

MATHIEU BERNARD-REYMOND
La flèche du temps (Time's Arrow)

Every year, I told my brother:

“Look, this tree is leaning more and more.”

And then, one day, my father sent us a text message. He wrote:

“The Spanish pine in front of the house has just fallen due to the wind.” And he added:

“No material damage or human injury.”

On falling, the tree lifted its roots and opened a hole in the ground several metres deep. We were all around, my parents, my brother, our children.

We scratched at the earth and looked at this hole. We knew the tree was going to fall, but it was impossible to predict when or how. Then it happened. The growth rings revealed that it must have been almost 200 years old.

I’m telling you this because, scratching under the stump between the roots, my brother found a metal coin. It looked like nothing else. But when he showed it to his wife, she said it was a Roman coin. She is an archaeologist.

The coin in the roots of the tree took 16 or 17 centuries to reach us.

By patiently disintegrating in the ground, the image on its surface had disappeared. And even under the microscope today, we can’t learn anything about who owned this coin and whose pocket it fell from.

At almost the same time the tree fell to earth, the Cassini spacecraft completed its mission by diving into Saturn on 15 September 2017. This one was a planned crash. The probe was designed 30 years ago and the technology it had onboard was the most sophisticated of its time. But today, now that it reached Saturn and its images are coming to us, we can take better pictures with a simple mobile phone.

Today, thistles have sprouted on the soil brought in to plug the hole. A field of thistles with seeds surrounded by down.

I think about all the people seen and re-seen near this tree. I think about my family, all of us being carried forwards on time’s arrow. I think that someday we’ll be wood and matter in stars and pixels. I think of them all now that I say these words, and I wonder what my purpose is here.

I never knew how to remember people’s names or the order of things because memory perpetually fails. As if everything is happening at the same time, since always.

I think about all this at the same time, and I say to myself that we’re lost in time and don’t understand anything. The time it takes for a project to take shape, for an

accident to happen or for people to finally understand each other is mysterious; this time is not human.

And to escape this, to put things in order, we do what we can to outdo ourselves, to do things well, things bigger and more beautiful than us.

Rinny Gremaud and Mathieu Bernard-Reymond

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Mathieu Bernard-Reymond was born in Gap (France) in 1976. After a university degree at the Institute of Political Studies in Grenoble (FR, 1998), he graduated from the School of Photography in Vevey (CH, 2002).

His images manipulate landscape, architecture and information as components of a poetic language that yearns for constant renewal. He sees photography as a means of creating strange realities to generate possible worlds. The digital aspect of his approach allows him to organise the data as well as the tangible world.

His work has been recognised with several prizes (HSBC 2003, Rencontres d'Arles 2005, Paris-Photo 2006, Arcimboldo 2009, Fondation Irène Reymond 2016) and he has so far published two books: *Vous-êtes ici* (2003, Actes-Sud) and *TV* (2008, Hatje Cantz). His work has also been featured in many public or private collections such as the Musée Nicéphore Niépce (FR), the Musée de l'Elysée (CH) or the National Fund for Contemporary Art (FR). He is a member of the European collective *Piece of Cake*.