

Caroline Cloutier *Variations*

Marie-Claire Blais *From left to right, in marble and in wood*

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Light and Sound in the Studio

Since their launch in late 2011, the artist residencies at the Foundation have played a major—and often unforeseen—role in rereading the work of Molinari and reinterpreting the architecture of his picturesque studio. At the same time, the resolutely heterogeneous works thus invited into the studio have benefitted from being seen in a new light, as they arise to inhabit “the bank” of the old master of plastic abstraction.

This year, the Foundation innovates once again: our residency space will harbour two young artists over the next two years, Marie-Claire Blais and Caroline Cloutier, who share many concerns and are both seen with esteem in the milieu. The artists will alternate in the roles of main resident and counterpoint, in a formula that will somewhat diminish the transitory nature of the residency experience.

It's too early, of course, to comment fully on their projects; speaking of an installation before it takes form is a little like speaking of a photograph not yet developed. One thing is certain; their work will consider the space that will hold it and which will become part of it and condition its signs, even moreso since it will emerge in a cultural space already highly charged for young Quebec artists: *chez Molinari*. On top of that, as we all know, two heads are better than one!

Marie-Claire Blais and Caroline Cloutier have both always been drawn strongly to space and architecture, light and

geometries. These are the true raw materials of their ventures. Blais trained as an architect before turning to the visual arts, where she has relentlessly constructed and deconstructed space in her drawings. Cloutier, for her part, strives to poetically articulate the real and virtual spaces inherent in the sites that host her work, often via breathtaking photographic techniques that give rise to fictional openings. At times, like Lewis Carroll, Cloutier also resorts to mirrors: “What really intrigued me when I read Carroll's tale during the course of my research,” she told Charles Guilbert in *Vie des arts*, “is the fact that Alice can step into mirrors. I love the idea of this transfer. In meeting her reflection, she accesses her psyche. In my works, I offer spaces to project our own desires; the works prompt us, among other things, to question what is on the other side of the opening. . . .” Both artists flirt, as well, with a deft minimalism in their sets of proposals that, perhaps paradoxically, convene both rigour and conviviality.

In the magazine *esse arts + opinions*, referring to a suite of works on paper by Marie-Claire Blais shown at the Galerie René Blouin a decade ago, the artist and art historian Serge Murphy wrote, with his usual acumen, “Here, at once, we have an ongoing deconstruction and a construction in process. It seems that the drawing is never done; we just catch it at a given moment. It's a snapshot, from a specific time, and it's there because the artist wants to show this image rather than another. After all, why show another image when this one depicts exactly, at this very moment, the encounter with oneself?” What's more, Murphy's comment could be applied almost word for word to *Blue* and *Polarity*, Caroline Cloutier's two most recent photographic series. She has elected to present them very soberly, in consonance with the modules of the great hall of the Foundation, which confer on these modest “foldings”—made using

kirigami techniques and very subtly calling on the vagaries of daylight—a whole new dimension. And vice versa. . .

At this writing, the works of Caroline Cloutier—the main resident this year—are united under the title *Variations*. In counterpoint, Marie-Claire Blais's sound piece—inspired by the line of black granite that traverses the main gallery—inhabits the very evocative space of the bank vault, and is entitled *From left to right, in marble and in wood*.

In the meantime, Marie-Claire Blais and Caroline Cloutier continue to eye Molinari's *Quantifiers*. . .

— Gilles Daigneault