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In this exhibition, a series of large murals and furniture highlight universal themes such as family, meaning and existence, as well as others that have traditionally been kept at arm's length from the world of 'serious' art, such as the decorative or plumbing problems. Lily van der Stokker looks for beauty in ordinary things, including ugly things. Her favourite subjects are joy, well-being and anything that might upset these states. She describes her work as 'easy looking art that is difficult', and the apparent non-seriousness of her art is in fact a militant stance that goes far beyond irony. In a discussion with the eccentric director John Waters, a great fan of her work, she described herself as a «conceptual pop artist and feminist».

That she is a woman who asserts herself is obvious: by outrageously assuming in her art the clichés generally associated with femininity (pink, little flowers, ornaments, decoration...), she exacerbates them to better assert her difference. That her works have a «Pop» dimension goes without saying. But what makes her a 'conceptual' artist?

Formally, conceptual art adopted a kind of 'office' aesthetic: typed texts, photocopies, archived newspaper articles, quotes from dictionaries, photos documenting actions or a sociological reality... She too uses a lot of words in her art, but the texts are written freehand (in the preparatory drawings at least), in a childish way. Rather than aiming for a seemingly scientific objectivity, they emphasise the personal, the intimate, while referring to the conditions under which art is possible, in particular gender prejudice, financial limitations and the need to integrate a network of friends into the artistic milieu.

Lily van der Stokker is represented by the galleries Air de Paris, Paris, and kaufmann repetto, Milan. This exhibition has been made possible thanks to the financial support of the G.I.P. Normandie Impressionniste, the Dutch Embassy in Paris and the Mondriaan Fund.

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The Frac Normandie is supported by the Direction régionale des affaires culturelles de Normandie and the Région Normandie.

Open: wednesday → sunday, 2-6pm
Free admission. Disabled access.



Lily van der Stokker, *Nice left Right* (détail), 2019
© Lily van der Stokker - photo : Roberto Marossi

Lily van der Stokker was born in 1954 in Bois-le-Duc (NL). She lives and works in Amsterdam (NL) and New York (US).

Lily van der Stokker (born in Bois-le-Duc in the Netherlands) has been known since the early 1990s for her playful, brightly coloured murals. Meticulously executed in a slow, painstaking process, the murals are made from small-scale drawings that the artist prepares with precision. Comedy, satire and irony are the hallmarks of Lily van der Stokker's work. Fragments of text such as 'Friendly Good', 'Yeah' and 'How' are often addressed directly to the viewer. Her work questions the stereotype of femininity and conspicuous banalities, as well as the economics of art and the everyday life of the artist.

Beneath her cheerful exterior, her work challenges the stereotypes associated with femininity, and tackles subjects that are a priori opposed to these formal biases, such as the economics of artistic creation, the validity of public policies, or the ordinary constraints that weigh on the life of an artist.



Portrait of Lily van der Stokker © Hydar Dewachi

Recent solo exhibitions (selection)

5

2023

Ik Ga Naar Bed, Coda Museum, Apeldoorn, Pays-Bas

2022

Thank You Darling, Camden Art Center, Londres, Angleterre

2019

Help help a little old lady here, Migros Museum, Zurich, Suisse

2018

Huh, SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah, États-Unis*Friendly Good*, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Pays-Bas

2015

The Tidy Kitchen, Lobby project, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, États-Unis

2014

Huh, Koenig & Clinton, New York, États-Unis**Recent group exhibitions (selection)**

2022

Hippydrome, Frac Normandie, Caen, France

2021

Triennale Kortrijk Paradise 2021, Kortrijk, Belgique

Is it possible to be a revolutionary and like flowers, Nest, La Haye, Pays-Bas

2015

Theory of Achievement, Yale Union, Portland, États-Unis

2011

Exposition d'ouverture, Le Consortium, Dijon, France

2008

Wall Painting 1+9/9+1, Cultuurcentrum Strombeek, Malines, Belgique

2004

Flower Poser, Palais des Beaux-Arts, Lille, Paris

2003

C'est arrivé demain, Biennale de Lyon, Lyon, France

2000

Let's Entertain, Walker Art Center Minneapolis. Itinérance à Mexico DC, Mexique et au Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris

