

'Image is far more than a simple cross-section taken of the world of visible elements. It is a sought after imprint, a trail, a visual drag of time, but also of additional time— [...] — that it cannot, as an art of memory, prevent forming there.'¹

'There are many things in fiction that are not uncanny that would be if they took place in real life, and in fiction, there are many ways of evoking uncanny effects that do not exist in life.'²

From the dinnerware set given to my parents as a wedding gift, there is only one tiny coffee cup left in my apartment on Rue Charlot. Each time they catch my eye they seem smaller, as if, in a contradictory spirit, objects from our childhood were shrinking as we are growing up. I don't know where the others are, no doubt dispersed in places inhabited by members of my family, sharing a cupboard with American mugs, diehards from flea markets or museum shops, memories of love affairs or flat-shares.

These objects are the tip of our family icebergs, they form a sequence that is constantly updated by new images, new objects that take over us, or that we willingly collect. Like the glass of milk in the film *Suspicion* by Hitchcock, certain images float above others and take up all the room. Whatever their reality, they become volumes, images/objects or images/time. They are literally disproportionate.

Luiza Baldan's images are like this: images/objects and images/time, elements of distinct sequences, which trace the paths taken by the artist during her travels and art residencies in different parts of the world.

This is the reason why I invited her to spend a month in this apartment on the brink of being sold, where, in addition to mine, there are traces of those who have lived there, during flying visits or long-term rentals. I wanted the artist to record her own experience before someone else's story would begin to take shape, for her to leave a mark upon the apartment and for the apartment to leave its marks upon her, as if her visit could draw something to a close and signal my separation with this place and its history.

Chance - or some say fate -, led this story to unfold not only in this apartment but in a series of other places. The theft of some of the artist's equipment, the day of her arrival in Paris, forced her to regroup, to move around with her own work and deploy it elsewhere, around and beyond the harshness of this intrusion.

The *Build Up* exhibition, presented at MdM Gallery, gathers works hinged around this singular residency experience, in the discontinuity and travel it entailed. A few

¹ Georges Didi-Huberman, 'The Image Burns,' *Thinking through images*, centred around the work of Georges Didi-Huberman, texts collected by Laurent Zimmermann, Nantes, Éditions Cécile Défaud, 2006, p. 11-52, p. 51.

² Sigmund Freud, 'Uncanny,' (Kindle), Chapter 3, Thriller Editions, 2013

previous images are also exhibited, like the one of balloons stuck in tree branches, the last shot taken in New York before the artist's trip to Paris.

This image has been enlarged and takes up an entire wall in the gallery, so that it provides an opening in the opening, as it's installed in the extension of the window. It is quite ambiguous as is often the case with Luiza Baldan's work: the perspective provided is impaired by the mesmerizing balloons that are stuck.

Something has happened, or something is going to happen, but we do not know when or how the action takes its place. A text scrolls on a black screen on the floor. It seems to have been detached from the images hanging on the wall. There is not enough distance to grasp them all together; the possible combinations are endless. The narrative thread is cut, the Uncanny emanates.

This unsettling effect is accentuated by distortions of scale – the photograph of a tree trunk, or of a building is printed in the same format as the small cup inherited from my parents –, but also by compositions of transparencies and reflections. Strong contrasts coexist, clashing between images and often continue on into the images themselves. For instance, an open cupboard is reflected in the piano from my childhood, as if its black lacquer could provide a delayed testimony, like Polaroid films.

The disparate accumulation gradually permeates the whole sequence, and builds up tension, like in the cinema the *build up* keeps the spectators on their toes in suspense thrillers, until the lights come back on and everyone continues with their lives, imperceptibly inhabited by new images and emotions.

Albertine de Galbert / 2014