



ARTICLE RÉSERVÉ AUX ABONNÉS

ÊTRE ARTISTE AUJOURD'HUI

## Épisode 5 : Charlotte Moth et l'atelier de l'itinérance

Par **Judicaël Lavrador** • le 21 novembre 2017

Comment devient-on artiste ? Comment le reste-t-on ? Est-ce un destin, un engagement, un sacerdoce ou un travail à temps partiel ? Comment en vit-on, ou pas ? Beaux Arts met, à travers cette série de six portraits, ses pas dans ceux des artistes, qui, jeunes ou confirmés, ambitieux ou réservés, tracent leur route. Celle de la jeune Charlotte Moth a serpenté d'un pays à l'autre, et son œuvre avec elle. Rencontre à Paris, son dernier point de chute.



Charlotte Moth au café La Fontaine de Belleville dans le 19<sup>e</sup> arrondissement de Paris, Novembre 2017

Quittant Londres, d'abord, puis les Pays-Bas, pour finalement faire de Paris un port d'attache duquel elle n'hésite pas à lever l'ancre pour séjourner à Dublin ou Porto, Charlotte Moth vient de participer au Prix Marcel Duchamp où elle a présenté une pièce elle aussi migratoire, qui consistait à sortir des réserves du Fonds municipal d'art contemporain parisien des statues classiques qui y croupissaient depuis des lustres. Une de ses œuvres phares est aussi portée par cette impulsion Itinérante qui anime le parcours de l'art : une collection de photographies d'architectures modernes ou d'intérieurs domestiques donnant forme à des sculptures, des installations, des tables d'assemblages ou encore un livre, qui s'intitule d'ailleurs le « Travelogue ». Sans être un carnet de voyage ni un journal intime, celui-ci est habité par ce même mouvement, celui des images qu'on trie, qu'on range, qu'on ressort en tâchant de se souvenir à quelle période de l'histoire – la nôtre et la grande – elles peuvent bien renvoyer.



Charlotte Moth, Travelogue, Novembre 2017



**Charlotte Moth ne vit toujours pas de son art. Les cours qu'elle donne à l'École des Beaux-Arts de Nantes équilibrent le budget, qui n'inclut pas le règlement d'un atelier : elle n'en a pas...**

**Charlotte Moth voyage toujours**

**beaucoup, et son œuvre avec elle.** Ces deux dernières années, elle a exposé à l'ICA, à la Tate Britain de Londres, au MIT de Boston (un show intitulé « Seeing while moving »...), au Parc Saint-Léger de Pouques-les-Eaux et, surtout, au Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, où les moyens (techniques et financiers) de production mis à sa disposition étaient inespérés : « Quand j'ai lu sur ma boîte mail la proposition de la curatrice du Kunstmuseum, Christiane Meyer-Stoll, se souvient Charlotte Moth, c'est comme si j'avais gagné à la loterie ». Façon de parler de la fertilité et de l'excitation ressenties

plutôt que de monnaie sonnante et trébuchante : Charlotte Moth ne vit toujours pas de son art. Les cours qu'elle donne à l'École des Beaux-Arts de Nantes équilibrent le budget, qui n'inclut pas le règlement d'un atelier : elle n'en a pas... faute de moyens suffisants. Elle a fait une demande d'atelier-logement à la ville de Paris, mais ne se fait guère d'illusions (« J'en obtiendrai un dans cinq ans », rit-elle). Son luxe ? « À la différence de mes parents, j'ai eu la liberté de choisir mon métier ».

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Charlotte Moth, vue de l'exposition « Travelogue », 2016 (1)

Exposition au / Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein - Photo Stefan Altenburger Photography / © Charlotte Moth © Adagp, Paris 2017

**À 18 ans, elle file à Canterbury, dans le Kent,** suivre un premier cursus en art et y écrire un mémoire sur André Cadere et Daniel Buren. Elle se souvient qu'elle emmenait ses camarades faire les vernissages à Londres, ceux de ses profs notamment, Simon Bedwell, un des membres du groupe d'artistes BANK, ou les Frères Chapman. En 2000, elle poursuit ses études à la Slade School of Arts, à UCL (University College London), tout en exerçant comme caissière dans les supermarchés, un travail harassant et peu gratifiant : « À Londres, tu n'as pas le choix, c'est dur d'y survivre. Ce qui change ta manière de penser, de travailler, de prendre des risques [dans le travail artistique]. Cela fait réfléchir et il faut avoir sacrément confiance en soi pour continuer. Tu dois rester actif ».



