

In Which the Wind is also a Protagonist

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If this were a movie (by the Coen Brothers? Takashi Kitano? Seijun Suzuki maybe) all of the action would of course take place off-screen. Crowds (faceless, milling about) would represent exactly where the action is not, all but blocking it off from view. Or maybe the camera would shift when it would seem as if something interesting were about to happen. The sound of the milling crowd rushing to a stand still. A vacuum. Of silence. Action. But no. Such a series of opening remarks is quite misleading, perfectly superfluous in fact, because like any crime story, the action is elsewhere, belongs to the past, is enveloped in one of its many folds, folded away into it, and sent like a letter to a destination, that remains a mystery to us (and maybe it is up to us to locate the destination? Then the letter, the contents, the crime, etc). Ah, the purloined letter then. No. What is more, in this non-movie there are actually no crowds, the would-be crime scene is empty, or at least it seems to be empty. Upon closer inspection it is not. But wait the scene itself. It consists of three, high-ceilinged rooms in a re-purposed porcelain factory in Sèvres, just outside the city of Paris. One side of each of the three rooms is flanked by a wall of windows, while the rest of the space remains white, nondescript, unremarkable (except for a couple of brick chimneys, painted white). The rooms are bright and expansive. Oddly fresh. Subtly charged with history. Texture. They have a kind of soul, *de la bouteille quoi*. Strolling around them one feels, is taken by a sudden desire to do an exhibition there. (Especially if one is a curator.) Or stage a crime. Or both. Wait. But no. There is a bottle. (1) Unmarked, sitting there in the middle of the room. Should a gust of wind penetrate the space (by way of a window propped open by a spoon (2), the bottle will sway, ever so slightly-- hovering, it seems, but centimeters above the floor, for it is attached to a filament of string from the ceiling. A trap? Maybe. Or a companion perhaps to a pingpong ball floating at the very top of a glass of water on a ledge. (3) A delicate balance, indeed. A test? Or maybe a red herring? (when or if one eventually comes across a needle hanging by way of a thread from another needle (4) in a wall, one might find one's self frankly compelled to wonder, "foutage de guele?") But what about the spoon? It could be connected to an elaborate door stop, as if to create current, or generate a kind of *libre passage* of wind. Is that where this story begins? The window? In and out? To where and what end? There is, after all, an X on the wall (5), indicating, it would seem, an absence. Something missing (born away by the wind?). *Un indice*. An index. Or maybe a target. To hit. A metaphor maybe, as in to "crack a case." But there are doubts. How to explain this dustpan full of red dust on the floor? (6) (Destined to become "dust in the wind?") Did that happen before or after what it ever it was went missing? (Is anything actually *missing*? besides, maybe, the plot?) What is more, it would seem that someone is in the space, is afoot, judging by the roaring sound of an action-packed film being viewed on the other side of a closed door. (7) Or maybe, a cover up? For the sound of footsteps. But then the perpetrator (one of?) seems to have forgotten the fur-encrusted soles of his or her shoes. (8) Deliberately perhaps. To throw one off by putting one directly onto their tracks. It happens like in a book that doesn't make any sense. But which one? One of the ones in a wooden box with their spines facing down such that one can only guess what they are? (9) Ah those books. But no (for they will tell us nothing, and in telling us nothing, so much). Maybe the other one, (10) elsewhere, on top of the weirdly embellished, doubly antique pepsi-cola crate. (11) Holmes, Sherlock. Something about the book as a potential murder weapon and a dead ant. Is this a crime? Or is it *the* crime? Maybe there is no crime. And that's what the enigmatic imagery on the TV set is about-- about people, tourists actually spectating, (12) viewing (being viewed?), or seeking, but what exactly? Or maybe a better question to ask is *when*? Or, no, maybe not. But then maybe the crime happened long ago, in a different place, elsewhere, and none but the wind was there to witness it. There is no proof that it (it? what? the wind) was even there, except for maybe in a series of old photos (13) (perpetrators? victims? unknowing bystanders?), in which, it would seem, the wind is also a protagonist.

1. Fernanda Gomes, *Untitled*, 2010
Glass bottle, water, string
Dimensions variable
Courtesy the artist and Galeria Luisa Strina, São Paulo; Galerie Grita Insam, Viena; Galeria Graça Brandão, Lisbon

2. Simon Dybbroe Møller, *Ill Wind (no more dead air)* 2007
Silver spoon, acrylic, wood, wind (Santa Ana and Scirocco)
Dimensions variable
Courtesy the artist and Kamm Galerie, Berlin

3. Fernanda Gomes, *Untitled*, 2008
Glass, water, ping pong ball
Dimensions variable
Courtesy the artist and Galeria Luisa Strina, São Paulo; Galerie Grita Insam, Viena; Galeria Graça Brandão, Lisbon

4. Fernanda Gomes, *Untitled*, 1989-2010
Needles, thread,
Dimensions variable
Courtesy the artist and Galeria Luisa Strina, São Paulo; Galerie Grita Insam, Viena; Galeria Graça Brandão, Lisbon

5. Kate Owens, *His Caution*, 2010
Hardboard, contact adhesive
53 x 57 cm
Courtesy the artist and Dicksmith gallery, London

6. André Guedes, *Modification d'un état*, 2010
Brick produced c. 1880 by a factory situated in North Western England and mechanically destroyed in 2009 by a furniture restoration company located in the same region; steel dustpan
brique produite c.1880 par une usine situé dans le nord-ouest d'Angleterre et défait mécaniquement en 2009 par une entreprise de restauration d'immeubles situé dans la même région; porte-poussière en acier
Courtesy the artist and Galerie Crèvecoeur

7. Mandla Reuter, *0614 Regal 14, Santa Fe*, 2008
sound, locked door
Courtesy the artist

8. Nina Canell, *To Be Hidden And So Invisible*, 2008
Rubber soles, synthetic fur
Dimensions variable
Courtesy the artist and Galerie Barbara Wien, Berlin

9. Nina Beier & Marie Lund, *The House and the Backdoor*, 2007
Books, wood, glue and varnish
18 x 25 x 35 cm
Since Nina Beier's mother moved in with Nina's father in 1972, she has kept a box in the attic of those of her books that overlapped with his collection. The artists have built a wooden container for the book, which is for sale on the premise that the buyer will return its contents to Nina's mother, should she ever again have to make a home of her own.
Courtesy the artists and Laura Bartlett gallery, London

10. Kirsten Pieroth, *Dead Ant*, 2005
Paperback book (detective novel), squashed ant, 2 x 11 x 18 cm
Courtesy the artist and galerie Klosterfelde, Berlin

11. Flavio Favelli, *Pepsi*, 2010
Plastic, wood, 34.5 x 41 x 31 cm
Courtesy the artist

12. Laresa Kosloff, *Snap Happy*, 2001
Super 8 film transferred to video
Courtesy the artist

13. Patrick Pound, *Portrait of the Wind*, 2007-10
Album of photographs
Dimensions variable.
Courtesy the artist and Fehily Contemporary, Melbourne and Grant Pirrie Gallery, Sydney