



Every Flower Seems To Burn By Itself

curated by Eloise Sweetman

Artworks by Tanatchai Bandasak, Jason Hendrik Hansma, Marlie Mul, Elif Satanaya Özbay, Maaïke Schoorel, & Damon Zucconi

Les Bains-Douches Alençon

(..) it was the moment between six and seven when every flower—roses, carnations, irises, lilac—glows white, violet, red, deep orange; every flower seems to burn by itself, softly purely in the misty beds and how she loved the grey-white moths spinning in and out, over the cherry pie, over the evening primroses! (Woolf, 1925, p. 13)

This passage from *Mrs. Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf has captured my attention. The golden hour that lingered in my mind over the years. The image of flowers glowing “white, violet, red, deep orange; every flower seems to burn by itself” intrigues me, as though the present’s intensity drifts a little longer. At this hour, we know the burning surprise in the sky will sink, shifting purples to blues, into the inky blacks of night.

Like a sunset, the exhibition *Every Flower Seems To Burn By Itself* momentarily suspends time. Each artwork slowly burns and blossoms in its own heat like Woolf’s flowers: vibrant, full and lingering before disappearing into the rhythms of daily life once more. By curating artworks by (in order of appearance) Maaïke Schoorel, Tanatachi Bandasak, Marlie Mul, Jason Hendrik Hansma, Elif Satanaya Özbay and Damon Zucconi, I aim to evoke the sensation of time stretching out, pulling your viewing experience along, like spun sugar candy elongating into delicate, airy threads.

By creating such an experience, I hope you’ll return to each work and see more than you initially presumed to see. Most of us have heard the phrase ‘take time to smell the roses’ throughout our lives—a cliché, perhaps, but for good reason. When we pause and dilly-dally away from our regimented agendas, we’re often surprised that the sweet scent inspires us to look more closely at what surrounds us. Taking (or sculpting?) time means giving time. During times of crisis, as societies worldwide confront challenges across many facets of life, attentiveness and reflection become more essential, not less.

Every Flower Seems To Burn By Itself invites taking a moment to pause, to remain in place for a while. The exhibition is composed to change in texture and light as you move in and out of the artworks. Each work burns slowly from within, generating an internal heat that radiates outward, lingering before finally dissipating against your cheek as you step back outside.

Maaïke Schoorel's minimalist painting *Lily in the Kitchen* (2016), for example, initially appears as a dying fire, flickering at its outer edges. As you are drawn in (again and again), the work reveals more of itself to you, until you think you know what you are seeing, only to forget what you thought you saw. Working with reference images taken on trips or provided by others, Schoorel's paintings seem to pour off the canvas, as if reaching out to join us in the space where the work is exhibited. One might assume that paintings like hers require quiet, still attention but speaking about and walking past her works allows you to enter the space of the reference image. Each time I have stood before her work and discussed it with an audience member, sooner or later a glimmer appears in their eyes, when they notice something they hadn't before.

Schoorel's painting is presented alongside the wash of the words in Tanatchai Bandasak's *Untitled* (a flower of extraordinary size) (2021), which, from afar, appears as nothing more than a stain. It's easy to walk past, unaware of its presence, but for those curious enough to approach, the work gradually reveals itself—a text stained with spoiled wine, pungent and fading. The text describes the *Rafflesia*, a parasitic flowering plant native to Southeast Asia. Rootless, it relies on the systems of other plants to survive. Its flower—the only visible part of the plant—is the largest in the world and smells of rotting flesh. Bandasak's practice draws from daily life, using found materials to create works that offer the viewer a quiet “turning the corner” moment, where something hidden unexpectedly reveals itself.

Returning to the main exhibition space, you'll encounter the dankness of Marlie Mul's *Puddles* (2014). Puddles of resin, asphalt, plastic and stones that resemble oil slicks or pools of rain in an empty parking lot. Or, as I read them, as sculptural sludge melting away from an artwork's internal heat while our focus was elsewhere. To fully engage with *Puddles*, we must kneel or crouch, looking a little harder and longer. I expect that when you leave the exhibition, you will notice puddles on the street, wet cigarette butts burnt down to the filter anew, and Mul's work will likely return to you. This work should evaporate, but it will probably live with us, like a memory, smoke blown away into the air.

As you move through the spaces of *Les Bains-Douches*, you may notice other works I have not yet described. One such work is *Something About A Double-Edged Sword* (2023) by Elif Satanaya Özbay. Drawing from memories, popular culture and Circassian folklore—particularly the myth of the goddess of War, Nart Sane—Özbay's performance began before we entered the space and continues after we have left. There is a sense that we should understand what is happening, and the characters seem intent on encouraging involvement, implicating us in the narrative. By creating a feeling of repetition, Özbay encourages us to pause and question what we just heard. Her practice extends to finding objects, materials and notes to set the stage. If you look closely as you move through the space, you may notice elements of the performance waiting to be reengaged, ready to be picked up again when the next cycle begins.