Charlotte Moth au café La Fontaine de Belleville dans le 10<sup>e</sup> arrondissement de Paris, Novembre 2017



**Une fois diplômée, elle « survit » donc trois ans à Londres**, avant que son dossier ne soit retenu pour une prestigieuse résidence, la Jan Van Eyck Academie à Maastricht. Elle y passe deux ans qui vont changer sa vie. Plus besoin d'être caissière ni « de se concentrer sur les dettes qui se sont accumulées » ; elle peut désormais se consacrer uniquement à son œuvre. Elle dispose d'un atelier et partage avec ses camarades (entre autres, le Français Gyan Panchal ou le Péruvien

Armando Tudela, deux artistes qu'elle continue de voir) une petite cuisine et une salle de vie collective, où chacun se retrouve « pour prendre le café à 50 cents (au lieu de 2 pounds à Londres) », s'amuse-t-elle. Dans cet « environnement très humain », tout en développant chacun leur travail personnel, les résidents organisent des soirées vidéos (d'artistes), des dîners, des fêtes et des soirées-débats au sein ou en-dehors de la Jan Van Eyck Academie. Charlotte Moth dirige ainsi, avec sa grande amie l'artiste Falke Pisano, des événements (labellisés « We love Evenings ») à la galerie Ellen de Bruijne Projects, à Amsterdam.



Charlotte Moth, Vue de l'exposition « Travelogue », 2016

**Quand elle intègre le laboratoire de création post-diplôme du Palais de Tokyo**, le Pavillon, Charlotte Moth a déjà fait le choix de vivre à Paris depuis huit mois, pendant lesquels elle retrouve (une dernière fois) les caisses des grands magasins. Ensuite, de nouvelles résidences l'emmènent à Dublin, puis à Porto, à la Fondation Serralves : un rythme voyageur qui étoffe à chaque étape le travail d'œuvres faites sur place, mais charriant et tramant avec elles un baluchon d'images, de sculptures et de pensées qui se sont nouées ailleurs et autrement.



Charlotte Moth, Installation conçue pour le Prix Marcel Duchamp, 2017



**« Quand tu es artiste, tu ne l'es jamais que pour ou par toi seul. Ça sonne un peu hippie, mais tu dois le partager »**

**Charlotte Moth**

À travailler un peu partout, là où le vent des propositions vous pousse, le risque peut être alors de s'éparpiller, de se perdre en cours de route. Mais l'attachement à Paris s'est renforcé et a pris pour port d'attache Marcelle Alix, la galerie (fondée et tenue par Isabelle Alfonsi et Cécilia Becanovic) qui représente Charlotte Moth depuis 2009. Enfin, à être de plus en plus sollicitée, « à gagner de plus en plus à la loterie » – sans s'enrichir, donc –, à travailler de plus en plus pour soi, le risque ne serait-il pas aussi de voir s'éteindre cet amour des

communautés qui a transporté Charlotte Moth d'une résidence internationale à l'autre ? « Tu ne peux pas bénéficier sans arrêt de ce type de soutien. En revanche, quand tu es artiste, tu ne l'es jamais que pour ou par toi seul. Ça sonne un peu hippie, mais tu dois le partager ». Et rendre ce qu'on t'a donné. Ce que l'artiste, lassée des allers-retours sous la Manche, n'a plus avec ses ex-étudiants du Goldsmith College de Londres mais avec ceux des Beaux-Arts de Nantes. « Artiste, c'est un investissement réciproque », conclut-elle. Avec son public, ses pairs et ses soutiens.

→ **Le site de l'artiste**

<http://charlottemoth.com/>

À lire aussi : **Épisode 4 : Les lignes de vie de Marielle Paul**

Art contemporain Installation Voyage Charlotte Moth +





Charlotte Moth accumule des photographies analogiques depuis 1999. La collection qui en résulte, le *Travelogue*, renvoie à des déambulations passées en révélant des paysages, des éléments architecturaux ou végétaux, parfois des espaces intérieurs, tandis que des allusions géométriques cohabitent avec des mains et des gestes. Une impression de justesse accompagne la solennité de ces images, ce qu'elles montrent semble figé dans le temps, oscillant entre mélancolie et élégance, alors qu'il n'est question finalement que de s'arrêter sur des choses a priori ordinaires.

