

galerie frank elbaz.

## Madeleine Roger-Lacan

*Painting under my skirt*

September 3 - October 1, 2022

Opening on Saturday, September 3, 2022

I drew *Nights with girl Marilyn* after watching Billy Wilder's *The Seven Year Itch*. Puckered lips, starry dress, narrowed eyes, round and full breasts. It's a sensual, tender dream.

A friend gave me a statue of Marilyn Monroe. It depicts the iconic scene where her white dress is blown upwards. This statue had been left at the entrance of a nightclub where it got completely beaten up. The poor cardboard Marilyn was a bit scary from the start... but now she looked like a nightmare. I liked her straight away and asked if I could bring her to the studio. She arrived one evening in November 2019. She has been sitting by the entrance ever since. I put a sheet over her head to keep her from driving away my visitors. A phantom Marilyn is better than a disfigured one.

The real Marilyn also got completely beaten up on the night of the famous dress scene.

*The Seven Year Itch* shoot, New York, September 1954: Marilyn is wearing a light, sunray-pleated white dress. This scene is now legendary. She leaves the cinema with her neighbour. It's summer in New York, a heat wave. Marilyn's character walks over a subway grate and whew – she repeatedly makes the most of the air blowing up her dress. Censorship meant that only her pretty feet and white sandals were shown on the screen. Another shot frames her face being caressed by her raised dress. The imagination will do the rest – as will the giant publicity photo displayed on Madison Avenue.

While the scene is being shot, there is actually a crowd of people looking at her, photographing her. She is extremely uncomfortable and wearing two pairs of panties to make sure no one discerns her private parts.

And then there's her husband... he can't stand his wife's "intimacy" being exposed. He leaves the set in

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a rage. In the evening, he violently strikes Marilyn. They get divorced three weeks later.

I am looking at this sculpture seventy years after the event. Her head is broken and people have drawn blood drops with lipstick under her skirt.

I paint her, but I am also protecting her: I do not activate the mechanism that raises her skirt and her gutted face stays covered.

Another Marilyn sculpture – this one ten metres high – was found in a rubbish dump in China. It was a copy of a giant sculpture of the actress made in the United States. It had once stood at the entrance to a shopping mall in Guiguan, but was subsequently removed and abandoned in a dump. A symbol that is all too American; there's an absolute shamelessness towards her five-metre-long legs and gigantic white panties towering over us.

*Reflection on the fantastic in a wonderful garden:* I sat at the feet of my phantom Marilyn. Her broken head lying by my feet, vanity out of plastic. There's a wonderful garden behind me, where I can get lost. My imagination is a source of pleasure. Painting fleshes out my fantasies. I live some of them out. My friends shelter under my skirt; I take them in. I kiss a man shorter than I am. Clément dances with an abandoned Marilyn in her Chinese dump. The mountain woman walks around, kinkier than her previous iteration.

Painting pleasure, laughing at the semen on one's body, staging my fantasies' atmospheres, and always keeping a few things secret. Painting sensual stories, celebrating sexuality and its strangeness, setting aggressions aside – just for a while.

### *Three lover's fragments:*

November 2020: "You and I are united so often in my mind.

It is with our skins that I am obsessed. They have the same texture pressed against each other."

"Who needs a god, when you have a man."

I wrote down this quote, in a distorted version, after reading an excerpt from Joyce Carole Oates' *Blonde*. I was fascinated. Frightened, too. And I recognised myself in this urge to please and do everything for someone else. To get lost in the other.

"There's something more intimate than love, this feeling of getting lost in you, or in the idea of you. It's mad."

Paul Valéry

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