



Ismail Bahri, *Horizons*, video installation, 2014

Aviator

Par Eric Degoutte
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At a moment when words are let loose and daring, and a thread of thoughts is thrown- still inhabited as we go by the already initiated process of *Dénouement*, lingering on by the slow unravelling of the sights yielded by *Film*, where in fact we should be closer now to Ismail Bahri's poise in "filming the seing", and that we should also be writing...there surge out, well intertwined, both figures of Small Prince and of Rimbaud.

It could have been otherwise. Perhaps. Delicious resonances would have come along with streaks of light like a "kaleidoscope of darkness" perceived from the bed of the writer, in his countryside, at Cambrai. Could be elsewhere. In that " flicker of the epiphanies of the mind" that would allow an approach in beauty and rightness, *Percées*.

Capturing in an instant the porosity of space and the intertwining of matter; where stone melts up in sound. In a single time. In the liminal ordeals, particularly the crossing of phenomenological borders, along the routes of consummate perceptions, and within moments of a singular bet on a possible reordering of things, even though incommensurable; and of an intelligible endorsed by sense.

"Scratches of light", or else small "breaches, real or fictional" of which Ismail Bahri spoke, would have been among other deaf presences, states perceived, or things seen. In the realm of

attempts of restitution, and of whirling and playfully interlocking words. A criss-cross of lace threads laid out in a phrastic expanse run on headlong, then stop in utter fixedness, like an echo along what has been produced and wrought in *Latences*.

A breath, a shot, wind caught in the branches of an acacia tree. No...*Small Prince* rather. Himself as he appears in this fragment, and in between the crossing outs:

-This one is too old. I want a sheep that will live a long time." By this time my patience was exhausted, because I was in a hurry to start taking my engine apart. So I tossed off this drawing. And I threw out an explanation with it.

"This is only his box. The sheep you asked for is inside."

I was very surprised to see a light break over the face of my young judge:

"That is exactly the way I wanted it! Do you think that this sheep will have to have a great deal of grass?"

In the gaze of Small Prince, in that singular illumination which arouses your desire and invites you to also engage in this search for an on-going seeing, there seems to be a beautiful projection to be made onto Ismail Bahri's work.

The box drawn by the aviator, which now has become a seeing machine, unveils nothing while allowing everything. It seems to incorporate the attitude and the gaze of Small Prince. He too has now been transformed into a seeing machine, he too is at the threshold of the off lens image that Ismail Bahri peeps into as in a screening room plunged in darkness. This box outgrows its limits, its field, and yields opportunities to give in to thought, to see, upon the completion of a beautiful press.

The volume expands, much like a human body at times knows how to. These movements are shared between them, to signify at best a possible common grace embodied in an emerging swift sparkle.

...Nothing transpires to allow the most beautiful press.

The gesture, retrieved or induced by Ismail Bahri, is elaborately wrought and searched. As if it were both ends of an opera glass, the two poles of a compass: Orientation is in essence a question of manner and meaning.

He talks about his hands initiating movements, an effaced gesture coming close to becoming the "hands of a mime", or nearing "the order of a caress"

Ismail Bahri works with these hands on these seizure instants and on states of perception. Such dexterity partakes in his art. And that is what his camera is probing

The camera lens is relentless. It captures everything, collects and accumulates in the lapse of a shot sequence. Then Ismail Bahri sets it on the incommensurable, the un-decidable, within the kaleidoscopic limits of light as of the penumbra.

The focal is intent on fixing the thread, in *Dénouement*, in a frail cutting of space, in that which is the crest of the visibility of fibre, in the tempo of a vibrating quivering tension. This gaze-point operates in a frame beyond its bounds as it encompasses all in the expression of this well bent body (from afar) which is a thread now become mass, a reminiscence of accomplished gestures, but also of this wrought body (in fine in utmost closeness) which is Ismail Bahri's, at the close of his proceedings, after he learnt how to probe the resistance of matter, of thread, in the temporality of a gesture whose presence intervenes in the lapse of the displacement of the body.

Both focal and frame contribute to perfecting his approach to the lens field and outside of it. The seeing machine functions well: Our eyes get accommodated to the fleeting ethereality of an on-going seeing.

This is no less than a third body at work.

In *Orientations*, the lens of the camera plunges into an insubordinate surface. A mechanics conceived to capture the well delineated universe of things, playing with the lenses and unceasingly attempting to correct. The correctives are the outer field of the incommensurable.

Porosity is in action: Visual matter blends with sonorous matter...Limits are effaced, and states merge.

Are we in the box? Do we hear exchanges?

Two beings talking and attempting to share the same crest of visibility.

Tourist? Guide? Westerner? Tunisian?...

Aviator or Small Prince?

What of Rimbaud?

The Seekers Of Lice

When the child's forehead, full of red torments,
Implores the white swarm of indistinct dreams,
There come near his bed two tall charming sisters
With slim fingers that have silvery nails.
They seat the child in front of a wide open
Window where the blue air bathes a mass of
flowers,
And in his heavy hair where the dew falls,
Move their delicate, fearful and enticing fingers.
He listens to the singing of their apprehensive
breath
Which smells of long rosy plant honey,
And which at times a hiss interrupts, saliva
Caught on the lip or desire for kisses.

He hears their black eyelashes beating
in the perfumed Silence;
and their gentle electric fingers
Make in his half-drunken indolence the death of
the little lice
Crackle under their royal nails.
Then the wine of Sloth rises in him,
The sigh of an harmonica which could bring on
delerium;
The child feels, according to the slowness of the
caresses,
Surging in him and dying continuously a desire to
cry.

Let us walk in the steps of these "lice seekers",

Following the tempo of the dance of these electric and soft fingers running onto the locks of a young hair, and along the clicking generating a frail anxiety.

A route made of apprehensions, deliverance, and then pleasure.
This extends from the indolence of a child to the stake of senses

Here, aren't we in the steps of Ismail Bahri?
Unravelling, the latter makes of each one of us, in a delicious dénouement, small princes.
More than a narrator, he is an aviator...in a marvellous machine, riding the wind.

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