Le *Travelogue* constitue l'une des trames de départ à l'exposition que présente le Parc Saint Léger, dont l'enjeu consiste à mettre en espace de telles images, en soulignant d'un côté la finesse du regard que Charlotte Moth exerce sur son environnement, de l'autre, la possibilité de démultiplier les cheminements visuels. En cela, il s'agit d'adopter une perception éclatée qui, plutôt que de s'arrêter sur la valeur intrinsèque des différents motifs, invite à considérer les intervalles et les connexions.

Dans le cadre de l'exposition, cette décomposition du regard se joue sur au moins deux niveaux. Celui, tout d'abord, des regroupements de photographies tapissant les murs et composant la majeure partie de ce qui est présenté. La série *Choreography of the Image: Inserts (Substitute)* se compose ainsi d'une dizaine de structures murales – des displays – associant des images autour d'une thématique spécifique : Lumière, Image, Livre, Nature, Atelier, etc. Extraites du *Travelogue*, ces images sont organisées de façon constellée, c'est-à-dire en s'articulant autour d'une thématique commune tout en affichant des différences formelles ou sémantiques. Décomposition du regard qui se joue ensuite au niveau de la scénographie, notamment à partir de l'espace central qui, de prime abord, peut sembler vacant. Celui-ci est cependant agrémenté de structures en bois situées en hauteur, lesquelles soutiennent des projecteurs diffusant des lumières d'ambiance. Une atmosphère colorée et chaleureuse en émane, son intégration à l'architecture locale évoque une mise en scène relative au monde du spectacle, là où sa position centrale permet d'imprégner l'ensemble de l'exposition de lumières immersives. Les photographies murales à la texture brillante, ou disposées sur ces displays légèrement inclinés et parfois réfléchissants, possèdent une consistance irisée, donc fonction du regard et des positionnements.

Ce qui donc est mis en avant est une logique de l'enchevêtrement pour laquelle chaque image est en mesure de résonner avec son autre ou avec l'ensemble qui la contient. Les lignes de lecture peuvent se démultiplier, car est favorisé un régime de perception s'appuyant sur la potentialité et la variabilité. De même, en passant par un regard divergeant et allant à l'encontre d'une idée de la narration unique et linéaire, les principes d'interprétation et d'identification sont malmenés, à l'image du film *The Story of a Different Thought* décrivant plusieurs façons de raconter une histoire, ou des deux *Lurking Sculpture*, impressions 3D de plantes d'intérieur dont l'une est accompagnée d'un mouvement de rotation à peine perceptible. Si l'une des difficultés que l'on rencontre lorsque l'on privilégie une logique de la multiplicité, à l'opposé d'une logique de l'unicité, est la possibilité de tendre vers un relativisme où tout se vaut, il semble néanmoins que la scénographie de Charlotte Moth parvienne à polariser une esthétique globale, dans la mesure où persiste la sensation d'assister à une recherche visuelle nourrie par une sensibilité évidente. De surcroît, la volonté d'agencer des éléments entre eux afin que s'enclenchent des lectures périphériques est toujours guidée par une logique classificatoire. Celle-ci, loin de diviser les différents éléments, permet au contraire de

## Charlotte Moth Pensée kaléidoscopique

par Julien Verhaeghe

Parc Saint Léger, Pougues-les-Eaux  
24.09 – 11.12.2016



Charlotte Moth, *living images (1)*, 2015 - 2016, collection particulière;  
*living images (2)*, 2015 - 2016, collection Bernard Ruiz-Picasso.  
Photo: Aurélien Mole © Parc Saint Léger

les corrélés, ne serait-ce parce que se dessine une trame invisible mais cohérente, un « air de famille ». En raison d'un mode de fonctionnement procédant donc par analogie voire par comparaison, sans doute peut-on associer ces photographies aux regroupements taxinomiques qui s'appuient sur des principes de ressemblance et de similitude, rappelant avec le philosophe anglais David Hume qu'afin de combler les intervalles rapportant les objets entre eux, il est nécessaire de se fier à une forme d'imagination. Plus qu'un appel à l'imagination cependant, dès lors que le regard hésite entre diversité et unité, Charlotte Moth semble inviter le visiteur à produire une déambulation mentale qui, plutôt que de tendre à la flânerie et à la passivité, aspire à l'élaboration d'une trame globale, c'est-à-dire, peut-être, à une forme de pensée.



