

Augusta Lardy Micheli - Solo show

'Quiero hacer contigo lo que hace la primavera con los cerezos' is the title of Swiss artist Augusta Lardy Micheli's first solo exhibition in France. In Augusta Lardy Micheli's painting of somatic gestures, a stylistic hybrid between abstraction and a fading landscape imagined by a weakened memory, we find an aesthetic of the senses and forms that seeks to awake our subconscious anxiety from its hibernation and environmental amnesia.

The three large canvases, with their sensitive titles and violent brushstrokes, evoke a gentle terror of nature in peril (*Mûres et cataclysmes divers, Algae bloom on stoic slopes*) and sometimes speak directly to the viewer (*Observez les lys*), like the title of the exhibition, almost soliciting their intervention to avoid the transition from the anthropocenic sublime to the ultimate collapse. In particular, *Algae bloom on stoic slopes* refers to the phenomenon known as 'glacier blood', which turns mountain snow red in summer. First observed by Aristotle, it is caused by the proliferation of a microscopic alga, *Sanguina nivaloides*, which occurs naturally and mysteriously.

In his poem XIV(1), Neruda makes several references to the wind: 'the sad wind that gallops along killing butterflies'. Likewise, Augusta Lardy Micheli envelops the 'subtle visitor' with the warm wind of her lines and curves that pierce the gallery walls. Far from being a 'cerebral sedative', the allegory of the wind evokes a temporality that slips between the paintings and flees into the gallery space imbued with 'solastalgia'.

Augusta Lardy Micheli confronts us with an idea of 'living painting', where the material, the support, the pigments and the binder demand that she lose control and open up to radical acts, in order to discover what the painting wants to become and learn from its silence. It is a painting of the body, of the moment and of somatic memory. This can even involve a drastic change of material and process, such as the switch to copperplate engraving and oxidation (*Serravalle* and *Locus Amoenus, Monte Rosa*). Augusta Lardy Micheli's experimental and corporeal painting also questions the essence of the image. She continues to subtract until what remains is nothing more than the essential.

In this installation of strong contrasts, a few small objects resonate enigmatically. *The little dove*, oil on denim (from her childhood), which the artist surrounds herself with as if it were a totem during her intense interactions with the canvases, and which watches over the exhibition, like a protective eye to help her face the intensity of her expressions. There is also a trace of her studio that gives an unexpected note of green and unites the intensity of the roses: a post-it note with an automatic drawing that she made during a phone call, before starting to work on the show, and a *mise en abyme* that projects us into a 'meta' space where a tiny model reveals a new story of the exhibition.

I agree with Hans Ulrich Obrist when he says that 'We will hear a lot more from Lardy'(2) and I am delighted to offer her her first institutional solo show at the Musée des Beaux-Arts Le Locle (MBAL) in April 2025.

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(1). The title of the exhibition comes from a poem by Neruda.

NERUDA Pablo, *Veinte poemas de amor y una canción desesperada*, 1924.

(2). OBRIST Hans Ulrich, *Das Magazin, March*, 2023

Text by Federica Chiocchetti, Director/Curator, MBAL.