

bertille bak

bestiary

Exhibition from May 3rd to June 7th, 2014
Opening Saturday, May 3rd at 3 pm

Dedicated to observing societies and to the accurate analysis of a site, Bertille Bak delves into communities and the groups by becoming a member and observing their rituals, gestures, and objects, which she later uses in her projects. In collaboration with the individuals she meets, she constructs narratives between fiction and documentaries where poetry and utopias usurp the simple assessment of a situation.

In 2011, 2012, and 2013, Bertille Bak met a fraternity of 5 young hunters consisting of forest rangers living autonomously in the heart of the Alsatian forest in Ursprung Hamlet. She lived with these enforcers of quota hunting and protectors of animal species regulations, trackers, and woodworkers. The artist observed the organization of hunting parties, the traditions and codes that persist and are perpetuated. In the film *Le hameau* (The Hamlet), Bertille Bak plunges us into this family's universe, which exists outside of time, in Ursprung, with literally means "A skip of the watch" in Alsatian. Bertille Bak collects and archives tokens and evidence of populations that she meets, much like a researching ethnographer preoccupied with social conditions. Immersed in a melancholic mockery, the film abstains from perpetuating it and instead constructs a singular reality. It gently brings up questions concerning the boundaries between the domestic and the wild, the personification of animals, and the instability of marginal lifestyles.

Through her contact with the hunters, Bertille Bak discovers several collectors fascinated with objects linked to military history and the Napoleon armies, in particular. *Collection Fall/Winter 2013/2014* counts more than 300 little, Nuremberg tin-plated soldiers. Here, the uniforms are extremely detailed and the soldiers have been repainted as Alsatian hunters. By intervening on the miniature figurines, Bertille Bak creates an analogy between the regiments of troops and the hunters.

Bertille Bak's "immersions" necessitate gathering information to better understand the groups that she meets. Similar to an archivist, she classes existing traps with the help of drawings. In collaboration with Charles-Henry Fertin, *Traquenard* (Ambush) is a series of drawings of armed weaponized traps that haphazardly go off. Thus the spectator himself is on the watch, not knowing where the trap will go off.

If the villagers send us back in time, then those of *Court n°4* (Short #4) create an interlude, a moment of suspense. The short began as a portrait in 2007 and now communicates a ritual of escape, a hobby invented to hijack the systematic rhythm of daily life or work. Here, on the day of rest, a circus troop in a new city transports us into a curious fable where animals socialize with men.

In Bertille Bak's artwork, time is a weapon. Contrary to the society where time is always counted and where speed is essential, her work advocates physical meetings and exchanges: Bertille Bak creates a link that goes the distance.

In the video, *Faire le mur* (Do the Wall), produced in 2008, the artist invites evicted inhabitants work together to produce the framework of Jellyfish's Raft (Le Radeau de la méduse), a symbol of their defeat. For several years, Bertille Bak has continued to give these former neighbors tapestries that they each embroider one after the other. Exhibited here in the center of these new pieces (without any link to this failed mining town), these "steamers" are arranged under the title *Rayonnage* (Beamings). Similar to sliding panels used to put away paintings, this storage, closet, and archive of great paintings of lost paradises, exoduses, and shipwrecks, remind us that her projects are never finished, and that the involvement of people can continue or even be reestablished after a well-documented defeat. No matter what the project, Bertille Bak develops a work focused on the collective with mankind at its heart. Her work believes in the possibility of inventing together different ways of approaching and appreciating reality.

Bertille Bak was born in Arras, France, in 1983. Many sites have dedicated solo exhibitions to her work: Museum of Modern Art, Paris, France (2012); Museum of Modern Art of Val de Marne Mac/Val, Ivry (2011); Art Gallery of Silpakorn, Wang Tha Phra, Bangkok (2006) and Xippas Gallery (2010-2012). Bertille Bak is also participating in several festivals and group exhibitions: "Get up #3," Mains d'oeuvres, Saint-Ouen; "Beauty lies Inside Desire," Museum of Contemporary Art, Vojvodina, Novi Sad, Serbia; and "NY-LUX," Mudam, Luxembourg just to name a few of the most recent shows. Starting June 6th, the Grand Café in St-Nazaire will dedicate a solo show to her work, open for the entire summer.

Her works are part of many collections, including but not limited to, Museum of Modern Art of Val de Marne Mac/Val, Ivry; FNAC-CNAP; FMAC, Paris; FRAC Aquitaine; FRAC Alsace; FRAC Rhône-Alpes; Neuflyze Collection; François Pinault Collection; Artis; Centre Georges Pompidou MNAM/CCI; Museum of Modern Art of Paris; and the Louis Vuitton Foundation.