

What takes place in the studio? Many different actions, of course. But which actions? The artist introduces a material to be utilized in his/her process. But today, there is no limit to either the material nor the related action. Some use the term creation. Others prefer research. Those on the fence say the artist creates and researches at the same time. Visionaries say the artist discovers.

Creation, research, research-creation, discovery – in any event, what does all this freedom lead to? An artwork, but then what? A truly free act? But what would a truly free act be?

Might we not find an answer in Barbara Claus's inaugural action of making the studio a subject of rejoicing? A single mark made might be enough to convince us. Claus's studio has no fixed address – it's where she finds herself at a given moment. This studio is both nowhere and everywhere.

Already familiar with my formalizing of the artistic action as a “theorizing action” or “decisive gesture”, Barbara Claus has been kind enough to instigate an intersection of our ideas and practices for the creation of *petites incarnations (suite)*. While she works, I will write, in relation with her and her workspace. I will move forward, step by step, word by word, grounded in my conviction that “there is no art without an artist to summon it up. And not only that... there is no art without a body that takes the risk of experiencing what is brought about. And not only that... there is no art without a mind to translate this experience, aware of the specificity of experience to each individual... There is no art without this encounter between doing and saying...”

**Jean-Émile Verdier** – Art Critic  
[www.jeanemileverdier.com](http://www.jeanemileverdier.com)

Text translated from French by Simon Brown

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Barbara Claus wishes to warmly thank: the Skol team for having accepted her in situ project, with all the unpredictability it entails; the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec for the opportunity to create and research without anxiety; Pierre for his presence; Jean-Émile for his trust; Ivan and Olivier for their technical help; her friends for being good listeners.

Centre des arts  
actuels Skol

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In her work, **Barbara Claus** deals with memory, death and ephemerality. She explores the role of slowness in a world where everything seems to be exponentially accelerating. The performative dimension of her process occurs within the sphere of privacy. Marks accumulate in layers, and through their many forms, trace the contours of the *little story* that meditatively emerges. For this exhibition at Skol, she slowly puts into action a process of construction-deconstruction, using the gallery space itself as raw material.

Barbara will be working in the gallery often throughout the exhibition. Come meet her! You are invited to share a cup of tea with the artist on the Saturdays of March 18th and 25th and April 1st and 15th. A closing party and group deinstall are planned for April 22nd, 2017!

**Barbara Claus** is a Montréal artist. “Born, in Etterbeek, Belgium; at 10 months, I take my first steps in Burundi; at two years old, back in my low country, I tear up magazines in my wooden playpen; at four, I play in front of a Finnish design store in the Toison d’Or shopping centre; at five, I take creative workshops; at nine, I attend a free school inspired by the philosophy of Krishnamurti; at ten, we take charge of the zoo next to the art studios (lioness, monkey, snakes, goats...); at 15, I read voraciously and take night classes at the Académie de Wavre; at 16, I know what my life’s passion will be; at 19, I am accepted into the silk-printing programme at La Cambre, evenings are spent at the Brussels Cinémathèque; at 24, I take part in the exhibition Gravures grands formats at the Musée de Louvain-la-Neuve with Tapiès, Chillida, Miro, Reinhoud, etc.; at 25, I arrive in Montréal...”

How can I write my biography without bringing to mind all my encounters with inspiring artists, of the intense aesthetic experiences that have forged my vision of the world, of the artist residencies that have fuelled my practice and my search for meaning up to now?”

– **Barbara Claus**  
[www.barbaraclaus.com](http://www.barbaraclaus.com)

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