



Lily van der Stokker, I Fake Nothing, 2018 © the artist and Air de Paris

PAROLE

with Eliza Douglas and Lily van der Stokker

September 10 - October 21, 2023
Opening on September 10, 2pm-6pm

Air de Paris | 43, rue de la Commune de Paris 93230 Romainville - Grand Paris

Parole brings together works by Eliza Douglas and Lily van der Stokker, displayed on a wallpaper by Lily van der Stokker.

Lily van der Stokker has been represented by Air de Paris for 30 years. Her last exhibition at the gallery *Hello Chair* was in 2014.

Air de Paris represents Eliza Douglas since 2016. It is their third exhibition at the gallery.



Eliza Douglas, *Untitled*, 2023 © the artist and Air de Paris

Opening in Romainville, on 9 September. A few recognisable figures: local celebrities, artists, a hustler, institutional priests and car-dealers are busy small-talking.

Eliza Douglas is presenting four new trompe-l'œil – crumpled or distorted – paintings. Each one of them utters an onomatopoeia, a foley rhythm – SHHHH, WOW, BOOM, HAHAHA – and conveys random emotions: an exclamation, admiration, amazement, annoyance or inappropriate laughter. They are levitating in space, the message of one referring to the other as hyperlinks. They could also be the response to a Joke Painting by Richard Prince, a hyperpop version of Velimer Khlebnikov's *Incantation by Laughter* (1910), or of Raoul Hausmann's *Hurra, Hurra, Hurra* (1921). Clicking on Eliza Douglas's pieces is like drifting onto Sturtevant's repetitions, which in turn are evocative of Andy Warhol's repeated flower patterns. They are images of images, automatic paintings generating atavistic and standardised emotions. Her process consists in crystallising uncontrolled feelings, formalising what comes before speech, signifying – in the manner of concrete poetry – statements that are seemingly inappropriate to name.

Her speech balloons or pulp, Lacanian quirks are shown in front of a wallpaper, available to order, by Lily van der Stokker. The latter reproduces a garland of pink pills, pastel abstract patterns, like an easy-listening album cover with its light-hearted, sedative properties. The artist has become

a specialist in cute, low-key forms marked by a sense of existential candour. In this spirit, *I fake Nothing* is a series of drawings about nothing, although art that claims to be about nothing never really is... Viewers are sometimes too compliant to a work's discourse. The childlike patterns, acid clouds and babbling are a whispered response to the blunt style of her colleagues from the post-picture generation, Barbara Kruger and Jenny Holzer. Her babywear or sandy colours simpler modernist claims, «goofing up» the ambitions of an art dedicated to grand purposes and changes. Her graphic nursery rhymes are adorable, with all the ambivalence they entail – between flattering and patronising attitude. Here, cuteness always lies somewhere between aggression and tenderness.

This soft, euphemistic, flexible, diminished or deceptively introverted visual language is nevertheless confident about its attributes: its pathos of weakness is in fact capable of producing extremely powerful requests. We are reminded of the exhibition *This is just pathetic* that Lily would have seen in New York at the Colin de Land Fine Art gallery in 1992, as well as of Courtney Love and her babydoll outfits, her blue-angel nighties as well as her babyish, damaged teddy bears. Eliza Douglas and Lily van der Stokker have embraced the commodification of pop, grunge and post-pop – their misguided candour and their ad merchandising full of indulgence and deceitful detachment. Just think of the posters that feature cosy spots and painless character to sell medication or carbonated water with digestive properties. CLIP! CRAP! BANG! ZIP! PSSST! that accompany our fears about accidents, private health insurance and sore throats.

More indirectly, their aesthetic process comment on the obsession with contemporary language's virality. The announcement prevails over facts, the buzzword over demonstration, the headline over dialectic. All that matters is the fluidity of the message, its reiteration, its ability to take up space at the expense of compactness. It can then become tyrannical, its radiant wave shattering the time needed for reflection and doubt. Words and signs, driven by their kinetic power, favour masses and the multitude over individuals, whom they annihilate.

By implying that their work is aimed at the widest possible audience, Eliza Douglas and Lily van der Stokker produce corrupt flattery, mischievous nonsense and hard candy for presumably innocent adults. By taking slippery paths, travelling through interference – delegation, appropriation, reproduction and deflation –, the two artists contravene their initial naive, sweet and zesty appearance.

Opening in Romainville, on 9 September. Private view birds still practice chit-chat: «It's cute», «It's adorable», «It fakes nothing», «It's wow». The future belongs to ethereal crowds

Text by Pierre-Alexandre Mateos & Charles Teyssou
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PRESS ROOM

ELIZA DOUGLAS (1984, USA)

It's the material limits of painting, its incapacity to hide the elements that compose it, and its potential to become an image, that prompted Eliza Douglas to work with this medium in the first instance.

If Douglas' pictorial vocabulary calls to mind aspects of Pop Art, Abstract Expressionism, or Hyperrealism, her paintings are more interested in inquiring about the status of the image, its construction, its circulation and fluidity, producing an ensemble of new yet recognizable images, sensual yet cold, laced with cool humour, sometimes tainted with gothic romanticism, and immediately photogenic and consumable.

Eliza Douglas creates meta-paintings fully conscious of their status and their history, often presenting mises en abyme of images extracted from publicity, the art world, pieces of fashion, or other consumption goods, reminding us that painting is, as well, consumed.



© Collier Schor, 2017



© Eva Pel, 2023

LILY VAN DER STOKKER (1954, The Netherlands)

Lily van der Stokker has been renowned since the early 1990s for her playful wall paintings in bright colors. Floral motifs and ornamental clouds are dominant elements in works whose aesthetic and fluorescent palette bring Pop art to mind. Meticulously executed in a time-consuming and labor-intensive process, the murals are based on small-format drawings the artist prepares with scrupulous precision. Simplicity and humor are hallmarks of van der Stokker's oeuvre. Integrated text fragments or affirmative messages often directly address the viewer. Recurrent concerns in her art revolve around the stereotype of "femininity," ostensible banalities, but also the economics of art and everyday life of the artist's existence. Her playful use of color can also be read as a challenge to a conventional bourgeois conception of art for which exuberant colorfulness is incompatible with reflective gravitas.