

Baronian Xippas

Press release

Leen Voet

Je fais ce que je veux

Rue de la Concorde 33
1050 Bruxelles

03.02 - 19.03.2022

Opening

Thursday 03.02.2022
18 - 21h

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Je fais ce que je veux

Baronian Xippas is pleased to be hosting *Je fais ce que je veux*, a solo exhibition with new works by Leen Voet. Leen Voet, born 1971, Belgium, lives and works in Brussels. Inspired by visual and literary sources, she uses humour to challenge the notion of creativity. In her work she confronts the fundamental question of who gets to be an artist and the reasons why as well as what actually constitutes a work of art. Leen Voet's work also offers different takes on the balance of power, rules and expectations. She does this by taking a more feminist approach to art, by being inclusive and above all by emphasising the pleasure to be found in the act of painting. Leen Voet's work is triggered by cultural and historical contexts as well as peripheral influences and personal aspects. She explores enigmatic relationships between allegorical representations and assumed meanings, emotional understanding versus motive and concept, narrative construction and replicability. Her pictorial style is characterised by geometric forms and vivid colours that are detached from any associated significance.

The works featured in this exhibition are from Leen Voet's series *JE FAIS CE QUE JE VEUX* and are based on both the lyrics and the scenography of the song *Je fais ce que tu veux* by Bourvil (André Raimbourg's pseudonym) that features in the television show *Rendez-vous avec ...*, RTF, 1961. In this song, Bourvil uses ironic lyrics to describe the little scenes of reactionary family happiness, mundane domestic scenes, recreational activities and reproduction. He sings about the normalised nuclear family as a safe nest. The song studiously avoids any mention or hint of feminism. And yet, the song dates back to the 1960s, an era that was characterised by feminism and experimental forms of relationships. In the TV programme, the song is performed by the man, Bourvil, who takes on the active role of singing and dancing. The female presenter, Jacqueline Joubert, one of the first female television presenters, on the other hand, sits neatly in her chair in a pose that one can hardly call emancipated; she is passive and prim and at the end even mysteriously disappears from the picture altogether. Could this be seen as a silent protest by Jacqueline Joubert?

The song about family happiness is performed in a simple studio setting against a backdrop of six doors. There is no explanation as to why there is that number of doors, and the fact that each of the doors is unique and distinct from the others magnifies this lack of clarity. Reflecting on the status of a painting, Leen Voet incorporates the six different versions of the doors from the studio backdrop. By applying contrasting colours with contradictory energies, the paintings based on the doors immediately evoke associations with hard-edge painting, in which geometric abstraction and symmetry are important.

The works in the series *JE FAIS CE QUE JE VEUX* comprise two elements, just like a couple. Each duo features a painting of a door that is presented as a free-standing element on a metal support in the room, as well as a painting of the performers that hangs on the wall. The duos of *JE FAIS CE QUE JE VEUX* represent a shift from individual to object and a deliberate erroneous change from active to passive. The

Baronian Xippas

human figures in the paintings, which are based on Bourvil performing his dance, become objects presented on a wall, in the same traditional way as any normal painting. The other paintings of the doors can be seen as “active characters” positioned as free-standing elements in the room.

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Leen Voet studied *Painting* at the KASK in Ghent and *Experimental Studios* at Sint-Lukas in Brussels. Recent solo exhibitions of her work include *Alda (c) Armand*, Baronian Xippas, Brussels (2019); CIAP Kunstverein, Hasselt (2018), *Bert Vandael*, Kunstbunker Forum für Zeitgenössische Kunst, Nürnberg (2016), *SINT-RITA*, Netwerk, Aalst (2013), *FELIX*, FeliXart Museum, Brussels (2010). Recent group exhibitions featuring her work are *Zonder Kunstenaars Geen Kunst*, MHKA, Antwerp (2020), *Salon de la peinture*, MHKA, Antwerp (2019), *20 Years NICC - Jubilee, A4 works*, NICC, Antwerp (2018), *Un-scene II*, Wiels, Brussels (2015) and *Return to sender*, Wiels, Brussels (2014).