



PASCAL GRANDMAISON  
Increasingly Empty Forms: 1928–  
1999 2008 Digital chromogenic  
prints mounted on Plexiglas Series  
of 12 works, 76.2 x 61 cm each

Pouliot and I each take a seat. We stare at each other from 20 feet apart; there is no other place we can look. This work, unlike his previous installation *Le Courtisan*, is a shared experience. Pouliot comments, "In the end I realized this is a social construction as much as an architectural construction. For me it resembles the networks we have built on the Internet. They connect us to other individuals and help us communicate, but in many ways they isolate us as well." CHRISTINE REDFERN

## Pascal Grandmaison

GALERIE RENÉ BLOUIN, MONTREAL

Stanley Kubrick wasn't much for dialogue. He let the camera tell the story, often leaving his viewers wading through a narrative in a bath of visually expressed ideas. While some of his films were box-office flops, many also became classics of cinema.

Pascal Grandmaison's ode to Kubrick, a piece entitled *Increasingly Empty Forms: 1928–1999* (2008), is a series of photographs of the side profile of the book *The Stanley Kubrick Archives*, edited by Alison Castle. In each close-up image, the indented, itemized and tabbed pages of the book lie in a faux-minimalist stacked sequence, like an indented pile of industrial cardboard. As the pages are turned, negative space fills up the surface of the image. A life story is read, examined and played out sequentially, leaving nothing but empty space in its wake. Except, of course, that most contemporary of traces—an image burned on film.

Grandmaison's treatment of the medium of

photography mirrors Kubrick's notoriously obsessive concern with technology. In order to adequately capture candlelit scenes in the period film *Barry Lyndon*, the director once adapted and patented a lens that had been manufactured for NASA satellite photography. Like Kubrick, Grandmaison has an infectious love of machinery: references to imaging technology abound in his work, with things like the zoom ratios of lenses measured and reincorporated in new forms.

An obscure nod to Antonioni's film *Blowup* in one work turns a crumpled piece of photographer's Seamless background paper into a large-scale, pristinely blown-up sculptural poem. In another, a very analog-looking electrical power pack is the source of light for the work itself, with multiple images of the object arranged in a deadpan repetition that recalls Warhol's *Electric Chair* series.

*Mechanical Dream I and II: Ohi Plant, Nikon inc., Japon, 1980* (2008) are close-up views of a Nikon lens, complete with branching coloured lines marking its f-stop settings. These slim lines reach up across a black surface, tracing the way to numbered light exposures: an accidental elegance that hovers ambiguously, leaving the viewer reflecting on the point where technological necessity becomes aestheticized.

At times, the subjects of Grandmaison's works seem a bit beyond the range of a viewer lacking technologically specific knowledge. However, in their formal crispness, his pieces—even shorn of conceptual embellishment—are an unconscious nod to his favourite filmmaker. You can watch *2001* without sound and get it. CAMERON SKENE