

Transcript:
My Laser
(Chris Langdon, 1974, 16mm, 4 mins)

I've been, uh, getting
into lasers

Is this, this is your laser?
Yeah, this is my laser.

Oh, uh. It's, um.
A bit red.

Yeah.
Sort of, uh.

*Yeah. It's uh, kind of, um,
bright.*

Wanna stick your hand in
there and see it? Won't burn,
but I want you to be careful.

It's nice.
Yeah.

Yeah.
It's really, uh...

How come it's red?
Well, uh, I think it, uh, was
the guy's favourite colour.

Oh yeah.
Mister uh... The guy who
started out with lasers,
you know?

- (1+28/28) Transcript of the dialogue in the film *MyLaser* (Chris Langdon, 1974, 16mm, 4 mins)
- (5/28) In the late 1990s Chris Langdon transitioned and took a new name. In this email, sent on 30 October 2023, Inga offers notes and context on the Chris Langdon films selected for this exhibition.
- (6-7+9-10/28) Pages 228-231 from the catalogue of the 2019 International Short Film Festival Oberhausen, at which a 14 film programme of Chris Langdon's work was presented on 4 May 2019, as part of the festival's Theme programme, "The Language of Attraction: Trailers between Advertising and the Avant-garde", curated by Cassie Blake and Mark Toscano. Courtesy International Short Film Festival Oberhausen.
- (8/28) Article by Reed Johnson on the work of Chris Langdon, Los Angeles Times, 25 January 2010. Written in response to the screening "Now You Can Do Anything: The Films of Chris Langdon", REDCAT, Los Angeles, 25 January 2010. This screening was the first significant presentation of the filmmakers' work in decades, following the collection, preservation and restoration of Langdon's films by the Academy Film Archive, through the efforts of Mark Toscano. Courtesy Reed Johnson / Los Angeles Times.
- (11/28) Press release, written by Louisa Wombacher, for the Jana Euler exhibition "Das Investment", Galerie Neu, Berlin, 14 October - 2 December 2023. This exhibition included the first public presentation of paintings from Euler's series *Coffee bean - Where the energy comes from*. (The exhibition included paintings 2, 3 and 4 from this series, *Coffee bean - Where the energy comes from 1*, is presented for the first time in the exhibition "Two Faces Have I".) "Where the Energy Comes From" was previously used as the title of Euler's 2014 solo exhibition at Bonner Kunstverein, and for her 2014 series of monumental paintings of electrical sockets. Courtesy Louisa Wombacher / Galerie Neu.
- (12/28) Press release for the Jana Euler exhibition "Global Warnings!", dépendance, Brussels, 2 March - 7 April 2018. This exhibition included the first public presentation of Euler's paintings *slug speed of background* (2018) and *slug speed of slug* (2018), which are included in "Two Faces Have I". Euler's collage *Global Warnings! (Invitation)* (2018) was used as the image for that exhibition's invitation, the original is shown in "Two Face Have I" for the first time. Courtesy dépendance.
- (13/28) First page of a PDF of the essay *The good, the bad, and the ugly: Jana Euler's quiet riot*, written by Kristian Vistrup Madsen for Art Basel Stories, August 2021. Courtesy Kristian Vistrup Madsen / Art Basel.
- (14/28) Page 4 of the exhibition brochure, written by Jay Sanders and Jamie Stevens, for the Jana Euler exhibition "Uniform", Artists Space, New York, 21 February - 19 September 2020. Courtesy Jay Sanders / Jamie Stevens / Artists Space.
- (15/28) Screen-grabbed excerpt of the essay *Jana Euler: Contextual Painting in Times of Global Groundlessness*, written by Ingrid Luquet-Gad for *Flash Art*, issue 330, April-May 2020. Courtesy Ingrid Luquet-Gad / Flash Art.
- (16/28) Pati Hill, *Some Notes on My Life*, published in the guide for Hill's solo exhibition "Wall Papers", Bayly Art Museum, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, 15 April - 18 June 2000.
- (17/28) Screenshot of *arcadiaexhibitions'* Instagram post, 2 March 2020, featuring the exhibition announcement for "Pati Hill: Common Alphabet #1", Franklin Furnace, New York City, 1978. Offset printed postcard, 11.5 x 18cm. Courtesy Franklin Furnace Archive, Inc & Arcadia University Archives, Glenside, Pennsylvania.
- (18-19/28) Pages 114-115 of Pati Hill's 1979 publication *Letters to Jill, a catalogue and some notes on copying*, a 128 page book prompted by Hill's discussions with her gallerist and publisher, Jill Kornblee, about the status of her xerographs and the process of making them. Published by Kornblee and printed by the Visual Studies Workshop Press in Rochester, New York. Courtesy Arcadia University Archives, Glenside, Pennsylvania.
- (20/28) A handwritten note by Pati Hill, 2004, from preparatory notes and materials related to the draft of an unpublished book (perhaps to be titled "Women and Vacuum Cleaners"), contained in the collection "Women and Vacuum Cleaners" (c.1960s-2000s). This collection's documents are represented in the wallpaper of the exhibition "Two Faces Have I". From the collection "Women and Vacuum Cleaners", Pati Hill, © [c. 1960s-2000s], Arcadia University Archives, all rights reserved.
- (21/28) Second page of the press release, written by Baptiste Pinteaux, for the Pati Hill exhibition, "Heaven's door is open to us / Like a big vacuum cleaner / O help / O clouds of dust / O choir of hairpins", Air de Paris, Romainville, 12 September - 17 October 2020. Courtesy Baptiste Pinteaux / Air de Paris.
- (22/28) Cover letter from Pati Hill to Charles Eames, sent to accompany Hill's 12 page booklet-maquette for her work *A Swan: An Opera in Nine Chapters*, 1978. Hill met Charles Eames in July 1977 on a transatlantic flight from Paris to New York. Hill had been experimenting with the photocopier as an artistic medium since 1973 or 1974. Following her meeting with Eames, through his influence, IBM would loan Hill her own personal IBM Copier II. Courtesy Arcadia University Archives, Glenside, Pennsylvania.
- (23/28) Screenshot of Sylvie Fanchon's author's page on the website of publisher and distributor Les Presses du Réel. Accessed 11 December 2023. Courtesy Les Presses du Réel.
- (24/28) Review of Sylvie Fanchon's exhibition "Peintures" at Galerie Bernard Jordan, Paris, 2007, written by Guitemie Maldonado for Artforum, Summer 2007, vol. 45, no. 10. Courtesy Guitemie Maldonado / Artforum.
- (25/28) Screenshot of an excerpt of Sylvie Fanchon's Wikipedia page. Accessed 11 December 2023. Courtesy Wikipedia.
- (26/28) Page 6 of 14, of the essay, *JESUISDESOLEEJENAIPASCOMPRIS. A reflection on truth in Sylvie Fanchon's painting*, written by Helena Chavez Mac Gregor for TextWork, May 2023, and translated from Spanish to English by Ana Andrade. Courtesy Helena Chavez Mac Gregor / TextWork / Fondation Pernod Ricard.

The exhibition *Two Faces Have I* gathers works by Jana Euler (1982-), Pati Hill (1921-2014) and Sylvie Fanchon (1953-2023), to orbit films by Chris Langdon (1952-).

The following material is offered as a form of reader or source book, to provide context on the works of the four artists shown.

Alice, Martin, Justin,

I am writing after mulling over some thoughts about the films you have chosen, and maybe more generally what I can remember about those days.

I had aspired to be a painter. I think at the time, I was heavily influenced by Surrealists. But somewhere around the time I entered art school, it became somewhat apparent that was not going to happen. I liked narrative in art, I liked "B" movies, and the hidden genius of bad art, and low budget films. So, I started making films, and was fortunate to discover Cal Arts, and even more fortunate to get into the film school there.

