

HEIDI WOOD

The twinning of cities in different countries first occurred in the 1950's with the aim of encouraging cultural dialogue, thereby reducing the misunderstandings and antagonisms that had made possible two World Wars and all the others. Twinning is thus a project of fraternal utopia activated on a municipal level rather than at the level of the State, which is always suspected of nationalism and so-called "higher interests".

At the same time, late modernism found its purest formulations in American art criticism and abstract painting. There is a surprising correlation, at least historically speaking, between these two utopias, namely the dialogue among cultures and the affirmation of a nationally anchored modernist eschatology.

Since then, the practice of twinning has lost in ambition what it has gained in administrative order and the formal vocabulary of pictorial modernism has been widely taken over by advertising, communications, graphics and design professionals. In Limay, Heidi Wood creates a parallel between these two heritages by twinning this small town in the Yvelines and that of Wheelers Hill, in the suburbs of Melbourne, Australia. The artist imagines tourist information centers for the two suburbs, complete with photographs, paintings and wall paintings. As in her work as a whole, the formal register used by Heidi Wood comes as much from geometric abstraction as from logos and visual communication, thus blurring the nature of what we are looking at. There is indeed a principle of transplant in most of the formal means used: oil paint on synthetic upholstery fabric, digital photography and graphics in diptychs, confrontation of two planes of color, coexistence of observational drawing and complex fictional economies...

Suburbia, which is both the host and subject of this project, can be defined itself as a graft: fantasy union of urban and rural, dream of a new type of city, it also answers to fundamentally different representations in France, where it incarnates exclusion, and the Anglo-Saxon world, where it is a residential area. In both cases, it raises the question of image(s). Finally, let it be said that when a graft doesn't take, it is known as "rejection".

Karim Ghaddab, 2012
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