

Fields of Abundance

A group project by Madeleine Bernardin Sabri, Florian Fouché, Adrien Malcor, Anaïs Masson, Marie Preston, Maxence Rifflet, Claire Tenu et Antoine Yoseph.

The word “abundance” evokes a vast mythological and allegorical reservoir revolving around the theme of a fertile, benevolent, or maternal Nature. This cultural background inspired the great industrial utopias of the nineteenth century in which Walter Benjamin recognized the grip of the commodity phantasmagoria on the collective imagination. It continues to underlie many comments on the “affluent society”, after the success of the synonymous book by John Kenneth Galbraith, which appeared in 1958.

But the current rise in ecological awareness has contributed to rendering the association of the productive power of Nature and the progress of industrial civilization problematic. In our view, abundance can no longer be considered a defining term for our times. We do not believe that the sole consideration of the continuous flow of media imagery, however critical, can replace the reference to Nature. We do not believe in an “aesthetics of plenty”, in accordance with the expression coined by Lawrence Alloway in 1959.

On the contrary, we want to explore the ambivalent imagery of a cultural history that accompanies that of art forms. To trace a parcours de bonheur, a “course of happiness”, à la Fourier. We have followed the networks of underground rivers with Courbet, danced with the stucco fauns on the ceilings of Versailles, and gazed into the lapis-lazuli eyes of the Sumerian scribe. We have deciphered Dutch painting with Barthes and wandered through Millet’s pastorals with Rilke.

In the galerie Dix9, we are presenting images and objects that are the results of the first phase of this work as a group. Our conception of the artistic experience is the affirmation of a presence in the world grounded in perception, invested by language and by the memory of forms. We have mobilized the descriptive possibilities of photography and the poetic resources of montage. May abundance be, above all, the richness of the world.