

"That monumental parking lot divided the city in half, turning into a mirror and a reflection – but the mirror kept changing places with the reflection. One never knew what side of the mirror one was on".

## **Robert Smithson**

A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic, New Jersey, 1967



*Fractal Table#1, V5 (On Fractals)* Detail

## fractal table

Initially created in connection with *Fractal Spaces*, a series of industrial suburban landscapes mounted on mirror, *Fractal Table* is a three dimensional piece conceived for the reinterpretation of different bodies of work, including texts and photographic archives. It consists in an industrial drafting table whose wooden top is covered with an anodized steel sheet, a surface on which elements held by magnets and clamps are displayed in changing compositions. Blurring the line between art piece and exhibition, the installation is conceived as a man-sized sketchbook: a mobile and versatile studio where visual experiments as well as written researches on the social mutations and environmental destructions brought about by globalization are assembled.

Once a landmark furniture in planning and engineering, the drafting table is now largely replaced by computers. Turning it into a sculptural piece convenes various references in terms of work environments: its tilt angle alludes both to the lecterns of the pre-digital libraries and to the consoles commanding today's automated industrial processes; its steel top, reminiscent of wall panels in photo labs, allows compositions in overlapped windows as on a digital screen. On this multi—semantic space, photographs and texts are contextualized in relation with one another and with the exhibition space. Their status as documents is questioned as, mostly printed on transparent films, they are laid on mirrors refracting them as well as reflecting the viewers.

Build with a used table from a mirror company, *Fractal Table #1* was shown as a processual piece during *Fractal Factory*, a solo show at Galerie Binome in 2018. Five successive versions explored different issues: *V1 On Light*, *V2 On Document and its Double, V3 On Housing, V4 On Extraction, V5 On Fractals*. Test prints, mobile snapshots, screencaptures and models were linked with personal writings, quotations (Bruno Latour, Thomas Pynchon, Robert Smithson...), archives, maps and photographs collected on the Web.

*Fractal Table #1* is meant to be the prototype of a series of tables reflecting on post-industrial society and the anthropocene.





*Fractal Table#1, V1 (On ILight)* Detail - UV print on glass, mirror, screencapture of a photograph by Albert Renger-Patzsch printed on transparent

*Fractal Table#1, V2 (On Document and its Double)* Drafting table, wood table top, anodized steel sheet (80x170 cm), evolutive content (5 versions): mirrors, glass sheets, lambda prints, transparent prints, models. *Fractal Factory*, solo show, Galerie Binome, 2018



• On a beau savoir, comme la écrit Hubert Damisch, que – les principes qui président à la construction d'un appareil photographique – et d'abord à celle de la chambre noire – ont lés à une notion conventionnelle de l'espace et de lobjectivité qui a été dàlorée préalablement à l'invention de la photographie et à laquelle les photographes, dans leur immense majorité, noin fait que se conformer –, l'imposture référentielle subsiste. Sur la survivance de cette illusion, il faut citer Clement Rosset, qui sen émersvelle, et qui en fait le questionnement initial de son essaf *Endismagories*. De la perception du médium photographique à l'œuvre des son imvention au 19eme siecle, il écrit := On semblait ignorer qu'une machine n'enregistre que sous des conditions suis restrictives, encore que pour d'autres raisons, que celles d'un peintre ou d'un dessinateur. On oubliait aussi qu'une machine n'enregistre que sous des conditions puis dessinateur. On oubliait aussi que ment fait to dustie neachriste. - Autre objection. – plus décisive (...) a la conception de la photographie comme témoignage du réel, (...,), la réalité est essentiellement mouvante alors que la photographie est un imptorable – fixateur ». Dans ceconditions je ne vios pas du tout comment l'une pourrait étre la peroduction de la aure. Le monde de la photographie est celu de l'immobile il est aussi celui du silence. Comment des lors pourrait l'évoquer la réalité, à plus forte raison en être le plus sure rethouver ment et la runneur ? – Et plus loin : – Tout arrêt est un arrêt de mort. –

Territorisme, V3, 2014

*Fractal Table#1, V2 (On Document and its Double)* Detail - C-print, abstract from *Territorism*, screencapture of *Pitheads* by Bernd and Hilla Becher printed on transparent



Fractal Table#1, V3 (On Housing)



*Fractal Table#1, V3 (On Housing)* Detail - Transparent test print of the *Fractal Spaces* series, model mounted on mirror



*Fractal Table#1, V3 (On Housing)* Detail - Transparent test print, abstract of *Territorism*, screencapture of *Colorado Springs, Colorado* by Robert Adams printed on transparent



Fractal Table#1, V4 (On Extraction)



Fractal Table#1, V4 (On Extraction)

« Ce qu'ils veulent, c'est savoir comment arrêter cette grande Chose invisible qui s'avance droit sur leurs terres, dévorant tout sur son Passage. (...) N'avons-nous pas dit, à coups de centaines de lames tout le jour durant, - Voilà jusqu'où nous voulons frapper à l'intérieur de votre pays, voilà ce que nous réclamons à l'Ouest. Voyez ce que nous faisons aux arbres, et comme nous nous en soucions peu, - comprenez comme nous nous soucions peu du Peuple Indien, et ce que nous sommes prêts à vous infliger. Cette Influence que vous avez ressentie, le long de notre Ligne, ce Courant puissant comme celui d'un fleuve, - nous lui commandons ... Nous pourrions tracer parmi vos Nations une Avenue de Ruines, aussi terrible que le passage d'une tornade ».



*Fractal Table#1, V4 (On Extraction)* Detail - abstract from *Mason & Dixon* by Thomas Pynchon, Screencapture of *Smelting Works, New Almaden* by Carleton Watkins printed on transparent "Haven't we been saying, with an hundred Blades all the day long,— This is how far into your land we may strike, this is what we claim to westward. As you see what we may do to Trees, and how little we care,— imagine how little we care for Indians, and what we are prepar'd to do to you. That Influence you have felt, along our Line, that Current strong as a River's,— we command it. We might make thro' your Nations an Avenue of Ruin, terrible as the Path of a Whirl-Wind".

Thomas Pynchon, Mason & Dixon, 1997





*Fractal Table#1, V4 (On Extraction)* Detail - Quotation from *Facing Gaia* by Bruno Latour, mobile snaphot of Etienne Jules Marey's photographic gun at Musée des Arts et Métiers, Paris

*Fractal Table#1, V4 (On Extraction)* Detail



Fractal Table#1, V5 (On Fractals)

Industrial drafting table, wood table top, anodized steel sheet (80x170 cm), mirrors, glass sheets, lambda and transparent prints, models



*Fractal Table#1, V5 (On Fractals)* Detail - UV print on glass, black mirror, clamps, magnets



Fractal Table#1, V5 (On Fractals)



*Fractal Table#1, V5 (On Fractals)* Details "On this drafting table, it is indeed the territory of the work that unfolds itself rhizome-like, traveling endlessly between words and images".

## Héloïse Conesa

Head curator, contemporary photography, Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF) Extract from a conversation for *The Photocaptionnist* 

## Marc Lathuillère

Tel. + 33 (0)1 43 14 05 52 M. + 33 (0)6 26 91 32 03 marc@lathuilliere.com www.lathuilliere.com