

*Cela aura déjà eu lieu* is a twenty-page full colour book, published after the exhibition of the same name at the Centre d'art de Morsang, France. As the following texts, (in English translation) indicate, the project was founded on the Freudian concept of *Nachträglichkeit* or deferred action. The first part of the work was an invitation, the second an event and viewing, the third, a postcard, and the last, the publication, where all the texts in circulation and the postcard are reproduced.

### *An Invitation*

This is an invitation to a project in several parts. It is a work that takes various forms, including that of recollection. Without you, it will come to nothing, for your presence is essential to its resolution. There is this invitation, which you may have just received in the post and are now reading. If you know me, then what I have written, what I am writing, will be familiar. There will be a photograph, which while set in the present – though not the present where you are reading my invitation – is constructed in the past. There will be a rehearsal for a concert that has already taken place. There will be a second photograph taken in the same place as the first, and this will become a postcard, circulating after the event it documents. Of course I worry if I am making sense, if my confusion of tenses, defying diachronic time, is sensible. It is how one thinks and dreams, though, in leaps back and forth. The title of the work, all its parts, is in the tense called the future anterior, sometimes called the future perfect. Something *will have been*.

There will be an audience. Perhaps my invitation will prompt you to be part of it. I do hope so. It will not be audience to a concert, though there will be some lovely music at a near distance. Rather, it will become, as audience, subject of a postcard, as it fills the empty chairs carefully arranged in rows to form a scene that duplicates that of the photograph behind what will appear to be a stage. It is not really a stage, yet there will be a performance, off-stage, out of clear view. It will not be the first time the choir has sung together, but it will be the first time it has performed in this way. Yesterday I left a message for the musical director. Today he left a message for me. We have not yet spoken though we know each other's voices. The performance of the choir will not be the object of the audience.

I do not think I have ever seen the park outside. The shutters have always been closed. I will open them when I take my first photograph. My sense of time is imprecise. Events recede and lose their proper order. It is not merely a matter of subjective feeling. Neither is it simply a question of following the supposed sequence of events, for no events have taken place yet and I am writing them into existence. Time - and memory - both acts in reverse and anticipates. What takes place in the present touches and shapes the past, and the past reaches out and finds an image at last. Events that may or may not have occurred are rewritten. What happens now, what will happen, will affect what has already happened. I am waiting for the return of a hundred metres of gold silk, which will become the elegant curtains of all the doors of the *salon* where you may anticipate being when you receive this invitation and decide to accept it. It will seem as if the curtains have always been there, because look, in the photograph I have yet to take, there they are (but their colour is not as I remember it).

There is then more than one event, more than one moment. There is a certain repetition, rather than matters moving along, being neatly resolved. I heard about this place long before I saw it and my passage there has been marked by delay, hesitation, before reaching any conclusion. I did not remember the existence of the doors through which you will enter, if you choose to attend, for I have always entered by another door. What will happen determines what is happening now. I am imagining how the *salon* will look and so will attempt to make it appear as I imagine it to be. In thinking about retroaction and anticipation, I am looking forward to a 'moment of concluding'. The words are not mine, but those of the psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, writing about the logical time of the unconscious. What you are reading, well, they are not quite my words either, for they will have passed through a translator. When I read them, I will not be able to tell if they are as I am writing them now.

I almost forgot to tell you. There will be another text. If you are here, on the night of the opening, it will be behind you, as you sit waiting, though you are welcome to visit at any time (it will not be the same, of course). You may be reading this now as you wait, facing a stage on which nothing is to be performed except the recording of your presence. I must add, there will

be another part, a third chapter to the story I have started to tell you, in a small book. I hope I have explained enough here, enough to engage you at least. I am inviting you to a *séance*.

### *Wall Texts*

He had accepted the invitation he had received in the post a week ago, though it had seemed rather enigmatic. Usually he had a resistance to this sort of thing, particularly as he was not terribly interested in what he considered to be the exclusive games of contemporary art. He did not like to be manipulated; yet something about the phrasing on the invitation card, combined with an image he could not entirely decipher, had succeeded in capturing his attention. He knew nothing about the artist and could not imagine why she appeared to have singled him out for this event, though he realized this was probably no more than a projection on his part. He had not visited the chateau before, yet remembered passing it several months ago, having mistaken his route (he had been on his way to a sale of old photographs, of which he was a keen, if amateur, collector). At the time, he had wondered casually about the use of the elegant, if slightly rundown, building. Perhaps it was the reproduction on the card that had drawn him. It was strangely familiar, yet he could not say where he might have seen it. He did, however, remember a mirror above a marble fireplace and the disturbing sensation of heat as he imagined climbing into the reflection. As he

took his place among the other guests, heading automatically for one of the rows of chairs that were laid out, he admired the faded *boiseries*, the ornate ceiling. The chandeliers, he noted with disapproval, were modern. He felt himself to be the object of an external regard. He noticed the large photograph hung at the end of the room, behind a small stage where a camera on a tripod was standing. Although the woman in front of him was obscuring his view, he felt that the photograph had something of the same quality as that on the card. It appeared to be of the room in which he was now seated. For lack of anything else to do, he turned and began reading, with difficulty, a text on the wall behind him. It was discomfiting to read about himself. He stopped reading.

