

Lucida's Room

Far from museums, galleries, biennials and the art business, the exhibition takes place in a child's bedroom, young Gaspar de Berg, exactly nine years old. No need to say that the idea does not come from his three parents, Robert, Jean and Jeanne. Certainly, the little boy is the only author of his exhibition, acting altogether as the curator, artist, watcher and guide. After spending a few afternoons in his bedroom which access had mysteriously been forbidden to his parents, he surprised them one night, in the kitchen, by handing them an invitation . In his childish handwriting, he had traced with a sharpie the date June 14th 2010, subheading his name – Gaspar de Berg - and in the middle, the title of the exhibition : " Lucida's room " .

Gaspar's parents called me a few hours later, around 11 pm, for me to come and see this little oddity. Amused, even puzzled, almost worried, Robert, Jean and Jeanne showed me to the child's bedroom where he had refused to sleep over the whole week-end of his exhibition. Gaspar had cleared the space of his room, got rid of the toys and put the bed aside, so that the floor and two walls would be free. But what struck me at once was the display of his works : hanging at a child's height, lined up at the bottom of the wall, in a way I had to squat in order to see them better. There were the pages torn from a magazine, pieces of fruit on a shelf, a few of Gaspar's drawings, some of them dating from a few years already, and fixed upon the wall, mobile phones showing only pictures of his mother. In another area, the live news report from Orange TV, and beyond that, another one playing a video clip by singer Rihanna. Lastly, in the middle of his room where he had drawn a circle and removed the carpet, Gaspar was playing in a loop the " Modern Warfare " game demo on the computer screen, which had been previously stained with sharpie.

I would be lying if I told you that I had first watched this childish display with amusement. On the contrary, right from the start, I was seized by the relevance of the whole show, its homogeneity, the feeling of a real exhibition taking place, mastered from beginning to end. With his parents, I wondered about the various references inhabiting this mini-show : the unexplainable, though very explicit echo to Roland Barthes's *Camera Lucida* , the re-use of a child-height hanging already experienced by Warhol in 1984, and of mobile phones, a process already seen in Jean-Luc Godard's exhibition at the Centre Georges Pompidou. But Gaspar's parents were quite unable to account for these references, for they did not remember having ever visited the director's exhibit themselves. " *Maybe on a field trip?* " assumed his mother. Unexplained in his sources, the exhibition would eventually shape as a group show rather than as an individual one. Multiple artistic processes were to be found, from drawing to ready-made with ad extracts or videos from the Internet. And the whole so well contained in its display that Gaspar de Berg's room appeared to us as " light ", like an ultimate concentration of the actual exhibition scene, and hybrid practises of "author-curator " .

If I chose today to review this little nine-year-old boy's exhibition, it is not in the name of enthusiasm for youth, always craving to discover new trends and artists. No. If I chose this month to write about " Lucida's room ", rather than on the Lucian Freud exhibition at the Centre Pompidou, it is simply because what was going on in this very bedroom of a Parisian apartment was more positive in my eyes : the synthesis of the revolutive art of the exhibition. Not to say the programmed exhaustion of a model of monstration more than a century and a half old. And its sinking into this mobile outside, in motion, where images are streaming. Something of the last showing.

Jean-Max Colard