1998

Dramatically Different, Magasin, Grenoble, France

1991

No Man's Time, Villa Arson, Nice, France

Ha, it' Doesn't Mean Anything 2008

Acrylic painting on wall, various wooden objects and woollen carpets

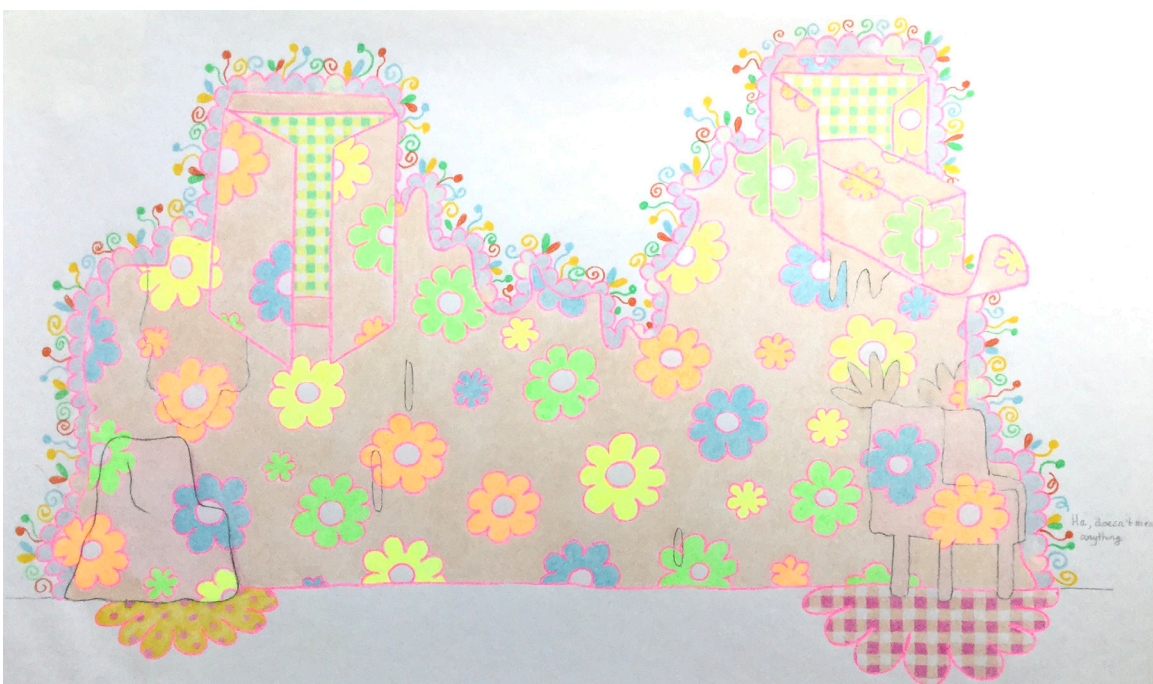
This work, which occupies a central place in the exhibition, was conceived as a drawing in 2008 and is being produced here for the first time, much to the delight of the artist, who considers it one of his favourite works.

His bright colours are those for which his work is known: fluorescent pink, yellow, green, light blue... The main motifs are stylised flowers, a symbol of optimism and positivity. Their design has a childlike quality, as do the embellishments surrounding the painting. Cupboards are attached to the painting, opening up like a pop-up book or the boxes of a sort of Advent calendar. Carpets and chairs help to take the composition out of the two dimensions of the painting and into real space, creating a sense of abundance.

The work is endowed with speech, as in Ad Reinhardt's cartoons: on the wall, in the bottom right-hand corner, written in small type in relation to the size of the installation, we can read 'Ha, it doesn't mean anything', as if the work were commenting on its own condition. «Ha', in Dutch, is an expression of joy. The title could be translated as something like «nifty! it doesn't mean anything», or «great! it doesn't mean anything». The work claims to take pleasure in meaninglessness.

It's a surprising proposition, given that artists (like critics and historians) usually tend to emphasise the 'content' or meaning of their works. Behind its exuberant, joyful appearance, the work raises a complex question about the meaning of art, and of things in general. We tend to expect art to «make sense», as we say today, to be justified and legitimised by a higher meaning. But is this meaning specific to the work itself, or is it a function of the discourse that comments on it, or of the structure into which it is inserted (institutional, historical, cultural...)? Flowers in themselves have no meaning, any more than colours or a cupboard.

As the artist herself explains: «Beauty and ugliness dissolve into each other in this piece. As a visitor, you are reassured and relaxed to be able to look at this art without worrying about searching for meaning, so what remains is the amusement of looking at the exuberant abundance of visual elements that make no sense. To question meaning is to question existence. But here the work of art ignores all this questioning, and this massive piece is content to exist, simply, in this place and on this wall. It's in a museum, so it's art.



