

Kato Six  
Re-located into Silence

13 March > 12 April 2014

c-o-m-p-o-s-i-t-e → Kato Six

***Where do you situate memory? And how do you deploy it in your work?***

My research is concerned with the object. What's the relation between me and that object? What's the relation between a space and the object? And how does the spectator relate to an object of which I have determined what it looks like and where it is placed? I think a memory is latently present in every object or situation. Or maybe not really present, because then it seems as if an object is imbued with soul and I don't think that is right in this context. But the possibility that you make a connection to another object or another event is always present.

The objects themselves have an associative and rather open-ended origin. Although everything occurs in the architectural and very recognizable sphere. Everyday objects are the starting point for the development of my sculptures. The shape, the material, as well as the associations the thing evokes can induce the making of a certain shape.

The connections I make are intuitive, and in that sense I thought it was permitted to use my memory as a support. Because recognizing things around you happens to be based on previous experience. Perhaps, then, it is more about recognizing than remembering. So, whether it is a question of grasping memory is doubtful. It is rather that the recognizing of things takes place at the moment when the spectator and the object are opposite each other in a space. But through a kind of detachment from the original context, maybe even the temporary removal of the memory of the past by placing it back in the present, the spectator is put in a false position with the object.

***You sometimes describe your installations as diagrams.***

My works are very architectural and somehow this entails that I quite greatly simplify things. As if there is a geometrical order against which everything is tested before making it. As if there is some vague register of pictograms from which I can draw. That is why I think of my works as a kind of diagrams. Because of the schematic nature of the objects. On the other hand, I think of a diagram as something that clarifies something else. (Although I do not have the impression that I clarify something with my work, it only gets more complicated.) A diagram perhaps does not occur in reality, only on paper, and the translation of this two-dimensional phenomenon into something three-dimensional makes that it isn't feasible to think in that way about an object. And yet I want to describe my installations as diagrams.

My sculptures denote space. You become more aware of the space because you need to move around an object, and at that moment you aren't completely free any longer to stand where you wish. Something is in the way. On the other hand, the spectator is related to the objects from within a certain position. He is the 'pivot point'. He may even be the missing link in the diagram. He completes the diagram, so to speak. In part, I understand a diagram as being something virtual. It is a network of things that are linked in arbitrary fashion, but that are not necessarily connected in reality. By making that connection, you create a new possibility. Thus, the connection can be arbitrary and not always generate meaning.

***Your works are like an oscillating relay switch between the personal and the impersonal, that is between personal meaning making and impersonal mechanisms of approaching objects and space.***

Some of the materials I use are actually ugly. But somewhere in their ugliness there is something sentimental. I look for that boundary between the functional side of the shape and the material and the moment at which it becomes a clumsy thing. This 'clumsiness' makes the object vulnerable in a way, as if it has character and feelings. And that's what makes my installations very aesthetic in a way. And this aesthetic of my work makes the object still more useless than it already is. Perhaps that is where the personal comes in, because people rather often feel attracted to something beautiful and endearing. It stands there, proud, rigged out, waiting. It creates a sort of expectation. It seems like a decor in which a play will follow. But maybe it's the objects themselves that have become the characters in the play.

The availability of my objects presents the possibility to get 'personally involved' in the work. A piece nonetheless gets a meaning (or not) in the gaze of the spectator. Of course the objects have their origin in my personal register of images and associations from my own lifeworld, but I find that origin of minor importance.

***Why do materials figure in the way they do in your work?***

The choices I make in terms of materials could be called primitive. Primitive in the sense of primary, because they are very obvious materials, that are often used. Like the repeated use of concrete, which is clearly a product with which our environment largely is constructed. Also, fake wood and fake plastic materials, of which the use is somewhat 'passé' and 'not done', often appear in my installations. By using particular materials like fake wood, fake stone, in combination with particular shapes, my objects pretend to be something, but basically they are not real. Some materials, such as the reed that I use for a couple of works, are so much part of a given style or decor that I actually play somewhat with the gimmicky level of these elements. It is very recognizable, yet finds itself in a useless situation. At the same time the uselessness of my objects is amplified by the reference to the object to which the material previously belonged.

