

IZABELA PLUTA, *à la dérive*



à la dérive
IZABELA PLUTA

MOP Projects
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2/39 Abercrombie Street
Chippendale Sydney 2008
02 9699 3955
mop@mop.org.au
www.mop.org.au

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www.izabelapluta.net

opposite page: *Chamonix Mont-Blanc (lac des Gaillands)*, 2009
found postcard
6 x 9 cm

cover image: *Untitled (wall)*, 2009
Photo mural on adshell paper,
285 x 385 cm



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à la dérive sounds very “figurative” in French, it is also an interesting and attractive appellation, as it stimulates the imagination and conveys different meanings. Grammarians tell us where words come from and what connection they have occasionally with each other. The original Latin meaning applied to the changing direction of a river. Navigators on a ship made it familiar as the effect of hostile winds and waves at sea. But what is fascinating also is the feeling at times one has lost his way or may have broken the rules, wandering at random as in the bush—or in a foreign land—making all sorts of discoveries. This is the creative connotation that seems to me the most relevant in line with Pluta’s experience.
- Dr. Jean-Paul Delamotte AM, Atelier Littéraire Franco-Australien, Paris 2009

Izabela Pluta: trace, place and recollection

The work of Izabela Pluta came to me as in a dream.

We are concerned here not with pictures, but with spaces, non-places and non-events. An aching wound where the fabric has slipped through. It's a rapturous absence, permeated by the excitement of being alive.

There are no pictures, just edges and non-edges. Photography as an instrument of removal. A blurry reality: scenes from the unimagined. An anthropological witch-hunt has led us here, to the edge of the world. This place made by humans was never meant for humans. Cleansed, it's now just scars and debris. Life has escaped.

Memory retreats, becoming remote and inaccessible. A thing to be toyed with but now lost and forgotten. It's just the now – the moment. The phenomenology of presentness gently guides our perception, and we drift. The haunting of the now is inflected with ghosts: empty houses – never lived in; barren fields; abandonment. Impregnated with rot. Yet such helpless, shocking beauty saturates this material poverty. The smooth enamel of civilisation has ruptured, and nature reclaims all. It picks slowly at the edges.

The nothing is not immediately apparent. It follows presence – not as a discernable void, but as an unfathomable absence. A sudden break in the universe. It looks real, but compellingly isn't. Surface representation of surface representation; we can't get beyond the veil. The nothing won't let us in – we are here, it is there. But 'here' and 'there' don't exist. 'Now' and 'then' don't exist. The thrill of nostalgic trace is like a slap across the face. *I have been here before.*

The phenomena of transitional space teases us – its indeterminate slippage between site and non-site, real and unreal, and the way in which it facilitates contemplation of the unknown. Space is rendered transitional by virtue of its unknowable geography, unknowable chronology, or because of its interstitial existence between two reference points: function and dysfunction. The broken poetry of concrete entropy releases a cloud of

calamity into the air. The transitional space is in a chronic state of flux – undergoing change, mutilation and decay.

Transitional space also occurs in the slippage between remembered place and actual, present place. As the power of recollection recedes the places in our memory become increasingly remote and inaccessible.

Green fields and abandoned structures are rendered transcendental in this way, by dint of their transitional state. We are reminded that spaces and places are in constant states of flux and renegotiation, and that as life speeds up our built environment becomes less dependable. The process of transition creates gaps in our knowledge; it distinguishes the now from the then and defies our attempts at definition.

Transitional spaces exist habitually on the periphery. Hidden behind temporary fencing, they seek to attract little attention, whether they be in the process of building up to a dramatic unveiling or in the solitary decline of decay. These surface representations offer just such sites for our contemplation and contradict the amount of time we would ordinarily spend in front of them; we are engaging with a subject that surrounds us daily and yet evades our attention.

The join between home and here is severed. The sinuous threads of nostalgia break one by one. The home in our dream is swallowed up, creating an absence through which the nothing emerges. Adrift, we are now the eternal traveller, seeking familiarity in all we see, but finding nothing but echoes, empty hollows and pockets of yearning. The colours have changed, have thinned. We are the travellers, who for Marc Augé:

are most likely to find prophetic evocations of space in which neither identity, nor relations, nor history really make any sense; spaces in which solitude is experienced as an overburdening or emptying of individuality, in which only the movement of the fleeting images enables the observer to hypothesize the existence of a past and glimpse the possibility of a future.

These acts of transgressive flux are coming to bear in my dream. But it's a lucid dream so I can note the following:

Light – like blades of ice cutting tactility from substance. The light bleeds in from another source. It doesn't belong; it's alien, mute, and caustic.

Form – without substance it's now useless to us. Discarded and dismembered, it waits patiently for the end.

Time – has deserted us. The ticking of the clock has stopped. Breath is frozen.

So, we drift. But we're not dead so we see, with every particle of consciousness. We claw at the detail, awake and alert with every sense to molecular shift. We intuit structure within fluidity and chaos. It's a microcosmic shift; a cataclysm of slippage and we've broken through, seeing things we shouldn't be seeing. We don't belong here but we have *been* here.

But we will never be here again.

[simon gregg]



Untitled #1-2 from *à la dérive*, 2009
lamda photographs
76 x 76 cm, 76 x 95 cm





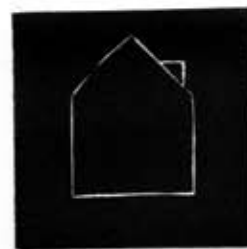
Untitled #1-5, from in (and against) time, 2009
silver gelatin photographs,
32 x 40 cm each

opposite page:
Maps (detail), 2009
pencil wall drawing, dimensions variable

previous page:
Untitled (float), 2009
Photo mural on adshell paper,
285 x 460 cm







Anthropological instructions, 2009
block prints from lino,
49 x 66 cm

previous page:
Untitled, from in (and against) time, 2009
Photo mural on adshell paper,
212 x 310 cm

