

Press Release

Sylvie Fleury

Égoïste

February 10–March 23, 2024

Public Reception: February 9, 6–8pm

Sprüth Magers Window, Berlin

Sprüth Magers

ÉGOÏSTE. Thirteen bright neon works that read the French word are mounted at different heights on the walls of the gallery's storefront exhibition space. The sunken and high-ceilinged room with its large display windows allows visitors to view Sylvie Fleury's installation from the street.

Fleury's artistic practice has been exploring the intersections between art, fashion, beauty, pop culture, motorsports and science fiction since the early 1990s. She utilizes the unmistakable visual language of these arenas and draws on their aesthetics and phenomena to examine desire in all its forms, while also radically questioning the paradigms of art history and its male-dominated canon of modernism.

Égoïste (2023) draws on the lettering of an eponymous Chanel fragrance, explicitly "Pour Homme," and represents one of the first logos that Fleury used for her works. Take, for example, an installation of multiple shopping bags emblazoned with the term, arranged on a table (*Égoïste*, 1991/2023) or a wall painting in which the word shimmered luxuriously (*Égoïste*, 1996). The brand's perfume campaign stages the egoistic as a positive masculine quality whose "seductive power" awakens female desire. Intended to circumscribe the wearer – give him a title – the logo, out of context, is charged with ambivalence and becomes either an insult or an admission of an obsession with the self. Here, Fleury explores the creation of identity and a question that resurfaces throughout her work: how do we define ourselves? As is so often the case, she chooses a trenchant motif that allows viewers to find their own answers.

The installation of thirteen neons in the Window is reminiscent of the advert for the Parisian perfume, in which several women on different floors of a hotel open their balcony doors to lament an "Égoïste." By evoking associations and transmitting a mood that is intended to encourage buyers, the works tap into effective marketing strategies. However, going beyond replication and once again demonstrating her humorous approach to the business of exhibiting, buying and selling art, Fleury puts the gallery space itself on display. She conceives of it as a showroom: the neon letters illuminating the gallery after dusk and inviting passersby to "window shop." In addition, presenting various editions turns the market's logic – which is characterized by a longing for rarity – on its head and questions the pursuit of individuality in a consumerist world.

Sylvie Fleury (*1961, Geneva) lives and works in Geneva. Selected solo exhibitions include Kunstmuseum Winterthur (2023), Pinacoteca Agnelli, Turin; Aranya Art Center and Bechtler Stiftung, Uster (all 2022), Kunstraum Dornbirn, the Instituto Svizzero, Rome (both 2019), Villa Stuck, Munich (2016), Centro de Arte Contemporaneo, Malaga (2011), MAMCO-Musée de l'art contemporain de Genève (2008–2009), the Mozarteum, Salzburg (2005), ZKM, Museum für Neue Kunst, Karlsruhe; Le Magasin-Centre National d'Art Contemporain, Grenoble (both 2001), The Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago (1995). Selected group exhibitions include Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zurich (2022/2013), Jeu de Paume, Paris (2020), Grand Palais, Paris (2019), Kunsthaus Zurich (2018), Museum für angewandte Kunst, Frankfurt (2017), Museum Haus Konstruktiv, Zurich (2016), Belvedere, Vienna (2012), Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich (2010), Chelsea Art Museum, New York (2007), PS1, New York (2006), Collection Lambert, Avignon (2003) and Museum Ludwig, Cologne (2000).

For further information and press inquiries, please contact Silvia Baltschun (sb@spruethmagers.com).

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