

GALERIE NATHALIE OBADIA

PARIS - BRUXELLES

Carole Benzaken

14 NOVEMBER - 25 JANUARY 2014

Oui, l'homme est un arbre des champs

Gallery I - 3, rue du Cloître Saint-Merri - 75004 Paris

À nos vingt ans, Nathalie !

Gallery II - 3, rue du Cloître Saint-Merri - 75004 Paris



Nathalie Obadia Gallery is very pleased to present the seventh exhibition of the work of Carole Benzaken since 1993, to mark the twentieth anniversary of our partnership with this artist.

Carole Benzaken develops a pictorial work that challenges the status of the image, as well as its representation and perception both in the space of the painting and outside it. She never ceases to surprise the viewer by constantly taking new approaches to the use of new media and techniques make use of three-dimensional space.

On this occasion Carole Benzaken is presenting works on the boundary between figuration and abstraction, in which a rhizomatic proliferation impinges upon different media by decomposing and recomposing the figure of the tree. Ramifications rather than arborescences multiply and overflow on different supports.

Through a series of works (*Magnolias, Portes – Tehilim, Od drzwi do drzwi, Yemima, Makom* and the installation *Migrations Temporaires*) the artist has pursued her research, blurring reality so as to make it more visible.

In the series *Od drzwi do drzwi (From door to door)*, Benzaken destabilizes the viewer's perception with effects of flux and acceleration that alters the source image (a road movie of trees in winter). The resulting distension of space and time is transposed through a pictorial touch that suggests the representation is vibrating or indeed trembling. The fuzziness of the image renders the subject insubstantial, distorted and imprecise. The optical effect created by this displacement stimulates a feeling of transience and enchantment in the viewer.

Taking as her subject the very unusual blooming of magnolias, plants whose flowers open before their leaves develop, thus passing without transition from winter to spring, Benzaken's *Magnolias* – painted with India ink highlighted with colour crayons and placed within glass – are a new plastic offering.

Tight framing combined with the opalescent thickness of the glass allows the viewer to feel the presence of the tree through the vibratory and velvety effects created: the transparent shadows, the blended shades of tones, and the ethereal hues of the flowers respond to the calligraphic representation of the black branches.

The contrast is weakened in a visual interlacing that increasingly distances us from a figurative image. The alchemical fusion of the glass and colour acculturates our gaze to an “atmospheric” abstraction that is as close as possible to the essence of a tree.

Following a project that had the Book of Ezekiel as its theme (*Saviv Saviv*, the episode of the dry bones, Ezekiel 37: 1-14) which was triggered by her exhibition for the MAHJ (Museum of the Art and History of Judaism) in 2011–12, and the art centre in Bielsko-Biala in Poland in 2012, Carole Benzaken has taken this formal meditation further with the new series of *Portes – Tehilim* (the psalms of David).

Broadening the plastic possibilities of the theme of contamination, Benzaken has produced works composed of strips of paper painted with India ink and lithographic ink. The mass of vertical strips, suggestive of hair or movie film, blurs with the background in which the colours are reduced to black and white rarefied by a few touches of colour representing fruit or leaves. The eye becomes immersed in this hail of signs to the point of giddiness. The retina reconstitutes the image composed by the multitude of paper strips. Benzaken is here bringing into play a sequenced memory whose fragmentation allows the viewer to experience both an overall interpretation and the perception of a multitude of stimuli.

Projecting slightly from the wall, halfway between a painting and a low relief, these works are the epitome of a research into multiple supports the artist has undertaken since 2006, that associate what are generally thought to be antinomic concepts, such as fusion/fragmentation, representation/evocation.

The manner in which Carole Benzaken’s works are hung in the spaces of the gallery are illustrative of her fondness for the creation of volume in painting, which she implements in the architecture of the exhibition space.

For the twentieth anniversary of the partnership between Carole Benzaken and Nathalie Obadia, the artist has chosen to present a set of recent works in Galerie II entitled *Autoportraits (anciens)*. These take the motif of the tulip which the artist presented at her first show at the Galerie Nathalie Obadia.

An echo of the reinterpreted past, these *Autoportraits (anciens)* are offered as an anniversary bouquet to celebrate her association with the gallery.

Carole Benzaken would like to thank Patrice Forest of Item Édition

Carole Benzaken was born in Grenoble in 1964. She lives and works in Paris.

Having graduated in 1990 from the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Paris, Carole Benzaken made a highly noted debut in the art world when she exhibited at the Fondation Cartier for contemporary art in 1994. The winner of the Marcel Duchamp Prize in 2004, she showed at the exhibition *Search for the New Land* at the Espace 315 in the Centre Pompidou. Her work has been included in many international exhibitions and purchased for prestigious public and private collections (Centre Pompidou, Fondation Cartier, Musée National d’Art Moderne de Paris, MoMA). Carole Benzaken is currently showing in the *Miss Dior* exhibition at the Grand Palais and will be the guest of the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Nancy in Spring 2014.

In 2011 Flammarion published an important monograph on her work.

Carole Benzaken has been represented by the Galerie Nathalie Obadia Paris/Brussels since 1993.

**Galerie Nathalie Obadia
Bourg Tibourg**

Brook Andrew

*Anatomy of a Body Record:
beyond Tasmania*
7 November - 31 December 2013

Sarkis

Au commencement le blanc
9 January - 1 March 2014
Opening on 9 January

Fabrice Hyber

14 March - 13 May 2014
Opening on 14 March

Xu Zhen by Madeln Company

24 May - 25 July 2014

For further information, please contact

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**Galerie Nathalie Obadia
Cloître Saint-Merri**

Carole Benzaken

*Oui, l’homme est un arbre
des champs*
14 November - 25 January 2014
Opening on 14 November

Agnès Varda

Triptyques atypiques
8 February- 29 March 2014
Opening on February 8

Manuel Ocampo

March - May 2014

**Galerie Nathalie Obadia
Bruxelles**

Mithu Sen

Cannibal Lullaby
9 October - 21 December 2013

Xu Zhen by Madeln Company

21 November - 4 January 2014
Opening on 21 November

Eugène Leroy

8 January - 8 March 2014
Opening on 8 January

Andres Serrano

13 March - 17 April 2014
Opening on 13 March

Valérie Belin

22 April- 26 June 2014