As winter nips at our ears and opens the door to the outside, the slowed-down voice of Rhianna fills the room. At the far end, the glowing embers of Jason Hendrik Hansma's video *In Our Real Life* (2021) flicker. In response to extreme weather events, the artist gathered footage of tsunamis and wildfires documented by citizens and volunteer firefighters on social media. The video is hypnotic, but unlike the soothing trance of watching a fire at night, the slowed-down version of Rhianna's *Close to You* (2016) stretches time, draws you into an altered state of imagination. I paired Hansma's video with Schoorel's painting, imagining that, upon returning to the beginning of the exhibition—carrying with you the experience of extended time and the glimmer of discovery in your eyes—you might view the other works anew, approach them a little closer this time, and see something different.

Out on the street, a little past the entrance of Les Bains-Douches, the doors lead down to the basement, where you will find *My Attraction May Fade, But I Will Not* (2020) by Damon Zucconi, a locked room filled with light and fog. Described as “a kind of sculptural casting”, this work comes as close as one can to sculpting time, evoking the idea that “[n]othing is emptied. Rather, the scent of the incense fills the room, even turns time into space; it thus gives it a semblance of duration” (Han, 2017, p. 57). *My Attraction May Fade, But I Will Not* draws you in, prompting you to press your nose to the window, trying to get your reflection out the way. Sometimes, all you see is yourself and the street behind. But give it time, as time will tell, such is the experience of the artist's work.

REFERENCES

- Han, B.-C. (2017). *The Scent of Time*. John Wiley & Sons.
Woolf, V. (2009). *Mrs Dalloway*. Oxford University Press.

BIOGRAPHIES:

TANATCHAI BANDASAK forages. He explores sites bearing archaic traces and roams anonymous urban, suburban and industrial spaces. At times, he searches for unusual objects online. His foraging, both in physical and online spaces, is at once intentional and random. In his artistic process, the objects he gathers come to exist in a suspended state, caught between dysfunction, discard, trace and transition.

JASON HENDRIK HANSMA's work explores the in-between, the liminal and the nearly articulate. Drawing from a wide range of references and materials, his practice deals with standards—architectural, cultural and physical—while also questioning how works can be made outside of standardized norms. A photograph might take months to create, or an entire exhibition might unfold in 'transitional spaces' such as hallways, doorways or windowsills. A hand-stitched curtain slows the pace of an exhibition, providing a soft cut moved by a slight breeze of outside air, or a film focuses on the moment a wave crashes against architecture. In the work, language (and the loss of language) plays a key role in

navigating the politics of aesthetics, prompting a reconsideration of how we locate ourselves through and with one another.

References to fluidity, liquidity and oozing recur throughout MARLIE MUL's work, both in its formal qualities and metaphoric themes. From her folded paintings to facsimile sculptures of rain puddles and inquiries into the history of tobacco smoke, her practice is intricately fabricated while maintaining a strong DIY character. In May 2017, Marlie Mul publicly canceled a solo exhibition at the Gallery of Modern Art (GoMA) in Glasgow, due to unworkable circumstances, resulting in an advertisement of the cancellation displayed inside the galleries of the museum itself.

ELIF SATANAYA ÖZBAY, born in The Netherlands with a Turkish-Circassian background, is an artist whose performance and research-based works revolve around diasporic nostalgia within the framework of horror. Referring Circassian myths, contemporary entertainment and Turkish folklore, her pieces depart from an autobiographical foundation and evolve into fictional narratives through mind mapping and linking methods.

To decode the subjects concealed in MAAIKE SCHOOREL's brushwork, the audience must adopt a slower, more deliberate approach to looking—one that allows space for both visual perception and imagination. Descriptive titles can mislead, as viewer are initially confronted with an illusion of abstraction, where forms hover in a *melée* of colors. Schoorel's paintings ask us to stay present in the act of looking and understanding, resisting the immediate image gratification that dominates our daily encounters with visual material. What emerges through this sustained contemplation is neither the immediacy of the photographic snapshot nor the labor of a restaged scene. Instead, Schoorel's work offers space for her subjects to gradually reveal themselves and to be reinterpreted in the mind of the beholder.

DAMON ZUCCONI frequently uses custom software and scripts to create his works. He has been engaged with computer programming since 2010, producing works that are typically accessible online. His works engage vision, literacy and pattern recognition to make plain our perceptual experiences.

Through extensive research in curating and writing, ELOISE SWEETMAN has delved into themes such as the interplay between not knowing and intimacy, as well as the roles of intuition and emotion in curatorship. Currently, she focuses on lingering as a metaphor to approach each exhibition as a unique research site that informs subsequent projects. Sweetman particularly enjoys developing a deep understanding of artworks over time and collaborating with artists across multiple exhibitions. She draws inspiration from the artist's relationship with the site, found or industrial material, and the ways these elements challenge hierarchies of form.