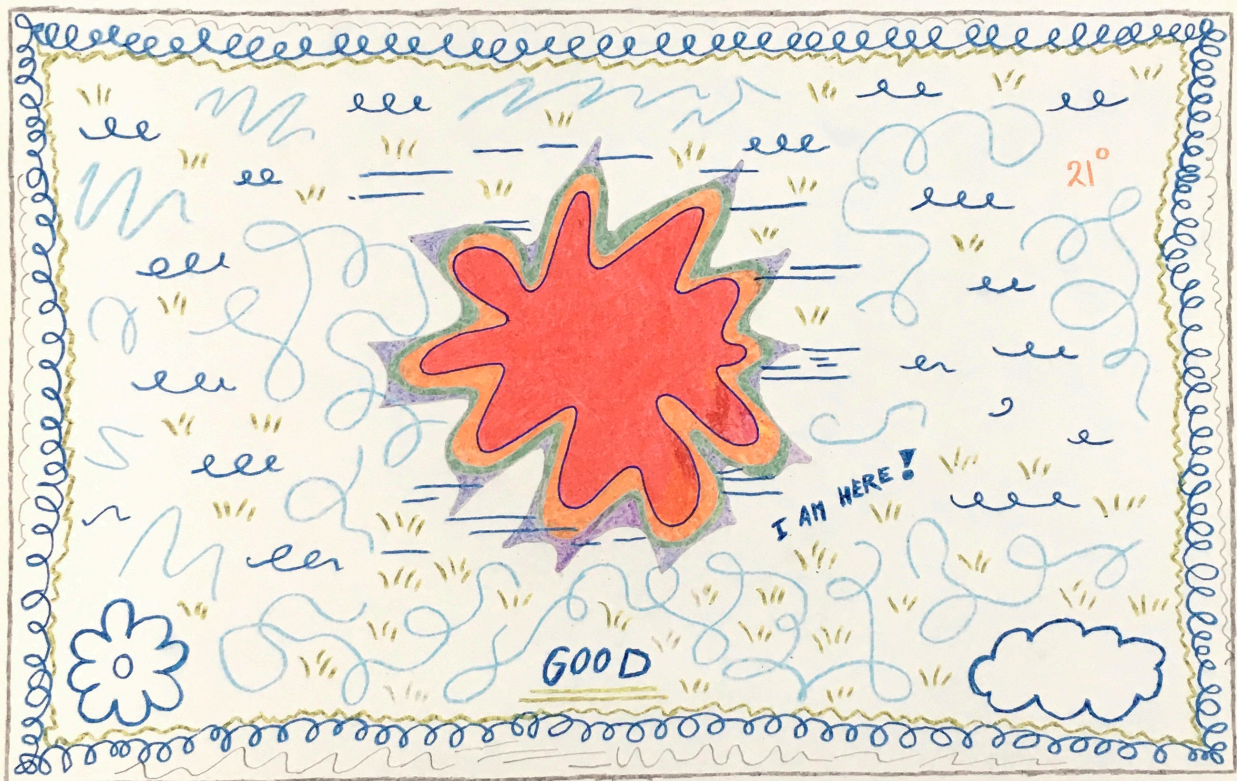
Preparatory drawing *Ha, it' Doesn't Mean Anything*, 2008. Courtesy of the artist
© Lily van der Stokker

Acrylic paint on a wooden object

«I Am Here» is a small felt-tip and pencil drawing from 1989, reinterpreted as a painting for this exhibition. Amusingly, it is this work, one of the two smallest in the exhibition, that gives it its name.

A frieze made of loops defines the frame of what appears to be a pastoral scene: we see grass, a red spot in the middle, a flower and a cloud. To which we must add three inscriptions: 'GOOD', 'I AM HERE!', and an indication of the temperature, '21°'. 'I Am Here' is French for 'I am here'. It's hard to know who is saying these words: is it the drawing itself? The red spot? The artist? In any case, all the conditions seem right for feeling good. «I am here», at this moment: this very simple statement is a reminder of the existential function of art, to reinforce our sense of presence in the world.

«'I am here',» explains Lily van der Stokker, «is a comfortable '21 degrees' at the time I'm making the drawing, and things are 'good', it's the epicurean joy of existence, as probably it is in all my art, and that's how it should be. I wanted to add it to the exhibition to add an element of pleasure and question the reasons for making art that were so essential in my early work. And still is in the most recent works.»

