

*C'est Drôle*: the serious pursuit of what's not there.

It's funny, but not so funny.

Nori Neumark & Maria Miranda's whimsical *Search for rue Simon-Crubellier* is an expanded installation in a cross media frame. Realworld located in the reading/watching room of *Artspace*, the anchorpoint is video set to trap the viewer in a seeming mise-en-abyme of pursuit of an imaginary street in Perec's *Life A User's Manual*. The documentary video that unfolds tracks Norie through the streets of Paris in her determination to follow every lead. Hence what starts off as a chasing after the object of desire in the absurdist style of Bunuel (*The Discreet Object of the Desire of the Bourgeoisie* comes to mind) slips over into something else, the even crazier and more paradoxical confirmation of what's not there.

The work thus reiterates the Situationist project of psychogeography: Neumark & Miranda's video record of their personal trajectory is a work of pure displacement of which there can only ever be documentation and traces. In a sense the object of the work is always lost or imaginary, even when it flips over into the trajectory proof of what is not, in perfect alignment with the Situationist aim of overturning the art object's ontology of presence and place. Even as a viewer caught in the trajectory of the work through its documentation, the sites of documentary witness or participation in this work of 'what it is not' multiply through web sites, Google searches framed and deposited in archive boxes on display, and a remix cd. The work is multiplying in its open-endedness at the same time as it confirms, or attempts to confirm, that this street could not be or ever have been.

The search takes them through a snapshot of Paris, of tourists, of workers, of a little boy who insists that he knows here it is - "you go here, like this (gestures) then there" - and, of course, the various bureaucrats and functionaries all the way through to city planning who attempt to variously determine its non-reality. With Perecian irony the highest authority, the office where the names of streets are officially recorded and changed - pronounces himself a neighbour of Perec's and an expert on his humour. This is a typically Perecian joke, and the end of the trail. Meanwhile, a responder to their blog reopens this apparent closure. As one

of Perec's childhood friends he informs them that the imaginary street was named after one of his friends. So the search which begins in the imaginary and is traced through the real ends in multiple confirmations on Perec's imaginary. A kind of circle is traced in which something comes out of nothing and then disappears into nothing again.

But given that a psychogeography, is always personal, and in this work of Neumark and Miranda, absurdist, the point is the multiple unfolding, the unpacking of the an abundant abyss, a nothing, a no-thing which continues to yield the more it is plucked at, teased out, until it fills the whole of the Artspace reading room and then spills into a webwork, *The Fourth Floor*, on a computer outside (placed on a symbolic pillar as if literally supporting further extensions of the work); also a soundpiece, the video journey in remix, to be played on a discman by a perambulating viewer redoubling ad infinitum the various trajectories. Across multiple platforms the very small kernel of an idea, the search for an imaginary street, opens up into a multidimensionality of realworld artifacts and proofs of what's not there.

*C'est drôle*, funny in the French sense, and droll in its deadpan humour in English, a kind of mise-en-abyme in inverse out of which stuff continues to emerge and unfold.

Written by Ann Finegan, Image courtesy of the artists.