



ESPACE MEYER ZAFRA

ORCHESTRATEURS D'IMAGES

MUNTEAN & ROSENBLUM, MAXIME BIOU, CLAIRE FAHYS, SARAH MAISON

23.01.2025 - 06.03.2025

4 rue Malher, 75004 Paris

Espace Meyer Zafra is very pleased to introduce you to its first ever group exhibition devoted to figurative painting, entitled *Orchestrateurs d'images*. From January 23 to March 6, 2025, this exhibition will bring together the duo **Muntean & Rosenblum**, **Maxime Biou**, **Sarah Maison** and **Claire Fahys**.

Orchestrateurs d'images explores the multiple methods used by these artists to exploit various images, whether visual, mental or historical. Within their works, they bring together and harmonize all the means available, such as photography, mental image, real scenes, art history or popular media.

Painting, by definition, is an interpretation of reality. Whether in the animal series presented by **Maxime Biou** or in the series by **Claire Fahys** produced during her residency in Mexico, we can find this orchestration of visual images, which originates in photography and which will be recomposed later in order to find the emotion felt by the observer; the most important aspect is not in the reproduction of reality but in the sensation, in the inner vibration generated by the image.

In the work *Sans Titre* (Fig. 3), **Maxime Biou** depicts a cat curled up, sleeping peacefully on an armchair, bathed in soft natural light, the artist's favorite trademark. The sobriety of this painting, stripped away from all spatio-temporal markers, allows the spectators to feel a certain softness and intimacy inspired by everyday life. This animal series fully embodies the artist's aesthetic research: the composition, the material, the color, the work of the drapery... Each element testifies to an obvious pleasure in the act of painting. Moreover, the subject represented here, his cat with whom he lives with, reveals at its peak the relationship of intimacy and simplicity that we can find in the work of **Maxime Biou**.

In contrast to this subdued light, the overwhelming light of Mexico is highly infused in **Claire Fahys'** paintings. Influenced by the urban landscapes of Richard Dieberkorn and the windows of Lois Dodd (as can be seen in the work *Lagos, 2pm* (Fig. 6)), **Fahys** pays particular attention to the colorful planes and subdivisions of the painting. In *Viento Solar* "Solar Wind" (Fig. 5), the eponymous work of the Mexican series, the artist captures a banal urban scene, but renders the intensity of the light which, by crushing everything under its radiation, reducing the figures to simple silhouettes. This phenomenon of blinding sunlight, which strikes the Europeans eyes as they arrive in South America, is one of the major aspects that **Fahys** successfully reproduces and captures, in all its power and energy.

If the interpretation of reality passing through everyday life is present in **Maxime Biou** and **Claire Fahys** works, in **Sarah Maison** and the duo **Muntean & Rosenblum**, it is the human body that imposes itself as the central subject. In the work *Figure marchant* (Fig. 7) by **Sarah Maison** - composed and recomposed many times over nearly 3 years - a figure emerges or disappears according to the viewer's interpretation. Through interlacing colors, the artist questions the materiality of the body, its relationship with a blurred, abstract environment. Her spaces, indefinite and timeless, are devoid of any specific narrative. Each of **Sarah Maison's** paintings is born from a real image, often a representation of herself, but is transformed into a mental abstraction, where the individual becomes an archetype rather than a specific person.

As for the compositional approach of **Muntean & Rosenblum's** painting, it is closer to traditional painting, although derived as much from the collective memory of figuration in popular media (fashion magazines) as from direct appropriations of Renaissance, Baroque and Neoclassical motifs. Presented as paintings of adolescent life, the images are always surrounded by a white border. Visually, they are reminiscent of an old-fashioned television set or images from popular comic strips. A maxim, an aphorism or an expressive comment is handwritten in the lower part of the canvas. The text is never directly linked to the image, but is not unrelated to the painting either. The figures depicted as in the work *Untitled (Happiness begins to deteriorate)* (Fig.1), are static and seized by a feeling of weariness. The viewer is deprived of any easily readable psychological content. The subject, despite the fact that he is wearing fashionable clothes, sneakers, a familiar lifestyle, does not immediately lead to a feeling of personal identification.