The film school was very diverse, from Hollywood people and aspirants to animators, and a small number of "art" filmmakers. My mentor was the San Francisco artist/filmmaker, Robert Nelson. He was a great influence. He encouraged his students to work and not overthink their projects.

I was all for that. Overcoming the process nature of filmmaking became one of my ambitions. I would try to make more films than any other students. To that end, I found ways to make them cheaper, using out of date film stock and even print stock.

With that in mind, most of my films were very spontaneously or intuitively made. I was often making satire or parody of what was around. I was a contrary. I didn't take myself seriously. After a while, I gravitated to the Art School at Cal Arts, primarily the Baldessari crowd. I was exposed to a tremendous amount of boring art and film done by artists. I did not want to make boring art.

"Bondage Boy" was my first attempt at making something like a formalists art film, (a satire of) something like a film painting, something resembling performance art, all with music and a hilarious touch of low budget bondage porn. It even has a moral. But I hoped it would be entertaining.

"Venusville" is a film made with my good friend, Fred Worden. It probably owes a lot to the boat names guessing part of Robert Nelson's film, "Bleu Shut". But I had just started using out of date color negative print stock as camera stock. It had an ASA of maybe 2, but made some interesting colors and grain due to "pushing" in processing. Fred and I got into a discussion one day about the perception difference between a motion picture of a still object and a freeze frame made on an optical printer. So we decided to each individually shoot footage and make freeze frame footage, we spliced the rolls together, watched them and commented on them with some radio on and that was the soundtrack. I don't know what possessed us to think that it was a film worth putting a title on..

"The Gypsy Cried" came about very incidentally. I somehow was in the possession of a sync sound camera and tape recorder, a rare event. I filmed my record player playing one of my favorite songs. The song is the story. It was a kind of twist on the music rights law, a device I employed other times.

"Last Interview with P. Pasolini" I made this film to commemorate the passing of Pier Paolo Pasolini. There was something suspicious about his creepy allegories and sanctimonious narcissism in his films. Perhaps the manner of his demise verified it?

"My Laser" Made with friend Ken Feingold, a spontaneous idea. I had made a series of photos at night with the laser pointer on sidewalks, and the laser was on a table in my studio when Ken came by, and he asked about it. It seemed so innane, we made a film. In retrospect, the photos I made (I wanted to film it but couldn't afford the ultra high speed film, mainly used in police surveillance, in fact I think it was called "surveillance film"). I settled instead for several rolls of 35mm still camera film. My studio was located in a part of downtown LA that very few people traversed the streets after dark unless they were intoxicated. I would target the laser point in front of the revellers moving it along as they went and recorded their reactions if any. Lasers were very unusual at that time.

"Two Faces have I" This one probably came from that intuitive corner of my painter's soul. The few times I have seen it, I don't believe I could have known that something in it transcended my smart-ass young self who made it. It has all the animistic sadness of whatever we try to do, work hard at, and retire from.

I hope I drew a good picture. I think there were a number of us at Cal Arts who weren't very thrilled with the way things were going in the "art world" according to Cal Arts. We were mostly painters without canvas. But most of us found our way forward notably my friends, Steve Galloway, and David Salle among others.

The title you chose is fine.

Thin Premises / Schockierende Exposés

Thin Premises / Shocking Exposés

Die Filme von Chris Langdon
The Films of Chris Langdon

In den vielen Jahrzehnten, die Chris Langdon in den unterschiedlichsten Medien künstlerisch tätig war, hat sie nur zwischen 1972 und 1976 Filme produziert, hauptsächlich während sie am California Institute of the Arts bei Robert Nelson, Pat O'Neill und John Baldessari studierte. Und doch waren ihre wenige Dutzend unvergessenen Kurzfilme von nachhaltigem Einfluss auf ihre Kommilitonen, von denen viele (einschließlich David Salle, Fred Worden und sogar Paul Reubens) sowohl die Filme als auch Langdon selbst noch Jahre später als prägende Inspiration in dieser Zeit bezeichneten.

Langdons Filme sind oft ein frecher Mix aus ernster und leichter Muse: Ein komödiantisches Fesselspiel-Szenario wird zur Kritik am Strukturalismus und ein satirischer „Dokumentarfilm“ über Picasso entlarvt die fragwürdige Macht des bewegten Bildes. Die Filme bedienen sich oft der Techniken und Sprache von Trailern, Lehrfilmen und des Kitschkinos, und in gewissem Maße nehmen sie sogar Musikvideos vorweg. Sie sind weder schwerfällig noch geben sie sich pseudokünstlerlich und stellen nicht nur die Art und Weise der Kunstherstellung selbst, sondern auch unseren Konsum der Kunst und ihrer angeblichen Botschaft infrage. Thom Andersen hat Langdon als „die erste Punk-Filmemacherin der Welt“ bezeichnet, und das ist keine Übertreibung. Formal ist ihre Arbeit satirisch und zum Schreien komisch, doch zugleich bodenständig und direkt. Häufig bedient sie sich konzeptioneller und performativer Kunstformen, um diese wiederum zu hinterfragen. Aber alles in allem sind ihre Filme einfach nur urkomisch. (MT)

Mit
Inga Uwais

1952 als Chris Langdon geboren, besuchte sie von 1971 bis 1976 das California Institute of the Arts und schloss ihr Studium mit einem BFA und einem MFA ab. Sie schuf ein umfangreiches, eklektisches Œuvre in Malerei, Grafik, Bildhauerei, Film und Video. 1994 zog sie sich vom Kunstbetrieb zurück. 1997 machte sie einen Abschluss an einer Schule für traditionelle chinesische Medizin. Seit 2010 malt sie wieder.

Alle im Programm enthaltenen Filme wurden vom Academy Film Archive restauriert (außer „Now, You Can Do Anything“, „Thin Premises“ und „Intermittent Transposition“).

In her multiple decades as an artist in numerous mediums, Chris Langdon only produced films in a concentrated period between 1972 and 1976, primarily while studying at CalArts in the company of instructors such as Robert Nelson, Pat O'Neill and John Baldessari. Yet these few dozen memorable short films exerted notable influence on her fellow students, many of whom (including David Salle, Fred Worden and even Paul Reubens) would still vividly remember them (and Langdon) years later as a formative inspiration during that period.

Langdon's films are often a brash mix of the so-called high and low – a comical bondage setup is employed as a critique of structuralism and a satirical 'documentary' on Picasso reveals the questionable authority of moving images. The films often reference the techniques and language of trailers, informational films, trashy cinema, and even presage music videos to a degree. Never ponderous or evasively arty, the films delight in challenging not just modes of artmaking, but our ingestion of that art and its supposed message. Thom Andersen has called her 'the first punk filmmaker', and this isn't a wild claim. Formally, her work is satirical and wildly comic yet deeply rooted and direct, often participating in conceptual and performative art forms in order to critique them. Perhaps above all, the films are just really funny. (MT)

With
Inga Uwais

Born as Chris Langdon in 1952 and attended the California Institute of the Arts from 1971 to 1976, receiving both a BFA and an MFA. She produced a large and eclectic body of work in painting, graphics, sculpture, film and video. In 1994, she retired from making art. In 1997, she graduated from Chinese medicine school. She returned to painting in 2010.

All films in the programme are restored by the Academy Film Archive (except for 'Now, You Can Do Anything', 'Thin Premises' and 'Intermittent Transposition').

