

From 6 July to 6 October 2002, the Villa Arson is putting on three solo exhibitions of work by Peter Kogler, Stéphane Dafflon and Francis Baudevin, which will highlight the formal relationships and the areas of concern shared by these three artists.

At the same time, the Villa Arson is showing an exhibition of recent works by Barbara Visser, accompanied by a specific project--by taking the city of Nice as both subject and surface, the artist produces a set of images which will be shown on 200 urban billboards between 28 August and 3 September 2002. This project has been backed by the ANB AMRO Bank. The opening will be on 5 July 2002, from 6 p.m. At it, Anne de Sterk and Yves Chaudouët will present a Sonoguidée/Sono-guided performance.

Francis Baudevin was born in 1964. He lives and works in Geneva, Switzerland.

In his painting, Francis Baudevin makes use of what forms the weft of our most immediate visual environment; on canvas, or on the wall, he paints layouts of industrial packaging of common consumer products, magnifying them to the power of about ten (with a soft spot for pharmaceutical items and confectionery.) All he keeps of the original image is its formal structure--all textual elements vanish. The resulting compositions do, needless to say, have a markedly complicitous relationship with the most geometric sort of abstract painting, but what is in fact involved is definitely figurative. In a way, he paints portraits of different kinds of "packaging" and "conditioning"--and these words [both translations of French conditionnement] should be understood in all their accepted senses: packing in boxes, just as much as behavioural adjustment. With wholesome irony, Francis Baudevin refers abstract painting to the whole fatality of its decorative/commercial development; he anticipates the process of retrieval, and turns it to its own advantage.

Stéphane Dafflon was born in 1972. He lives and works in Geneva, Switzerland.

Stéphane Dafflon's painting borrows, for its own ends, and recycles the production methods and forms of industrial design, graphic design, and advertisements in all their various aspects. To this end, and before he actually produces them, he designs each one of his paintings by computer, with the help of dedicated software. The patterns he uses (in particular the rectangles with rounded corners) are drawn from the decorative repertory of contemporary design. The painted image often spills over beyond the strict perimeter of the canvas on its stretcher; as shaped canvases, on the wall, on the floor, in volume, Stéphane Dafflon's images unfurl their visual immediacy and their elementary and coloured forms, beyond any metaphorical system. His latest works tend to stand back, become detached from the wall, and enter the fray, but without resorting to demonstrative strategies. Dafflon's work forms a "reasoned" oeuvre, removed from both the ideological straitjackets of modernity and the spectacular effects of Op Art.

Peter Kogler was born in 1959. He lives and works in Vienna, Austria. If you saw these images elsewhere, and isolated, none of them, per se, would especially catch your eye or attract your attention. All they have going for them is the extreme austerity of their making, at times rough and ready, at times very spare and refined, and invariably a thousand leagues from the flamboyant textures and nuances these days permitted by the new technologies; these images can only be shown in groups. Created, first of all, by a calculator, then enlarged and organized on the surface of the wallpaper, associated, then patterned, and last of all arranged in space: organic or vaguely mineral forms, pixelized insects, pipes and tubes, tracery, excessively large skeins, polished and visibly make-believe spaghetti, wicker racks, trellises which curve to the rhythm

of the music, or details of a Fernand Léger apocryph, it all seethes on the walls, appropriates the floor, and intermingles on the ceiling. The viewer is completely immersed. The eye thus settles at the hub of the pictorial arrangement as within a canvas, in the lair of the picture itself. In other respects, Peter Kogler's works have always made plenty of room for the figure of the labyrinth, used as a motif and as a compositional principle. In his latest video-projected works, a complete maze is set in motion around the onlooker.

Barbara Visser was born in 1966 in Haarlem. She lives and works in Amsterdam, in the Netherlands.

Barbara Visser's work is essentially an exercise in observation and questioning about the uncertainties bound up with identity. She works with video and photography. The human figure, which lies at the heart of her images, recurs, in most of her works, plunged in an unusual context (a setting, a moment, a situation). It is this relationship of calculated incongruousness which enables human beings to face themselves, face what they think they know about themselves (socially, culturally and ethnically), and face what people have to say about them. So the photographic series A Day in Holland/Holland In a Day, in Huis Ten Bosch Stad, in Japan (a kind of theme park where a whole series of historical Dutch urban landscapes--cityscapes--have been reconstructed with tremendous accuracy) presents a pair of westerners decked out as Japanese tourists. The three parts in the film Philippa (1998) are played by the same woman, Philippa Van Loon, in the house where she spent her childhood, now turned into the Van Loon Museum. Each character reflects a part of Philippa's personality, talks one of the three languages she herself can speak fluently, and wears a wig. But as if these three identities were mutually exclusive, these three women chase one another, but never manage to meet up. The Detitled series (1999) presents and "victimizes"--but not in any theatrical way--photographs of armchairs with the symbolic shapes of modernity, burnt, melted, broken, taken apart. For Gimines (1995), she plays the part of herself (filtered by the dictates of fiction), in a Lithuanian television series. Other works by the artist play with the stereotypes associated with the art world (Ars Futura, 1994), or else focus on certain forms of cultural airtightness (Medium Girl, 1996), not without a dash of wit.

Anne de Sterk was born in 1971. She lives and works in Nantes, France.

Yves Chaudouët was born in 1959. He lives and works in Paris, France.

Anne de Sterk and Yves Chaudouët do not necessarily always work together. They got to know each other in Nantes, where they developed the first Sonoguidée/Sono-guided project, a semi-theatrical performance encompassing their respective activities. A Sonoguidée is a polyphonic composition. Several performers, equipped with headphones, simultaneously rehearse and play acoustic fragments which are broadcast--for their ears only--by a pre-recorded tape. The result is a concertinaing of meanings and sounds, producing opening gambits of narrative, music and onomatopoeia.

These projects are supported by the Provence-Alpes-Côtes d'Azur Regional Council, the ABN AMRO bank and Pro Helvetia.

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06/07 - 06/10 2002