Through a diversity of approaches, these artists orchestrate their images with a mastery that questions the relationships between perception and reproduction. By playing around with references, appearances and cultural resonances, each of these creators composes, deconstructs and recomposes, inviting the viewer to an intimate and multiple exploration of the image and its meanings.

Espace Meyer Zafra a le plaisir de présenter pour la première fois à la galerie une exposition collective consacrée à la peinture figurative, intitulée *Orchestrateurs d'images*. Du 23 janvier au 06 mars 2025, cette exposition réunira le duo **Muntean & Rosenblum**, **Maxime Biou**, **Sarah Maison** et **Claire Fahys**.

Orchestrateurs d'images explore les multiples méthodes qu'utilisent ces artistes afin d'exploiter diverses images, qu'elles soient visuelles, mentales ou historiques. Au sein de leurs oeuvres, ils rassemblent et harmonisent tous les moyens dont ils disposent (photographie, image mentale, scènes réelles, histoire de l'art, médias populaires, etc.)

La peinture, par définition, est une interprétation du réel. Que cela soit dans la série animalière présentée par **Maxime Biou** ou dans la série de **Claire Fahys** réalisée lors de sa résidence au Mexique, nous pouvons retrouver cette orchestration d'images visuelles, qui trouve son origine dans la photographie puis qui sera recomposée par la suite afin de retrouver l'émotion ressentie par l'observateur ; le plus important ne se trouvant pas dans la reproduction du réel mais bien dans la sensation, dans la vibration intérieure que génère l'image.

Dans l'oeuvre *Sans Titre* (Fig. 3), **Maxime Biou** figure un chat recroquevillé, endormi paisiblement sur un fauteuil, baigné par une lumière naturelle douce, marque de prédilection de l'artiste. La sobriété de cette peinture, dépouillée de tout marqueurs spatio-temporels permet aux contemplateurs de ressentir une certaine douceur et une intimité du quotidien. Cette série animalière incarne pleinement les recherches esthétiques de l'artiste : la composition, la matière, la couleur, le travail du drapé... Chaque élément témoigne d'un plaisir évident de l'acte de peindre. De plus le sujet représenté ici, son chat avec qui il vit au quotidien, révèle à son paroxysme cette relation d'intimité et de simplicité que nous pouvons trouver dans l'oeuvre de **Maxime Biou**.

À l'opposé de cette lumière tamisée, la lumière écrasante du Mexique infuse les toiles de **Claire Fahys**. Influencée par les paysages urbains de Richard Dieberkorn et les fenêtres de Lois Dodd (comme on peut le voir dans l'oeuvre *Lagos, 2pm* (Fig. 6)), **Fahys** accorde une attention particulière aux plans de couleur et aux subdivisions du tableau. Dans *Viento Solar* « Vent Solaire » (Fig. 5), oeuvre éponyme de la série mexicaine, l'artiste capte une scène urbaine banale, mais rend l'intensité de la lumière qui, en écrasant tout sous son rayonnement, réduit les figures à de simples silhouettes. Ce phénomène de la lumière solaire aveuglante, qui frappe les Européens de plein fouet à leur arrivée en Amérique du Sud, est l'un des aspects majeurs que **Fahys** tente de reproduire, de capter, dans toute sa force et son énergie.

Si l'interprétation du réel passe par le quotidien chez **Maxime Biou** et **Claire Fahys**, chez **Sarah Maison** et le duo **Muntean & Rosenblum**, c'est le corps humain qui s'impose comme sujet central. Dans l'oeuvre *Figure marchant* (Fig. 7) de **Sarah Maison** - composée et recomposée de nombreuses fois durant près de 3 ans - une figure surgit ou disparaît selon l'interprétation du spectateur. À travers des entrelacs de couleurs, l'artiste questionne la matérialité du corps, sa relation avec un environnement flou, abstrait. Ses espaces, indéfinis et intemporels, sont dénués de tout narratif spécifique. Chaque toile de **Sarah Maison** naît d'une image réelle, souvent une représentation d'elle-même, mais se transforme en une abstraction mentale, où l'individu devient un archétype plus qu'une personne précise.

