

Clara Thomine
you are lucky (like me)

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"Oser la réalité", that is "daring reality", is a maxim that outlines the work and practice of Clara Thomine (°1990) quite nicely. Interlacing performance and video, Thomine stages and films herself, animating personages close to a slightly exaggerated version of her personality. From the unpredictability of improvisation when facing a particular situation arise these quirky ruminations about art, life, and the state of things. The result after the editing process brings about videos that present an odd tension between fiction and reality, where the question isn't any longer 'is this real or fake?', 'true or false?', but rather 'what can we find in continuously displacing the lines of this boundary?': an opening towards a new realm of possibilities through the absurd?

At c-o-m-p-o-s-i-t-e, for her first solo show, Thomine has generalized this approach exhibition-wide, transposing her practice onto other media. Matter, objects, their meaning or manipulation have hitherto been a main focus in her videos. These have now leapt off-screen into the tangible world. By presenting physical objects alongside her video works – that in various ways interact with one another – Thomine shuffles what we variably take to be the surer bearers of truth: either objects, words, or images. In so doing, she widens latitude to tinker with the anchorage of our beliefs about reality.

A selfmade vending machine invites you to take home miniature multiples, as tokens of the show and your visit to it. They allow you to substantiate the event's existence and to recount it to other people. Thereby, both multiple and yourself in/voluntarily become mediators of the real, each supporting, spreading and furthering the true stories you are caught up in.

A video continues Thomine's investigation into 'la vraie vie' ('the real life'), this time following a day in the life of a scale model city. With great admiration and a gentle *naïveté méthodologique*, the basics and opacity of human life, its social, cultural and artistic practice are enthusiastically interpreted and clarified. Yet, the humans remain awkwardly silent and inert, while we are struck by the vibrancy of machinic life. Inflated with irony, and shot through with antiphrasis, the video alludes to a denouncement of insensibility, and presents a call for an all-inclusive cosmology.

In an installation combining video with plaster statuettes, Thomine lightheartedly tackles the question of the end of the world, as a 'crash test of the possible'. Making use of intentionally inappropriate anthropomorphism, she addresses issues of the representation of objects, animals and plants in our current debates. Putting forward a twisted update of a fable for us, moderns, it is about asking questions on how to adequately give voice to nonhuman entities.

Although the experience of the whole exhibition bears similarities to a feversih dream, this inference may discard it too easily to the realm of nonsense, of the imaginary, of the 'unreal'. Instead, it presents an apparently ludicrous yet oh so sincere claim to reality and its crafting. Everything imaginable resides in a horizontal conceptual plane, from which alternate alliances assemble to articulate a speculative proposition.

Clara Thomine (°1990 France, lives and works in Brussels) studied at Ecole nationale supérieure d'art de Nancy until 2011, after which she obtained an MFA in installation, performance and video from ERG, Brussels in 2014. She recently won the Prix de la SOFAM Médiatines Bruxelles (2014), and the Prix de l'Institut français at the Mulhouse Biennale (2015).

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