## Charlotte Moth by Jennifer Burris

*Infinite configurations: collection, space, and story.*



Charlotte Moth, Still from *In unexpected places, in unexpected lights and colours, (sculpture made to be filmed)*, 2012. Black-and-white digital video transferred from 16mm, silent, 3 min.

I met Charlotte Moth in August 2012 in Paris, where she lives and works. She was preparing for an isolated year in the residency of Schloss Solitude in Stuttgart following her first major solo exhibition, at the Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève, which had just closed. We spent the afternoon looking through images of the exhibition, which brought together photographs, sculptures, and films made since the beginning of her *Travelogue*, a collection of images of exterior and interior architectural spaces without chronological or geographical indicators that evolves via processes of accumulation and deferral. The exhibition also included two works by her frequent collaborators Falke Pisano and Peter Fillingham.

Having followed her practice since that first meeting, we reconnected earlier this year in the context of a screening program I organized at the Stedelijk Museum Bureau Amsterdam (SMBA) called "The Color of Capital." Immersing myself in her work in preparation for this event, I noticed for the first





time its profound resonance with the rise of object-oriented ontology in curatorial and artistic practice, an approach that investigates the “relation between persons and things while denying the hierarchical superiority of the human subject,” as described by Emily Apter. Without naming it as such, the following conversation excavates these ontologies in Moth’s work, focusing in particular on her most recent film *The story of a different thought*, which will be shown throughout this year at installations in The Temporary Gallery in Cologne, the Skulpturenmuseum Glaskasten in Marl, and De Vleeshal in Middelburg, and also screened alongside other of her films at the Centre Pompidou on September 25th as part of their Prospectif Cinéma series. In 2015, Moth will show a newly commissioned work in a solo exhibition at Tate Britain’s Archive Room.

**Jennifer Burris** After the screening of two of your films—*Study for a 16mm film* (2011) and *Study for a Travelogue in Motion* (2012)—at SMBA this past March, I was asked a couple of technical questions that I couldn’t fully answer. Perhaps the most straightforward of which was about your decision to shoot in 16mm before transferring to digital. Maybe this is a good place to start?

**Charlotte Moth** Well, to begin, I suppose it’s good to look at the first photo films that I made, which were composed of scanned photographs. Works such as *Maeve* and *Sadie*, both made in 2010, were developed from sending a box of selected images from my *Travelogue* to Sadie Murdoch and Maeve Connolly alongside a recording device. In effect, this resulted in two recordings, used in the films, of two people looking at the same set of photographs, but of course having two very different responses. The images came from 35mm negatives because in the *Travelogue*, for example, I never work with a digital camera—in part because I started off working with negatives, but also because of its connotation to the hard copy: the idea that there is a physical surface or imprint to the image. So when I started making films out of these photographs, I was already working in between analog and digital. It was just a very natural process.

*Study for a 16mm film*, on the other hand, was actually the first moving image work I made. I was interested in this format because it extended my previous process: 16mm film is made up of a series of single images. I was also very interested in the relationship to light, materiality, and color that I could achieve only with film. There is also this beautiful thing, similar to analog photography, which is that you don’t get to immediately see what you’ve done. There’s always a surprise. Things are overexposed. You take a risk. There is a delay between doing something and seeing something, and I really like to work with this kind of deferral.

