

Alice Anderson/ a little girl's fabulations

These women's micro-stories thus express the sad decline of drives: the catastrophic lot of drives, when un-chained, un-arranged, un-magnetized, wearing themselves out in sterile play between a useless aim and an empty object. Dolls like these play fictions of identity redemption with humor and despair. While another little girl fabulates.

Alice is the ideal character to recount tales today. Alice Liddell existed: the daughter of the dean of an English cathedral, she would receive the manuscript of *Alice* from the hands of Lewis Carroll as a souvenir of a rowing party in her company. Alice is the unattainable incarnation of paradox. She is bored and wavers between sleeping and doing something. She goes to sleep and dreams, which we will understand later. Desire is destined to reach towards objects of substitution; it remains fundamentally unsatisfied because the lost object that causes it is impossible to get back – the size changes sign the vacillations between childhood and adulthood in a double desire to become small and big at the same time. Alice is never the right size for the event: she is too big to get into the warren or she is too little and drowns in her tears. The ambivalence of the desires -- the basic dissatisfaction that the wonderful world repeats in the ordinary vexation of the world of reality -- offers nothing but imagination. Alice can realize desire through dreams: only the right size can enable the realization of a possible desire. *Alice* expresses the fear that any satisfaction of desire might result in punishment, and size changes bring about a blurring of identity: the adult – in her – knows.

The tale opens with the vision of a subject always foreign to himself since she warns right off "I am I". Alice Anderson is a very talented young English woman who thinks she is her first name and her mother: she likes the supernatural. *Vertical*¹ (2001) is a video that tells the unlikely story of a woman who turns into a skyscraper. In a voice-over, the heroine is speaking to a man to whom she announces her departure. A woman with an icy face then asks if she doesn't suffer from vertigo. The building-in-movement is taken in charge by the video artist: "She had become very hard. She no longer felt what was happening inside her. Was she going to collapse?" Questions that signal the end of the film. The mixture of introspection and fantasy makes Alice different. Private madness can be seen in *How to Become Peter*², akin to an instruction book for how never to grow up. Alice Anderson's recurrent problematic is the daughter-mother link that she materializes in this identity substitution *My Mother*³, in a set of 20 video sequences.

¹ Anderson A., *Vertical*, video, 9mn, 2001

² Anderson A., *How to Become Peter* Photo 50 x 70 cm, 2002

³ Anderson A., *My Mother*, video, 40 mn, 1999-2000

Alice takes over her mother's daily activities for a week, imitating her in mother-daughter cliché scenes. A text insert explains that it is "playing a game that separated them again." Alice-mother, exasperated, confronts Alice-daughter grappling with the problems of separation. The mother punishes Alice for taking her mother's shoes: "I must not take my mother's things." The daughter leaves her mother, and then "changed into product becomes building." Construction is paid for by becoming petrified. Alice explores private madness in the phobia of a woman engulfed in the infinite depth of International Klein blue or in a carpet pattern. The remedy is found in her last film *No More Fears*⁴ from 2004. The medical institute "No Fears," directed by Mme Hoffmann, desensitizes you following a death or a break up and promises that you will never feel anything again after one simple injection. We are in the heart of uncanniness, of *Unheimliche*. Reality is challenged in Alice Anderson's work. The sign of reality that Freud spoke of is manifested when belief and appreciation of reality match up. Reality and fiction come together in a collusion faced with an illusory self-consumption of pleasure.

⁴ Anderson A., *No More Fears*, video, 23 mn, 2004