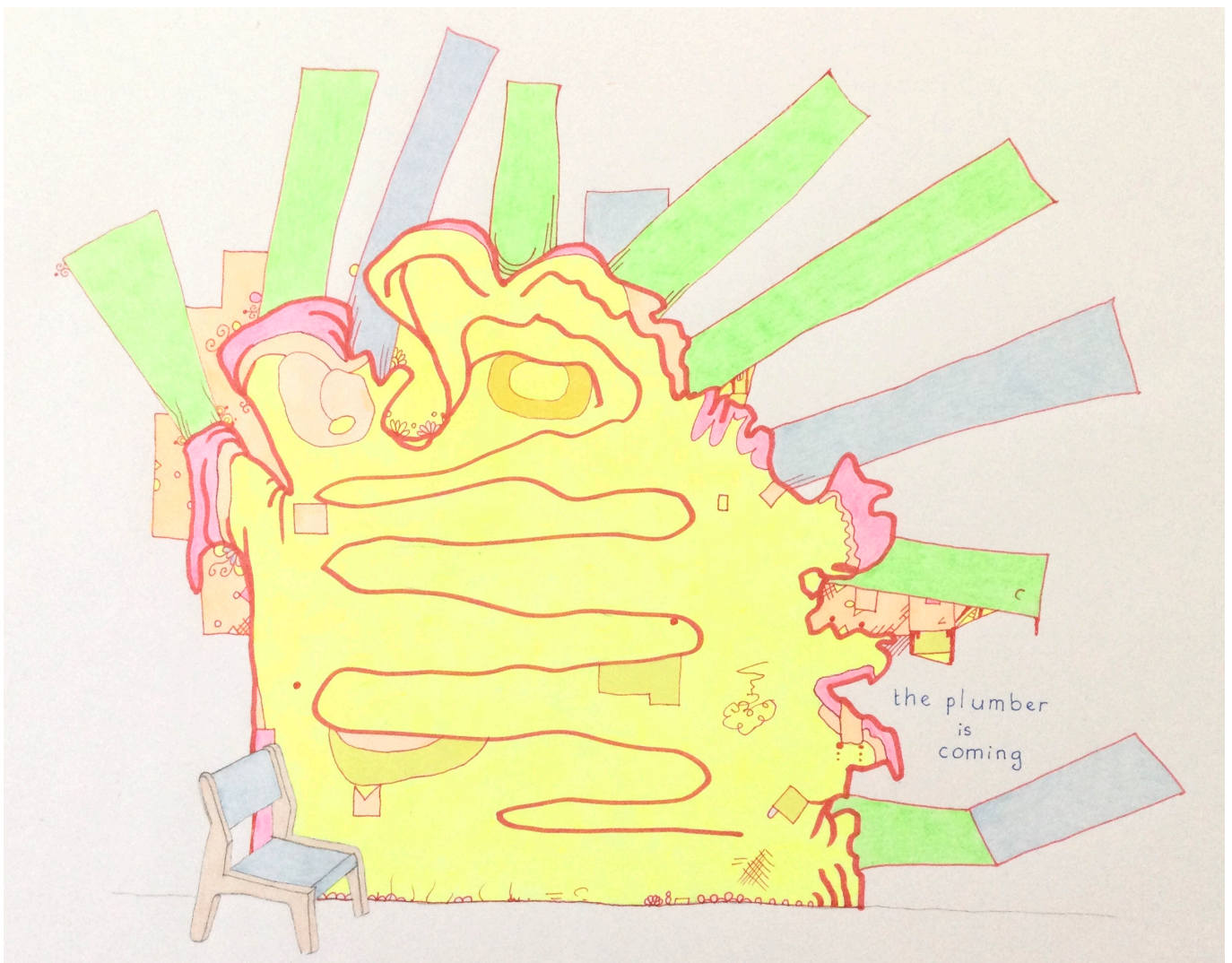


Preparatory drawing *I am Here*, 1989. Courtesy of the artist
© Lily van der Stokker

Acrylic paint on wall and wooden chair

Again, the painting is done in a bright colour palette, accompanied by text that reads 'The Plumber is coming'. No matter how hard you try, it's hard to make out a figure that looks like a plumber in this chaotic composition, although you might consider that the lines at the top of the yellow shape could resemble the eyes of a monstrous character (which would be derogatory to plumbers). What's more, the space depicted is so confused, so upside down, that it seems to call for someone to intervene and put things back in order.

The reason for this inscription («the plumber is coming») is in fact much more random and anecdotal at the same time: «This winter my downstairs neighbour and I were waiting for the plumber to arrive to help us repair several leaks and install a tap. Finally, when he rang the doorbell, we were relieved and said «the plumber's on his way». The text is as simple as can be. [...] So in this work I celebrate the absence of meaning, the ugly beauty, and I have fun with these colours, shapes and other unnecessary movements. I revel in its meaninglessness and that's what gives it meaning.



