

ALAIN DELORME – Murmurations 21 September – 9 November 2013

A distant rustle, puffs of air: a swarm forms and rises in the breeze, drawing elegant arabesques in a sky full of shimmering reflections of light. At first, the works of Alain Delorme fascinate by the magic of the first fleeting beauty of a flock of birds, a murmuration. However, this initial charm soon vanishes when the viewer takes a closer look, notices the clever deception, and discovers what is really behind the graceful flocks, the sometimes aquatic, sometimes calligraphic shapes: thousands of plastic bags, meticulously arranged by the artist, their variety threatening to asphyxiate the horizon.

This work is located at the crossroads between various visual cultures and diverse artistic heritage, primarily cinematic: Murmuration seems like an improbable blend of the sight of the plastic bag which in *American Beauty* (1999) swirls around almost hypnotically, and the *The Birds*, Hitchcock's great classic from 1963. Both play with the reversal of perspective: The Master of Fear builds his plot on the inexplicable aggression of actually harmless animals, while the scene captured by the amateur filmmaker seems to unveil the beauty and delicacy of an otherwise ungainly object.

More generally, and despite the fact that these pictures were taken using digital technology, the chosen starting point, the way the installation is arranged, in a broader sense evokes the works of land art, which fit directly in outdoor locations in order to be better able to ask the question of the fragility of their future. And finally, as in Alain Delorme's previous works, the accumulation reappears, which is so important to the New Realists and which highlights the excesses of modern society with the help of the absurd.

By choosing such a common and universal artifact, the commentary takes on a global relevance. The context of the images is only hinted at, without explicit geographic positioning. The outline of our proud industrial societies, factory chimneys and power lines stand out as shadows playing against a sky that is bathed in a twilight which seems to announce the end of an era. Because it is a truly global threat that the plastic bag poses: It invades the urban surroundings, litters the natural habitats, paves the seabeds, and inhabits the deserts.

Through visual deception, Alain Delorme steps away from any militant position and prefers the process of gradual awareness. He cuts out, assembles, arranges the elements of a both fictional and probable reality in one image that projects the sunsets of our tomorrow. Looking towards the sky, one may recall the title of the famous photo exhibition *New Topographics* from 1975, *Photographs of a Man-Altered Landscape*, which paved the way for questioning the future of the industrial society, and modify the title of the current show to *Man-Altered "Sky" scape*. Or: when the artist contaminates our dreams...

„Photographs of a Man-altered Skyscape...“ by Raphaële Bertho, September 2013

*Alain Delorme born 1979 in Paris, France.
He lives and works in Paris, France.*