



From left: View of "Joëlle Tuerlinckx: Nothing for Eternity," 2016–17. Floor: Works from the series "ATOMIC AMALGAME ANNÉE 58' – FLOOR FIGURE 'RONDs-DESOL'" ('Atomic Amalgam Year 58' – Floor Figure 'Floor Discs'), 2002–16. Photo: Gina Folly. Joëlle Tuerlinckx, *RIVER CORNER* security screen 'St. Alban-Teich' or *STUDY FILM* 'River corner St. Alban-Teich, Kunstmuseum, Basel,' 2015–16, digital slide sequence, indefinite duration. Joëlle Tuerlinckx, 'BOUGÉ silver #10'—série *FLEURs* Sitterwerk/alu or 'Branche verte baroque #4'—série *BOUGÉs fleurs*, 2016, photocopy on metallic paper on aluminum, 16½ x 11¾". From the series "BOUGÉs fleurs," 2016.



Joëlle Tuerlinckx

KUNSTMUSEUM BASEL | GEGENWART

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SEVERAL PIECES OF PAPER in Joëlle Tuerlinckx's recent exhibition have the words NOTHING FOR ETERNITY stamped on them. To stamp something is to mark it aesthetically, temporally, geographically. A stamp confers a reassessment of that to which it is applied, introducing a reflective moment. And we also stamp objects in order to send them or, more precisely, to circulate them as ideas. The exhibition itself—also titled "Nothing for Eternity"—is concerned with precisely this circulation of ephemeral ideas, moments, reflections: the substance and temporality of a "nothing" that only becomes something when we perceive it in space, as we move around and among the various groups of objects, images, paper, and words.

As we entered this fugitive configuration, we thus embarked on an open-ended process that defines so much of Tuerlinckx's work. The show, curated by Søren Grammel, is structured like the branches of a tree, some of which have been pruned back, and others grafted on so they can continue to grow. Tuerlinckx's work releases a dramatic energy over four rooms, engaging in a variety of activities related to drawing. Stamping pieces of paper is just one tactic: The artist also employs folds, creases, and blurring; she measures, magnifies, and corrects; she creates her own original drawings and texts as well as copying others; she utilizes paper, foil, cardboard, packaging, and modified books.

In the first room, about two dozen discs from the series "ATOMIC AMALGAME ANNÉE 58' – FLOOR FIGURE 'RONDs-DESOL'" ('Atomic Amalgam Year 58' – Floor Figure 'Floor Discs'), 2002–16, are strewn across the floor in a manner reminiscent of water lilies on a pond. Their various surfaces, made of Plexiglas, foil, or metal, reflect the space around them, which changes depending on the time of day and the positions of the visitors. The discs also mirror the yellow-painted corner piece *Angle*

d'Ombre 'Coin jaune jaune post-it' or *Ébauché muséal #1* (Shadow Angle 'Yellow Corner Yellow Post-it' or Museum-like Draft #1), 2016, as if it were a light source casting diagonal reflections across the room. At the same time, Bruce Nauman's neon work *Seven Virtues and Seven Vices*, 1983, permanently installed in the same room, flashes on the discs' surfaces. These different optical relations underscore the lengthy process that Tuerlinckx engages in to produce such transient interactions. For example, to make the works in "RONDs-DE-SOL," the artist takes a cardboard cake base or a used coaster, then photographs, copies, or scans it; magnifies it; manipulates the surface; and lets the various traces of the production process (and the imprint of the actual glass) become visible as imperfections. In so doing, she conforms to philosopher Michel Serres's insight that every transposition is always accompanied by static interference, and it is precisely this interference that contains the possibility of art.

The digital slide show *RIVER CORNER*—security screen 'St. Alban-Teich' or *STUDY FILM* 'River corner St. Alban-Teich, Kunstmuseum, Basel,' 2015–16, brings images from the immediate surroundings into the exhibition. On the upper floor, opposite a wall drawing by Sol LeWitt, a monitor fixed to a balustrade like a security camera shows photographs of empty plastic bottles caught in the rotating current of water that rushes and swirls along the narrow canal running beneath the museum. Here, among the discarded remains of our mania for packaging, one encounters a poetic image whose digital form strangely shudders and jolts in the eddying stream.

In keeping with her practice, the artist invites visitors to enter spaces of sometimes subtle, sometimes radical intervention. For example, Tuerlinckx lets sunlight into a gallery through a window that is normally covered, revealing a view of historic row houses in St. Alban-Tal. Right below this, she painted a brown border around a storage door, exposing this otherwise camouflaged portal. Elsewhere, she covered an entire room in shiny Belgian-chocolate wrapping paper. Its creases create a grid that overlaps with the images, paper, and objects that are mounted on it. Among these are delicate hand drawings of flowers and shafts of wheat, which the artist copied or

scanned several times and collected under the title "*BOUGÉs fleurs*" (Moved Flowers), 2016. Often she shifts the source material while scanning it, causing the drawings to become blurred, introducing a wavy bend in their stalks or making them tilt slightly, as if a gust of wind were blowing through the grass. This manual intervention into automatic reproduction is a post hoc intrusion into the drawing process; like the stamp, it forces us to reassess the original object in time.

In the corridor connecting the galleries, selected pages from Tuerlinckx's multivolume work *B.O.O.K.*, 1999–2016, are presented both in a long vitrine and in wall-mounted frames. The relationship between those modes of display isn't obvious. As readers, we jump from the

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horizontal to the vertical, from the handwritten to the printed, and back again. Here, reading and writing are not subject to any linear logic, but instead lead to new constellations of both spatial and temporal relations, with meaning constantly reinscribed.

This brings us back to the collages hanging by "RONDs-DE-SOL" in the first room. In one of them, Tuerlinckx cut a circle in a piece of greaseproof paper with the word *FLORALP* printed on it. Presumably what appealed to her about this archetypal Swiss brand of butter was its evocative name, which suggests the exhibition's floral theme, its exploration of the horizontal space of the floor, and its display of silver foil. The fact that the artist draws our attention to a piece of paper that's normally thrown away is just another instance of the effortless way in which her work embraces all that is fleeting. □

"Joëlle Tuerlinckx: Nothing for Eternity" is on view through Apr. 17.

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