Quant à l'approche compositionnelle de la peinture de **Muntean & Rosenblum**, elle se rapproche davantage de la peinture traditionnelle, bien que dérivée autant de la mémoire collective de la figuration dans les médias populaires (magazines de mode) que des appropriations directes des motifs de la Renaissance, du Baroque et du Néo-Classique. Présentées comme des tableaux de la vie adolescente, les images sont toujours entourées d'un liseré blanc. Sur le plan visuel, elles ne sont pas sans rappeler un poste de télévision à l'ancienne ou des images de bandes dessinées populaires. Une maxime, un aphorisme ou un commentaire expressif est écrit à la main dans la partie inférieure de la toile. Le texte n'est jamais directement lié à l'image, mais n'est pas non plus sans rapport avec la peinture. Les figures représentées comme dans l'oeuvre *Untitled (Happiness begins to deteriorate)* (Fig. 1), sont statiques et saisis d'un sentiment de lassitude. Le spectateur est privé de tout contenu psychologique facilement lisible. Le sujet, bien qu'il arbore des vêtements à la mode, des sneakers, un style de vie familier, n'ouvre pas immédiatement la voie à un sentiment d'identification personnelle.

À travers une diversité d'approches, ces artistes orchestrent leurs images avec une maîtrise qui questionnent les rapports entre perception et reproduction. Par le jeu sur les références, les apparences et les résonances culturelles, chacun de ces créateurs compose, déconstruit et recompose, invitant le spectateur à une exploration intime et multiple de l'image et de ses significations.



MUNTEAN & ROSENBLUM

Markus Muntean, Born in 1962 in Graz, Austria / Adi Rosenblum, Born in 1962 in Haifa, Israël
Collaboration since 1992. Lives and works in Vienna, Austria

Markus Muntean was born in 1962 in Graz, Austria. Adi Rosenblum was born in 1962 in Haifa, Israel. Muntean/Rosenblum live and work in Vienna, the city where they met while studying at the end of the 1980s. The artists have collaborated since 1992.

Large-scale painting is one of the core aspects of their practice. However, they often expand their work by creating large installations with sculptural elements where performances are staged or films screened. In addition, they make drawings as well as collages with texts and photographs. In their work, Muntean/Rosenblum mix references to art history and present-day popular culture. They mostly depict groups of apparently lethargic or melancholic young people in idle situations, which are either ordinary and everyday or mysterious and ambiguous. The often-dreamy scenes take place in rooms, public spaces or landscapes as if part of a film, presenting unresolved situations in the making. The characters seem to adopt postures copied from fashion magazines, or from paintings originating from the renaissance to the nineteenth century. Their work is frequently accompanied by captions or texts not-directly relating to the depicted scene, adding another layer of complexity. The artists themselves described their work as 'precise ambiguity'. By playing with visual codes from the past and the present, Muntean/Rosenblum scrutinise the power of images and how these constitute an overwhelming collective memory.

Most important exhibitions :

