

Ninar Esber
The Stabilizer Bar and the Time Stretchers

28 November 2013 > 18 January 2014

In her most recent work *The Stabilizer Bar and the Time Stretchers*, Lebanese-French artist Ninar Esber sets out to explore multifarious versions of how matter and action can be compounded to unearth whatever they can tell us about the fabrication of times (in the plural sense) and the dimensions at play in conventions. Taking as a fictional starting point a story of her walking on an imaginary path that stretches further out with each step she takes, while holding the stabilizer bar to which all new 'actions' that emerge during her advancement are attached, she narrates the ongoing gathering of an expanding collection of contrasting enquiries.

The performances and pieces Esber presents are all works of inscription and manufacturing of times. They waver between well-known objective and subjective approaches. While recent history is fraught with quarrels over attempts at 'exacting' time (i.e., the objective, scientific approach) versus teasing out 'lived' time (i.e., the subjective, phenomenological approach), Esber's propositions find themselves at the interstices of both attempts. Departing from the single universal metronome, yet escaping unfettered human idiosyncrasies, it is through the performance of relatively simple action sequences involving preset instructions, performers' bodies, to-be-manipulated materials and (proto) technologies that times get inscribed and conventionalized. The resulting inscriptions act as materio-temporal trails of past action and as 'read-outs' inviting future exploration.

Times, in Esber's hands, are stretched and compacted simultaneously through repetitive routines and material mediation. Thereby, the present is dilated and fixed-by-motion. In addition, as with any conventionalizing process, it is never only a matter of decision or a decision of matter. Both intra-act, negotiating their respective boundaries. In her materially mediated performances, agencies of performer and matter are negotiated through resistance and adjustment, that is through a mutual yielding of each to the other's influence. Even the most skillful execution of preset action can thus grant no guarantee to identical duplication of a measure. Contingencies abound. Yet, inherent discrepancies between practiced and idealized convention are not treated as deplorable deviations from the norm, but instead are included as necessary co-constituents for a norm to work.

The works in Esber's *The Stabilizer Bar and the Time Strechters* all find themselves at different instants of their fabrication, putting a rhythmic multiplicity on an equal footing. Pieces that result from past performances are presented along with pieces that are in the making, initiated during performances at the opening night of the exhibition. In so doing, Esber not only expands the frame by zooming out on the art production-exhibition continuum, but also conflates art production and exhibition, giving a particular sense to her performances and resulting pieces.

As a collection, *The Stabilizer Bar* resists the trope of absolute closure. Put into motion at some point, it continuously 'becomes' without ever finding a final integration. As a whole they are never complete, but are always possibly subject to addition.

c-o-m-p-o-s-i-t-e
varkensmarkt 10 rue du marché aux porcs
1000 Brussels
Belgium
info@c-o-m-p-o-s-i-t-e.com
www.c-o-m-p-o-s-i-t-e.com