4.5. 17:00 Uhr 5:00 pm Gloria

Trailers for the Films of Chris Langdon

USA 1973-74
3'30", 16mm, Farbe und s/w colour and b/w, Englisch English
Regie Director Chris Langdon

Langdon hat zahlreiche absurde Trailer zu ihren ohnehin schon sehr kurzen Filmen produziert, teils aus Liebe zum Format, teils als satirische Antwort auf die in ihrer Kunsthochschule weit verbreitete Konzeptkunst. Diese Auswahl stellt die komplette Sammlung aller noch existierenden Kopien dar. (Die meisten anderen sind momentan unauffindbar.) *Langdon produced numerous absurdist trailers for her already very short films, partly out of love for the form, partly as a student's satirical gesture at the attitudes of an art school steeped in the conceptual. This selection represents the complete collection of surviving examples (some others are currently lost).* // MT

Bondage Boy

USA 1973
5', 16mm, Farbe colour, Englisch English
Regie Director Chris Langdon

Eine verschwitzte und lüsterne Nacht in einer unterirdischen Einzimmerwohnung soll zugleich den Strukturalismus aufs Korn nehmen. Sensationshascherei in konzeptionellem Gewand! *A sweaty and salacious night in a subterranean studio doubles as a satirical send-up of structuralism. Sensationalism at its most conceptual!* // MT

Two Faces Have I

USA 1973
3', 16mm, s/w b/w, ohne Text without text
Regie Director Chris Langdon

Eine kleine Geschichte als Antwort auf Lou Christies gleichnamigen Song. *A mini-narrative response to Lou Christie's titular song.* // MT

Now, You Can Do Anything

USA 1973
6', 16mm, Farbe colour, Englisch English
Regie Director Fred Worden, Chris Langdon

Ein Tag am Strand von Malibu im Jahr 1973, und als einzige Ausrede gilt die Tatsache, dass das Filmmaterial nicht sehr lichtempfindlich war, sodass die Filmemacher beim Dreh sehr viel Licht brauchten. Der Titel suggeriert die nonchalante Haltung, mit der Langdon und Worden sich dem Filmemachen angenähert haben, und das Ergebnis ist eine höchst anekdotische und bezaubernde Collage eines Tages unter Surfern, mit den Stars der lokalen Surf-szene im Abspann. *A day at the beach in Malibu, 1973, the only pretext being that the film stock was really slow, and so the filmmakers needed a lot of light to expose it. The title suggests the why-not? idealism with which Langdon and Worden approached the filmmaking process, and the end result is a highly anecdotal and charming composite of a day among the surfers – complete with a credited cast of local stars.* // MT



ENTERTAINMENT & ARTS

A showcase for experimental filmmaker Chris Langdon

BY REED JOHNSON

JAN. 25, 2010 12 AM PT

For decades, colleagues and connoisseurs say, Chris Langdon was arguably the most interesting and important experimental L.A. filmmaker that most people had never heard of. Even many of Langdon's old friends and teachers from the [California Institute of the Arts](#), including artist [John Baldessari](#) and avant-garde trickster auteur [Robert Nelson](#), didn't know what had become of her over the last 30 years.

As it happens, Langdon is alive and well in Pasadena, where she's still painting and sculpting. Tonight, she'll be making one of her first public appearances in ages when she attends a retrospective of some of her work, "Now You Can Do Anything: The Films of Chris Langdon," at [REDCAT](#) in downtown Los Angeles.

But Langdon acknowledges that old acquaintances may have trouble recognizing her as Inga, the female incarnation she assumed several years ago after a sex change. On a chilly afternoon last week at a Pasadena restaurant, the artist also indicated that no one was more surprised than herself when film preservationist Mark Toscano, who curated REDCAT's program, tracked her down through the Internet several months ago. "I guess I was just a little incredulous that anyone would remember those films, and a little wary about it, to be honest," said Inga, who asked that her surname not be used to protect her privacy. "But after awhile, I thought it was pretty cool."

Inga, who was born in 1952 and raised in Indiana, got a love of photography from her newspaper-photographer father and started making Super 8 films, including animations and scratch films, in her teens.

Inga said that one film, "Picasso," was concocted in about four hours after the Cubist master's death in 1973. Her fellow art students wanted to throw a send-off party, Inga said, so she decided to bring a film to the postmortem bash.

The three-minute black-and-white work depicts an actor portraying Picasso drawing, in a deliberately unpersuasive manner, as a looped voice-over that Langdon got from a found scrap of stock footage rambles nonsensically in a Southern accent. Although a subtitle proclaims this is "the actual voice of Pablo Picasso," the film's patently false "documentary" style invites viewers to question assumptions about artistic hero worship and the creative process.

A similar sensibility, more cheeky than mocking, pervades a number of Langdon's films. "The Last Interview With P. Passolini" (1975) purports to be a serious Q&A with the Italian neo-realist master. But as the possible pun in the title telegraphs -- the director's name is correctly spelled with just one "S" -- it turns into a ludicrous spoof of film-crit gibberish and cinematic idolatry.

"Bondage Boy" (circa 1974) serves up sequential visions of a young man in a white slip, lashed to pillars and banisters, while "These Boots Are Made for Walkin'" bales. But the vision isn't played as camp sensationalism. You might detect a parody of so-called structural films such as Andy Warhol's "Empire," generally abstract, anti-narratives that emphasized formal qualities. "We were exposed to a lot of structural films, like Michael Snow's films," Inga said. "I thought often the imagery in those films wasn't very interesting. Nothing to lure your eye."

Other Langdon films display a tender reverence for the power of earnest simplicity. "The Gypsy Cried" (1973), depicting a 45 rpm record being cued up and played, is a concise homage to the mnemonic power of the throwaway '60s pop ditty that gives the film its title.

"I don't particularly believe in high art and low art," said Inga, whose favorite filmmakers include Werner Herzog. "If you get a lot out of a Sam Fuller film, it doesn't matter if it's high art or low art. I like it when those distinctions are blurred."

Inga said she was "always a rebel," leading her into student activism against the Vietnam War. That attitude also applied to certain parts of the CalArts instructional ethos. At the time she attended, Inga said, the Valencia arts college "was all about something had to be new and different, complex."

But Inga and a handful of other students gravitated more toward traditional figurative painting, which was then held in low esteem by much of the academic establishment. Although in retrospect, Inga believes that films were "a very good medium" for letting her tell stories, she came to realize that experimental filmmaking "was too expensive, and there really wasn't any money in it."

Eventually, she quit filmmaking entirely and went back to painting for private pleasure, not exhibition. Later, she experienced a second life, earning a degree in traditional Chinese medicine and living in China. "Having gone through a big healing process myself, I was interested in helping and healing other people," she said, referring to the challenges of her sex change.

The dozen-odd films in REDCAT's program showcase Langdon's penchant for gently but incisively puncturing artistic pomposity and popping the two-headed balloon of received opinion and dubious authority. In an interview, Toscano praised Langdon's films for what he termed their irreverent but never unkind wit and for their ability to find potency in "very powerful, single ideas."

He said Langdon's films also avoid the art-student tendency to fetishize their imagery. In Langdon's films, Toscano said, it's the clarity of the concepts that registers most.

Among teachers and fellow students in the early 1970s, Langdon's films were highly regarded both for their sophisticated yet unpretentious way of conceptualizing ideas as well as for their sheer quantity and the speed with which they were made.

Although some students labored over a single film for a year, Langdon churned out up to 12 in that span. She also worked on two films each with Baldessari and seminal experimentalist [Fred Worden](#).

One of the unforeseen benefits of withdrawing from making art for several years, Inga said, was realizing that "art is very precious."

"I don't think I really understood that until I stopped doing it," she said. "I'm getting used to the idea that there still might be some of that energy left in me, from those times, waiting to come out."

