

Chris Andrews Montréal QC

De Fortune
April 19 - May 27, 2023

Alix Van Der Donckt-Ferrand
Curated by april april

april april and Chris Andrews are pleased to present "De Fortune," a solo exhibition by Montréal-based, multidisciplinary artist Alix Van Der Donckt-Ferrand.

"De Fortune" assembles nearly 100 mixed-media drawings and sculptures produced over the last three years. Accompanying these works are six songs written, performed, and produced by the artist. Such breadth articulates what, for Van Der Donckt-Ferrand, is a daily practice of dreamwork, processing, and manifestation. Presented together for the first time, these drawings, objects, and music record heartbreak, fantasy, death, ceremony, and pleasure in love.

Van Der Donckt-Ferrand's aesthetic strategies straddle outcomes both restrained and decorative, often circling a guiding question of how to draw the invisible. Swirling in personal narratives, the drawings shift from minimal, graphite-forward renderings ("De Fortune" and "Ange de Neige") to maximal bursts of colored pencil, marker, and collaged elements ("My Great Grandmother was an Indian Princess" and "Maison Longue"). Daydreams and desires commingle with mourning and fears. The artist approaches each with a diaristic sensibility, merging image and text to pursue a poesis unlimited in emotional scope. Ex lovers, apparitions, and trees arrive pictorially in excess of outside logic.

In some drawings, Van Der Donckt-Ferrand's writing in graphite aids concisely in a descriptive fashion ("CROIX DU MT-ROYAL"), while in others, poetry unlocks a path to a fuller picture:

Fantasy - my husband picking berries - si al lago me tirara, SK Novembre en Septembre.
Une rangee d'arbres noirs.

and

Voile. Un arbre se penche vers moi et je ne sais pas ce qu'il me dit. S'il me dit quelque chose. Merci. Fleurs qui tombent. Une fleur, c'est toujours au boutte.

Van Der Donckt-Ferrand's trilingualism dances through meaning to produce a specific yet capacious lexicon, a kind of Peruvian–Huron–Wendat–Québécois pop-cosmology.

Across two tables in the centre of the gallery sit small-scale assemblage sculptures, each comprising detritus of everyday life. With bells, bows, sticks, and clips, the artist constructs these small relics as conduits of feeling; all "Untitled, the sculptures magick and locate the stories told through the drawings and songs in real time. Van Der Donckt-Ferrand decorates objects of surmised significance—a pregnancy test, old dog bones—into things entirely otherwise, like camp talismans or trophies.

"De Fortune"'s fidelity to the poetics of and purpose found in drawing can be further understood in the wake of artists like Bill Traylor (1854-1949); Aloïse Corbaz (1886-1964); James Castle (1899-1977); Cecilia Vicuna (b. 1948) and Shuvina Ashoona (b. 1961). For all of these artists, drawing was and is an extension of the self, of one's being and consciousness. It is a method of exposing the richness of life.

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Alix Van Der Donckt-Ferrand (b. 1995, Montréal, QC) lives and works in Montréal. She draws, makes objects and sings. The artist makes music under the name La Cucurucha. She has exhibited at april april (New York), Pound Maker Historical Museum (Saskatchewan), The Loon (Ontario), and Antonini Museum (Nasca).

Van Der Donckt-Ferrand served as Artistic Director to the Indigenous-run film and performance company Miyawata Culture from 2019 to 2022, and through which she illustrated two publications, “Ashes and Embers: Stories of the Delmas Indian Residential School” (2022) and “The Story of Broken Knife” (2020). Since 2019, Van Der Donckt-Ferrand has run Centre du Rat, a community project space in the basement of her home at the foot of Mont Royal.

april april is a contemporary art gallery and poetry program currently operating out of an apartment in Brooklyn, NY. The gallery hosts solo and group exhibitions and, in response to this program, commissions original works of poetry. It is founded and directed by Lucas Regazzi and Patrick Bova.