

L'un avec l'autre, en même temps

Corine Lemieux

September 14 – October 19, 2019

MATIÈRES À RÉFLEXION

MATTERS OF CARE¹

Corine Lemieux's exhibition *L'un avec l'autre, en même temps* is a formal and poetic exploration of the relationship between the artist and her creative process, an exploration that invites viewers into a dialogue with matter and its various trappings. Through photography, collage, sculpture and installation, Lemieux offers up the handcrafted language of an art practice capable of touching both the intellect and the senses.

With a view to deconstruct the arbitrary hierarchy between art and craft, Lemieux examines the symbiosis between the hand and the mind in such a way as to highlight their complementarity. Indeed, for Lemieux, it is from this meeting that object-based experience of creativity is born. Guided by materials and artistic knowledge deeply rooted in her own body, she shapes, weaves, braids, measures and cuts, drawing our attention to the materiality of artmaking, and especially to the *attention* that all creative processes imply. This attention ensures a mindful and deliberate presence that represents a last bastion against the permanent state of distraction that has become the hallmark of our hyper-anxious societies. And the term *attention* is carefully chosen: being *attentive* here is an act of ethical engagement that relies on both the mind and body. As such, the body is ubiquitous and indeed fundamental in the exhibition's works, becoming, in Lemieux's own words, a veritable "tool of consciousness".

While Lemieux's traditional medium of choice, photography, still plays a key role in her practice, photographs for her are not an end result per se, but rather a means of representing the creative act, an act that is fundamentally deliberate and instinctive at the same time. Truly an ouroboros of the image, the photographic medium here becomes an indexical instrument for capturing the pivotal moment where *knowing* and *doing* begin to merge. These pieces are thus the result of a process that is both manual and mental, a tangible record of intimate encounters with materials and the knowledge that informs them.

Lemieux doesn't, however, purport to be a demiurge, making manifest some hypothetical symbolic essence contained in the materials she uses. She sees herself rather as a crafts-person, giving back the voices that are rightly theirs to clay, textile and photographic pigment, so that they might share their wisdom, their science, their powerful resilience. Through its multidisciplinary exploration of form, *L'un avec l'autre, en même temps* embodies an inner voyage, a dizzying recursion of the creative process as a vector of encounter—with the self, and with the Other. As such, Lemieux aligns herself with feminist traditions of artmaking fuelled by care, a practice of solicitude and goodwill that speaks to a twofold nature characterized by both an interest in other people and a form of commitment and support towards them. Indeed, *L'un avec l'autre, en même temps* underscores this empathetic and mindful relationship to the Other, a relationship not only expressed by the dialogue between art and the public under the gloss of education, but also that is simply a way of life. The exhibition foregrounds the interdependency of our entire ecosystem—living and non-living, human and non-human, subject and object—, giving rise to resistance embodied in a new

awareness of, and engagement towards our environment. This idea is central to these works, drawing heavily as they do on the leitmotif of the circle, of the link in a chain, certainly a symbol of evolution and creation, but also a metaphor for holding together, shedding light on the invisible connections that anchor us to the world. Here, *being with* is a political act.

In keeping with the relational nature of Lemieux's practice, *L'un avec l'autre, en même temps* furthers her research on reciprocity, an idea that underpins more than ever our relationship with the real and our sense of being in the world. In our present era, which many are now calling the Anthropocene, the line drawn between the self and the Other is now porous. Confronted as it is with hybridity and multiplicity, our humanity is measured against the various entities and technologies that intersect with it, who, for their part, are constantly redefining themselves. It is the rule that has become the exception.

Delimited and defined by these epistemological and materialist exchanges and hybridizations, our sphere of knowledge now finds itself irrevocably transformed. Lemieux places this overlapping of matter and meaning at the heart of her installation, speaking to a desire for togetherness and collaboration: art as a vector of social and material engagement.

While *L'un avec l'autre, en même temps* isn't overtly political or feminist—with the possible exception of the somewhat ostentatious clitoris—, these issues fuel the whole of Corine Lemieux's practice, through which she explores, here as always, identity, transformation and solidarity, drawing from her life experience as a woman artist. However, with this new body of work, she refocuses our attention on the countless material and immaterial interrelationships that define more and more our collective future. In this sense, the exhibition is strikingly lucid—the minimalism and concision of the works pay homage to the wholly pragmatic acumen that epitomizes Lemieux's oeuvre.

Anne-Marie Dubois

Translation: Simon Brown

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1. The title references the book of the same name by feminist theorist María Puig de la Bellacasa. María Puig de la Bellacasa, *Matters of Care, Speculative Ethics in More Than Human Worlds*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017.