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Reed Johnson

Reed Johnson es editor de Los Angeles Times en Español. En 2018, se reincorporó a Los Angeles Times como editor asistente. Johnson había trabajado anteriormente para The Times como escritor de 2000 a 2014, incluidos cuatro años y medio como escritor de cultura latinoamericana del periódico, con sede en la Ciudad de México. También ha trabajado como reportero para el Wall Street Journal, con sede en São Paulo, Brasil; como editor de Zócalo Public Square; y como reportero del Detroit News, el L.A. Daily News y el Times-Union de Rochester, Nueva York.

4 4.5. 17:00 Uhr 5:00 pm Gloria

Thin Premises

USA 1974
5'30", 16mm, Farbe colour, ohne Text without text
Regie Director Chris Langdon

Arbeitstitel: „Ich habe Hunderte von Filmen gesehen, die 2, 5, 10 und sogar 20 Mal länger waren als dieser Film und noch fadenscheinigere Prämissen hatten“ / Eines Abends hab ich mir ein Hollywood-Musical mit Jane Russell angeschaut, und was bei diesem Film am meisten auffiel, war die Tatsache, dass er jeglicher inhaltlicher Grundlage entbehrte. Er hatte nur den äußeren Anschein von etwas: Requisiten, Kostüme usw. *Original working title: 'I've Seen Hundreds of Movies 2, 5, 10, 20 Times or More as Long as This, Based on Thinner Premises' / One night I was watching a Hollywood musical with Jane Russell, and the quality which it had the most of was that the film was based on absolutely nothing; it only had a semblance of being something – props, costumes, etc. // Chris Langdon*

This Is the Brain of Otis Craw ield

USA 1973
3', 16mm, s/w b/w, ohne Text without text
Regie Director Chris Langdon

Während Eric Burdon sich die weiße Seele aus dem Leib singt, entpuppt sich Langdons treffsichere Montage menschlicher Belange als messerscharfe und zynische Kritik an klassen- und rassenübergreifender performativer Empathie. *As Eric Burdon sings his poor white heart out, Langdon's pitch-perfect human interest montage unfolds as a devilishly cynical critique of performative empathy across class and race. // MT*

Love Hospital Trailer

USA 1975
2'30", 16mm, Farbe colour, Englisch English
Regie Director Chris Langdon

Ein gescheitertes Filmprojekt wurde umgewandelt in den freischwebenden Trailer eines Films, den es nicht gibt und der wirkt wie eine Mischung aus schlechtgemachter Krankenhausserie und Low-Budget-Porno. *A failed film project was instead resourcefully salvaged as an unmoored trailer for a nonexistent film that looks like a cross between a bad made-for-TV medical drama and a particularly low budget porn film. // MT*

999 BOY (aka Express Implication)

USA 1974
8'30", 16mm, s/w b/w, ohne Text without text
Regie Director Chris Langdon

Ungewissheit und Vorahnung bestimmen diesen Blick durch die Windschutzscheibe während einer nächtlichen Fahrt durch die Wüste, wobei die Scheinwerfer und das Filmkorn die Aussicht liefern und die Reifen, die über Kakteen rollen, den Ton. *Uncertainty and anticipation mark this view through a windshield on a nighttime drive off-road in the desert, with the headlights and the film grain providing the sights and the truck running over cacti supplying the sounds. // MT*

Bondage Girl (aka Immaculate Gate)

USA 1973
5', 16mm, Farbe colour, Englisch English
Regie Director Chris Langdon

Diese humoristische Camp-Episode ist das Gegenstück zu „Bondage Boy“. Die strukturelle Willkürlichkeit, mit der diese provokante Geschichte um verbotene Freuden dargestellt wird, hätte Hollis Frampton und Roger Corman gleichermaßen erzürnt. *A companion film to 'Bondage Boy', this humorous camp vignette illustrates an edgy story of forbidden pleasure with a structural arbitrariness that would infuriate Hollis Frampton and Roger Corman alike. // MT*

Intermittent Transposition

USA 1974
7', 16mm, Farbe colour, ohne Text without text
Regie Director Chris Langdon

Einer der Unterschiede zwischen Malerei und Film liegt darin, wer bestimmt, wie lange wir uns ein Bild ansehen. In der Malerei entscheiden wir das normalerweise selbst, doch dieser Film schlägt ein Alternativmodell vor. Ein Trailer für ein Gemälde? Vielleicht nicht ganz, aber dieser Kurzfilm macht definitiv Appetit auf mehr. *One of the differences between painting and film has to do with who decides how long we get to look at an image. With painting, normally it's up to us, but this film proposes an alternative model. A trailer for a painting? Maybe not quite, but this short film may definitely leave you wanting more. // MT*

Picasso

USA 1973
3', 16mm, s/w b/w, Englisch English
Regie Director Chris Langdon

Als Picasso starb, wollte ich den ersten der unweigerlich folgenden Post-mortem-Dokumentarfilme drehen. Aber meiner sollte billig sein. Es hat vier Stunden gedauert, ihn fertigzustellen, vom Dreh bis zum Schnitt, und knapp fünf Dollar gekostet. *When Picasso died I wanted to make the first post-mortem documentary (which I knew would happen anyway), and cheaply. The film took four hours to finish from camera to print and cost a little under \$5.* // Chris Langdon

The Last Interview With P. Passolini

USA 1976
6', 16mm, s/w b/w, Englisch English
Regie Director Chris Langdon

„Ich habe niemals endgültige Aussagen gemacht. Ich habe immer nur verschiedene Probleme in den Raum gestellt, mit denen man sich auseinandersetzen kann.“ (Pier Paolo Pasolini) / Revisionistischer Blick auf die Geschichte? Wunscherfüllung? Verhöhnung? Hommage? Frevel? Denkmal? Satire? Kunstmord? „Non capisco.“ (P. Passolini) *'I've never wanted to make a conclusive statement. I've always posed various problems and left them open to consideration.'* (Pier Paolo Pasolini) / Revisionist history? Wish fulfillment? Mockery? Hommage? Outrage? Effigy? Satire? Art assassination? 'Non capisco.' (P. Passolini) // MT

**Venusville**

USA 1973
10', 16mm, Farbe colour, Englisch English
Regie Director Fred Worden, Chris Langdon

Keine Schnitte, keine menschlichen Subjekte, minimaler visueller Inhalt, wobei die Künstler sich einen Dreck um die vierte Wand scheren und auf jede erdenkliche Art die Künstlichkeit der Situation hervorkehren. Ein Anti-Filmschulen-Film, entstanden auf einer Filmschule. *No montage, no human subjects, minimal visual content, and the artists basically pissing on the fourth wall by calling attention in every way possible to the artifice of what they're doing. An anti-film school film made at film school.* // MT

The Gypsy Cried

USA 1973
2'30", 16mm, s/w b/w, ohne Text without text
Regie Director Chris Langdon

Der Grund, warum ich diesen Film gemacht habe, ist folgender: Wenn man etwas richtig gerne hat, oder jemanden, ist es schwer, etwas anderes zu tun, als es oder ihn zu mögen. Ich wollte von dem Song weder etwas wegnehmen noch ihm etwas hinzufügen, eben weil er mir so gut gefällt. *Part of the reason I made this is because when one likes something very much, or someone, it is hard to do anything but like it. I didn't want to take anything away or add anything to this song because I like it a lot.* // Chris Langdon



Galerie Neu**Linienstrasse 119abc
10115 Berlin**Tel. +49 (0)30 285 75 50
Fax. +49 (0)30 281 00 85
mail@galerieneu.com
www.galerieneu.com**Jana Euler, *Das Investment*, 14.10.2023 – 02.12.2023**

Coffee, as a fixed part of the daily grind, is the ideal energy source for capitalism's global machinery. Profit is incessantly mined from this crucial trading commodity, rooted in colonial infrastructures. Highlighting our insatiable and never-ending thirst, Jana Euler locates what otherwise often gets lost in the tumult of events, interrogating once again the question *Where the energy comes from*.

