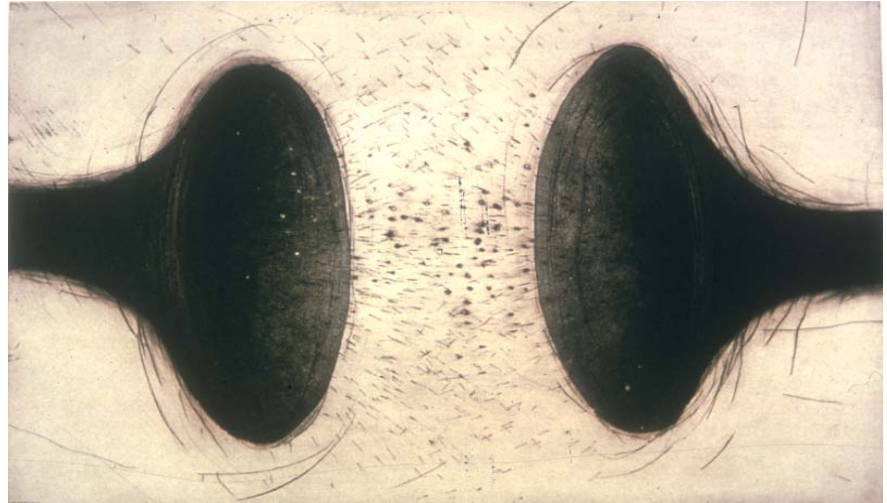


Engramme, centre de production en estampe / diffusion en art actuel

Letters from the Centre of the Earth

Par John K.Grande

A propos de l'exposition *Letters from the centre of the Earth* de Ludmilla Armata .



At the heart of matter there is matter. At the core of the earth - there is some unseen force, an energy that abounds. We can only imagine what the sources there are or could be. We cannot define, have never seen the centre of the earth. Nevertheless the seismic shifts and tectonic plate movements affects our lives. They can generate tsunamis, earthquakes and the like...

However brief in intensity, these phenomena have a lasting and likewise all powerful effect. In a way, Ludmila Armata's *Letters from the Centre of the Earth* series (2005), her etching *Poem from the Centre of the Earth* (2005), the *Shadow & Shape* series (2005) created in boxes with pins and fragile tiny cut-outs a la Henri Matisse in white paper on black and vice versa, or black on black and white on white are like entomological and exemplary exercises in aesthetics. Art is pinned like a butterfly and captured in a box..

Even the large scale modular etched series titled *Seismografia* (2005) created so it can be reassembled in a variety of orders on a wall suggest these all powerful earth forces, but this time they exist through the registrations, the tiny lines and exaggerated striations on steel plate that are these etchings. Armata's *Seismografia* series emphasizes the surface of things, and the traces that are felt or even left by energy, even the way life's traces are ultimately ephemeral existing at a moment in time, or left behind after the life has moved on. The surface may be that of an artwork for the artist, but the surface subject is far more universal, an allusion to the unusual way energy follows form or creates forms, as it exists in a biological state, or a geological state, or in any other shape and form between.



Working on steel plates, or delicately assembling miniature works in boxes after cutting them out, Ludmila Armata integrates a sense of time, of the density and shape of time, and of the perpetual changes that seismic movements enact, as much sound as matter. The seismic shifts on the surface of earth become a digital dance, with scatalogical notations, scratchy effects, ... vertical vortices open up and then close. There is a repetition of line in many variations. The lines are like voices that speak to us from some distant and inhuman, less than conscious source. The ongoing change is an effect of motion, or affect of energy. All this passes through the earth and is paraphrased in Armata's art. Energy moves towards a surface and speaks to us, Armata's art seems to suggest. The energy, eventually moves onward, and dissipates, dissolves altogether. Her art has this aspect of sensitivity for the dissolution of things, even of histories, and this is the personal and autobiographical part of her art, all abstract even so. What a metaphor for life itself! With this art, we can fully understand how time can be a metaphor for life, (particularly as it affects the physics of the world we are in).

Ludmila Armata has created a body of work that not only references the unseen, the invisible by drawing sometimes fluid, othertimes nervous, very physical motions in a push and pull tug of war battle with the surfaces and density of the matter she makes her art out of. Her art achieves this resolution of the elemental and primordial, and elucidates on nature's essential force with a visual eloquence that is based on observation of very real things - the geological layers, the chasms of a gorge, the layers of things, even the growth form of a mushroom or tree root. We sense that life does not ultimately imitate art, but that art can imitate life in Armata's Seismografia works. We see here a visual language that often resembles what we discover around us in landforms, or growth forms, or body details, and cannot put to words, or in images. There is also a conceptual edge to Ludmila Armata's play on and with variations of surface effect, energy and design. The cartoon-like character that emerges as a description of effect is an aesthetic that seeks to build bridges between the mind-body split. Armata achieves this with a tactile and visual interweave.

Letter from the Centre of the Earth is a show that proposes a communication between elements of nature, including ourselves. These forms are ultimately not abstract at all, but as hidden poetic epigrams from some concealed space, even an existential place of origin, Armata's artworks are symbols of intuited experience. As mediaworks, the works on paper by Ludmila Armata challenge the stereotypical belief that technology is the only source for contemporary artistic process. Instead the tactile, the physical world and its effects remain salient and significant sources for all the works in this show.

John K. Grande est auteur et critique en arts visuels et s'intéresse particulièrement à l'art environnemental. Il a publié de nombreux articles entre autres dans les revues *Artforum*, *Vice Versa*, *Sculpture*, *Vie des arts*, *Adbusters* et *Canadian forum*. Il est également l'auteur des ouvrages *Art, nature et société* (Écosociété, 1997), *Jouer avec le feu : Armand Vaillancourt ; artiste engagé* (Lanctot, 2001) et *Art Nature Dialogues : Interviews with Environmental Artists* (Sunny Press, NY, 2005)

L'exposition *Letters from the Centre of the Earth* de Ludmilla Armata était présentée chez Engramme du 26 novembre au 23 décembre 2005.

Ci-contre de haut en bas : *Tension*, eau-forte et pointe sèche, 34''x47'' et *Infrasonic*, aquatinte et pointe-sèche, 33'' x 33''.

Engramme
501, de Saint-Vallier Est
Québec (Québec)
G1K 3P9

Tél. : (418) 529-0972
Télec. (418) 529-9849

engramme@meduse.org
www.meduse.org/engramme

ISSN 1712-901X

© Engramme