

**L'ÉTÉ RETROUVÉ**

Soufiane Ababri, Carlotta Bailly-Borg, Thomas Fougeirol,  
Maude Maris, Christine Safa, Marnie Weber and Guy Yanai

Galerie Praz-Delavallade is pleased to invite Carlotta Bailly-Borg, Soufiane Ababri, Christine Safa, Guy Yanai, Marnie Weber, Maude Maris and Thomas Fougeirol to this year's summer group show titled *L'été retrouvé*. Together, they immerse the visitors in tender warmth and colorful positions, filling the gallery space with the tenderness of the suspended time of summer months.

When the sun is at its highest, the summer noon, Both the middle of the year and the middle of the day coincide. It is a moment of balance between the extremes of the force of creation of spring and the shedding that comes in autumn. That zenith, the immobility of the middle moment, that enables us to be present. The summer months seem to reunite both laziness, lasciviousness and economy of movement but also moments of adventure and rituals of initiation. The sweetness of the season enable us to be adventurous, the heat encourages us to take risks and nothing seems to have consequences. To pass the time, the boredom and the freedom of summer, new relations, friendships and loves form. It is the simultaneous celebration of pleasure of the senses and of a *memento mori*.

The anthropomorphic forms in Carlotta Bailly Borg paintings are fluidly trying to place themselves in relation to each other as their caressing and merging bodies appear to morph with pressed flowers. As results of another moment, they become as delicate as a sheet of tissue paper. The organic and fluid curves are inspired by Persian calligraphy, Greek and Hindu mythological sources, medieval manuscripts and Japanese erotic representations. Their timelessness and the question of physical love unites bodies and flowers as floating bodies, skin to skin. They are the bodies of summer, undressed floating in the warmth. These non-gendered figures have tender gestures between them and are interwoven in soft compositions.

Equally there is the floating figures in the work of Maude Maris. They seem to be in places a part of time, isolated from their original context. Maris implements a precise ritual involving painted objects. It is as if the images have established a mysteriously connection to the occult world, one which unsettles notions of scale, disturbs perception and disrupts dominion. Inspired by the practices of Henry Moore, Constantin Brancusi and Georgia O'keeffe, Maris moulds small objects in plaster, objects that she buys from flea markets. This process enables her to play with her finds, allowing accidents and unexpected results to occur. As tokens from past memories they are reshaped, transformed and opened to the interpretation of the eye of the viewer.

Christine Safa's small format evokes the calm of the sea, the sensation of twilight on a Mediterranean evening. The same Mediterranean that is a place of longing, the incarnation of summer. Safa's poetic paintings seduce through their graphic compositions, whose colors are inspired by the light and intense sun of childhood summers spend in Beirut. A memory of tiredness by the heavy laying heat as if half consciousness half asleep, through the mesmerizing sound of the water and the hot air. They capture a feeling of nostalgia, where interior becomes exterior,

impressions and emotions shape landscape. The suns power and the Mediterranean sea equally inspire her as the works by Etel Adnan, Hilma af Klint, Albert Camus and Paul Valéry.

Similarly referencing memories, Marnie Weber's collages are part of the summer season of her series of 366 works of *The Diary Project*. Making one collage a day, she explores archived images, such as *The Spirit Girls* or nude figures taken from soft-core skin magazines. Weber converts memories of summer days into fiction and distorted reality. They show days of mundane happiness as well as some days of sadness and heart-ache. As in a daydream a women's body becomes one with a summers landscape and flora. Through the sensuality of textures Weber transforms the mythical American landscape into a child-like and Surrealist place. Her works reunite the emergence of sexuality and the image of feminine beauty as well as ugliness and cruelty. Historical references range from Victorian fantasy, the Pre-Raphaelites to Surrealism, and on through twentieth-century pop and feminism.

The characters in Soufiane Ababri works exist in suspended time: a couple lounging naked on the beach, while others play happily in the water. The hours of high are followed by hours of lows, as a figure passively waiting uncovered as for the heat or something or someone to pass in another drawing. Soufiane Ababri's characters read Élisabeth Lebovici and Édouard Glissant, listen to Isabelle Aubret records and hang posters of classic films such as *The Godfather*, directed by Francis Ford Coppola. All these references help to contextualise the characters he draws. The stolen images taken with his phone that he redraws allow him to distance himself from reality in order to give free rein to his imagination and fantasy.

Also Guy Yanai boats are this certain nostalgia of something never experienced. Though appropriating found digital images and memories of others he reimagines the world in flat, rectangular patches of bright color, suffused with a radiant light. In his isolated moments, one may find a tiny boat gliding on placid waters below a clear sky as the image of a day spend in the sun. Like a day of leisure in the austral light and warmth of the climates of his native Israel and his adopted home in the south of France. The ports of Haifa and Marseille connecting the Mediterranean, which is so characteristic in Yanais work. Guy Yanai appropriates digital images that he finds online and pays tribute to the cinema of the French nouvelle vague française, which he often borrows characters from.

Thomas Fougeirol works seem to be capturing old images of old half developed images in his pratique of thick paint and raw pigment. The body imprints itself through the action of manipulation on the print, just as the image does on a negative. They seem like a shadow of a fleeting memory, as seen through half closed eyes or distant images vibrating in the heat. Seen from a distance, the canvasses appear to be photographic, or even proto-photographic experiments or images of materials. Seen from close-up however, they reveal the rich diversity of their structure and lay bare the traces of the process by which they were made.

Together the seven artists create an exhibition in quiet bloom, as a moment in the quietness of hot hours of noon. They let the visitor question the memories of yesterday's summers as we go through one that will be the memories of tomorrow, while the artists celebrate the tenderness of hours of leisure and idleness. As we think of *L'été retrouvé* we might also be thinking of new tomorrows.