Translated by Anna Knight

Margot Pietri – The Joy of Getting Your Hands on Lost Techniques

by Henri Guette

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Beyond a potential signature, graffiti attests to communication, as a geographic or temporal indication designed for a reader or a minimal piece of information destined to enter the fabric of time. At the Musée de la Céramique de Lezoux, the signs and symbols left by the Roman potters create an echo with the work of Margot Pietri and give rise to an examination of present-day and future archaeology and the traces handed down to societies. A cross, a line, or a geometric figure has no meaning outside of a plan, outside of a common frame of reference. They may, in the hobo code, warn the vagabond of eventual dangers, but for other communities their meanings are radically different. The clues that the artist leaves will only be illuminated once we consider them within a milieu, only once the artworks are established as a network. Mass-produced, yet handmade, the objects in terracotta conserved in the galleries respond to the same forms but contain imperfections and singularities. Margot Pietri's wooden, resin, and steel sculptures also rework generic forms, but without the use of moulds, retaining the trace of each gesture. These details reveal systems of production to us, which refer to standards, but without having the means or the desire to apply them.

As architect Philippe Rahm recalls, it is the study of infrastructure that reveals the most in-depth information about a civilisation: their technological knowhow, political organisation, economic management, or even philosophic principles. The canalisation networks or the foundations of Roman buildings also make us look at our own electrical and communicational networks, the way in which our bollards and utility terminals convey mastery over territory. The parking and gas meters, telephone and postal boxes from which Margot Pietri draws inspiration are ubiquitous parts of the landscape; they reveal a buried world very different from the interfaces to which we are accustomed. Increasingly technical, the modern world, as Radovan Richta has analysed it, no longer considers humanity as the main factor of production, but instead, scientific invention and technical innovation as its drivers. We are therefore

surrounded by machines that we do not understand individually but that mutually assist one another to guarantee the conditions of modern life and the communication platforms it entails. Through fiction, the artist imagines what these technical objects might teach us, the design of which seeks to be increasingly discrete nowadays.

Margot Pietri's floor sculptures are based on a balance between materials and even the assemblage of the mural works creates a tension. Metal rulers whose cursors are hands invite us to recover meaning in measurement, to involve ourselves emotionally with these terminals whose titles establish a kind of dialogue: *0 notifications, all is well, forget to update, inadequate*... Beyond the recall of symbolic functions, the artist insists on the variants, the degrees between the moon and the sun, on and off, sadness and joy. Her presentation depends on the moods that her sculpture-totems convey, as much through their colours – from watery blue to the yellow of alarm – as through their deliberately aged or wet look and their forms. The neologism of *mfascia* formed by the artist – a contraction of the terms 'empathy', 'face' and 'fascia', the membranes that act as binding agents on a bodily scale – enable a fascicle of complex relationships between humans and techniques to be evoked, without denying the affective element associated thereto. The sculptures call for an interaction with bodies, curves, ergonomic angles: there is something about them that invites us to grasp them. At the limits of transitional objects, these terminals invested with beliefs and emotions define new compositional modes; new limits appropriate for expressing the contemporary age.

Margot Pietri was born in 1990 in Drancy, she lives and works in Paris-Saint-Denis. Graduating with a DNSEP at the ENSBA de Lyon (École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts) in 2014, she has presented her work during collective exhibitions, for instance in Canada during her studies at the Oboro Art Center, Montreal (2013); at the Palais de Tokyo, Paris, for the exhibition *Night of the Tumblr on Fire* in 2014; or at Glassbox Espace d'Art, Paris, in *Narrative Background*, in 2016. Margot Pietri has also been invited to various artists' residencies, notably at Mains d'Œuvres, Saint-Ouen, in 2017 and at the Cité internationale des Arts, Paris, in 2020.
Margot Pietri regularly writes and publishes, either self-publishing or for various magazines such as *La Tribune du Printemps des Laboratoires* at the Laboratoires d'Aubervilliers (2014) and *Multitudes* (2016).

Margot Pietri
l'mfascia
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