When she had received the invitation to the exhibition of her friend, she had been pleased to accept, despite her reluctance to leave the city. She knew a little about the intentions of the work, and indeed, shared an interest in the concepts of psychoanalysis that she believed to form the background to the work. She understood that the work should be approached through Freud's idea of 'deferred action', the way in which the past is no more than a set of memories constantly reworked according to the

events of the present. She knew that these events were not important, in psychoanalysis, as real events, rather that their interest lay in the way in which they were recounted. She felt rather nervous on behalf of her friend, wanting the work to be well received. She had to prevent herself from approaching those other guests who were looking bemused or even irritated, initiating charming conversations in which she might guide them towards an explanation of the work that would engage them. It was clear that some were uncertain as to what they were supposed to be doing or seeing. She wondered how she might set an example, having always considered herself to be a viewer with perfect behavior (if occasionally flawed in her interpretation). The

large photograph of the room in which she now stood looked much as she had imagined it when it had been described to her earlier in the year. It was slightly smaller than she had hoped, and she tried to suppress the vague sentiment of disappointment she so often felt in the presence of works of art, unless they were of the most classical nature. There were some discrepancies between the photograph and its subject. It was as though she had arrived with a memory of the *salon*, a memory that now proved to be incorrect or false. A man who was seated behind her suddenly moved, and this drew her attention to a text on the wall behind her. At the end of reading it, she read that she stopped reading. Following what she felt to be her instructions, she stopped reading.

*Essay*

### *Afterwards*

Passé le temps pour comprendre le moment de conclure, c'est le moment de conclure le temps pour comprendre. Car autrement ce temps perdrait son sens.

Jacques Lacan, 'Le temps logique'

It is over and this is what I think happened. In 2002 an old acquaintance called me to say he had met a young curator at a dinner party and told him of my work. He pressed me to get in touch, but as usual I prevaricated, finding the chore of preparing a set of slides, a collection of catalogues, books and so on too dull. I think that in the end I forced

myself to make a telephone call, which I always dread when I must speak French to someone I do not know. I think I sent some material; I cannot be clear about the next events. I know we arranged a meeting in Paris, at one of my favorite restaurants, but at the last minute it was cancelled. We arranged another meeting, but at a different restaurant, chosen only because it was near to where I had another meeting. I had brought some objects, including a linen dress, embroidered in red with the word '*allumeuse*', and the burst of laughter from J-P when I unfolded it over the table at which we were having lunch. At the time I was still working on my series of works on the arcades of Paris and the circulation of women, and I found it hard to deflect my occupation with these to address a new site. I felt I would be returning to something I had left behind, and moreover, it was a moment when I was caught up in writing. I did not feel capable of engaging with the history of a specific location, though this had indeed been characteristic of my work in the past.

I had then recently completed a commission, located in a psychiatric hospital in England that was closing, a collection of four small books rather like school exercise books, in a slipcase. Now I think of it, the cover of each books was based on a set of old schoolbooks I had bought in a *brocante*. I called the work *Memoirs*, and in both English and French '*mémoire*' has a number of meanings. It is the faculty of conserving and recalling what has happened and what is associated with those events of the past; it is the mental function of representation of the past; it is what a person may leave behind for the future. It is also the reminder of a bill outstanding. In his discussions on memory, Freud moves to the speculation that all memories are screen memories, writing, 'it may indeed be questioned whether we have any memories at all *from* our childhood: memories *relating* to our childhood may be all that we possess'. With this in mind, I took up the strange process of recollection at the Chateau of Morsang.

It is a work in four parts. This book is its fourth and final part. As the text for the invitation, which is reproduced here, just as its cover has become the cover of this book,

intimates (and this also is taken up in the text of the woman, also reproduced here as it appeared on the wall of the *salon*) my interest lay in certain psychoanalytic concepts of temporality. However, what I thought would be the work for Morsang went through many changes, and each stage was marked by a strange reluctance, a hesitation on my part, which I could not explain, either to others or myself. I next met with J-P just before Christmas in 2003. I had already spoken of my interest in that strange and beautiful film, *L'Année dernière à Marienbad*, and suggested that the work I might make for Morsang would in some way be connected to that. I had just made a small series of black and white photographs, which showed enigmatic details of the fall of heavy curtains where they touched the floor, and I gave one to J-P, feeling that this image articulated more eloquently my engagement. B. joined us for lunch, and he is to be seen to middle-left of the postcard, reproduced at the end of this book. The bar/restaurant used to be my favorite in Paris yet now was renovated, more expensive and less delightful and I have not been back there since. I had yet to visit the Chateau of Morsang.