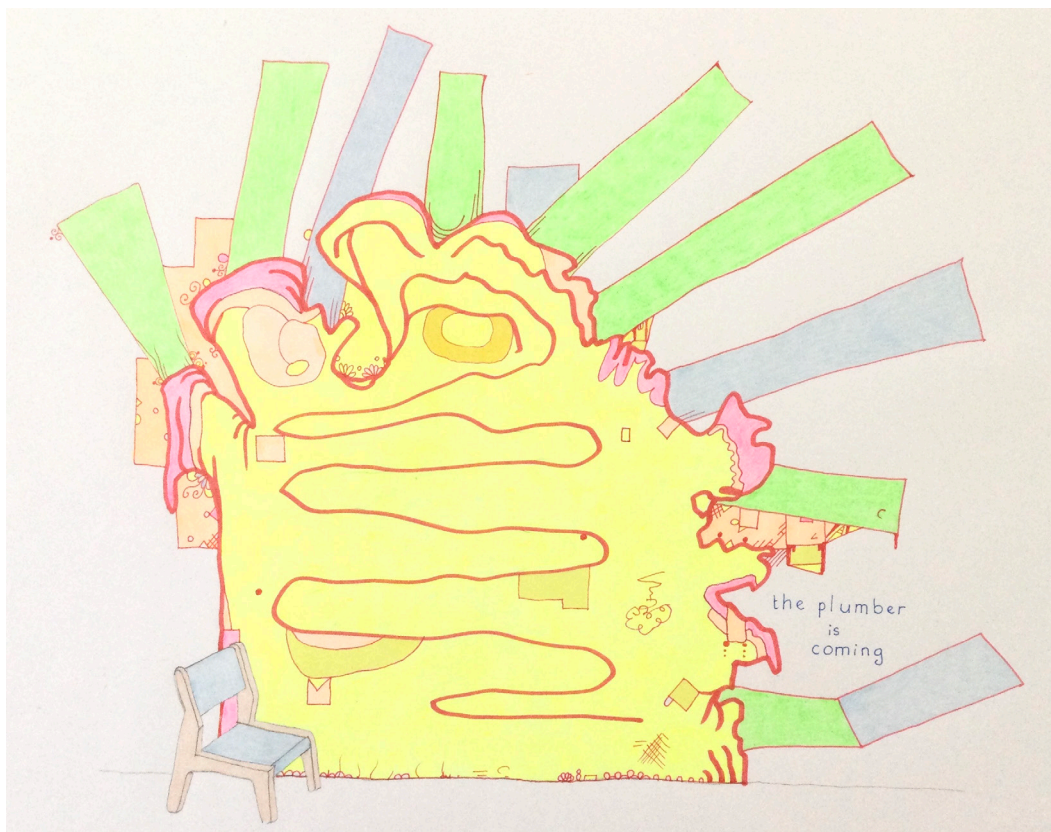
Preparatory drawing *The Plumber*, 2023. Courtesy of the artist
© Lily van der Stokker

Breasts? is the last work in the exhibition, and one of the most recent. The colours used (brown, ochre) are relatively new shades in his work, as in 'Brown wall painting with artist catalogues'. A preparatory drawing for a wall painting with objects, it shows a chair, a sort of cone, complicated motifs that make no sense at first glance, and a question written on the wall: 'Breasts? A strange question, since the answer is clearly no - no, there are no breasts in the drawing. Perhaps the image conjured up in the mind by this question is a reminder of the modesty that makes their representation strangely taboo (images of bare breasts are banned on Facebook and Instagram, two of the most important mediums today). But as Lily van der Stokker explains, the texts she uses are in fact illogical; there is no satisfactory key to reading them. She uses text as a kind of concrete poetry, like still life. For her, text is as much a visual element as non-textual abstraction.

«A long time ago, I discovered that in my art I could tell lies [...]. I can do anything and not explain it, leave it unfinished, open and unclear. Listening to cacophonous music inspires the way I make art [...].»