2000 / Fantasies and Curositities, Miami Art Museum, Miami, USA
2004 / Being in and out of love too many times makes it harder to love, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne, Australia
2004 / It is never facts that tell, Tate Britain, London, Great Britain
2004 / 26th Sao Paulo Biennale, Sao Paulo, Brazil
2004 / Busan Biennale, Busan, Korea
2006 / We live in a twilight, Kunsthalle Budapest, Budapest, Hungary
2008 / Muntean & Rosenblum, Arndt & Partner, Berlin, Germany
2012 / The Management of Insignificance, CAC Malaga, Malaga, Spain
2012 / Une Mirada Multiple. Selecciones de la Coleccion Ella Fontanals-Ciscenos, Museo de Bellas Artes, Havana Biennial, Havana, Cuba
2014 / States of Mind, Maison Particulière, Brussels, Belgium
2014 / Les esthétiques d'un monde désenchanté, CAC Meymac, France
2015 / My Selfie & I, Tel Aviv Museum, Israel
2016 / L'arte differente, MAXXI, Roma, Italy
2016 / Intrigantes Incertitudes, Musée d'art moderne et contemporain, Saint-Etienne, France
2017 / Muntean & Rosenblum, Parkview Museum, Beijing, China
2017 / Imaginery Asia, Nam June Paik Art Center, Gyeonggi-do, Korea
2018 / Walking Wounded, MOCAP, Museum of Contemporary Art, Krakow, Poland
2018 / Unexpected Narratives, Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach, USA
2019 / Trouble in Paradise, Kunsthal Rotterdam, Rotterdam, Netherlands
2022 / Muntean & Rosenblum, Albertina Museum, Vienna, Austria
2022 / Que te seja leve o peso das estrelas, Centro de Arte de Coimbra, Portugal
2024 / In aller Freundschaft, Dom Museum, Vienna, Austria
2024 / Mirror of Thoughts, Stadel Museum, Frankfurt, Germany

Museum and Public Collections :

MoMA, Museum of Modern Art, New York / Albertina, Vienna, Austria / Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna (MAK), Vienna, Austria / MUMOK, Museum of Modern Art Foundation Ludwig Vienna, Vienna / Museum der Moderne Salzburg, Austria / Neue Galeri, Graz, Austria / Bank Austria Kunstforum Wien|Sammlung BA-CA, Vienna / Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst, Leipzig, Germany / Museum Kunsthpalast, Düsseldorf, Germany / Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Tel Aviv, Israel / MOCAP, Museum of Contemporary Art Krakau, Poland / MUSAC, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Castilla y León, León, Spain / Zabłudowicz Collection, London, New York / Susan and Michael Hort, New York / Ella Fontanals-Cisneros Collection, Miami / Rubell Family Collection, Miami / Dicke Collection, Ohio / The Progressive Art Collection, Ohio / Burger Collection, Hong Kong / Belvedere 21er Haus, Vienna, Austria / ARCO Foundation, Madrid, Spain / Coleccion Inelcom Arte Contemporaneo, Madrid, Spain



HAPPINESS BEGINS TO DETERIORATE ONCE IT IS NAMED.

Muntean & Rosenblum
Untitled (*Happiness begins to deteriorate*), 2024
Pastel Chalks and Oil on canvas
110 x 85 cm (43,3 x 33,5 in)
Fig. 1



PEOPLE DO NOT CHANGE, THEY ARE MERELY REVEALED.

Muntean & Rosenblum
Untitled (People do not change), 2024
Pastel Chalks and Oil on canvas
110 x 85 cm (43,3 x 33,5 in)
Fig. 2

MAXIME BIOU

Born in 1993 in Issy-les-Moulineaux, France

Lives and works in Paris, France

Maxime Biou graduated from the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris, where he studied for five years in François Boisrond's studio. He began painting shortly before enrolling at the École, initially working almost exclusively from life, using his friends and everyday elements as models. It was only later that he incorporated photographic references into his creative process, granting him greater freedom.

A painter of spontaneity, Maxime Biou acts as a witness to the moments he captures. The narratives in his paintings are more implied than explicitly stated. The key lies in the relationship that forms between the viewer and what the work, its treatment, and its material evoke. Thus, Maxime Biou does not impose interpretation on the viewer; instead, he allows ample space for it to develop and take root.

His work has received numerous awards: the Diamond Grant, the Friends of the Beaux-Arts Prize/Bertrand de Demandolx Prize, the Yishu 8 Prize, the Fénéon Artistic Prize, and the Encouragement Prize in Painting from the Academy of Fine Arts. Recently, his work has been featured in several group exhibitions, including the 2019 show of the laureates of the Emerige Revelation Grant – L'effet falaise – after which the National Museum of the History of Immigration acquired his painting *Les naufragés* for its permanent collection.