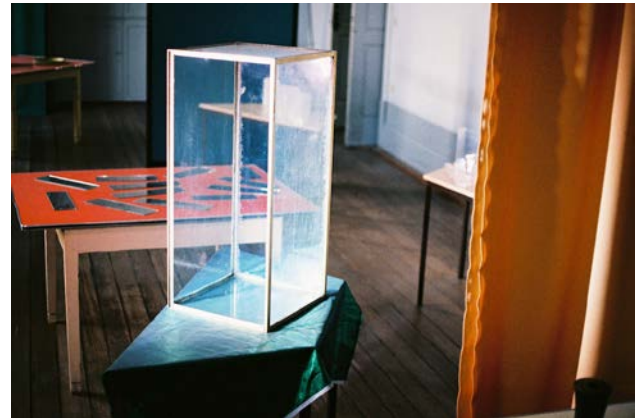
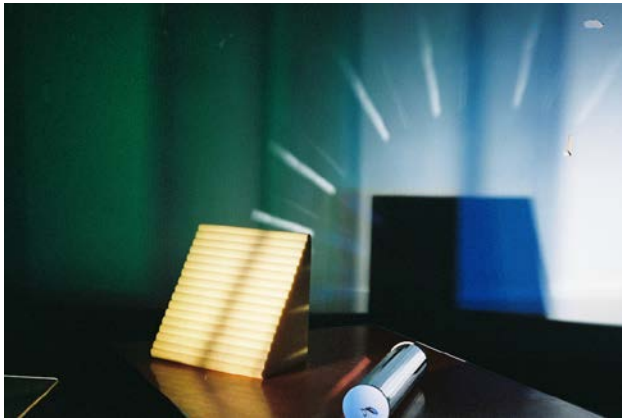
But I also really wanted an experience that was silent, without the sound of a projector going on in the background. This desire for silence is tied to the context in which the film was made. I was doing a residency in Porto at the Fundação de Serralves, and the space they had found for me to work in was previously a school for deaf children. Its curriculum was anti-gestural, which basically means that the children weren’t allowed to sign. They were made to speak. I think the school used quite harsh methods in order to achieve that. I spent three months in the presence of that history, thinking about silence and visual forms of communication. The name for the show at the end of the residency was *Visual Speech*.

**JB** And this is what compelled the transfer to digital?

**CM** It’s definitely one very strong part of the decision. I can also be quite critical of myself, and perhaps I was concerned about the aesthetic quality of the imagery. I didn’t want to deal with the aesthetics of the machinery that produced the image as well. So it was, in part, a result of natural transitions between analog and digital already in my work, but also an awareness of the asceticism and nostalgia that the medium can evoke.



Charlotte Moth, Stills from *Study for a 16mm film*, 2011. Color digital video transferred from 16mm film, silent, 11 min 28. Instituto Araujo, Porto, Serralves Foundation.



**JB** When you first arrived in Serralves, did you know that the space you would be working in was this former school or was the violence of that history something that unfolded over time?

**CM** I don't think I realized the extent of it—it takes time to reach an understanding of a place that you come to stay at. Porto is just so beautiful. It's right by the sea, so the light is incredible. I knew that they had found a space for me, and that it was a school, but it wasn't until I was there that the actual reality or atmosphere started to sink in. It's not like I planned to make a work that would be directly in response to that situation, but you're inevitably formed by a context.

**JB** Speaking of contexts, the first time we met you were about to go to Stuttgart for a residency at Akademie Schloss Solitude. How was that?

**CM** That name is not a euphemism. I did meet some really incredible people, and I think that's something that will stay with me. I met Joshua Edwards, who is a poet and writer from Texas. We went on a sixteen-kilometer walk, from castle to castle, talking and thinking about our approaches to working and how writing and the image are types of translation. We chatted about everything on that walk, it was wonderful for me and the beginning of a friendship with Josh resulting in many ideas we have not had the opportunity to develop yet. I also met Rebecca Loewen, who is a very talented architect from Winnipeg. There were many other great people as well. But I think Rebecca and Josh became the people whom I really wanted to develop projects with.





During this time, I was given a great opportunity from Die Kunstproduzenten, which is a new initiative set up by a nonprofit space in Cologne called The Temporary Gallery. Die Kunstproduzenten works with different partner institutions across Northern Europe to produce work in electronic form. I was the test artist for this, which was a great thing to be able to do, because you're also helping to define the project's boundaries. The first collaborating institution was the Skulpturenmuseum Glaskasten in Marl, about an hour and a half outside of Cologne. I naturally ended up wanting to make a new film after seeing this place, which became the site that triggered my twenty-eight-minute epic, *The story of a different thought*(2014).



