

t r a n s l a t i o n

n o i f s l e n s i t

e l i z a b e t h b o y c e

a n n a f i n l a y s o n

n a t a s h a f r i s c h

j e s s m a c n e i l

r o b m c h a f f i e

c l a i r e m o o n e y

p a n d a r o s a

a l e x p i t t e n d r i g h

Translation is commonly understood as the transposition of one language or world of meaning into another - an invisible and seamless continuity of passage. Not simply a bridge, the process of translation also involves rupture and flux, tension and contamination. A vitally constitutive space, translation incorporates frailty and failure, losses and flight, accident, ambiguity, miscommunication, opacity, noise and deformation. It is both the means by which we can and cannot reach common understandings. A breaking and a joining at the same time; a tearing and refiguring; a movement without marked beginning or end; translation is a continuity of passage from one form to another and the potential to disrupt.

Art works are a kind of translation. They inhabit this border zone. Crossing realms of image and representation, memory and imagination, artists engage the possibilities inherent in mistranslation and slippage. Art works emerge from the space between language and experience, coherence and fragmentation, between impulse and what actually happens once the creative process has begun. The subjective enters seemingly objective discourses and the distinctive voice of each artist brings a peculiar intimacy and new rules.

The desire for a return to order - for seamless passage - is dissolved with the solidity of the world. Chance is accepted and indeterminacy implied. Always information, always open, negotiable - a fragile physicality - these works reflect the pull of structural collapse and regeneration. With an eloquent ambivalence, they recount their own past. Structured around a dialogue with the viewer, the impossibility and necessity of communication shapes their form. Like a conversation, a kind of translation unfolds.

These works inhabit a space of irresolution - an oscillating universe; a provisional fluid architecture; a discontinuity that resists closure. Translation allows the perpetuity of things and recognizes the inevitability of their passing. It is both museum and anti-museum - an intersection between prosaic and extraordinary delineated space.

The exhibition catalogue - itself a residual gesture and a restaging - represents each artist with a documented image and an 'alongside' - something that informs their creative practice. In this movement from nothing to something and something to nothing, lies the eccentric status of the art object in a constant state of translation.

Martina Copley 2005