Man turns into a coffee machine. In the form of a blank, polished, and steaming coffee robot, the artist idealizes a system driven by achievement, innovation, and expansion. But at the bottom of the coffee cup there is no solution lying in wait. *With or without*, the stressed dairy cow reaches with gusto for the source of all evil.

By painting coffee beans instead of grinding them, Jana Euler underscores their individuality. As larger than life actors, they confidently stride into relation with their environment, with the other paintings, and with the beholder. This painted encounter generates friction and stimulates a new circular flow of energy.

The female brush experiences this charge of tension. In its role as artist, motif, and tool, the brush freezes into mutual self-referentiality. Painting becomes the object of the image and goes for treatment to the dentist's office.

The Investment is paradoxical, like the provisional wall that holds the exhibition together.

- Louisa Wombacher



Section 1: Global Warnings (the unbearable outside):

Hollywood Stars: Danger power in the wrong hands
 James Bond: Guns kill
 Youtube stars that are identical twins: individual
 James Dean: everyone dies
 Youtube stars: xoxo
 Romy Schneider: Always being watched
 people who are over 100 years old: The climate is changing

Section 2: Speed (the scared inside):

On the central walls of the gallery are paintings with different types of speed, though all of them running in the same direction. To be scared (Angsthase) is just one of the reasons to speed up. The speed of all of them is relative. As seen in the slug paintings it depends on how fast the viewer moves.

Section 3: horse/rider switch (the confused middle section):

In the middle of the gallery is a third circle of paintings. One of the paintings (race against yourself, 2018), that joins the circle, has still the speed of the section 2 paintings. But what is confused about this one is, that the rider, the horse, the obstacle and the background are all the same person. The other two paintings show a classical Rider/Horse switch, but a switch that did not happen whilst a smooth ride. They are both under observation and in both situations the power relation was out of balance:
 First: The Human tamed the horse.
 Second: The horse gets rid of the rider.

The good, the bad, and the ugly: Jana Euler's quiet riot

Kristian Vistrup Madsen

Is the notoriously silent painter trolling us with vexing pictures of our times?

The late painter **James Bishop** liked to say that artists should never be seen or heard – ‘except, of course, opera singers’. **Jana Euler**'s large, confrontational, and saturated paintings are a far cry from Bishop's quiet abstractions, yet she seems to share his attitude. Euler does not give interviews and provides little discursive context for her exhibitions: What she has to say she has already said in her works. The German artist has painted bizarre neckless portraits of artworld figures, such as the curator Daniel Birnbaum and artist **Wolfgang Tillmans**, enormous electric plug sockets, sharks that look like penises, and fanciful horned horses she calls Morecorns, which kind of look like penises, too. She makes art that consistently catapults itself into the center of contemporary discourses on pop culture, gender, capitalism, even existentialism. She may be reluctant to put words to her practice but in her works she is the opposite of shy.



Jana Euler, Morecorn 1, 2021. Acrylic on canvas, artist's frame. 127 x 166.1 x 6 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Greene Naftali, New York.

< 2 / 4 >

Euler's work is brazen; some would call it ugly. At times it is even grotesque, in a specific aesthetic that has been somewhat difficult for audiences to come to terms with. For many, the now-famous 2019 exhibition 'Great White Fear' at Berlin's **Galerie Neu** of eight three-meter-high paintings of phallic sharks marked an important turning point in the reception of Euler's work. While certain key elements have long been present in it – a humorous approach to social networks, to the artworld, this mix of crassness and criticality – the shark paintings represent a powerful concentration of them. At a key moment during the #MeToo movement, Euler's massive beasts flung themselves out of the water as though in a last-ditch effort to assert their dominance, eyes beaming absolute dread. It was also a showcase of painterly virtuosity. Each canvas was painted in a different style – technically and compositionally they were triumphant. And this is what gives Euler's sly critique its bite: It is as bold as it is hilarious and, crucially, full of pleasure and energy. Although the exhibition's message was not simple, the meaning of 'Great White Fear' was clear – there was no need to say anything else.

The slug has featured previously in Euler’s works, such as in *Global Warnings!* (dépendance, Brussels, 2017), in which Euler included two photo-realistic paintings of individual slugs moving along the earth, each depicted with a change in depth of field, creating a sense of uncertainty whether the slug or its observer has somehow changed speed.



Slug speed of background, 2018
Oil on linen
35 ½ × 82 ¾ inches



Slug speed of slug, 2018
Oil on linen
35 ½ × 82 ¾ inches

Euler also utilizes snail-like forms as narrative articulations of the dynamics between artist and institution in her painting *Whitney*, exhibited in *Outside Inside Sensibility* (with Stewart Uoo, Whitney Museum of American Art, 2013), another work that addressed an organization in a moment of profound transition, in which she painted the Whitney’s former Breuer building alongside a portrait of Whitney Houston. Layered



Whitney, 2013
Oil on linen
75 × 119 inches

under the museum and famed singer are two echoing compositional structures in the form of human snails. One figure’s shell is a skyscraper while the other figure is coiled upon a horizontal building. Euler repeated the structure of this contrasting pair in her exhibition *IN* (dépendance, Brussels, 2014), with the vulnerable soft organism and hard protective shell once again switched from body to building—in this case a scale model of the presenting gallery. A sense of comical uncertainty underlies Euler’s interrogation of the idea that an institutional boundary might be both a home and an obstacle for the artist, or a burden and a muse of endless fascination.



Human snails dépendance I, 2014
Foamboard, metal, foam, resin
24 × 6 ¼ × 18 ½ inches



Human snails dépendance II, 2014
Foamboard, metal, foam, resin
16 ½ × 13 × 25 inches

The shell-less and shapeshifting mollusk is an indication of nutrient-rich terrain but also corrodes and spoils the formal design of a garden or landscape if left to roam free and multiply—a function possibly analogous to the task of the artist in an organization such as Artists Space. Euler has created eight distinct configurations of the slugs and columns, from which the viewer can interpret specific tactical patterns familiar to how artists might approach or defend themselves from institutional containment:

This configuration is a telling example of the way the 1982-born German artist's practice engages with context through spatially constructed situations. Jana Euler is a painter, among the most challenging ones of her generation, but her paintings, before anything else can be said about them, are first and foremost social objects. The canvas does not open up as a magical portal into a parallel dimension, and there is no escape, no outside to this world. Her painting is immanent, entangled in a radical present tense. It is a social object submitted to the same gravity as any other object — just look at that slug's heavy, tired body! And this is, precisely, its force. Whatever is lost in terms of contemplation and reverie is regained as engagement with contemporary discourse and reflexive criticality.



① 2 3 4 5 6

"Unform." Installation view at Artists Space, New York, 2020. Photography by Daniel Pérez. Courtesy of the artist and Cabinet, London; dépendance, Brussels, Greene Naftali, New York; Galerie Neu, Berlin.

While all of Euler's works are social objects, several of the artist's recent solo exhibitions have

Some Notes on My Life



Patil Hill printing with
Robert Dutrou at La Meterie.

I was born famous in Ashland, Kentucky. Anyway, that's what I supposed since everyone I met knew all the embarrassing things about me like my cousin Eloise knew about the movie stars from reading the magazines she kept under her bed.

When I was eight my father went off to build an airport, perhaps in Washington, and my mother and I came to Charlottesville, Virginia, where my mother got a job as house mother at St. Anne's School. It was the Depression and anything anybody had was *it* because there wasn't going to be another. This probably gave me my respect for objects (in contrast to Mother who thought a box was as good as a chair and women should be paid more than men because they were smarter).

