

Wilde

PRESS RELEASE

Carmen Perrin

Voir venir

26.08. – 21.10.2023

WILDE | BASEL

My architecture is coherent like a living organism, and in my houses, there is a bony structure, muscular forces, blood, lymphatic and nervous systems, and all the impeccable features of biology.

- Le Corbusier

Wilde proudly presents Carmen Perrin's fourth exhibition with the gallery and her first with us in Basel. *Voir venir* brings together the artist's latest body of work alongside historical pieces, all woven together by the underlying theme of Le Corbusier's architectural perspective. Echoing his words, the works explore an interplay between form and function, the delicacy of structures, and the inherent life within objects.

The exhibition commences with Perrin's new sculptural work *Lignes de fuite* (Lines of Escape). The robust yet delicately crafted cubic form draws its inspiration from the traditional fish traps made by fishermen on Lake Geneva. In a bid to question the approach of extracting from living creatures without reciprocity, the sculpture imitates a fish trap while exposing a warlike appearance, featuring apertures reminiscent of loopholes found in fortresses. Designed to invite fish in, these crevices offer protection, while inclined panels guide them towards the exits, challenging the traditional concept of a trap.

The fundamental forces of materials, light and the way both categories interact are central to Perrin's art. *S'évaporer* (Evaporate) is part of a series which began during a residency at the Furkablück Institute and was inspired by a photograph Perrin took of the Rhône Glacier in 1991. The core element of this artwork is the elastic threads, stretched and undulating, through which the artist translates the image of the glacier, as though it was being filtered through a sieve. The final result is like a delicate veil that sways with the wind, symbolizing the fleeting and fragile nature of the glacier.

Consistent with Perrin's fascination with architectural forms, her concept for this exhibition was rooted in the compelling similarities between the design of Andrée Putman's staircase in the gallery and Le Corbusier's iconic structure at the Villa Savoye. *Lignes de forces* (Lines of force) consist of double spirals drawn on paper, inspired by gravitational waves detected on Earth's surface in 2016. These spirals capture the visual essence of this cosmic event and mirror the staircase within the gallery. Also in creative dialogue with its architectural features, *Même les échelles* (Even ladders), which is uncannily akin to one designed by Le Corbusier for the Immeuble Clarté building in Geneva, features three lights, drawing a direct visual parallel to the fixtures in the Geneva building. *Même les maisons attrapent la coqueluche* (Even houses catch whooping cough) eloquently captures Le Corbusier's philosophy, as expressed in his own words (quoted above). Influenced by a thought-provoking conversation between Georges Charensol and Le Corbusier, this artwork embodies the idea of houses as living organisms. Crafted meticulously from letters cut from cardboard and adorned with mirrored chrome vinyl, the arrangement reflects a notable quote from the interview.

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Her collaboration with architects and craftsmen is evident in her series *Tracés* (Tracings) and *Déroulés, tresses* (Unwinding, braiding) in which she employs construction materials and tools. One such tool is the "chalk line," composed of a string soaked in blue chalk powder used to make temporary and straight markings on building walls. Here, Perrin interacted with the paper's surface solely using the mark made by the tight and orthogonal snap of the chalk line. In the work on the left, the traditional chalk line is absent. Instead, the artwork is created on a motorized table that the artist controls with a pedal. As the table spins, blue powder is chaotically scattered onto the paper.

In *Déroulés, tresses* Perrin crafted a wall sculpture from deconstructed measuring tape made of tempered steel, which retains its spring-like and taut quality. Through weaving and aligning cut sections, she transformed the industrial material into an organic shape, akin to a cushion, creating a piece resembling furniture. This novel use of a common tool demonstrates a unique blend of form and function, reimagining the material's industrial origins in a new context. The construction theme continues with *Traversée jaune/gris* (Yellow/grey crossing), which fuses geometric patterns and organic lines. Despite following strict, self-imposed, guidelines, Perrin finds the unpredictable and discontinuous outcome of these drawings fascinating, as they convey a sense of layered movement and constant surprise.

Playful sculptures created from folding rules seem to emerge like cacti in a desert, evoking an almost animal-like appearance. The sculptures were manipulated through a series of folding and unfolding gestures, a process typical of how this measuring tool is commonly used. The first phase of the creation involved taking a imprint of an object, like a cardboard box or a rock, which was then removed.

Specially crafted for this exhibition, Perrin presents a series of woven double-page spreads from Paris Match magazine editions of the 1950s, '60s, and '70s. These compositions intertwine two iconic impressions from distinct historical moments, crafting a fresh narrative. Each piece was created by slicing one image horizontally and another vertically before weaving them together. In a similar vein, *Là, devant, derrière* (There, in front, behind) uses A3-sized lenticular pictures, intricately cut and edited to isolate luminous and chromatic vibrations that shift with the viewer's movements. The result is a visually engaging interplay that offers a unique viewing experience.

In the '80s and '90s, the artist was drawn to sculpting using industrial objects and materials and testing their synergistic potential. The exhibition brings together a grouping of these older works made of a combination of materials like steel and rubber, along with natural elements such as wood, bricks, and stones. One distinct aspect of her work is represented by three thin rubber plates affixed to a wall. Patterns are formed through precise perforations, created by methodically removing material. The resulting effect is akin to drawings in space, where the absence of material contributes to the overall design, adding depth and complexity to the otherwise simple forms.

Carmen Perrin's exhibition at Wilde in Basel is a profound exploration of form, function, and the essence of the organic within the inanimate. Through innovative interplay between traditional and industrial materials, Perrin has deftly woven a narrative that reaches beyond mere visual aesthetics, echoing the philosophies of architectural giants like Le Corbusier and Putman. The synergy between the tactile and the intellectual, the historical and the contemporary, culminates in a journey that invites the viewer to reflect on the complex relationship between man, object, and environment. Her art, suspended between engineering precision and natural chaos, is a testament to human creativity's infinite capacity to challenge, inspire, and redefine our perception of the world.

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