Charlotte Moth, Still from *The story of a different thought*, 2014. 16mm footage digitally transferred, 35mm colour scanned negatives, digital photographs, digital steady cam footage, 28 min. The script includes conversations with architect Rebecca Loewen DIN projects, Winnipeg, Canada and poems by Joshua Edwards. Narration by Keith Collins and Caroline Hancock. Produced by Die Kunstproduzenten, Cologne.

**JB** This film seems to coalesce elements of your work that had previously remained physically apart, for example, a collection of essays presented alongside a silent film, both of which can also circulate independently from one another. I'm thinking in particular about Alice D. Peinado's text "Continuous Trajectories—Broken Utopias," which developed out of conversations she had with you in 2011. Reading this essay, which looks at notions of time and place in Ibiza, particularly in the context of Dada artist Raoul Hausmann's travels there during the 1930s, deeply informed how I understand your film *Study for a Travelogue in Motion*, as well as your *Travelogue* more broadly. This unfolding of meaning seems somehow condensed in your new work, where the relationships and influences are present in the film itself through voiceover narrative.

**CM** Pandora's box is the best way to describe this work. I am still digesting it. This also describes the museum in Marl, which is an incredible building. It was a very luxurious thing to be able to research a project for a year, and when you have that possibility it becomes more and more layered. Josh and Rebecca also contributed to the film's narrative. Marl is not far from Stuttgart, and since

***BOMB-Artists in conversation***

**04.09.2014**

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they were there at that time as well, they could also visit the building. At first, I asked Josh to think about what it would mean to write poems in relationship to a particular site. I also asked Rebecca to visit it with me, because, even before I had seen the building in Marl she had described another building on Lake Manitoba in Winnipeg that is built on sand. Located on the shoreline of the lake, its foundations are always shifting, never stable. The weather conditions are also incredibly volatile: there is a lot of flooding, heavy snow, and extreme heat. Responding to these conditions, the architectural firm where Rebecca works, DIN Projects, built a house called Twin Beaches that has floors that can be heightened if the water levels rise. Within this building you have all these concepts of instability, balance, suspension, and latency at work.



Still from *The story of a different thought*, 2014.

Learning about Twin Beaches, a building that I had never actually seen, made my first visit to Marl feel like a rediscovery, as the same principles of floating and suspension animate the design by the Dutch architects Jo van den Broek and Jaap Bakema. Therefore the municipal building, the Rathaus, created a natural link between Twin Beaches and resulted in conversations that were then elaborated further by intricate stories I discovered during my time in Marl—the collection of works inside the building, for example, which is incredible. It's a long story.

**JB** These architectural principles of floating and suspension that you are talking about also seem to inhabit the camera's perspective in the film, which glides over and under stairways.

**CM** It was the first time I was shooting in a digital format, so that feeling comes from being able to use a Steadicam. The film is a real collage. It's a prism almost, a multifaceted way of looking or un-looking. Scanned images from the *Travelogue* are incorporated as well. Thinking about surfacing in architecture and ideas of illusion, I was drawn to paper marbling and Renaissance architecture: the confluence of pictorial convention and an imitation of other surfaces. So that led me to Florence. There is a scene in the film where a man is putting colored pigment on a surface as he marbles paper, which is actually filmed in a workshop in Florence. It was shot on 16mm.





Still from *The story of a different thought*, 2014.

Rebecca was a great help. I wasn't able to visit Canada in time, so I asked her to take a lot of photographs of Twin Beaches. I asked her to shoot both the interior and exterior in 360 degrees, and then send these images to me with a description. These conversations, both visual and textual, all somehow ended up in the film.

**JB** From how you've described Twin Beaches, it sounds very much like an architectural solution to a specific geography of instability, whereas the construction of the building in Marl seems more ideological. Is that contrast intentional?

**CM** There is a contrast. Architects were testing a lot of new construction technologies in the 1950s, which is when the Rathaus was built. For example, it was the first building that used concrete suspension columns. But obviously, there's a risk when trying out new techniques, an element of the unknown is inherently involved. Concrete has a lifespan. There are huge problems with the hanging towers crumbling, and they've had to reinforce them from the inside and that process cost the town a lot of money. But going back to your question, the flotation system and roof structure of the lower-lying building did have to do with geographical conditions in Marl. There's a lot of coal mining in the area, and I think the architecture was in part a response to the instability of the earth that it's sitting on. Maybe it has to do with having to spread the load. But it's fascinating to see the flexibility of these concepts, particularly in their ideological relationship to modernism, because in a practical way Rebecca and Neil obviously made a building that directly responds to the needs of a specific physical place. Whereas van den Broek and Bakema were also responding to the direct needs of a project prescribed by the community of the small town that commissioned it.



