

April 2 - 25, 2009

Opening Reception: Thursday, April 2, 6pm - 9pm

Ingrid Ledent was born in 1955 in Brasschaat (Belgium). She studied graphic art at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp (1973-1978), then specialized in lithography for one year in Rudolf Broulim's studio at the Academy of Applied Arts in Prague (Czech Republic). In 1981 she obtained a Masters Degree at the National Higher Institute of Fine Arts in Antwerp. She has also attended numerous international workshops in different techniques.

Ledent has been professor of lithography at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp since 1984. She has led lithography workshops at the Academy of Fine Arts in Turku (Finland), the University of Santa Cruz in Tenerife (Spain), the Academy of Fine Arts in Hasselt (Belgium), the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow (Poland), the University of Tianjin (China), the printshop "Daglicht" in Eindhoven (The Netherlands) and at the Frans Masereel Center in Kasterlee (Belgium). She was invited as member of a panel at the Southern Graphics Council conference at the University of Austin, Texas (USA) and at Rutgers University in New Jersey (USA). She has given lectures at the University of Shenzhen and Tianjin (China), the Artist Association in Tallinn (Estonia) and at the Association of Finnish Lithographers in Helsinki (Finland).

Barbara Balfour is a Toronto-based artist who has exhibited prints, multiples, and installations nationally and internationally. An Associate Professor in the Department of Visual Arts at York University in Toronto, she teaches print media and theory courses. Her current research deals with artists' writing, within and parallel to art production.

Upcoming activities include the solo exhibition *méthode champenoise* in the Project Room, York Quay Gallery, and a Sunday Scene talk about the work of Carey Young at the Power Plant, Toronto (2009). Recent activities include the *Ex Libris* multiple launch at Art Metropole, Toronto (2009); and group exhibitions *Almost Nothing* at akau (Toronto), *El Ultimo Libro/The Last Book* at the National Library of Argentina (Buenos Aires), *Vehicle* at Nuit Blanche (Toronto), the Edmonton Print International (Edmonton) and *Titles*, traveling to second-hand bookstores in Canada and the USA (2008).

Balfour was introduced to Ledent through their involvement in Richard Noyce's international survey *Printmaking at the Edge*, leading to their participation in the 2007 Falun Print Triennial in Sweden. In Falun, Balfour and Ledent discussed their shared love of lithography and the lithographs on display in the local grocery store.

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Open Studio acknowledges the generous support of its government funders, members, individual donors and volunteers.

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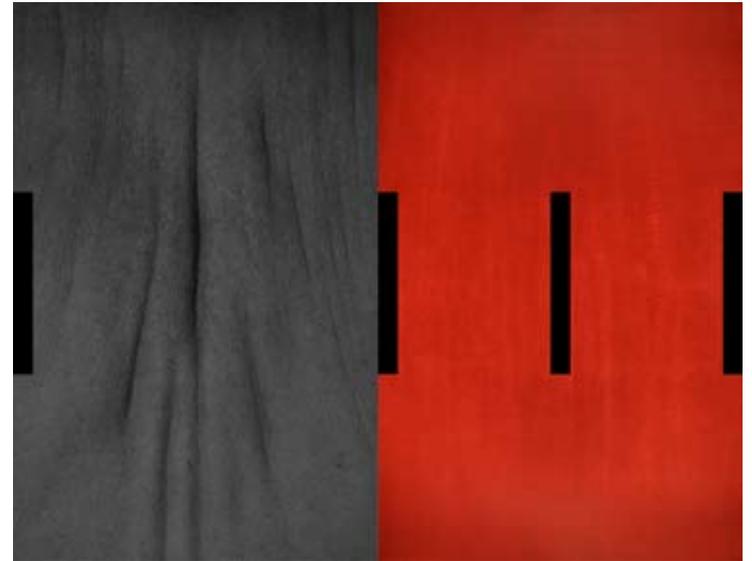
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Ingrid Ledent

Continuum Ininterrompu



Continuum Ininterrompu II, stone lithography & digital print on Zerkall paper, 100cm x 130cm, 2008



