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..... and so I wonder what
might be a work unable to get translated into words?

Words are explanation, superstructure, I imagine them as puppeteer's strings, something that leads the work towards its understanding, or perhaps they are a structure one can use to fill up a shape-mould, the potatoes with which to fill a potatoes' sack.
But if a potatoes' sack emptied of any potatoes is a former potatoes' sack, what is a sack that is meant to host its first potato? A potential potatoes' bag? Just fabric?
And a work that was born not illustrating a story, without any words, only following an atmosphere...will it make it on its' own?
Every studio visit is like swimming in a sea of words, a navigation amid definitions, sentences and ideas: every work that is met is the illustration of a verbal process, the words are blown into 3D or squashed, flattened into two-dimensions, archived or immediately written ...
We were expecting to observe visual art and we found out we are surrounded by words.
There is nothing wrong. Let me be clear. I like writing very much, I stress it once again, and I as well like reading, I have to admit, even more than writing.

Many years ago we were told that a conceptual artwork is generated from art after philosophy (*), now I believe we can say that literature took the place of philosophy. The true artist doesn't help the world by revealing mystic truths, but by telling stories.
The shapes I have found myself observing in the most beautiful exhibitions (***) that I have seen in the past months are nothing more than a heap of splinters, parts of a wordless narration nonetheless explained through words that are hidden behind the shadow of the objects appearing in front of my eyes.
It seems as if the narrative ability is the only tool saving beautiful shows from becoming collections of memorabilia, or souvenirs displays, turning them into incredible machines for meaning. There has been a time when exhibitions consisted of not re-edited quotes, of excerpts taken from real life, or from the history, from modernism... or whatever you like, think of a topic or a subject, well, it would have been part of this autoptic treatment. Now it seems as if we stepped from categorization to a creative confusion, to evocation...going back to the Logica del senso. (***)
It is the usual relationship between form and content, now exploding, then bound itself into a virtual circuit that takes us with him. In the middle of words.

Then, I don't recall where exactly, I read Ryan Gander writing of his relationship with fiction, and of how many of the things that sustain the forms he proposes are not necessarily true. The likely is truer than truth...what it takes is of being able to tell it...with words. Nothing less.

There has been a time when to measure the economic, sometimes cultural value of a painting, its dimensions would have been considered and, as a consequence, to the painters was given a correlated coefficient (I think it is called like this). Now perhaps we should create an instrument able to measure how much a work originates narrations, how it affects our everyday, how much it partakes in changing it or in creating one's own...

There is a beautiful book of short stories written by Douglas Coupland called *Polaroids from the Dead*, which could be useful here and which is precisely a diary sorted by images.

Words and images: in this case, photographs, polaroids. The texts that are comprised in the book are different in nature and size. Sometimes they appear as long newspaper reports, other times as short reviews, only a few pages long. The third story is devoted to Brentwood, one of the most luxurious residential neighbourhoods in Los Angeles, so beautiful that it becomes scary, so that it seems not a coincidence that it was the same place of the homicide presumably perpetrated by O. J. Simpson and the backdrop of Marilyn Monroe's death.

It is while writing about Brentwood, with its empty, void, black and synthetic magnetism, that Coupland offers us these words:

“Qualcuno sostiene che noi, in quanto animali, ci differenziamo da tutti gli altri animali per un particolare, e cioè che abbiamo bisogno di rendere la nostra vita racconto, narrazione, ed è quando sentiamo svanire il nostro racconto di vita che ci sentiamo sperduti e diventiamo pericolosi, perdiamo controllo e ci ritroviamo soggetti alle forze del caso.”

Everything said and written to this very point is summarised perfectly in few lines. Now we can truly understand what makes exhibitions appealing, far away from being a collection of memorabilia: the objects they contain, the forms they are made of, nothing happens by chance. There is an invisible spider web holding things together, we don't see it, but we can feel its presence.

Successful shows don't risk to lose the sense of their existence as a story; they are not afraid of de-narration (***)

We have been told (****) that the post-modern condition is sanctioned by the end of major narrations, now we have plenty of them, small, handy, personalized, and it doesn't even count if they are true or false as long as they are catchy.

