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CYPRIEN GAILLARD

Title | *Desniansky Raion*, 2007
Media | Video; 29 min

Artist Information | Cyprien Gaillard, * 1980, Paris, France
Lives and works in Paris, France

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Art Work Information | Between vandalism and minimal aesthetic, romanticism and Land Art, Cyprien Gaillard's work questions man's traces in nature in an iconoclastic way. Whether he commissions a traditional landscape painter to paint colorful views of housing projects in Swiss suburbs, surrounded by their luxuriant natural environment (*Swiss Ruins*, 2005), or introduces the image of a distinct tower block into a Dutch landscape etching from the 17th century, hence transforming the naturalist visions of Rembrandt, Anthony Waterloo, and Jan Hackaert into building lots (*Belief in the Age of Disbelief*, 2005), Cyprien Gaillard represents contemporary architecture as a modern ruin on the verge of being taken over by nature, just as French *ruiniste* painter Hubert Robert did with the Louvre in the 17th century, thus perfectly illustrating Denis Diderot's statement: 'One must ruin a palace to make it an object of interest.' Like Robert Smithson, Cyprien Gaillard deals with the notion of entropy, a movement of transformation irreversibly aiming towards chaos. In the short-lived Land Art works of the *Real Remnants of Fictive Wars* series, he activates industrial fire extinguishers in carefully chosen landscapes (among them Smithson's iconic *Spiral Jetty*), releasing a thick white powder that creates a vaporous cloud as well as a veiled threat. Exploring the notion of entropy in a romantic way, the video *Desniansky Raion* (2007; 29 min) constantly alternates between order and chaos, from a pitched battle between two hooligan gangs in a parking lot to a grandiose show of lasers and fireworks on the facade of a housing block before it is torn down, to end with a dangerously low-altitude flight over a multitude of stark towers rising into a snowy and melancholic landscape.

Desniansky Raion, 2007
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