**JB** There are different ways of thinking about how a building responds to its environment, be it social or political or geographic.

**CM** There is one comment that van den Broek and Bakema made about wanting their building to have as multifunctional and flexible a usage as possible, an attempt to respond to the demands of the community that made the project happen. But when something is too broad, it can also get lost. I learned a lot from talking with Rebecca about this, and how it intersects with structuralism in architecture.

**JB** I remember something you said when we first met, which is that your projects often evolve from conversation, be it with a specific person, history, or locality. I see this dialogue in your work with Hausmann's archives, which chronicles his travels through Ibiza, and also in the work you made in Marfa, *Sculpture made to be filmed* (2012), which is in conversation with both Donald Judd and the Texas landscape. How did you arrive at this process of developing work through conversation?

**CM** A lot of it has to do with the thinking process. I'm also working with this in the *Travelogue*, which is like a reserve. It's about when things are put into action in a certain context. A conversation is a process of thinking; thoughts are being constructed as we speak. So it's about these infinite configurations or possibilities that a conversation might take.

The sculpture I made in Marfa during my residency there echoes this process. It's six units, or boxes, and I worked with a lighting engineer to construct a system of permutations where every unit has a different rhythm. If you looked at it for a month, you would never see patterns of the entire sculpture repeat. It is as close to infinite as I could possibly imagine in a sculpture.

**JB** Why did you start the *Travelogue*?

**CM** It was when I was a student in Canterbury, in response to a series of buildings that I became fascinated with. I was starting to make sculptures, which were direct copies of certain features or aspects of buildings that had this very imaginative side to them. There was a window at the De La Warr Pavilion in Bexhill on Sea, for example, which probably looked like a window you could find in many places because it wasn't very Mendelsohn-like—the 1935 building was designed by architects Erich Mendelsohn and Serge Chermayeff—but I added a certain backspace or depth to it, which made it quite playful. Another interesting piece of architecture was a space that used to be a disco, and outside there was a window with a mirror sectioned to it, so you had this doubling of the image in a sense. A piece of work I made about this copying was my very first consideration of architectural space.

**JB** Is your interest in illusion or surface rooted in this confluence of windows and mirrors?

**CM** It's a continuing system of deferral, I suppose, which functions in many different ways. As I was saying, you come back to the same image but treat it in a different way. It's again this sense of the different possibilities or different lives of something, and it is quite interesting to think about how that functions within a work.

**JB** In an interview with Florence Ostende, you mentioned that you think of the *Travelogue* as a collection rather than an archive: "An archive categorizes something and fixes it in relation to a specific meaning. The images in the *Travelogue* are an ever-growing configuration that shifts in my mind as ideas do: one image informs the other so it's quite unexpected and very much a speculative activity. A collection grows organically; it's a very practical type of knowledge. Think of André





Malraux's *Musée Imaginaire*, Aby Warburg's *Mnemosyne Atlas*, or Walter Benjamin's *Arcades Project*. There are many many links inherently woven into this system of collecting, ordering or categorizing. I think of it as a cumulus cloud that's drifting, snowballing in size that enables ideas to travel great distances and be put in new contexts." Why is this distinction between archive and collection so important to draw?

**CM** It really has to do with questioning the nature of what an archive is. An archive asserts a certain truth of something; it professes an authority on what that thing is in a sense.



Still from *The story of a different thought*, 2014.

**JB** Even if that truth is radical or counter-hegemonic, it's still a specific perspective.

**CM** Yes, for sure. I was very interested in *not* making a particular statement about an image, which is why I say it's more like a reserve waiting to be put into action or waiting for a statement to arise. These images have a possibility of shape shifting.