A few months later I wrote the first proposal for the project, and B. translated it for me. I intended a work proposed in three parts, each relating to one of the exhibition spaces. Responding to the faded, melancholy and nostalgic ambience of the gallery, the work was to take up ideas of memory, as an articulation of the symbolic history of a subject (or subjects). The title was taken from Resnais and Robbe-Grillet's iconic film, which appears to follow the construction of memory through speech, rather in the way a psychoanalysis might work, in the sense that it does not aim at reminiscence but at a rewriting of history. I proposed a rewriting of the history of the location, in three founding moments that would later be traced:

The first was to rehearse a concert over several months. The music would have been chosen in discussion with the music school, and form part of its repertoire. On the evening of the opening the piece would have been performed and recorded in one of

the three spaces. However, the audience would not have direct access to the performance, but instead would hear it in the large room, from behind closed doors. Already it would be in the distance. Afterwards the recording would play in the room in which it was made.

The second was the making of a video. In the room overlooking the park, two people, a man and a woman, were to be filmed looking out at the park through the windows. It would be summer and they were to have commented on the scene in front of them, while also weaving in other thoughts as they spoke. In addition, certain phrases, drawn from the third moment of the work, would form the structure of the dialogue. The shutters on the windows were to remain closed. The dialogue would have played over and over, on a loop, but would stop when a visitor entered the room beyond a certain point (achieved with a simple sensor). The sound would have been quadraphonic, filling the room spatially, moving between four speakers.

In the largest room there would have been one very large photograph, taken earlier in the year. People in Morsang would have been asked to lend for a short time a piece of furniture that they had inherited. It would not have been necessary that it should have been an 'antique' but should have had some sentimental significance, described when the piece is collected. Each article would have been arranged in the room as though the room were still inhabited, each item draped with a linen sheet as though the *salon* were closed for restoration or had been abandoned. This view would then have been photographed and reproduced both as a large photograph, installed in the space and as a postcard, circulated. The 'recollection' would have been used in the dialogue between the man and the woman, as both prompts and punctuation in their conversation.

None of this happened of course. Had I seen the place by this time? I think so, for the locations of each part were so specific. Yet something had changed, intervened and the work became another work. Was the change in my thinking or was it rather a change

in circumstance? I do not remember, and by the time I visited the Chateau again, in July 2004, the work was quite different. The title, oddly enough, was not changed in the advance publicity – the booklet of forthcoming events in Morsang – and in that, the work that is described is the work that was not eventually made. In a way then, there have been two works, one of fiction, one of staging.

The invitation card explained as clearly as I could, what was to happen. A correspondent recently described the text as ‘just like having a moebius switchback ride in time’, mentioning also that she was keeping it on her mantelpiece. She is the editor of a recent issue of the journal *Angelaki*, for which I wrote an essay called *L’Année dernière*, about the film of course, and also about the mirror-stage of Jacques Lacan, and included a set of black and white photographs, one of which appears here in colour and was also used as an image for the exhibition. There was a certain anxiety about the invitation, that the text was too long, too obscure, despite its stated intention to be as clear as possible. The translation was accurate, sensitive to the differing nuances of English and French, and attentive to the exactitude of temporal grammatical constructions. The invitation was printed very late, and risked arriving on the day of the opening event or even later, when it would have invited guests to an event that had already happened, as did the notice at the back of *Art Press*, in which the day was given as Friday rather than Thursday.

In the end, the card was posted and must have arrived at its destination for enough people came to make up my audience. Some were charmed, some confused. Some were late and missed being in the photograph I took for the postcard. The staging was not a performance by me as photographer, though some took it to be so. Anyway, I was wearing a particularly beautiful skirt, matching the silk curtains that many thought had always been there and most did not consider for one moment to be part of a work of art, yet the curtains transformed the room and one might think transformation is artful. The choir performed splendidly in the next room, separated from the audience,

yet most aware of its presence. I returned the following day, photographed the empty room that still seemed full to me, and have not been back since, though I now have the photograph of the *salon*, in three parts, in my studio. The postcard has just, as I write, been posted to all those people who left their addresses. It is a little dark, perhaps, but I can easily recognize those people whom I know.

On the evening of the opening, before anyone arrived, I opened all the shutters to the façade. I felt a curious sensation of ownership as I leant out into the dark of the night. For a moment, the Chateau de Morsang was inhabited once again, and as its *chatelaine*, I awaited my guests ... *c'était le moment de conclure le temps pour comprendre*