In 2021-2022, Maxime was an artist-in-residence at the Casa de Velázquez, Académie de France in Madrid. In late 2023, he was in residence at the Beijing House of Arts, invited by Yishu8.

Excerpt from the biography written by Matthieu Iandolino for the Casa de Velázquez

Most important exhibitions :

2017 / Exposition Lauréats des prix des amis des Beaux-Arts 2016, Fondation Brownstone, Paris, France

2019 / L'Effet Falaise, curator: Gaël Charbau, Bourse Révélation Emerige, Paris, France

2022 / Madame Rêve, Huit peintres parisiens à Venise, curator: Galerie T&L and Galerie Mathilde M. Le Coz, Scoletta di San Giovanni in Bragora, Venezia, Italy

2022 / La Nature faite pour Dürer, curator: Edwart Vignot, Galerie Dilecta, Paris, France

2022 / En Si, Para ti, Mas alla, Institut Français de Madrid, Casa de Velazquez, Madrid, Spain

2023 / !VIVA VILLA!, curator: Victorine Grataloup & Stéphane Ibars, Collection Lambert, Avignon, France

2023 / Itinérance, end of residency Casa de Velazquez, Ecole des Beaux Arts de Nantes, France

2023 / Tout près de moi, Dans les yeux d'Elsa, Paris, France

2023 / Dans la tête de Balthus, curator: Edwart Vignot, Perrotin, Paris, France

2024 / Histoire d'Yishu8, Musée d'Art National, Beijing, China

2024 / Se mettre au vert, Pal Project, Paris, France

Publications :

Monographie - Cahier Regala #6, Tout Doucement, Texts by François René Martin, Emmanuel Mouret, Edwart Vignot, 2023 / Catalog !VIVA VILLA!, Collection Lambert, 2022 / Catalog Resident artists 2021-2022 Casa de Velazquez – Académie de France in Madrid, 2022 / Graduate Catalog of the Beaux-Arts de Paris, Editions Beaux-Arts de Paris Ministry of Culture, 2019

Awards :

Winner of the Charles Oulmont Foundation Plastic Arts Prize / Winner of the Académie des Beaux-arts Encouragement Prize in painting / Winner of the 2019 Fénéon Artistic Prize / Winner of the Yishu 8 Prize / Nomination for the Emerige Revelation Scholarship / Winner of the Friends of Fine Arts Prize/ Bertrand de Demandolx Prize / Winner of the Diamond Scholarship

Museum and Public Collections :

Musée National de l'Histoire de l'Immigration, Paris, France



Maxime Biou
Sans Titre, 2022
Oil on canvas
81 x 65 cm (31,9 x 25,6 in)
Fig. 3



Maxime Biou
Sans Titre, 2024
Oil on canvas
81 x 65 cm (31,9 x 25,6 in)
Fig. 4

CLAIRE FAHYS

Born in 1984 in Paris, France

Lives and works in Paris, France

Claire Fahys (b. 1984, France) lives and works in Paris. After studying at the Ateliers de Sèvres in Paris, she completed a BA in Graphic Design at Central Saint Martins, London (2007). A largely self-taught artist, Fahys developed her distinctive oil painting practice while living in London and later Berlin, where the German figurative tradition and the vibrant local art scene had a significant impact on her work. Exposure to the work of German, Danish, and English artists further shaped her evolving artistic vision. Fahys has participated in several residencies in Mexico City, Oficina de Arte (2014, 2016) and most recently, Lagos (2024).

Her solo exhibitions include *Cosmos* curated by Marion Guggenheim and Catherine Geysen, Viento Solar at Pipeline Gallery, London (2024); *Les Mains Libres*, curated by Tatiana Roth, London (2023); and *Rodéo*, Galerie Hussenot, Paris (2022). Recent group exhibitions include *Body Symphonies*, curated by Marion Guggenheim and Nicolas Dewavrin (Paris, 2024); *Tempo*, Better Go South Gallery (Berlin, 2023); *The Power to Dream*, Galerie Hussenot (Paris, 2023); and *Chambre à Part*, curated by Pierre Allizan and Laurence Dreyfus (Brussels, 2023). Fahys' work has been featured in *FAD Magazine* (2023–2024), *Whitewall Magazine* (2024), *It's Nice That* (2022), and *Le Quotidien de l'Art* (2022).