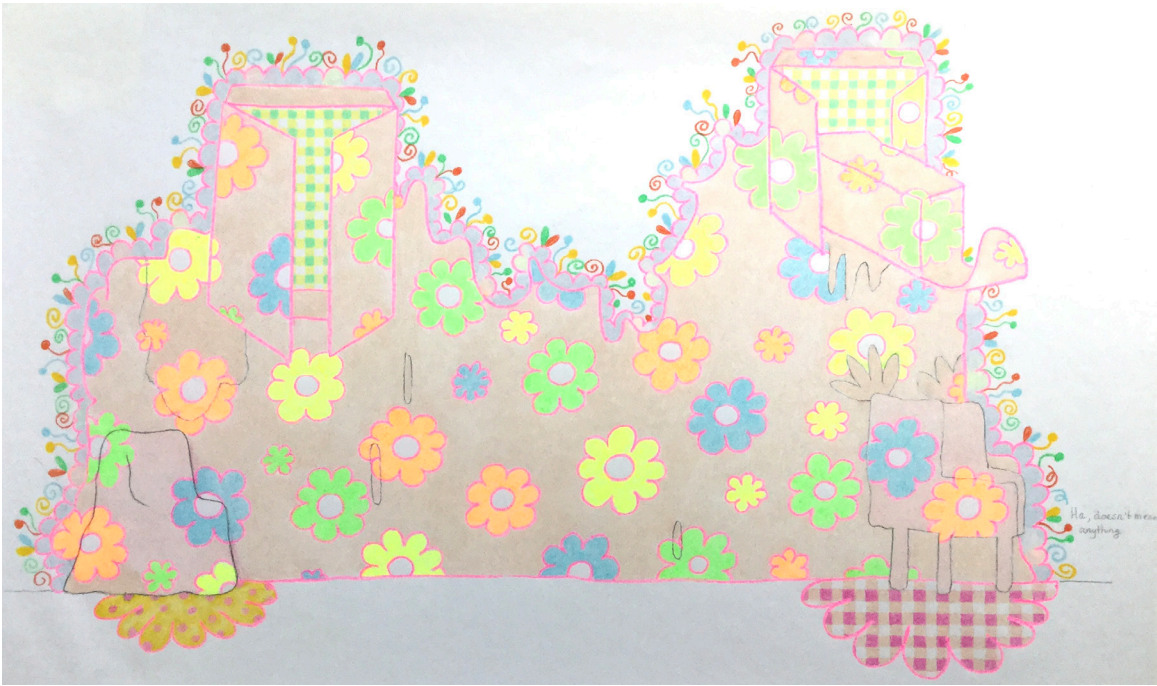
Preparatory drawing *Breasts ?*, 2023. Courtesy of the artist
© Lily van der Stokker



Preparatory drawing *The Plumber*, 2023. Courtesy of the artist
© Lily van der Stokker



Preparatory drawing *Breasts ?*, 2023. Courtesy of the artist
© Lily van der Stokker



Preparatory drawing *Ha, it' Doesn't Mean Anything*, 2008. Courtesy of the artist
© Lily van der Stokker



Nice left Right, Migros museum, 2019, Zurich
© Lily van der Stokker - photo : Roberto Marossi

saturday 05.18.2024

EUROPEAN MUSEUM NIGHT

As part of the 20th European Museum Night, the Frac Normandie in Caen is offering a number of free events.

Programme

4pm Family workshop «La fabrique des songes» - 5-99 years (2h).

After visiting Maxime Verdier's exhibition, adults and children will join the Fractory to create meteorological, zoological or botanical masks - in short, masks that are a little surreal.

Workshop designed by Maxime Verdier.

4.30pm Teen workshop - organised by the Young Ambassadors for Culture (2 hours).

Edeïs, Marie and Nathan, young cultural ambassadors at the Frac Normandie, have put together a practical art workshop for teenagers.

6pm Dance by students from the Conservatoire and the Butte de Caen.

7pm Screen-printing workshop - create your own Cyprien Desrez poster for Museum Night.

Create your own poster based on the original design created by artist Cyprien Desrez especially for the Frac Normandie for Museum Night.

7.30pm «Flash» tour of the exhibitions.

The flash visit offers an overview of the exhibitions in just 30 minutes. The current exhibitions are «I am Here» by Lily van der Stokker and «Soleil noir» by Maxime Verdier.

Registration for tours, workshops and dance: mediation@fracnormandiecaen.fr

saturday 09.21.2024 & sunday 09.22.2024

EUROPEAN HERITAGE DAYS

As part of the European Heritage Days, the Frac Normandie in Caen is opening its doors and offering a programme for young and old alike.

Programme

saturday 4pm A long and wide tour of Lorge. Discover the history and architecture of the Frac Normandie and the stables.

saturday 3.30pm & 4.30pm «Flash» tour of the reserves with Amélie Delsart, collection manager.

saturday 4pm «Fleur bleue» workshop Lily van der Stoker (5-99 years). A workshop to create wallpaper in soft shapes and bright colours.

saturday 5.30pm -Performance-concert by Ellah A. Thau (solo) / Nathanaëlle-Eléonore Hauguel. Based on a proposal by Maxime Verdier as part of his «Soleil noir» exhibition.

sunday 2.30pm A long and wide tour of Lorge. Discover the history and architecture of the Frac Normandie and the stables.

sunday 3.30pm & 4.30pm «Flash» tour of the reserves with Amélie Delsart, collection manager.

sunday 4pm «Fleur bleue» workshop Lily van der Stoker (5-99 years). A workshop to create wallpaper in soft shapes and bright colours.

