-sized plaster casts of the head (he has also done an ongoing series of smaller maquettes as well), the character of the clown entered his work. Leathered Clown (from the 2003 series Head Games) uses the leather to define the oversized down-turned mouth, red nose, and exaggerated face painting of a clown. It is as if the dichotomy between inward and outward, happy and sad, tortured and placid has become more overt. And for the first time, colour has appeared in his work.

Up to this point, Bungay had used found objects as part of the stimulus for the development of a specific work. The object would suggest an idea, its nature and its range of associations would play an important role in the direction of the work. With the Head Games series, Bungay began to make drawings of a potential work and then seek out or fabricate the objects that had appeared in the drawing. A yellow duck, for instance, a found object, ended up in several drawings, but the sculptor realized that he had to make the multiple ducks of the drawing called for. Shooting Ducks (2003) is a good example. The initial idea surfaced in a small working sketch derived from an exploration of the carnival theme or midway games. The idea was further developed in a large three-foot by four-foot drawing. Bungay then created a whole shooting gallery of ducks, fabricated an aluminum mask, and found an appropriate gun to complete the work.

These later works, because they depend more on artist-fabricated apparatus (rather than found objects), seem slicker and more finely crafted than some of his earlier works. The net result, however, is equally compelling. Bungay’s sculptural works are unique, direct, and powerful — yet at the same time psychologically ambiguous and mysterious — demonstrating a rare and original fusion of idea and execution.

http://angusbungay.tripod.com

Karen Trask: Touch Wood—Touchez du bois


Now transport yourself into an art exhibition by Karen Trask, entitled Touch Wood—Touchez du bois. Although you find yourself inside an artificially lit room surrounded by carefully arranged art pieces, you may eventually enter a sizable space within yourself — the space that nurtures dreams, memories, and yearning palpable.

For over ten years, Trask has been giving sculptural treatment, often through artist books, to the relationship between the abstractions of spoken and written language and their visceral roots. The works exhibited here are part of an ongoing exploration inspired by the venerable tree and its sublime offspring, word and book. Like a cultural anthropologist determined to put our current day’s digital preoccupation in its proper place, Trask draws together a narrative on how tree, bark, leaves and branches connect with our own human legacy of sounds, signs, words, and pages. You now shed the world of contem-