**JB** There is no "objective" categorization with meta-data and subcategories.

**CM** Because then you get lost in the whole system of process and differentiation, which is a bit limiting in a way.

**JB** Your resistance to categorization is interesting because so many of the images in your collection are fragments of modernist architecture, which, to me, evokes an intense desire for a Western model of rationality—a very specific, programmatic idea of how one should live translated into three-dimensional space.



**CM** Well, the building in Marl is truly a modernist architecture, but a lot of the other images are hybrids. They're mixtures trying to be something; there's a lot of copying. But then again, the idea of modernism itself is quite a heavy word, no? The *Travelogue* is really about how there's another way of looking at these specific things that you can't really place. Again, I suppose that's where it comes down to being a collection and not an archive. But at the same time, I'm now making a work on this very high modernist building that almost nobody knows about, which is quite strange because van der Broek and Bakema are really important architects.



Still from *The story of a different thought*, 2014

**JB** I had never heard of them before seeing your film.

**CM** That's also very interesting about history, no? How certain things survive and other things are forgotten or have these moments of reoccurring. *The story of a different thought* looks at how a building just completed by a young architectural firm in Winnipeg could relate to that conversation or history as well. Twin Beaches isn't even completely finished, actually, so it almost looks like a ruin in some of the photos Rebecca sent me.

**JB** Like Robert Smithson's *Hotel Palenque* (1969-72)?

**CM** Definitely. That's a very important work for me. There is an entropic Smithson moment in there.

**JB** You are currently working on a project for Tate Britain's Archive Room. How do you reconcile this context with the distance toward archives you feel in your own work?

**CM** Over the last year, I was working in the Archive Room and discovered Barbara Hepworth's sculptural notes and documentation starting in the 1930s up until the '70s. I became very intrigued with this set of images, one in particular. It's in her London studio, photographed before World War II, of a sculpture called *One Form (single form)* 1937. There's this white curtain behind the sculpture

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that seems to be reverberating or resonating, like it's not keeping still. You have this completely blurred backdrop with a sculpture that is quite crisp in front of it.

**JB** So the first time this sculpture was visible to the outside world was through this photograph?

**CM** Exactly, but I think it was more for her own documentation. But then her studio was bombed during the war, and the sculpture was destroyed. Looking into these records further, I just became more and more intrigued by how she was employing the image to record her sculptures. Other images have a kind of cloud background, so the sculptures almost seem to be levitating in the sky. And then there are other images where her sculptures sit next to a tropical-looking houseplant. What kind of decision was behind that? In another one the shadows of leaves sort of creep into the top left-hand corner, which creates this strange sort of decontextualization of the sculpture. I just became fascinated with these images, which tie back to my fascination with Brancusi's studio: an obvious example of the construction of the sculpture photograph. I think these discoveries will probably be the basis of my work for the Archive Room, but it's early yet and I still need to visit Hepworth's studio in St. Ives, where she moved after the war.

**JB** Speaking of destruction, or bombing, when I first saw your work it made me think of Antonioni's *Zabriskie Point* (1970)—particularly if you were to strip the movie's narrative, leaving just the atmosphere and feeling and mood. Do you think about film or intentionally engage with certain cinematic histories when making your work?

**CM** It's funny that you should say that because, the other day, I went for a walk with a friend who was showing me parts of Paris that I hadn't seen before. We were walking up the street and I saw these strange buildings that felt like they were from the desert, and we both thought that they looked like something out of *Zabriskie Point*.

I recently went through a serious Cassavetes phase. *Shadows* (1959) and *Faces* (1968) are extraordinary films. With *Shadows*, I also like that it doesn't technically have a script. The film was made up as he went along, working with actors who aren't really actors; a construction that functions like the *Travelogue* in a way. I also love the Indian filmmaker Satyajit Ray. There is one very beautiful film of his called *The Music Room* (1958). I love the beginning of it. It's strongly atmospheric; from the void, this blackness, a chandelier comes swinging and gets bigger and bigger and bigger. There's also a moment when he films a dancer with a really long shot, allowing the attention of the viewer to stay with her movements. Just letting vision rest and the shot continue for quite awhile.

*Charlotte Moth's exhibition at the Skulpturenmuseum Glaskasten Marl opens September 8, 2014. See her Kunstproduzenten production grant [here](#).*

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<http://bombmagazine.org/article/1000206/charlotte-moth>