Frac Normandie : exhibition 04.06 → 09.22.2024

in Caen

MAXIME VERDIER Soleil noir

Each year, the Frac Normandie presents a solo exhibition by an artist associated with the Normandy region, and this year it is inviting Maxime Verdier to take part.

The «Soleil noir» exhibition is the time of the eclipse. Maxime Verdier offers a narrative work made up of personal and collective stories, revealing the marvellous as well as the monstrous in colourful compositions inspired by his everyday life.

Arranged around the solar star, the works are worlds in themselves, with the artist as the underlying thread. Drawings and models transpose his deepest thoughts, between dreams and nightmares, childhood memories and outings with friends, or more recently his daily life as a young artist. Effects of scale combined with truncated or hybridised figures produce whimsical visual narratives: a naked man with the back of a rabbit's head collides with the gaze of a strange black curtain with eyes, a nod to the atmosphere of the studio. A slug wearing a down jacket sits inside a probable bus shelter, expressing the boredom that lends itself to the artist's imagination, creating an unusual situation akin to a cartoon.

Like *Don Quichotte*, Maxime Verdier uses the slightest moment of reality or memory as a pretext for a visual tale that sometimes borders on the absurd, in which watered-down pop figures and motifs have their own dark and disturbing side.

Maxime Verdier is represented by Galerie Anne-Sarah Bénichou, Paris.
Exhibition as part of the Normandie Impressionniste festival.

Frac Normandie : event 09.21.2024

in Caen

To close his exhibition, Maxime Verdier invites the composer and singer Ellah A.Thau (solo) / Nathanaëlle-Eléonore Huaguel for a concert performance on Saturday 21 September at 5.30pm.
Salle du Frac show at the Frac Normandie in Caen - free admission.

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Normandie and the Normandy region.

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Maxime Verdier, *Le Noctambule* (détail), 2023. Courtesy of the artist
© Adagp, Paris 2024 - photo : Raphaëlle Detheve

Francis Baudevin is a Swiss artist, born in Bulle in 1964. He lives and works in Lausanne. His art is based on trompe-l'œil, somewhere between abstraction and representation. In this exhibition, which looks back over the last twenty years of his work, he plays with categories by organising his paintings as suites of colours and formats, or families of mediums. Playing cards, the preferred tools of illusionists, become here a possible image of painting, reshuffled in such a way as to blend Pop Art, geometric abstract art and minimalist seriality.

Like the motifs of his paintings, the title of the exhibition is a quotation from a letter by Cézanne to Camille Pissaro: «It's like playing cards. Red roofs on a blue sea».

Francis painted after Cézanne, of course, but also after several generations of abstract painters. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the first artists to embrace abstraction were breaking new ground - art that dispensed with stories and figures. Over time, however, abstract art itself began to constitute a history, recorded and illustrated in books, preserved and ordered in museums, with the paradoxical effect of transforming abstraction into imagery. This has had the paradoxical effect of transforming abstraction into imagery, so that today, someone like Francis who makes a composition from squares, for example, is no longer painting just squares: he is painting squares after Malevitch, after van Doesburg, after Albers, and so on. A square in a painting now conjures up familiar images of abstract compositions made from squares. And so abstraction, which was initially absolutely new and sought to wipe out representation, has come closer over time to the world of found objects.

Francis' method takes this logic to its logical conclusion. It consists of faithfully reproducing the motif of packaging for industrial products of all kinds (record sleeves, medicine boxes, food products, etc.), enlarging it to the size of a painting and removing all the text. The background of the packaging is already an abstract work. All he has to do is cut them off (in other words, remove the text that covers them) and they (re) become readymade abstractions. Asked whether he painted figuratively, Francis replied: «Representational painting - and abstract painting. Geometric representation.

The exhibition was supported by the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia.
Exhibition as part of the Normandie Impressionniste festival.

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Francis Baudevin, 8, 2024, Courtesy of the artist
© Francis Baudevin

Frac Normandie, Caen

04.06 → 12.22 | opening friday 04.05 6.30pm

I AM HERE by Lily van der Stokker

04.06 → 09.22 | opening friday 04.05 6.30pm

SOLEIL NOIR by Maxime Verdier

Frac Normandie, Sotteville-lès-Rouen

04.13 → 09.22 | opening friday 04.12 6.30pm

C'EST COMME UNE CARTE À JOUER by Francis Baudevin

Théâtre de l'Hôtel de Ville (THV), Le Havre

05.14 → 06.08

PHOTOSENSIBLE with Pierre-Olivier Arnaud, Marc-Antoine Garnier, Barbara Kasten, Isabelle Le Minh, Jochen Lempert, Sébastien Reuze, Laure Tiberghien, Thu-Van Tran, James Welling

