

In Fribourg, the anniversary of the death of St. Nicholas is celebrated in the form of a procession, where he follows a path from the College Saint-Michel to the Cathedral of the city where he addresses to the people a speech inspired by the events of the past year. He realizes his journey on a donkey, accompanied by the bogeymen and the fifers. Each year, the procession is performed identically, although the main participants have changed.

*We Win Or We Die II* re-arranges the elements of this traditional event in a particular exhibition game. By diverting them in a certain staging and working by collages, the various works avoid postulating the relationship of fidelity to the traditional event as the axis around which the works are organized. The collage aspect refers to the possibility for a whole to make sense thanks to its parts: here, the interest thus moves on the links between the various protagonists represented through the exhibition and the meaning given by their gathering.

The stained glass windows represent the various participants in this reconstruction and, placed on the windows — that is to say precisely between the «interior» exhibition space and the «outdoor» public space of the street in which the traditional procession took place — insist on the issue of the space in which takes place an event, either traditional or of an art exhibition. The publication presented as a piece proposes a re-writing of the original score played during the procession and proclaims the slogan «We Win or We Die» which brings together the elements present in the exhibition. The projected video dramatizes the various constituent moments in the exhibition presented in the form of recordings, illustrating a link between a «live» art and a mediated reproduction. These games of re-arrangements cause movements of meaning and blur the different categories: are these protagonists those of the traditional event of the St. Nicholas or of the exhibition in WallRiss? Is it a diversion of preparatory moments to the traditional event, or a collage of elements that already incorporate the intention to realize an exhibition?

Without a clear answer, the possibility of setting a reference

is prevented: it is not then a real past event that fixes the content of the different works but rather the possibility for these moments to take meaning together. In other words, it is a matter of impregnating a certain cognitive space: a space composed of the different wills that create the collaboration.

This opacity, which prevents us from determining the original event and the real intention, allows *We Win or We Die II* to thus permeate this abstract space which becomes here the basis for the possibility of the emergence of the event. A popular festival or an exhibition presents symbols in such a way that the paradigmatic pieces (costumes, repetitions of symbolic acts in the first case, works of art and particular contextualization in the second) are objects that present by their very content the setting in act of an intention and an original act. But *We Win or We Die II*, by blurring the possibility of determining a clear intention, fixes the works that compose it as the sole purpose. Thus, the exhibition does not propose an experience of a popular gathering in a new mediation offered by a space of contemporary art nor does it dramatize an event by reconstitution, but rather exceeds these first frames to impregnate a cognitive space underlying each collective realization, and reminds us that the basis of any emergence is participation. By integrating elements of reality into a new fiction, the works presented at the WallRiss participate together in a new narrative. By insisting on this storytelling, *We Win or We Die II* integrates a tradition of a speculative, personified retelling of history.

*We Win or We Die II* is a solo exhibition of Camille Alena at WallRiss, performed with Emma Antille (vocals, actress), Nicolas Brodard (photo, video), Olivier Fasel (fife, actor), Leo Bulliard (fife, actor), Anna Cavenagh (vocals, actress), Edith Giro Larraz (vocals, actress), Serge Nidegger (silkscreen), Pascal Moret (stained glass), Dan Solbach (graphics), Kathi Hofer (essay), Camille Chanel (translation), George Schreiner (translation), Cric Print (print), Florian Pittet (sound engineer), Collège St-Michel (costumes).