

PROGRAMMING 2011-2012

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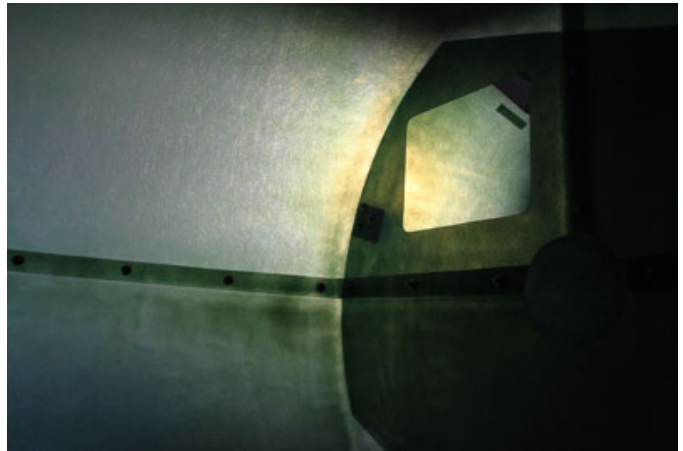
FROM JANUARY 19th TO FEBRUARY 25th, 2012GALLERY 1 **PIERRE BOURGAULT | JENESAISPASVRAIMENTOUJEVAISMAISJEMENVAIS**GALLERY 2 **SOFT TURNS | ENCLOSED**

Mechanical and Disorienting Perceptions

Jenesaispasvraimentoujevaimaisjemenvais (2011), even the title, which can be read in a single breath, has a momentum of its own. This work, which drifts and opens onto an elsewhere, condenses ideas that are dear to **Pierre Bourgault**, the Quebecois artist who is notably well known for his public art sculptures, which render Inuit string game motives in three dimensions. For quite some time, Bourgault has taken inspiration from his sailing experience to create works that translate his relationship to space and time through the use of systems, these languages devised by human beings to understand, control, and mark their environment. After ephemeral drawings on water which make the effects of ocean currents visible, translations of ship routes depicted in pseudo abstract drawings in which the line appears to have a meaning that goes beyond itself, salt towers washed away by the elements, sculptural works which incorporate proxemics, i.e. the manner in which people use space, and soundscapes which evoke echolocation, this new work by Bourgault touches on many of his concerns and invites us to poetically reflect on the individual's capacity to adapt to a new living environment.

Consisting of hundreds of drawings covering the gallery's main room, a capsule suspended over a pool of water, and a mysteriously poetic soundtrack, this new installation presented at CLARK appears to promise an experience and not just something to gaze upon. Indeed, though visitors may approach the cartographic images pinned to the wall in order to grasp their organizing principle, they will literally have to plunge into the water if they wish to enter the capsule, which can only receive one visitor at a time. Halfway between a scale model zeppelin and submarine, the soft green, molded fiberglass passenger compartment seems uncertain of its function— as both shelter or cocoon, and protective survival capsule, it is only suitable for a temporary stay. Equipped with an apparatus emitting chirping sounds through a hazy audio filter, the craft reserves an unsettling sensation for visitors, whose senses will be disoriented for the duration of one push off. Rudderless, it can but instill the reverie of someone adrift, something that the echo, rolling, and mirroring of the vessel in the water is bound to reinforce.

Because Bourgault has accustomed us to works made out of organic material—wood, salt—the lifespan of which can be measured in terms of a more subjective, sensed time, the quasi futurist aspect of this installation is quite surprising. Cradled within it, swaying to the rhythms of melodies of uncertain sonorities, the pseudo natural accents of which unexpectedly betray their digital source, visitors will perhaps imagine themselves on a journey to the unknown, in search of a primordial and untouched land.



Pierre Bourgault *Jenesaispasvraimentoujevaimaisjemenvais*, 2011
Installation view (detail) Photo : P.B.



Pierre Bourgault *Jenesaispasvraimentoujevaimaisjemenvais*, 2011
Installation view (detail) Photo : P.B.

pierrebourgault.org



Soft Turns *Enclosed*, 2011 (detail) Photo : S. T.

The movement, which is presented as a tangible physical experience and a sign translated by meteorological symbols in Bourgault's installation, also plays an important role in the video diptych *Enclosed* (2009) by the Canadian artist duo **Soft Turns**. Comprised of **Sarah Jane Gorlitz** and **Wojciech Olejnik**, who each also pursue solo careers, this collective makes animation works using the stop-motion technique whereby inanimate objects are used to create movement. A cross between photography and video, this process functions in the opposite way of live action film. Objects do not move during shots, it is their slight shifts between images that, when projected at a set speed, simulate the flow of movement. This lengthy and laborious process endows animation with a certain colour, and makes it a good fit for the current proposal.

Enclosed takes place in a library emptied of its patrons. Rather than moving between the shelves one strangely passes before them, as though one were not really in the space and perceived only a vertical slice, the surface of which is traveled over thanks to a remote controlled device. One moves forward, but without ever entering the site, without really feeling its materiality or depth—the objects, books and shelves always seem to flee before the lens. All of a sudden, one finds oneself moving through the walls and floors, going up without using the staircase. This lends the space an illusory feel and reveals its fictitious nature, the fact that it is actually a scale model, a three dimensional miniature.

The staccato sound, reminiscent of the noise made by a forklift truck, follows the rhythm of the camera's changing directions and contributes to creating a distance between our position and that of the space before us. In fact, no sound seems to emanate from this unusually still library.

The impersonal and cold point of view reminds us of its mechanical origin, of its being transmitted via a recording device which remains present and does not vanish before its object. On the contrary, it is rather the mediating mechanism that should here be viewed as the central subject. Though there is in fact narration in this work, the tale it tells unfolds according to an external focus, which is characterized by the objectivity of the narrator, who is outside the action, situated on the sidelines as an observer.

As the journey through the space comes to an end, one is thrust right up close to the books and word-filled pages, but this is not accompanied by the tactile, intimate and emotional dimension of reading. The text fragments scrolling by as images with nothing to tell us, end up completely disorienting us regarding the scale of the space. Language is here revealed in its graphic dimension as a sign, and as such it echoes Bourgault's coded cartographies and sounds which remain stubbornly illegible to the novice eye.

softturns.com

Soft Turns *Enclosed*, 2011 (detail) Photo : S. T.