In third grade I went to Stonefield School on Rugby Road, where I learned most of the important things I was going to know from Miss Nancy Gordon (except about the outcome of the Civil War; I admit she was a little evasive about that).

When I was nineteen I went to New York to live a bohemian life in Greenwich Village, but by then there were no more bohemians, so I went on to Paris to model the first collection of American clothes – at Molyneux on the beautiful rue Royale. Everyone laughed because I didn't put my feet in front of each other the way they still do today and looked the audience in the eye. I didn't sign the contract a local movie company offered the American models either, because I remembered about Eloise and those stars under her bed.

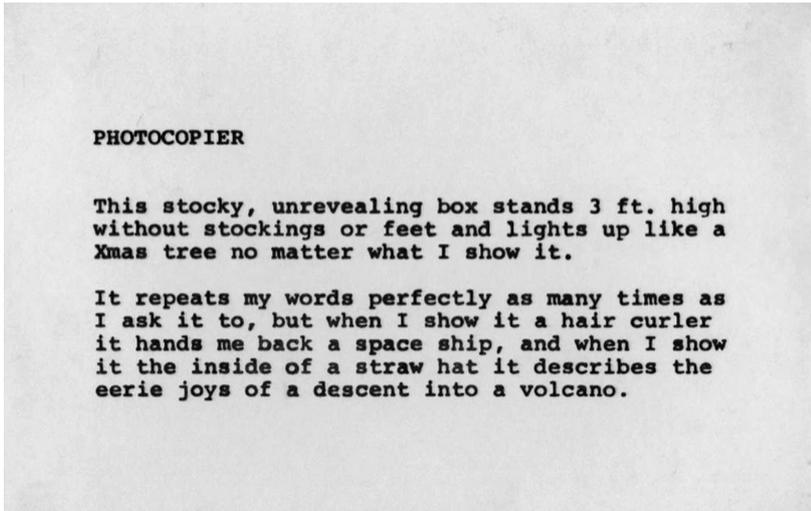
The *Paris Review* was just beginning, and they published my stories. This encouraged me to go to Burgundy where I lived for two summers in a damp and distant farmhouse while I wrote my first two books. One – *The Nine Mile Circle* – was about Charlottesville, Virginia, and the other was a journal about Burgundy, which I loved first because it reminded me of Virginia, which had slipped my mind, and afterward because of itself.

Eventually I married a Frenchman who had a gallery on 78th Street in New York where he showed the new Pop artists. I thought he would be rich because his family made silk in Lyon, but it turned out he was as poor as I was. He did interesting things, though, like putting the Orient Express back on its tracks. (We had enough Orient Express silverware to open a restaurant!)

We have a daughter named Paola who takes great photographs and lives in a "triporteur" (a kind of teeny covered wagon built on the front of a motor bike).

I have had many things I wanted in life, although I usually haven't realized it until quite late. If I had my life to do over, I would still want to work on my everyone's language, but I might want to be an ecologist instead of an artist. If I were living my life over in "real time," as they now call "now."

Pati Hill



arcadiaexhibitions "I suppose I saw these sleek, brute, machine-made images as being art suitable to the time we are living in. A simple direct message from the forefinger that pressed the button that propelled the magic bar that illuminated every filament of the subject, and I trusted this message to eventually come clear by the even more dazzling light of the future time." — Pati Hill, "Photocopying Versailles" (unpublished manuscript, c. 1980–2000), Pati Hill Collection, Arcadia University

Untrained as an artist, Hill was a published novelist and poet before she began experimenting with the photocopier as an artistic tool in the early 1970s. She was not alone in recognizing the creative properties of what she called "a found instrument, a saxophone without directions;" however, her literal approach to the medium—"having come to copying from writing"—coupled with her lucid texts about it, especially regarding xerography's potential for self-publishing and image-sharing that we take for granted today, have proved prescient. Unlike many who experimented with this instant-duplication process—a technology whose convenience, affordability and use of plain paper made it revolutionary—Hill sustained her commitment to xerography for 40 years.

Excerpt from "Pati Hill: Photocopier — A Survey of Prints and Books", Arcadia University Art Gallery, 2017.

Pictured: Exhibition announcement for "Pati Hill: Common Alphabet #1," Franklin Furnace, 1978.



DEAR JILL

You ask, Is it a print?

Actually I don't know. The best answer is to describe how I make a picture.

So here finally goes with me upstairs on Grand Street and it's a perfect day, which is a mercy because it allows me to leave the windows open to let out the fumes I make by putting too much black powder in the till and the machine is humming or grumbling or whatever it does when it isn't asking me to Call Key Operator or Add Paper or Lift Cover or complaining it's Not Ready - it makes me feel like some brute with an unhappy lummoX in bed - and it's too bad things can't go on like this forever - it humming and taking up space and me letting it - but I want to get this demonstration done before any *more* questions come up.

I reach into my box marked Common Objects and take out a clam shell. Because a clam shell will touch the copying surface at most points, making a clean white line, and the inside of the shell will fall away pretty fast but not too fast for some delicate shading, and there is a nice hollow at the side where the two halves of the clam were once joined and the shell is not dusty, sticky, perishable or red, a color that doesn't copy well.

Now since I want this picture to be showy, I think I'll make it very dark and try for some stars - holes, they are really - so I open the powdered ink till and shovel in the black at about a dollar a spoonful, being careful not to let any drop on the

newspaper I have spread out below because it is bad to clean up even when it doesn't get on the floor, and close the trap and close the door and clap the shell on the copying surface and press "Press" and out comes a picture of a clam shell looking about the way I thought it would.

That is, the flaw on the rim *is* a little too important and the shading *might* have been better if the moving light had hit from left to right, still it's a more or less creditable copy of a clam shell with that touch of mystery copied things need and I'd be satisfied if the powder was not insufficiently mixed so streaked in one place, so I press the button a few more times (an act that automatically mixes the powder) and reverse the shell to be lit the other way, while I'm at it and the black evens out gradually and there *are* stars - something that even now I am not always able to achieve - and I think, Why not make several of these, I rarely have anything to give to friends, so I do, but as it turns out, I don't have any extra ones in this series, either, having used up the peak of blackness in mixing.

Also a hair seems to have crept in.

I don't like flaws like that, and I don't like retouching because it seems silly to retouch something as haphazardly made (presumably) as a copy, and anyway copies are not easy to retouch.

Well, making a clam shell is not a big deal, really, in spite of all these words; it hasn't lost petals or melted or changed color and it is still early in the day - the neighbors won't complain of

A P.S. ^{FOR BOOK}
Vacuum Cleaners

On the ABC today, Dec 23, 2004, they told about a man who is seeing the vac. company, I don't remember which, because his vacuum got out of control and threw him down the steps causing him to suffer multiple injuries.

when trying to renegotiate her notion of her independence and her work. The literary circles she had been moving in up until then, mainly made up of married white men, considered her marriage and her life as a mother as a betrayal, a desertion of her vocation as an artist. She left New York for Stonington, Connecticut, where there were regular visits from her husband. As a welcome gift, the poet James Merrill – a long-time friend and now her neighbour – gave her a cat, pointing out to her that she “might as well have all the little luxuries that went with being a prisoner.”⁷ She published nothing between 1963 and 1974, but kept on writing – and working: she opened her own antique shop in Mystic, Connecticut and renovated a property at Les Massons, near Paris. Having built up substantial debts over the years, her husband closed his gallery early in the 1970s, while it fell to her to continue organising the family’s domestic life – a job which, American writer-artist Frances Stark commented, “bears no evidence of productivity – save for the fact that the home isn’t falling apart.”⁸ Its realities were not lost on her.

