

FRANCES, PAUL AND OLIVIER

*Observations on the exhibition 'Two Versions of the Imaginary',
Annet Gelink Gallery, by Maria Barnas*

*Part 1
June 25th – July 13th 2011*

What is it to look at an image?

Something goes wrong in my head when I try to understand something placed or taking place right in front of me.

The short circuit occurs exactly on the fault line between the placement and the place taking. The first is a given, an object in space, the second, an event I might have some influence on. It is somewhere between encountering and undergoing.

My thoughts use my eyes to look for some foothold. But in reality there is no such thing. In this case: a bottle of correction fluid, largely white with a green and white label and black lettering. It is a fake Tipp-Ex. It looks very similar, and corrects just as well as the original. As a fake it evokes something else: the original. It is as though I'm looking at a poor reproduction while I know this is the genuine object itself. It seems to whisper 'Look, it doesn't say what it says', in the words of poet Martinus Nijhoff.

But what does it say? The bottle bothers me. I open it, and paint it white with its own contents. Messily corrected, it now stands with a little less apparent meaning on my table. I try not to think about the new meanings it has gained in the process.

I look at the bottle. I also look at the image of this object on my table, how it is placed there, how it might have been placed. I also see what is not there. Everything could have been there instead of this object. In that sense everything in the world is contained in the bottle of correction fluid.

There is a world in the ink that flowed from my pen when I tried to get it to write by dipping it in my cup of tea.

I have never had an ink pen that wrote immediately when I wanted to start writing.

I may use ink pens too little. Or must all ink pen writers first see their tea turn blue, in order to start working?



The strange thing is that when I took the photos of the cup on my table, it did not occur to me that I was staring at a huge eyeball. I was concentrating on the quality of the liquid at the time.

Is remembering like the various stages of colouration in the cup (cups in my memory – every colouration a new cup)? Or is remembering fixing something, writing it down, a gesture that causes its own story?

The cup with the coloured tea stares at me. A blank, unseeing eye.