Most important exhibitions :

2022 / *Rodéo*, Galerie Hussenot, Paris, France

2023 / *Chambre à Part*, curator: Laurence Dreyfus & Pierre Allizan, Brussels, Belgium

2023 / *The Power to Dream*, Galerie Hussenot, Paris, France

2023 / *Les Mains Libres*, curator: Tatiana Roth, London, UK

2023 / *Tempo*, Better Go South Gallery, Berlin, Germany

2024 / *Body Symphonies*, curators: Marion Guggenheim & Nicolas Dewavrin, Paris, France

2024 / *Viento Solar*, Pipeline Gallery, London, UK

2024 / *Cosmos*, curator: Marion Guggenheim with support by A Women's Art Association Catherine Gheysen, Hauvette Madani, Paris, France

Publications :

FAD Magazine (2024) / *Whitewall Magazine* (2024) / *It's Nice That* (2022) / *Le Quotidien de l'Art* (2022)

Residencies :

Oficina de Arte, Mexico (2014 / 2016) / Lagos, Mexico (2024)



Claire Fahys
Viento Solar, 2024
Oil on linen
152 x 122 cm (59,8 x 48 in)
Fig. 5



Claire Fahys
Lagos, 2pm, 2024
Oil on linen
70 x 50 cm (27,6 x 19,7 in)
Fig. 6

SARAH MAISON

Born in 1990 in Paris, France

Lives and works in Paris, France

The work of Sarah Maison (b. 1990, Paris) questions the body in its materiality, in relation to the environment that surrounds it.

Through intertwining colors on the canvas the artist creates spaces for her figures to inhabit: these undefined, timeless places are decluttered from narrative elements. Interested rather by the interiority of her characters, the artist establishes a perpetual dialogue between figuration and abstraction seeking more «to make people feel, rather than to describe, what happens when we let ourselves be inhabited by the world and how the world composes us from the inside». The boundaries between space and figure are gradually dissolved, the color is internalised, becoming a reflection of spirituality, the figure, stripped of space time attributes, becomes an archetype.

Maison portrays herself in almost all of her paintings. She often decides to be accompanied by another character, who, however, is there as a function of her, to act as her counterpart and allow her to escape from herself when, overwhelmed by her own presence, she feels the need to find new forms of representation.

Femininity takes on new attributes and the woman, in becoming a mother, emancipates herself through the act of creating life.

Most important exhibitions :

2020 / Amies, Muses, ARTISTES, Les Beaux Arts de Paris, Paris, France

2020 / Sarah Maison, L'Inlassable Galerie, Paris, France

2020 / Tajan, Paris, France

2021 / Volta Art Fair, Sobering Gallery, Basel, Switzerland

2022 / La Pyramide de Ponzi, curator: Marc Molk, Galerie Valérie Delaunay, Paris, France

2022 / Rosée, Dans les Yeux d'Elsa, Paris, France

2023 / Message Personnel, curators: Delphine de la Roche & Nicolas Jaeger, Tout Orion, Montreuil, France

2023 / Figurative Painting in France Today, Galerie Peter Kilchmann, Paris, France

2024 / Mega Art Fair, Bebe Leone Art Advisory, Milano, Italy

2024 / Sarah Maison, Bebe Leone Art Advisory, Roma, Italy



Sarah Maison

Figure Marchant, 2022

Oil on canvas

195 x 130 cm (76,8 x 51,2 in)

Fig. 7



Sarah Maison
Jakarta, 2023
Oil on canvas
22 x 35 cm (8,7 x 13,8 in)
Fig. 8

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