



Karilee Fuglem

— *résidence*, installation view, Pierre-François Ouellette art contemporain, Montréal, 2018.

Photo : Edward Maloney, courtesy of Pierre-François Ouellette art contemporain, Montréal

† *film*, detail, 2015–2018.

Photo : Karilee Fuglem, courtesy of Pierre-François Ouellette art contemporain, Montréal

Karilee Fuglem

Résidence

As I leave the gallery to walk down the street I stop and watch as the wind brushes up against the brittle blossom that survived the winter snows. The petals quiver in the wind, the sun catching golden edges while the blue shadows move and dip. “A Fuglem moment,” I think to myself and internally I thank the artist, for now I have been rendered rich, a seer of the elusive beauty of the world that is always already here with me.

For one month Fuglem occupied Pierre-François Ouellette art contemporain. Here she took note of the natural light, the air currents, the wall contours, the floor dimensions. Paying attention to the environment she inhabited, Fuglem played with, arranged, and rearranged the given elements of her artistic vocabulary: reflections, movement, transparencies, light, shadows. She employed those materials that capture, extend, highlight, and document. Long strips of paper flutter when we walk by, mirrored surfaces refract the given light, fishing line documents arching sunbeams. Fuglem’s oeuvre, executed with the mastery of a thirty-year practice, eases effortlessly into the space of the gallery.

Sensations rise in the body and find words like precarious, ephemeral, fragile, discreet. And although these words reflect Fuglem’s practice, there is also a developed methodology of rigorous consideration. In order to apprehend her oeuvre the viewer has to be both receptive and proactive. One could miss the connection between the sunbeams on the walls and the reflective surfaces next to the windows, one could easily walk by the paper strips without noticing their fluttering in response, or one could not encounter the dancing tendrils of the ceiling work if one fails to look up. The accentuated demand on our perceptual awareness is married to a conceptual shift in how *art* is demarcated from *gallery*. Here there are no artificial lights, pedestals, labels, or frames. Works are not “displayed at eye-level.” Materials

used are of the “common kind,” not normally associated with art displayed in an art gallery. Fuglem is deeply aware of how materiality conditions response and how the body’s position, manner of movement, and awareness of itself *in relation* to the conditions of the given space dictate how and what is apprehended. Through her economy of means and refusal of markers of differentiation, Fuglem equalizes the things in the environment and destabilizes how we perceive the events contained within. Fuglem’s levelling requires the viewer to take care, to slow down, to pay attention.

The “what it is” Fuglem’s work does—this choreographing of ephemeral moments to highlight that how we move and where we look has consequences, this opening of us to a beauty that cannot be possessed, this positioning of us in the here and now—is of radical import. You are here. Here is what we share. This “here” where we are contains a multitude of moments and events. These already givens are of an unspeakable beauty. Look. Pay attention. Stop and marvel. This “here” is worthy. Of value.

What we value affects how we move through life. Remember this. Now move.

karen elaine spencer

Pierre-François Ouellette
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