

“ITERATIONS, OR, UNTIL YOU GET IT (THAT THING YOU SHOULD KNOW)”

Paula Castro and Cyprien Chabert

*In collaboration with Nick Norma*

Dec 3rd – 8th, 2009

Opening Reception Dec 3rd, 6-9pm

Wavering minarets and less perfect originals.

Italo Calvino’s *Invisible Cities* is a series of conversations between Marco Polo and Kublai Khan in the palace gardens. Polo describes to the aging leader different cities of his vast empire and Khan listens intently to the traveler’s tales unable to escape a foreboding sense that his reign is ending.

*Polo: “In vain, great-hearted Kublai, shall I attempt to describe Zaira, the city of high bastions. I could tell you how many steps make up the streets rising like stairways, and the degree of the arcades’ curves, and what kind of zinc scales cover the roofs; but I already know this would be the same as telling you nothing. The city does not consist of this, but of relationships between the measurements of its space and the events of its past: the height of a lamppost and the distance from the ground of a hanged usurper’s swaying feet; the line strung from the lamppost to the railing opposite and the festoons that decorate the course of the queen’s nuptial procession; the height of that railing and the leap of the adulterer who climbed over it at dawn; the rips in the fish net and the three old men seated on the dock mending nets and telling each other stories for the hundredth time.*

*As this wave from memories flows in, the city soaks it up like a sponge and expands. A description of Zaira as it is today should contain all Zaira’s past. The city, however, does not tell its past, but contains it like the lines of a hand, written in the corners of the streets, the grating of the windows, the banisters of the steps, the antennae of the lighting rod, the poles of the flags, every segment marked in turn with scratches, indentations, scrolls.*

Polo tells of all the cities in this manner, through their particulars: one city is reflected in image and all action in a lake below and another is described only through how its minarets waver in the heat. Small details that fade and disappear solidify his visions of each city.

Paula Castro and Cyprien Chabert share this interest of working in reverse, through particulars instead of the whole and in multiple instead of a single focus. An image of a stone is repeated numerous times either redrawn or photocopied and a wall drawing resembling the

grain of a tree explodes into a landscape. They bring the distant to the foreground through examination of details. Iterations are repetition of a process and simulacra are defined as reproductions, which are less perfect than the original. Nick Normal's "Expansive Library," an ongoing collection of facsimile knowledge, proved a useful point of departure, with refashioned books serving as titles.

Simulacra has been taken on by contemporary writers such as Jean Baudrillard who looked at the term as having changed in the modern age of constant reproduction and how any trace of the original of any one thing is near lost. Because of this lost original he looks to each copy as being essential, each iteration as necessary in its own right, or in Castro's words that "each image could be a memory of the other."

This installation is then presented here at Flux Factory, a collective recently transported and re-imagined in a former greeting card factory. An industrial building that has been smartly repurposed and there remains a large conveyor belt in the corner coiled up, an installation waiting to happen, and the gallery's windows open to the brick walls of its neighbor. Layers of sediment fill the now forgotten narrow windowsill like strata allowing another language of history into the room.

*-Summer Guthery*