But if the credibility of stories is not important, it doesn't even matter if they are real or not. And with “real” I mean present. Tangible.

Before the real luck of the e-book, the electronic book, we witnessed the birth of the i-book, the invisible book.

The invisible book doesn't have any words, not even paper sheets, it is that imaginary portion of space that contains stories linking artworks, explaining and showing them. Yes, you read it right; words that stand for images. Some kind of oxymoron.

But it works, it seems. Let's just think of Tino Sehgal's performances, which live on the same i-book of Homer's books, an oral transmission,

only afterwards compiled into books.

Art has been dematerialized through a book (*****) and is re-materialized every time into props and an untold story... exactly in an invisible book.

Image is nothing, thirst is everything stated a Sprite's commercial, a while ago. Thirst... but also trust in the words is everything, a trust so strong that almost becomes faith. Maybe it is only a coincidence, but in Italian to refer to someone who believed a lie, we say "he has drunk it"...and that's how the circle closes...

But let's go back to the blackletter...

Thinking of miniatures books, you think of a precise relationship between word and image. Different to what has been stated so far. The word accounts and the image illustrates, expands and dilutes into a two-dimensions what is written on paper. I then think, in a second time, at the visual force of a page so complicated, where black letters on a white field are entwined, they help creating a landscape, more than showing ideas. The page is rich in visual stimuli and they end up in communicating more for their intrinsic power than for the meaning of the words they contain. Words are kept underneath the skin, so deep that they don't appear anymore on the surface. What is left is a muddy and mysterious mixture. What is left is the mystery of an unknown language that we lost the code of.

Let's go back to a period between July 19th 1799 and an indefinite day in 1822, in between the discovery of the Rosetta stone and when Jean-François Champollion could use it to decode the hieroglyphics. We go back to appreciate the alphabet's iconic force, a little bit as Ramelzee who used to make up alphabets in New York in the Eighties.

Let's leave aside any meaning, let's just consider their shape and their grace. Let's rediscover the beauty through the words.

Not differently to the mystery of an elegant and silent door of which you have lost the key, but from which keyhole filters a light unequalled. In the end, aren't the people with more charisma the ones that manage to be heard even when they choose silence over words?

Often the forgotten paths, the paths that end into nothingness, are more fascinating for those who discover them, with a magnetism that realized plans and ideas no longer have.

It is like an old-fashioned revolution to the eyes of a teenager: it is a lack of compromises with the existing (status quo?) that gives a power of seduction without limits.

Re-reading what I have written so far, I see the words melting together and generating a drawing that has to be followed in its evolution on the page, more than into its sense.

Like a beautiful blackletter.

I ended up not writing about blackletter, but LIKE a blackletter...
Writing with ordinary ink I managed to gather a twine of all those ideas. I tried to write with invisible ink simple sentences with a defined sense, in order to solve the problem; now you just have to out the fire under the paper...but the result will no longer be a word: it will be a work...I am giving you instructions for a performance...

We are fucked.

I cannot help it, the word's charm is stronger than its meaning, it is the pleasure of the word that strikes the engineer of forms, and who, with him, was hoping to define the border between word and image, between form and the ideas that generate it. But this is impossible through words.

We are inside a vortex where things are no longer distinguishable, and where one's position is absolutely not clear.

But this constitutes a result nonetheless.

* Ever heard of Joseph Kosuth?

* * Liam Gillick, Three perspectives and a short scenario, Kunsthalle Zurich

Simon Starling – Three Birds, Seven Stories, Interpolations and Bifurcations, Galleria Franco Noero, Torino, Christopher Williams, For Example: Dix-Huit Leçons Sur La Société Industrielle (Revision 5), Mambo, Bologna, 26 January – 4 March 2007

*** Douglas Coupland, Polaroids from the Dead (1996)

**** Gilles Deleuze, Logica del senso, Milano, Feltrinelli.

***** Jean Francois Lyotard, La condizione postmoderna, Feltrinelli, Milano 1981

***** Lucy R. Lippard, Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object (1973)