Médiathèque Rolland - Plaisance, Évreux

06.29 → 10.06

DÉPAYSAGES with Lélia Demoisy, Philippe Desloubières, Louise Gugi, Marie Heughebaert, Anne Houel, Guillaume Lebel, Jacques Perconte, Simon Ripoll-Hurier*, Stéphane Vigny

*as part of Simon Ripoll-Hurier's «On the Town» artist residency with young people and senior citizens from the Nétreville neighbourhood

Le Hangar 107, Rouen

05.23 → 07.21

RESONANCE PAINTINGS - NYMPHEAS by Oliver Beer

Hangar à Dirigeables, Ecausseville

06.10 → 09.22

HOPELESS SKY by Flora Moscovici

Jardin des Plantes, Rouen

06.13 → 07.14

ARCHÉOTYPIC with Jean-Luc André, Sylvie Auvray, Ingrid Berger, James Lee Byars, Edouard Decam, Uta Eisenreich, Morgane Fourey, Meschac Gaba, Ryan Gander, Akira Ikezoe, Farida Le Suavé, David Liaudet, Azikiwe Mohammed, Nicolas Moulin, Hugues Reip, Ernesto Sartori, Gilles Saussier, Zin Taylor, Marnie Weber

Château des Ravalet, Cherbourg-en-Cotentin

06.22 → 09.22

Ô DINGOS, Ô CHÂTEAUX with Martin Aagaard Hansen, Caroline Bachmann, Sarah Benslimane, Ligia Dias, Florent Dubois, Morgane Fourey, Gaillard & Claude, Vidya Gastaldon, Dorothy Iannone, Romuald Jandolo, Pierre René-Worms, Michael Scott, Blair Thurman, Tursic & Mille, Marie Weber

One Frac Normandie, two exhibition venues

There is now a Frac Normandie, but there are still two exhibition venues: one in Sotteville-lès-Rouen, opposite the Jardin des Plantes in Rouen, and the other in Caen, in the heart of the city, in the Lorge district. Since 1998, the Frac in Sotteville has been housed in an industrial building dating from the 1930s. Built by architect Pierre Chirol, this building, known as the «magasin», was used to store tramway repair equipment and belonged to Transports Rouennais. The town of Sotteville-lès-Rouen, which owns the premises, chose French architect Claude Tautel to convert it into an exhibition space.

The Frac in Caen has been housed in the former Visitation convent since 2018. This exceptional heritage building was built in the 17th century at the request of the sisters of the Visitation Order. Requisitioned by the army in 1792, the convent was transformed into barracks and then became France's first remount depot, where cavalry horses were prepared. Occupied by the military until 1997, the building was completely renovated by French architect Rudy Ricciotti to house the Frac.



Le Frac Normandie in Sotteville-lès-Rouen
© Frac Normandie - Clérin-Morin Photographie



Le Frac Normandie in Caen
© Frac Normandie - Clérin-Morin Photographie

The Frac's missions

Collect

The Frac Normandie's main mission is to build up a collection of contemporary art. To this end, a technical acquisitions committee meets each year to propose the purchase of works, which are then approved by the Board of Directors. To date, there are over 4,000 works in the collection by 1,251 artists. This general public collection includes paintings, drawings, photographs, videos, sculptures, artists' books and installations. It brings together leading, significant and emerging contemporary artists from the international, national and regional art scenes. New acquisitions have been added to the collection every year since 1983.

Broadcast

The works in the collection are disseminated through a dynamic and inventive policy of exhibitions, actions, events and partnerships, as well as loans and deposits throughout the Normandy region and beyond.

Raising awareness

Thanks to an original and sustained programme of visits, mediation, documentation, workshops, courses, meetings, conferences, study days and colloquia designed by the Frac team for all audiences.

The Frac Normandie in figures

1 administrative structure : EPCC
2 sites

1 public collection of over 4,000 works
1 team of 21 people including 1 director

Frac Normandie :
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14000 Caen
 T. 02 31 93 09 00 www.fracnormandie.fr
 Fb Insta : @fracnormandie

Opening

wednesday → sunday, 2 – 6pm

Free admission     

The Frac is accessible to all. Documents for all audiences are available at reception.

Access

By bike

Véloblib station Anciennes Boucheries – Artothèque

En bus

Ligne 2 stop station État Major

Ligne 3 stop station Anciennes Boucheries

More informations on twisto.fr

PRM – People with Reduced Mobility

Two parking spaces are reserved for people with reduced mobility at the entrance to the Frac

Reservations

mediation@fracnormandie.fr



OH
I'm
so
Ugly

Wow
Yes
I am
UGLY