The use of concrete follows from the architectural undertone of my work. It is such a rough and sturdy material, but at the same time also very beautiful and fragile. I like everything made out of concrete for some inexplicable reason. I really can't explain why I started using this material so often. It is something that forces itself upon me. In my work that's pretty clear, but it imposes itself upon anyone of us. We live in and on concrete.

Also, elements that reflect in inconspicuous ways are common in my work. I find it interesting how an object and a space reflect in themselves and mutually reflect in each other. As if they are questioning themselves and each other. It is not something that immediately stands out, but the spectator, too, is reflected in some parts of the work. In that way, the doubling, the distortion, the repetition, and the imitation of things is subtly integrated in my work.

**Your work often entails quite simple, but distorting, figure-ground relations, leaving undecided what is figure and what is ground.**

I consider what I do as creating an environment where it is not important what is the foreground and what is the background. It only depends on just where you are standing. In a certain way, every object is equal, but by zooming in or out the foreground becomes background and background foreground. Usually, I consciously put my objects in the margin of a space, 'margin' in the typographical sense of the word. Which provides a different way of looking.

The same thing happens when an object also looks like a pedestal. What is the work and what is the 'presentation' of the work? What serves to support what? The doubling of shapes and objects, the vagueness of scale, the (re)presentation of the work, a two-dimensional image of a three-dimensional object that becomes three-dimensional again, all of this perhaps makes that it isn't clear what you should be looking at. It is a construction in which every element is of equal value. It is an enquiry into the relation with things I gather around me, and maybe an enquiry into the status of the object.

Kato Six → c-o-m-p-o-s-i-t-e

**Whose space is it? Yours or mine?**

**How do you experience the transformation from one project to another, this occupation of the space? How do you feel about this shift? For example, are works resonating in the space afterwards?**

We do not consider the space as either yours or ours, even momentarily. It belongs only to itself. The most we can claim is to be temporary occupiers, or better, *compagnons de route*, biographical subsets that all partially share what the space allows us to do and makes us do.

That aside, we're always thrilled to see what an artist can do to the space and what different artists can do to the same space. And in the same movement, we're curious about what the space can do itself, what it is able to do, what it makes an artist do. As generic a space it may be (perhaps wrongfully) designated, there are apparently still ample spatial elements that allow for quite a range of expressive, performative, and narrative enunciations.

As for resonances. Even the quasi-existence of frail and faint elements of projects that did not make it into the exhibition—other works, alternative scenographies, other narratives, and so on—but that do exist in ideas we had throughout conversations with the artist—or still, in mock-ups, sketches, and drawings—continue to linger. Together with what has actually been exhibited but is not there anymore, all this resonates continuously in different articulations and at different moments (personal, interpersonal, or inter-entitative reminiscence). The haunting of past artistic investment, spectral exhibitions that at once superpose (absence on presence) and are superposed by what comes next (presence on absence), an ongoing conversation between coexisting past and present.

### ***Can a space actually do something by itself?***

We like to think so, yes. Much, however, depends on what you mean by the words "do something" and "by itself". And further, it depends on what you are willing to accept in the meanings of these words.

Our opinion on what a space by itself does or is varies from considering space as co-constitutional (for doing) to the complete autonomy of space (for being). If one wonders what a space *does* by itself, it is instructive to reverse the question, i.e. what does a human being do by itself? Immediately one would answer "a lot" or even "everything". But is there any human action that takes place outside of space? No, human action is always situated somewhere. The more, as much as we would like it, we humans cannot do anything without space. Sure, in this, space is either ally or adversary, as it can be a resource, substrate, instigator, obstacle, impediment, or whatever. But however it turns out, humans and space are bound to make things happen together. As for a space's *being*, taken at large, it is a dinky human idea (and worry) that space is not by itself. Most of space is by itself, and is *fine* by itself. Or, at least, it is not necessarily in need of our help. Sometimes space is even better off without human intervention! It does not care in the same way about the things we care about.

