

documentation céline duval

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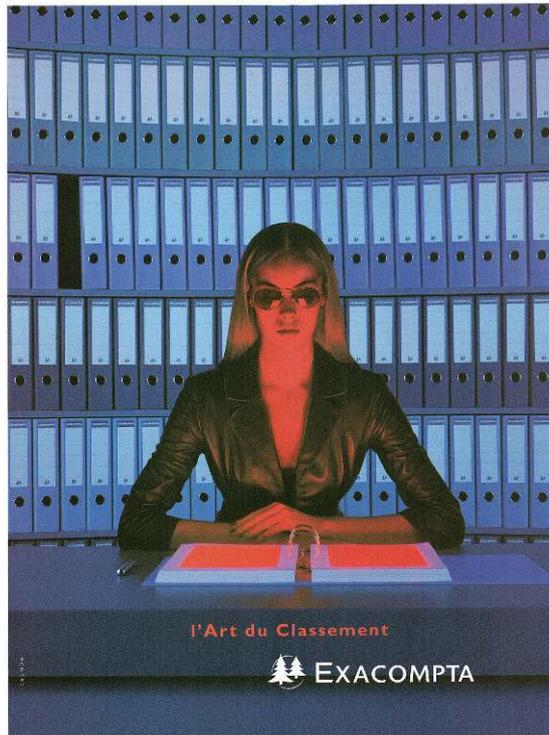
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- 1 The archivist and the iconographer are two major figures in present-day art, as has been attested to over the past ten years or so by publications and exhibitions. The work of documentation céline duval is part of this phenomenon. Since 1998, the artist has been putting together a collection of photographic images made up of her own snapshots, amateur photographs, post cards and magazine illustrations. Thinking about, classifying, and using the plastic dimension of these images is what occupies Céline Duval (born in 1974), focusing on the representations that these convey and on the possibility of a visual writing.
- 2 The knowledge we have about her production is largely reliant on her early publications, including the *Revue en 4 images*, which ran to 60 issues (between 2001 and 2009): a format akin to A3, printed in black and white on the front, and folded in such a way as to form a 4-page booklet containing as many images. Coming from amateur photographic collections, (the artist's and those of the joint editors of each issue of the magazine), these images are related by analogies, be they thematic, formal or narrative, underpinned by an attention to the editing, which has since been markedly confirmed.
- 3 The *Revue en 4 images* expresses a kinship with Hans-Peter Feldmann—Céline Duval incidentally produced seven publications with him (cf. the series *Cahier d'images*, in 2001-2003)—and a predilection for publishing in its lightest forms, encouraging a democratic relation to the work of art.
- 4 Artists' books and videos conceived by documentation céline duval combine classification, editing, re-mediation and re-circulation of images, with a view to a kind of artistic anthropology of visual culture.
- 5 Without calling these principles into question, the artist's activity has involved several notable developments over the past few years. In this way, she broadens her practice of re-reading images to collections other than her own, including non-photographic visual collections. The chronological spectrum of her work is being broadened, for example with

the Maciet collection held in the Decorative Arts library, where most of the images are prior to the 20th century.

- 6 While introducing a documentary bias into her works (*Les Photographies du géologue* and *Les Images de Thouars bavardent*, videos, 2014), the artist also pays every greater heed to the plastic, not to say pictorial dimension of the images which she appropriates and whose cultural and social representations are reliant on visual forms and constructions.
- 7 Not unconnectedly, it is lastly the practice of the exhibition which is asserted in her work. If publishing remains her favourite medium, the exhibition enables her to work out forms which go beyond the mere logic of printed reproduction and distribution, and which renew it within a spatial development.
- 8 So it is possible to appreciate the evolution of this artistic approach and gauge what makes up its constant challenges. Documentation céline duval noticeably studies images, the better to understand them, and in order to know what to do with them, and how to position oneself in relation to them. It underscores their ambivalence, somewhere between an encompassing and humanist universality and a uniformity which expresses and produces conformity.
- 9 The images which she appropriates are taken from the viewpoint of representations, but also from the angle of their material nature, and their physicality. In gravity, in water or in air, in particular, bodies are, in a self-reflexive way, ubiquitous in her works. There is something erotic in the imagery, but there are also political stakes, like the gender issues which recur in the artist's activity.
- 10 Lastly, and this is not the least of paradoxes, the idea that is most deeply rooted here is perhaps that involving the disappearance of the images. Behind the repetition of the identical or similar representations, they vanish by following each other, covering each other (in the pages of the book, in slide shows), and by depending on a projection that is at times inoperative (as in the exhibition at the Chapelle Jeanne d'Arc Art Centre in Thouars, in 2014). Sometimes they are even destroyed, like photographs taken from magazines, which are at once recorded and consumed in the video series titled *Les Allumeuses* (2011). Back in the days when she was a student, it was with chocolate and wax that the artist constructed pinholes for taking her photographs. The light, which was the condition of their appearance, thus also caused their destruction.



L'art du classement, autoportrait par procuration, 2011 © documentation céline duval, courtesy Semiose galerie

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