Thirteen years went by between the publication of her third novel, *One Thing I Know*, and her second collection of poems, *Slave Days* (1975), with its insider’s account of the discomfiting experience of being a housewife. In short, the experience described in her memoir *The History of Dressmaking* where she wrote: “I wish I did not feel so blameless. If I were at fault I could change our destinies by changing myself, but I have been such a good mother, cook, taxi driver, dog feeder etc. according to the American myth.”⁹ Each poem is a digression based on the observation of an object Hill photocopied and reproduced in the book. A few years earlier she began keeping various objects in a laundry basket and reproducing some of them, using an IBM Copier II. To keep a record, she said. The first xerographs that she published in *Slave Days* and exhibited the same year in New York mostly depict ordinary subjects such as flowers, tools, clothes and documents. (*Alphabet of Common Object* is the title of an emblematic series dating from the late 1970s, some of whose images are included in the exhibition.) It would be tempting to make them appear as the expression of a gift, generally – and perversely – attributed to women to justify their dependence on domesticity: the gift of being able to turn their intimate contact with matter into a certain “poetry of the everyday”. But Pati Hill’s works say the direct opposite. True, they may signify one of those “little luxuries that went with being a prisoner”: that of a more finely honed attentiveness to things and their presence, but this attentiveness is not so much sensitive as critical. When things are photocopied life-size, the more their reproduction seems to reside in some infallible objectivity; and the sharper their contours, the more their images will elude clear definition. The machine offers the eye what it flattens, as shapes at once familiar and strange, living and mummified: a succession of hard, autonomous, impenetrable sculptures that defy immediate understanding.

Displayed alongside the copies of *Slave Days*, the xerographs thus seem like an implacable response to stories of domesticity based on women’s alleged fascination with objects and their ability to create balanced and harmonious interiors. But on the contrary, they present shapes with no pre-established meaning and which never coincide with the desire they are supposed to satisfy. The machine’s utterly objective gaze is then overlaid with an inseparable mixture of tenderness and naivety, a form of detachment which gives one the impression of watching a cruel little tale unfold or a methodical settling of scores.

In 1960, Pati Hill began collecting the advertisements, instruction manuals and users’ guides she claimed were the art form she felt closest to. She made them the subject of several series of xerographs in which she observes how, while supposedly allowing specific information to be conveyed by means of slogans and symbols, the accumulation of informational signals in these commercial images ultimately generates an inverse subtraction effect, the upshot being confusion, misunderstandings and pretexts for the projection of fantasies. This is one of the things that strike you immediately when you’re confronted with the considerable collection – some six hundred images, all of them of vacuum cleaners – that Hill built up from the early 1960s to the early 2000s.

A great deal of uncertainty still surrounds the status of this collection, currently held with the artist’s archives at Arcadia University. We do know, however, that in 1996 she claimed to be using it for a book whose title, *Women and Vacuum Cleaners*, alludes to *Men and Women in Sleeping Cars*, an emblematic series of xerographs she made in 1979 from advertising images for the Compagnie des wagons-lits. A draft of this work is presented in a showcase, accompanied by a short text about her relationship to the machine. While Hill’s work on the photocopier began a deliberate move away from her relationship with domesticity in the 1980s, when she decided to photocopy Versailles, this set of documents constitutes the continuation over nearly fifty years of the story begun by *Slave Days*.

The title of the only paperback book in the collection: “The Museum of Man. The fabulous decline of the masculine empire” suffices to make obvious the organised sabotage of a social mythology. The diversity and profusion of documents too, ranging from the first ads for vacuum cleaners early in the 20th century to the double-page spreads in *Paris Match*, revealing with a mixture of humour and bitterness, the immutability of a century-old iconography supposedly defending women’s autonomy – “the art of sparing one’s strength, time and money”; “the vacuum cleaner eliminates effort and fatigue”; “for four dollars a day you can finally have a reliable maid!” – while actually relegating them to the domestic existence.

Bringing together newspaper and magazine cuttings and their multiple copying avatars, the collection reminds us – like Claude Toney’s film *Toreador* (1983), where we see Hill in her studio – that there’s nothing delicate about her work with the photocopier: it’s crushing, it’s fast and blind. Then there are the artist’s books she made throughout her life. Hand-bound

⁷ Pati Hill, *Family History*, op. cit., p. 14.

⁸ Frances Stark, *The Architect & the Housewife*, London, Book Works, 1999, p. 12

⁹ Pati Hill, *History of Dressmaking*, op. cit., p. 292.

DEAR CHARLES,

THERE ARE 2 COMPLETE SETS OF A SWAN.

EACH IS SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT AS IT IS HARD TO MAKE 2 SIMILAR PICTURES.

I THINK OF A SWAN AS AN EXHIBITION, BUT CAN IMAGINE IT AS POSTERS.

IT WOULD BE CHEAP. LIKE WALLPAPER SO YOUNG PEOPLE COULD COVER THEIR WALLS IN SWAN FOR A FEW WEEKS THEN MOVE OFF OR THROW THE SWAN AWAY AND PUT UP SOMETHING ELSE.

A KIND OF BOOK.

IBM HASN'T SEEN THE SWAN.

I FIGURE IT WOULD BE IN THE SAME CATEGORY AS THE OBJECTS SO WOULD BE A WASTE OF TIME. BUT I WOULD LIKE TO SHOW AT IBM AND WILL TAKE IT TO IBM PARIS.

Love
P.



Sylvie Fanchon

Sylvie Fanchon (1953-2023) was a French abstract painter whose work is characterized by patterns without apparent meaning, by an economy of means (including the two-color process) and by a precise methodology that the artist described as an "enterprise of verification of the veracity of our perceptions of the world."

(external link : www.sylviefanchon.com)



SF
2012
French edition
various
~~13.00~~ 7.00 €

Catalogue / artist's book.



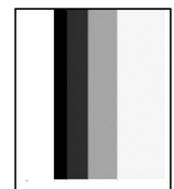
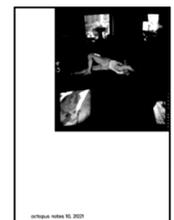
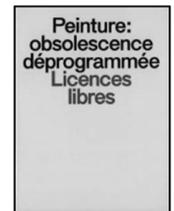
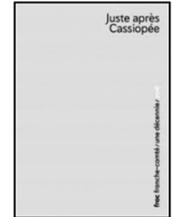
untitled
2007
bilingual edition (German / French)
Analogues - Monographs

First large-scale monograph dedicated to the work of the French artist, this publication gathers abstract paintings since 2000 to 2007.

topics

Abstract painting
Contemporary art
France
Painting
Women (female artists)

Sylvie Fanchon:
also present in



REVIEWS PARIS

Sylvie Fanchon

Galerie Bernard Jordan

By Guitemie Maldonado

For Sylvie Fanchon, painting comes *after*: after photography, after film, after television, after video—all these mediations between man and reality with which she weaves a tense dialogue. To technical means, she prefers the hand—its imperfections, which she accepts but does not particularly seek out, as well as its availability; to the dematerialization of the world that these visual means effect, she contrasts the physical contact of painting; to their instantaneity, she responds with slow, careful, layered craft. Faced with the proliferation and inflation of images, she opts for a radical economy of means: These modestly scaled works bear no titles, and there are never more than two colors per canvas, always brought together in strong contrast (pink and yellow, black and white); single, simple forms are painted with minimal material effects, lending the whole a self-contained flatness.

