

Michel Le Belhomme

about *Cahier de doléances* (extract of *Chiens de fusil*)

written for DerGrief magazine,

Paris, May 2014

Courtships rituals

Lea Habourdin doesn't care much for the conventions of photography, her series mix black and white as well as colors; her realism hugs the curves of blurred over-closeness and of nervous proximity. Her work is similar to an encyclopaedic process, her museum of (very) natural histories is of fragmentation and harshness. Lea Habourdin observes, dissects, and applies the scalpel to her everyday life, adventures and encounters. However, this is nothing like a simple personal diary; she focuses on and confronts disparate bodies. In *Cahier de Doléances*, a sort of comprehensive diorama, flesh comes together with flesh, without hierarchy, and they engage almost by mimetism on a contradictory dialogue about their conditions, whether animal or human. Sensuality is elsewhere, far beyond our usual habits. On the one hand, there is the beauty of this polar bear whose raw energy is liberated in a suspended swim; on the other, a person's back marked with an H as a sign of ownership: convulsing, squirming, bundled up. Even her landscapes are a form of reversal; vital energy converses with inertia. These photographs constantly shift us between an enhanced lifelessness and a floating presence. There is a recurring idea of escape, exhausted desire and curiosity. Her nocturnal wanderings exude loneliness, especially in the series *Preuves Objectives 01 : Notes sur l'attraction*. Even in photos taken during « entertainment » parties, excitement is firstly about sweat and eclipse. The ecstatic sensuality of those close-up parading bodies documents curves that appear caressable but have the power to burn. Lea Habourdin bites into the raw night and extracts precious intuitive moments from this overdose of ugliness and usual shadows. This ordinary life, seen from the focal distance of ex-

treme proximity, becomes an epic saga à la PAOLO UCELLO. This parading, between the attraction for singularity and the rejection of the boredom of an everlasting new beginning, takes place in something that is more than mere erotic seduction. It materializes in the drifting and violence towards this frozen time. This porous immediacy and this unavoidable refusal create thus a documentary that is both hybrid and fantastical. translation Ramona Bourhis