

Esther Schipper is pleased to present days, between placing and displacing, Jean-Pascal Flavien's first solo exhibition with the gallery.

Flavien has introduced objects usually found in domestic settings, turning the exhibition, in the artist's words, into a house. Upon entering, visitors are faced with a functioning sink that acts to destabilize standard expectations of an exhibition space. An electrical switch at the entrance allows visitors to turn on or off lights, another one, in a less familiar gesture, the power to two radios that have been hung on the wall. Blue and yellow electrical outlet covers punctuate the space. Custom-made furniture—stools, chairs, a day-bed, tables and a ladder—are placed in sequences numbering between 3 and 6 elements that appear to articulate concise statements, perhaps speaking a language based on the activities they indicate: to sit in a chair or on a stool, to use a table or small footstool. Both precise and poetic one imagines the dynamic created by the lines of objects to be similar to that created by words in a sentence: slight alterations may fundamentally change their meaning.

Part of the exhibition is a person chosen by the artist who has spent time in his breathing house: le maison respire in Parc Saint Léger (2012-) and who will be present in the gallery. She will speak of her experience and show pictures of her time at the breathing house. Two dresses, designed by Nadège Vanhee-Cybulski, also constitute a link between built structure and exhibition: a blue one was worn in the breathing house, the white one will cloth her in days, between placing and displacing.

Five models of houses are exhibited on custom-made cast aluminum shelves. Each model is paired with a book containing a short story written by the artist that tells of inhabitants and events pertaining to the structure, evoking a vivid impression of each house as individual presence. The combination, without an apparent contradiction, of familiar and unfamiliar and even somewhat nonsensical elements seems to allude to the operations of dreams and their high tolerance for ambivalence.

Although they are posed as characters, the houses are not to be understood as psychological beings but rather as conceptual entities, representing ideas, locations, and events in which the architectural conditions can determine the behavior of its inhabitants (and vice versa). Jean-Pascal Flavien's work explores how architecture shapes our experience of space but also how it can more fundamentally determine our experience of ourselves and of others.

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