Nothing spectacular, then, and nothing overbearing. For this show, Fanchon chose forms with supple contours that recall clouds, plumes of smoke, or foliage: Whether borrowed from nature, architectural ornament, or even comic books, they are like pattern elements—secondary or marginal, meant to be repeated—which Fanchon has instead separated, isolated, and made central. These motifs thereby acquire a new autonomy. Furthermore, their treatment in flat tints contrasts sharply with the bulges of their contours, and the colors they are cloaked in—white on black, acid hues or artificial ones that seem somehow edible, like bubble-gum pink or lemon yellow, instead of the natural greens of vegetation—blur their identities. Detached from all context without losing any of their evocative power, the forms are kept in a state of suspension reinforced by a tangible indeterminacy of scale: Have these details been enlarged or reduced to become subjects of painting and in order to fit the dimensions of the canvas so perfectly? Are these works constructed? Are they still lifes painted after reality or maps of the imaginary? Despite the apparent clarity of things, the eye cannot decide, unsettled as it is by an effect of light that, like a flash, immobilizes everything even while exalting it.

Ultimately, it doesn't matter, because in any case the task at hand is to transcribe a reality according to a specific code, with the singular henceforth becoming a symbol. Since the late '80s, Fanchon has been creating a sort of heraldry for the era of pictographic communication, a heraldry of indeterminacy and opacity to counter the insipidity and overlegibility of the world.

—Guitemie Maldonado

Translated from French by Jeanine Herman.

Sylvie Fanchon

🌐 1 language ▾

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From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Sylvie Fanchon (1953 – 14 April 2023) was a French contemporary painter.^[1] Born in Nairobi, Kenya, she worked in Paris as a painter until her death on 14 April. Fanchon's career spanned from 1987 until her death.^[2] From 2001 to 2019, she was head of the studio at the Beaux-Arts de Paris.^[3]

Fanchon's works have been characterized by large, simple geometric forms: squares, rectangles, circles and triangles, evoking and taking inspiration from the legacy of modern painters such as Kazimir Malevich and Piet Mondrian.^[4]

With around 50 artworks in public collections, Fanchon's work is present in more than 15 major French institutions including CNAP, MAC VAL, Pompidou Center, M/M Paris, and eight regional contemporary art funds.^[5]

Fanchon later described her work by stating:

I don't want technical prowess, I favour the surface, without ever introducing perspective, volume, shadow or light.

^[6]

Critical opinion [edit]

Artforum has positively described the work of Fanchon, stating:

"Since the late '80s, Fanchon has been creating a sort of heraldry for the era of pictographic communication, a heraldry of indeterminacy and opacity to counter the insipidity and overlegibility of the world."^[7]

MAC VAL, a museum which houses much of Fanchon's work, also commented positively on her art. "Sylvie Fanchon paints from elements extracted from reality — furniture diagrams, plans, comic strips or cartoons — to synthesize them to the extreme. Thus, they are inscribed in flat, enigmatic, almost abstract floating forms. The systematic use of the term "*Sans titre*" (Untitled) to name them demonstrates the desire to leave their interpretation open."^[8]

Works of art [edit]

Two of Fanchon's paintings, an untitled work dated 2001, using acrylic paint on a canvas, as well as a photography collection of eight images, a collaboration, are housed in the Pompidou Center. The untitled work is described as "based on an imbalance that the quantity and dullness of the blue covering most of the surface tries to compensate for, without suggesting that a superior and utopian harmony could exist beyond our reach".^[9]

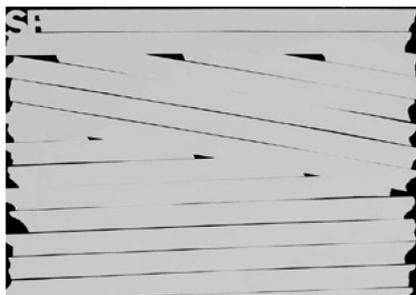
In the series of *Scotch Paintings*, Fanchon applies a first color then positions adhesive strips on the surface of the painting before covering the whole thing with black. When removing the tape, the patterns then appear in reserve. These compositions reveal the delicate layering of paint skins, disturbing the relationship between substance and form.^[10]^[unreliable source?]

Her last paintings, faithful to her ironic spirit, mocked the injunctions of the medical profession in the face of illness: "Keep your spirits up", "Make plans", "Don't let yourself be discouraged".^[11]

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Sylvie Fanchon, *Sans titre (Tableaux Scotch)*, 2016, 50 x 70 cm.
Courtesy the artist and Galerie Maubert.



Sylvie Fanchon, *Sans titre (Tableaux Scotch)*, 2016, 50 x 70 cm.
Courtesy the artist and Galerie Maubert.



Sylvie Fanchon, *Sans titre (Fantôme)*, 2015, 50 x 60 cm.
Collections FRAC-Artothèque Nouvelle-Aquitaine. © Adagp, Paris. Photo : Frédérique Avril.

Fanchon assumes the death of painting with the grace of being out of time.

Sylvie Fanchon sits on the history of art and laughs, not without anger, at the pretensions of sacredness, interiority and contemplation of painting. She also laughs at the aspiration to change the world with art. She seeks truth with painting, but perhaps, unlike other artists, she does not seek truth *in the* painting, nor truth *in* painting. This last proposition, which Derrida attributes to Cézanne, reminds us of the knot we are in:

That which pertains [a trait à] to *the thing itself*. By reason of the power ascribed to painting (the power of direct reproduction or restitution, adequation or transparency, etc.), “the truth in painting,” in the French language which is not a painting, could mean and be understood as: truth itself restored, in person, without mediation, makeup, mask, or veil. In other words, the true truth or the truth of the truth, restituted in its power of restitution, truth looking sufficiently like itself to escape any misprision, any illusion; and even any representation—but sufficiently divided already to resemble, produce, or engender itself twice over, in accordance with the two genitives: truth of truth and truth of truth.²

Truth in painting, in this double genitive, was undoubtedly the philosophical obsession of the medium. Painting comes to Fanchon when it is already mortally wounded. Although this does not mean its end, it does entail the decline of metaphysical aspirations in it. Thus, Fanchon’s questioning does not seem to be an ontological inquiry but a material one. She suggests remaining cautious before the power of fascination and enchantment of painting, and to do this, she establishes three limits from which to work: surface, color and form. With these three elements, which are modified throughout more than four decades of her career, the artist experiments to produce truth in painting. In *the* painting, in *her* painting, in *every* painting. Her work is to insist, almost obsessively, on these components without ever returning to a field determined by the artist’s technical, expressive or intuitive genius in the classical sense of painting tradition, nor to the cold purism of the medium. Here, there is a pictorial research of the first order, which is within the history of painting itself, but already outside its teleology.

Sylvie Fanchon does not make abstract or expressionist painting; she is neither conceptual nor lyrical. Hers is a production that insists on investigating color and form without ever forgetting the delimitation that allows the existence of that work. The space—the canvas, wall or glass—is not a window, but rather a surface. There is something in this search that frees us from the pressures of painting, that relieves. She does not see herself as a feminist artist, but to me it is refreshing to find a woman’s painting that does not follow the male mandate, that neither imitates it nor assumes the place historically designated to female painters. Fanchon assumes the death of painting with the grace of being out of time. Therefore, rather than aiming on geniality, she plays. She establishes a series of rules to play and, from there, to unfold the possibilities of truth present in her paintings. Playing is not a banal nor a complementary activity, it is perhaps the resource that remains once the historical *pathos* of painting is broken.³

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Uh huh.

And, uh.

*Gee, I'd like to have
a green one.*

Yeah, I think there are.
A different colour would
be interesting.

They go real far. And, uh,
you can, sometimes you can
see the lines.

*Hmm. It's a, really narrow
beam.*

Yeah. Maybe we could get a,
uh, get a shot of that.

*We could blow some smoke
in it.*

*We could blow some smoke
in it.*

Oh yeah, that's pretty.

Do you happen, uh... Hmm.

Ah that's a good one. Here
you take that end and I'll
take this end.

OK.

Yeah. Take that one.

[MUSIC]

WATCH THIS!