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misha margolis and dominique albertelli @ charlot gallery review



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Memories & imagination

by Betty on 13/01/2013

The Charlot Gallery, established two years ago, is a white and narrow space located on two floors in the third arrondissement of Paris. The gallery custom for every new exhibition is to showcase two artists: one who works with traditional techniques such as painting and drawing, and one who will rather work with new technologies.

To start the year the gallery invited the French painter **Dominique Albertelli** at street level, and the Russian artist **Misha Margolis** to occupy the basement space with his piece 'La Racine' ('The Root'). This amazing installation work consists in an actual three-meter-long tree root fixed to the ceiling of the room. From it hang five white screens and five squares of polarizing films through which, individually held, the images on the screens magically appear.

[Misha Margolis, 'La Racine', 2012 \(detail\), image courtesy of the Charlot Gallery](#)

Misha Margolis, 'La Racine', 2012 (detail), image courtesy of the Charlot Gallery

On each screen a different animation is shown: they are simple and poetic, and depict an ideal of rural and family life. Two to three generations of persons from the same family are shown in repetitive everyday doings under a bright blue sky. Altogether the room is quite dark and the atmosphere is eerie for you can hear the mixed sounds of the looping animations like a melody of birds singing and doors creaking.

It is interesting to see how the audience acts with this multimedia installation: for in a group of persons, each individually stares through the polarizing film, everyone bearing the same attitude while actually reflecting on how the images they see relate to themselves, their family history or their values. The film is like our personal handheld lens, and the five apparatus create five individual theaters.

[Misha Margolis, 'La Racine', 2012, image courtesy of the Charlot Gallery](#)

Misha Margolis, 'La Racine', 2012, image courtesy of the Charlot Gallery

As for the aspect of the sculpture in itself, even if an equality of treatment was given to the technologic parts and the natural parts, gravity still differentiates the two. The roots are very light and seem to crawl in the air a few inches under the ceiling, while the screens are heavy and hanging from very straight vertical cords. This ironic contrast is even more striking when you realize you are watching beautiful landscapes fixed on a tree-root, in a small Parisian basement. Overall the aspect of the sculpture is still spectacular and the lack of finishing touches only appear as an extension of the artist's desire for spontaneity.

[Dominique Albertelli, 'Femmes d'ici ! \(et d'ailleurs\)', 2012, image courtesy of the Charlot Gallery](#)

On the ground floor, colourful paintings and drawings from Dominique Albertelli are on display. Two series of small square drawings, 'Femmes d'ici ! (et d'ailleurs)', ('Women from here! (and elsewhere)') are presented in a narrowed fashion, and three larger paintings on canvas are hanging on the opposite wall. The two series are portraits of imaginary women, often in close-up, wearing colourful and boldly patterned clothes. In some drawings some elements from the sea – fish, shells, or algae-looking hair – are to be seen, but mainly the only decor for those women is their own aura represented by coloured floating dots.

[Dominique Albertelli, 'Au-delà des mots' \(left\) and 'Les rêveurs' \(right\), 2012, image](#)

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Among other techniques the artist uses charcoal and watercolour, which gives the smaller drawings an appreciated sketchy aspect. A documentary video shows her in the midst of creation, and her speed drawing movements are hypnotizing. Her larger paintings are also portraits, but this time full-length and situated in a more elaborate background. The artist says that she usually uses even bigger canvases and paints mainly with the colour red, and that the grey, orange and light pink pieces presented there are an exception in her work. One painting stands out: 'Au-delà des mots' ('Beyond words') has more ink-like drippings and a more sophisticated composition than the other two. The depicted characters are very resembling to those in the other paintings, but the watery texture and the absence of horizon really gets our attention.

(Dominique Albertelli & Misha Margolis are being exhibited @ GC until February 16th)

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