

## Vers le Neutre

Centre d'Art et Photographie, Lectoure 12 December 2015 - 27 March 2016

## Vers le neutre



Tanja Verlak

Marco Bohr David Claerbout Agata Madejska Sophie Neilson Olivier Richon Tanja Verlak

[...] Finally a few words about the idea for this exhibition, which came from my rereading of some writings by Roland Barthes – the French literary critic and semiologist, the centenary of whose birth in 1915 has been the occasion for many radio and television broadcasts, as well as numerous publications and such exhibitions as Lumières de Roland Barthes at the Frac Aquitaine in Bordeaux. In my introduction to the exhibition I cite a remark Barthes makes about the painter's canvas as a 'non-signifying background'. There is no equivalent of the canvas for the photographer. The canvas (or other material support) is the necessary prior condition of painting, whereas the photograph exists before it is printed on paper or projected onto a screen. Moreover, unlike the painter's canvas, the background of the photographic image cannot be (in Barthes' words): "this image of nothingness from which the real must emerge", because everything in a photograph always already points to an exterior reality filled with meaning. Therefore it is rather a tendency towards the non-signifying that I find in the ways in which these artists show us what they see through photography. In the works exhibited here the tendency may be a matter of a certain effacement of the contingent, the accidental (Olivier Richon, Agata Madejska); or the sending to the back of the image that which Western pictorial tradition tends to foreground as most significant (Sophie Neilson, Marco Bohr); a retreat that goes as far as occultation in some of Tanja Verlak's photographs. And when the leaves of a tree tremble in David Claerbout's projected photograph it is the people, the houses, the windmill, that are momentarily relegated to insignificance by their very stillness.

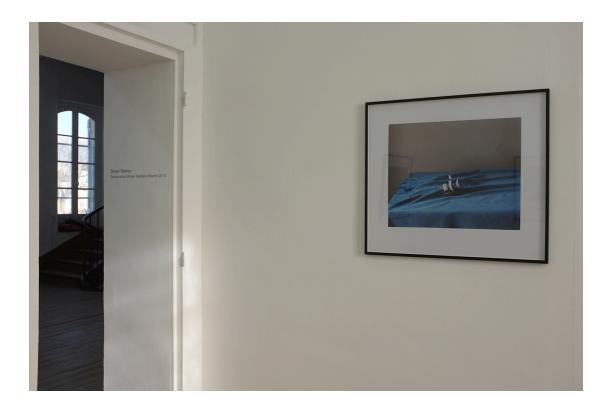
During 1978 Roland Barthes gave a lecture course at the Collège de France entitled The Neutral. In his introduction to the first session, of February 18, he makes clear that for him the Neutral has nothing to do with "impressions of greyness, of neutrality of indifference." He goes on to say that his aim is not the elaboration of a concept but the "exposition of figures corresponding to possible incarnations of the neutral". Amongst these are the figures of "tact", "reserve", "retreat" and "silence" – figures I find incarnated in the works in this exhibition.

Barthes tells us that he prepared his lecture course on The Neutral on the basis of a "network of readings – that is a library" (the library, in fact, of the maternal vacation home in Urt, Pyrénées Atlantiques) – "a place-time where the loss in methodological rigour is compensated for by the intensity and pleasure of a reading that is free." I have invited you to cast a certain regard on the network of images on show here. I hope that, in the particular "place-time" that the Centre d'art et photography represents, you will find the pleasure of a gaze that is free.

Francette Pacteau, Guest curator









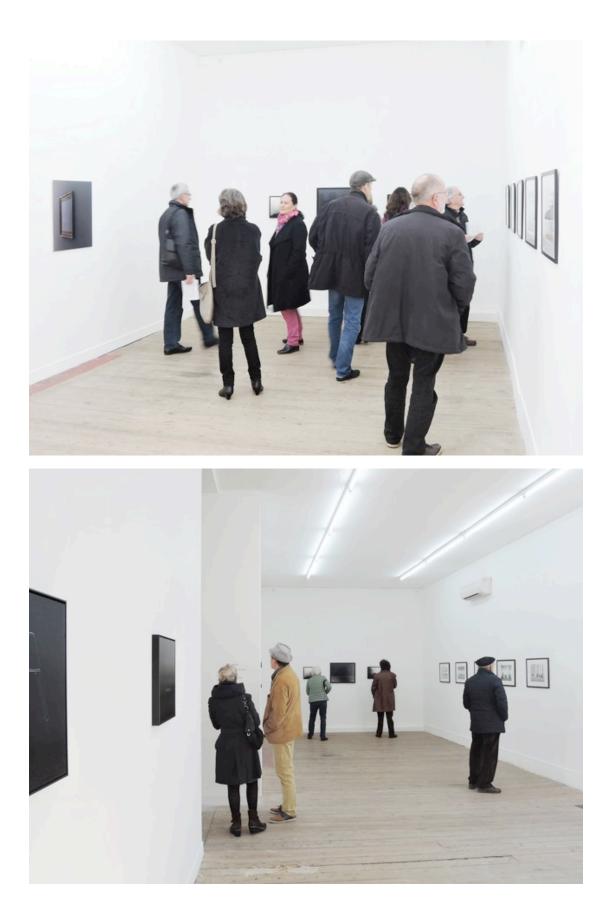












## SAMEDI 12 DÉCEMBRE À 15H - CINÉMA LE SÉNÉCHAL

**CONFÉRENCE D'OLIVIER RICHON** WALKER EVANS : *UN COIN DE CUISINE, ALABAMA 1936*.



Cette photographie se trouve dans la deuxième édition de *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (1960), qui réunit les images de Walker Evans et le texte de James Agee.

À partir de cette image de Walker Evans, Olivier Richon propose de lier et de délier les signes que son regard rencontre. Faire un commentaire sur une seule photographie de ce livre est une approche volontairement réductrice, qui propose d'écrire sur une image en restant le plus possible à l'intérieur de cette image.

*Un coin de cuisine, Alabama 1936*, parlera donc de la photographie, du regard que l'on porte sur elle, de la traduction d'une image par le langage et des effets du style documentaire cher à Walker Evans.

Olivier Richon est photographe, professeur et directeur du programme de photographie de l'École d'arts plastiques du Royal College of Art de Londres.

La conférence se tiendra à 15 h au cinéma Le Sénéchal, 102 rue Nationale, Lectoure.

Dans le cadre de l'exposition Vers le neutre, du 12 décembre 2015 au 27 mars 2016. Centre d'art et photographie de Lectoure, 8 cours Gambetta. Ouvert du mercredi au dimanche de 14h à 18h. <u>contact@centre-photo-lectoure.fr</u> - <u>www.centre-photo-lectoure.fr</u> - 05 62 68 83 72