It follows that space *does something*. For one, space is no container for human action, it is not a passive backdrop against which human life unfolds. On the contrary, it is an active participant, an agent with a will of its own. It is at the same time ally and adversary in our joint ecological swirl. Just *what* it does depends on what we are willing to accept. Within a first rim of possibilities, it is easy to acknowledge that space does something: willy nilly space works with or against us in various ways, and as such creates wanted, unwanted, sought for, or surprising (because never anticipated or thought of) effects upon and in us. In a second, wider rim, the something it does may cohere to a greater or lesser extent with human somethings. Like plants that let themselves be cut by humans without any resistance. They do not do 'something' against it. Or so it seems, because it now turns out they do warn their fellows, and in the long run they try to counteract. So they do do something, only not a human something. Perhaps space has its own ways of communicating and resisting in the long run, ways we humans are not yet cognizant of... Let that be the third rim of possibilities, the one in which we humans open up to space and not treat it as inert, docile matter, awaiting our manipulation, but instead try to re-cognize and subsequently imagine what space does; of, for and in its own. Hitherto unknown somethings.

### ***What is your idea of what a 'virtual world' or virtual space is, and how does it influence our way of seeing?***

A virtual world or space is, in the most generic sense, a world or space where the immaterial has the upper hand, over the material. The upper hand, because nothing is ever strictly or completely virtual or material. The virtual always is anchored in and co-directed by material media and connectors, and vice versa. And also, that it is predominantly virtual does not necessarily mean that it is therefore less actual or real. All that which brings about effect, you might say, is indeed real. And that is why its influence or interference is also sensible and tangible. Only, it is differently sensible and tangible.

In line with dream worlds, illusions, memory and imaginary spaces, or still, psychotropic extensions of the world, we find the emerging and expanding copmputer-based virtuality. The difference being, however, that the latter is becoming more pervasive in the contemporary world, being part of ordinary, everyday life and its functioning, and for some of us also being very central and pivotal. Given this pervasiveness and immanence, a number of consequences is beginning to unfold, which does not only influence or interfere with our ways of seeing, but our outright way of

experiencing. Especially the (quasi-)infinite character of this virtuality seems interesting to us (without being inherently positive or negative).

In particular, we think of the geography of the infinite, graphical infinity, and the infinity of new awareness. The infinite geography is characterized by a transformation in which features we know from previous thinking and experiencing, like dimension, scale, strata, connectivity, topography, and topology go into hyperdrive. And this with far less resistance than its earlier counterparts. And with the great meta-advantage: however far, fast, big, layered, dense, ... it can be mapped! The graphic infinity entails a new search for, and experimenting with, shape and shaping, which has its own possibilities and constraints, and brings into being a its own kind of skill. It also offers the possibility to bring together the most disparate associations. All this also has an impact on the nature of the new awareness. In terms of perception, experience, as well as action (and extensions thereof) the virtual space suggests a new awareness. Not only seeing, but other senses, too, are subject to an expanded sensory range. This may even concern a whole new sensorium. The same designations concerning experience will get new meaning, and categorically new experience will be added to the old. Sensory-motor couplings that together form action, finally, will lead to new forms of movement, skill, and corporality in unbridled fashion. In short, a pervasive affecting of our awareness-possibilities has now been put into motion by virtual space. This can all be deplored as the demise of the non-virtual world, but let us console ourselves with the thought that it is not an either-or story, rather an and-and one.

*Kato Six (°1986 Bruges, lives and works in Brussels) obtained a MA 3D-multimedia in 2010 and a MA graphic design in 2008 from KASK (Koninklijke Academie voor Schone Kunsten) Ghent.*

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

This exhibition is supported by Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles.

c-o-m-p-o-s-i-t-e asbl is supported by Brasserie de la Senne and Little Miracles.