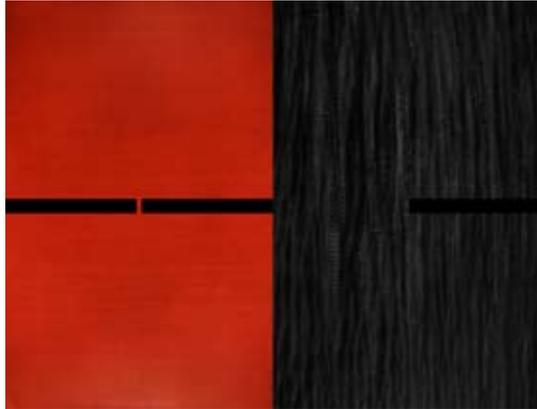
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A Brief Interruption

by Barbara Balfour



Continuum Ininterrompu II, stone lithography & digital print on Zerkall paper, 100cm x 130cm, 2008

I have to confess that my reading of Ingrid Ledent's work began with a misreading. My eyes scanned the rhythmically repeating vowels and consonants of *Continuum Ininterrompu* and took this title to signify 'interrupted continuum,' the notion of uninterruptedness imbedded in the title had been overlooked somehow. Nonetheless, I want to consider the uninterrupted continuum proposed by this project in terms of how interruptions might serve as a counterpoint to the body of work as a whole.

Beginning with the title, *Continuum Ininterrompu*, I recognize words from two languages, placed side by side, that evoke both continuity and discontinuity. Latin is linked linguistically to French, a Romance language, with the former considered 'dead' and the latter 'living.' Yet is it commonplace, increasingly in a globalized world, to find an inflection of nonnative vocabulary within the vernacular. This is certainly part of Ledent's experience. Based in Belgium, Ledent lives and works in a milieu where a multiplicity of languages intersect. Raised with Flemish as her mother tongue, she also learned French and English at an early age.

Turning to the installation of *Continuum Ininterrompu*, I take in the procession of rectangular prints – single, paired, and in groups of three – that lead from either side of the gallery to the central, modular assemblage comprised of eight prints. This installation draws in the viewer from the open doors of Open Studio into the gallery, as side chapels lead to an apse or boxes in an opera house lead to the stage. There is a notably restrained palette of red and black, fields of primarily monochromatic colour, yet the formal continuity contains significant interjections: the variable spacing between groupings of prints and the slender, solid black bars that punctuate the all-over printed surfaces.

But closer, closer still to the prints, more can be discerned. There is depth and tactility in these surfaces, a quality of multi-layered translucence and richness to which print-based artists are particularly attuned. There are superimpositions of imagery – at times just different enough to resist being exact repetitions. The patterned markings are often suggestive of natural formations, of bark on a tree or windswept snow flurries. And yet, there are more apparent photographic images to be found: creases and folds of skin – indicators of wear and aging – observed at close range. It is paradoxically a kind of proximity that can be both clinical and intimate.

It is at close range, however, that the viewer might lose sight of the image and get lost in the internal patterning of the epidermal layer, which in fact is more easily identified from a distance. From this viewpoint, one is aware once more of the work's pervasive logic of repetition with variation. Rather than being drawn to the reproduction of copies, Ledent employs print's reproducibility to produce a proliferation of related variations. Attracted by the potential for physical and chemical transformation as well as opportunities for reworking and reprinting, Ledent's medium of choice is lithography.

Yet I keep thinking of the recurring black bands, these moments of accentuation, pause, and interruption. Similar to the 'blacking out' of information through censorship, or lines struck through passages of text, they cover what is beneath and yet call attention to all that remains visible around them. These curious, incrementally positioned black bars, sitting so emphatically on the uppermost layer of the prints, keep leading me to the saturated fields of colour, decorative veneer of patterning, and epidermal layers of skin. In the case of the vertical bars on and adjacent to the image of flexed flesh, they seem to exert pressure, disrupting the surface of the skin and resonating in lines of stress. The illusion of the folded tissue of flesh exists in an uneasy tension compared with the otherwise uniform surface of the print.

Now back to the continuum. The layering and superimposition in the individual prints are as much an index of progress and sequence as their ordered, linear concatenation on the gallery walls. The continuum does not only manifest itself from one print to another; there is a genesis to consider in the inherent layering of the inked surfaces in each print. To further complicate matters, Ledent has overprinted on several prints that previously figured in earlier bodies of work. Their history, what she calls "remembrance," predates the present series, just as some of the prints in *Continuum Ininterrompu* might reappear one day in the future, in another context. Perhaps this is a good place to conclude this present interruption, in time to come.