

NIGHT ROOFLINE 1999

Le Creux de l'Enfer, Thiers

The Night Roofline project was planned to take place in three exhibition venues in southern France: at Le Creux de l'Enfer in Thiers, and at Le Parvis, in Pau and in Tarbes. I was very interested by the prospect of trying out three types of hanging with the same works, and this tallied perfectly with my desire to get more mileage out of a line of thought I'd already embarked on, but which had been too quickly halted by the disappearance of the *BCHN* corridors in Paris.

Le Creux de l'Enfer is an old knife factory with three floors built to the same plan but each with specific features. In the basement I had a four-by-four-metre cell built, in which to set up the slide show. My black line drawings flit across the white wall. On the floor above, the exhibition opens onto 'Bolero'. A flexible corridor made of sandblasted aluminium runs in an elbow-shaped track. It may be expanded and contracted on both sides. Both width- and depthwise. I can give it a dimension that fits the place it's installed in. Here, I extend it as far as I can on the window side, while the tighter part is directed towards the centre of the room. From the entrance, the sculpture interrupts the straight circuit. Its extendable structure and the stable place it is situated in lend it an uncertain reality. Depending on whether it's being expanded or contracted it looks either fluid, ample and light, or solid, tough and immovable.

The constructions *Fabrique I* and *Fabrique II* are representations directly inspired by those of *BCHN* corridor. Just as at the ARC (City of Paris Modern Art Museum), they are made in the form of modules to be assembled, their form and thickness differing in relation to their use in the sculptural interplay.

Fabrique I (Folly I) is installed beneath the level of the windows which ring half the building; on the other side the granite rick wall is bare. It consists of six modules made up of one panel for the floor, one for the back, another for the ceiling and three L-shaped brackets to hold them in place. I arranged them in a U form, around a central rectangle, in such a way that none of the sides is like any of the others. A thick sheet placed between two parallel groups encloses the quadrilateral; while another thinner one emerges from the volume of the piece, and slopes down to touch the floor. Once complete, the assembly is 85 centimetres high, 350 centimetres long, and 170 centimetres wide. The wood is painted grey. The construction looks like the maquette of a corridor. The grey paint covering the sculpture helps to make it look very austere.

Fabrique I is an even, ordered work, thus soothing to look at. Its circuit extends beyond its meanders, into the room; the board that sticks up out of the structure and rejoins the floor links the floor of the sculpture to the building's floor that people are walking on. By following the contours, you are projected on to them as you walk. The construction reminds me of the inside arrangement of a large piece of office furniture I used to hide in when I was a kid.

Fabrique II (Folly II) is a dense, dynamic sculpture. The principle behind it is simple enough. It is made up of four modules of the same length (151 cm) and width (37 cm), but of graduated heights (115 cm - 107.5 cm - 99.5 cm - 92.0 cm). At the top, on stilts, they interlock and overlap, and form an empty central void. When put together, it measures 115 cm in height, 128 cm in length, by 151 cm in width. The wood is painted

purple.

Fabrique II was built based on the model of a detail that struck me in the *BCHN* construction (two corridors which intersect and pass a long way one above the other, while the floor in this area is levelled).

The plastic corridors at the ARC were conceived as a sculpture, in other words a three-dimensional object. It was never my intention to create “a space” for hijacking the architecture of the museum. I opted for the colour purple because it is rarely associated with a natural object. It’s too intense, so it rarely features in apartments.

The sculpture rejects the space around it: the complex organization of the structure of the corridors interlocked in a compact order, and the choice of the dazzling colour both play their part in this.

Ça m’intéresse (That interests me) copies a carpenter’s ruler. It is made from a sheet of aluminium, in five thicknesses, each one 80 centimetres wide and 115 centimetres long: unfolded, it measures five metres. It is placed folded on the concrete in the middle of a span.

The idea of its construction came to me when I was looking for contours in wooden sculptures. Instead of making a small model for myself, I felt happier handling planks placed on my studio floor. I put them together in such a way that they created corners directed at all the positions. They became a simple work tool. At Le Creux de l’Enfer, the aluminium ruler isn’t functional; it’s exhibited like a pointer to my studio research.

The title *Pièces détachées BCHN* (BCHN spare parts) includes a model made of aluminium, some videos, and a wooden platform covered in red carpeting. The whole thing covers the entire surface of the top floor. On this floor, light and sun pour in and spread over the whiteness of the walls and the floor. Looking at all this overall, the Le Creux de l’Enfer archives, which are kept in a series of mezzanine cupboards, emphasize the spiritual and immaterial nature of the place, especially things coming from the darker, unpainted lower floors. When I came upon this room on my first visit, I went straightaway to have a look at the landscape through the windows, skipping the interior. And right away I felt that I was being instantly projected towards the windows because their shadows cast on to the floor define so exactly the depth of the room.

This space seems to have been built solely so that people can go and see the view. I decided to work at ground level. The installation doesn’t exceed the height of the two screens showing the *‘Vitrines’ Paris-Berlin, 1996-97* video tapes.

One of them is placed just beneath the windows, in the shadow of the wall. The pictures of the empty windows, filmed during the day, duplicate the all too real image of the window frame; simultaneous vision of both shots – the shot of the outside landscape, which doesn’t change, and the shots which flick past on the screen and are repeated every three seconds. The placing of the television near the windows calls our attention back to what is going on in the exhibition room.

The second video, filmed in slow motion at night, is placed in the shadow of the mezzanine, in another time frame: each shot lasts 30 seconds.

I cut the floor in an L shape, directed towards the middle of the space. The scarlet-coloured carpet is identical to the carpet on the floor of the corridors in the *BCHN* exhibition.

The aluminium model recreates on a one-sixth scale the *BCHN* corridors, introducing the dimensions of the much larger rooms of the City of Paris Modern Art Museum. It is divided into several parts, like the plastic original. The potential of space involves all sculptors, but I’m interested in its abstract capacity (more than its measurable

dimensions) which defines and is defined by sculpture. Each of the videos, the platform and the model all seem remote in a time and a space which befit them in separate ways.