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# Mimosa Echard

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SPOTLIGHT

# MIMOSA ECHARD

THEO BELCI



Above and opposite page, top: **Mimosa Echard, *Escape more*, 2022**, glass, aluminum, pumps, pipes, urine, wool, fabrics, capsules, silver prints, natural and artificial hair, acrylic paint, plastic lids and trays, calendula petals, gardenia, lotus pollen, cherry pits, necklaces, bracelets, beads, thread, cotton and plastic rope, electrical systems, coconuts, geisha balls, rubber bands, varnish, glue, lace, *Financial Times* newsprint, plasma screens, monitor, digital video (*bitch\_im\_a\_cat.mov*, *bella.mov*, *la\_clede.mov*), colored distilled water, fluorescent sun, moon, and stars, dolls, "Hello Keta" stuffed cat, plastic balls, ginkgo egg, compact, Scotch tape, false eyelashes, makeup sponges, glass tassels. Installation views, Centre Pompidou, Paris. Photos: Aurélien Mole. Opposite page, bottom: **Mimosa Echard, *Numbs (Hello Kitty)*, 2021**, digital C-prints, glass beads, plastic beads, plastic rings, elastics, synthetic foam, fake flower pistils, mirrors, capsules, bulbs, hair, organza, acrylic medium, acrylic lacquer, gloss, aluminum frame, 98% x 74% x 2 1/4". From the series "Numbs," 2021.



**WE DO NOT LIVE** in a frictionless world. Despite the best efforts of social media, advertisers, and the innumerable other architects of our everyday lives, we constantly bump and chafe in our routines. We navigate the world as bodies and minds subject to chance, producing pangs of irrationality, sensitivity, and empathy that impede the instantaneous flow of capital and information so desperately sought by tech barons and corporate managers alike.

In 2022, Mimosa Echard won the Prix Marcel Duchamp and exhibited the installation *Escape more* at the Centre Pompidou in Paris—a display consisting of glass walls, streams of water and urine, pollen, ginkgo tree eggs, newsprint, films, and assorted tchotchkes, among other items. Echard modeled the work in part after an indoor water feature at a bank in New York’s Chinatown, which caught her attention for its “connection between the circulation of water in finance and in Buddhist thought.” In a 2024 interview with artist Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, she traces the chain of associations that flowed from the initial inspiration, from “the practice of golden showers” to “the fountain in the lobby of the Trump Tower” and finally the “Alexander McQueen runway from 1993, financed by American Express, called ‘Golden Shower.’” As suggested by these disjunctive references, Echard’s cataract emphasizes the friction in systems of architecture and exchange. Its endless flow recycles a crystalline and immaculate sheet of waste. The surface, dynamic and shimmering in its movement, is dotted with small pill packets and fake eyelashes fastened into place—static objects disrupting the fluid’s momentum. In the space behind the water feature, a CRT TV plays a video in close proximity to a set of loose-hanging curtains as pink *Financial Times* pages litter the ground. The clean, metaphysically pure current of capital from the Chinatown bank is reformed into a messy and vaguely domestic scene: It is a reassertion of the centrality of the consumer and the worker—the flesh-and-blood (and piss) inhabitant within the infrastructure of trade.

Frictionlessness, generally speaking, is the design ethos that whisks a user seamlessly from Instagram ad to online shopping cart; from Word document to AI chatbot; from drawing pad to image generator. Most proponents of frictionless design focus on the elimination of imperfections and “pain points” in technology; in contrast, Echard embraces the kind of sloppy materiality that was presaged by Jean Baudrillard’s 1988 book *The Ecstasy of Communication*: “The era of miniaturization, of remote control, and of a microprocessing of time, bodies, and pleasure has come. . . . Our body seems superfluous in its proper expanse, in the complexity and multiplicity of its organs . . . because today everything is concentrated in the brain and the genetic code, which alone sum up the operational definition of being.” Like electrical resistance in a battery, friction primarily belongs to the body—it is the frisson that develops as a result of life’s capriciousness and the ungainliness of our flesh, elements than cannot be replicated by Neuralinked brains in vats of goo, as Baudrillard suggests.

A photo of a body is replicated across two collaged works on canvas from 2021, *Numbs (Narcisse)* and *Numbs (Hello Kitty)*, both of which were displayed that year during Echard’s first solo show at Galerie Chantal Crousel in Paris. She took the picture herself; its subject is androgynous, shot from behind, naked from the waist down and curled up in a blanket on a bed. Alongside the photo are layers of organza scraps that have been lacquered to the canvas substrate with an assortment of collected organic and manufactured ornaments (fake flower pistils, hair). In *Numbs (Narcisse)*, the figure nearly fills the bottom half of the piece. Amid the scattered images and textures is a shadowy, high-contrast print of a poet’s daffodil, emerging as a six-pointed star in an otherwise murky sky. *Numbs (Hello Kitty)*’s composition shrouds the nude in a bleached, congealed mixture of glue and tissue, burying it under piles of snowy varnish bubbles and elastic bands. A photo of a Hello Kitty doll in a recessed niche peeks out above the scene, a cultic shrine to cuteness presiding over the dormant model’s dreams.

Echard produced her “Numbs” series, 2021, as she does many of her works: by combining disparate objects and unpredictable liquids on the canvases in one

heaping, dynamic mess. In a 2022 video interview, Echard massages the surface of a piece while describing her interest in plant sexuality and natural permaculture as means for “superimposing elements and letting them interact.” Speaking in front of her studio’s garden, she reflects on her desire to incorporate biological functions into her art, taking inspiration from trees and organisms that live, interact, and reproduce in ways that evade easy classification (take the ginkgo tree, which drops eggs instead of seeds and can spontaneously switch its sex). In the “Numbs” works, forms are duly amalgamated and transposed, mimicking the oozy, mysterious strangeness of various biological processes. Dye stripped from photos by lacquer moves in viscous flows that seep into other areas of the composition. Fabric layers mesh and bond; glass pellets, mother-of-pearl beads, and cables get nestled into crevices, trapped under hardened strata of varnish. Of course, the ambiguous nude’s identity becomes contextualized by the items surrounding it. The photo prints are porous and vulnerable to the materials that surround them, mirroring the body they depict. In the feminine symbolism of the flower and the Hello Kitty doll—and the myriad bracelets, hearts, and other items affixed to each canvas—Echard constructs her figure’s gender as a tangled, blurry, and tactile exchange between the body and its surroundings.

Over the past few years, Echard has been drawn toward the infrastructures of communication. For the 2024 Le Nouveau Printemps festival in Toulouse, France, the artist produced *Lady’s Glove*, 2024, a public artwork adorning a 5G cell tower with vinyl foxglove stickers, an LED monitor playing videos, and an oversize aluminum heart charm. The artwork’s use of the tower recalls those conspiracy theories that claim 5G’s electromagnetic waves harm human tissue, causing everything from headaches to the Covid-19 pandemic (the service was introduced in 2019). While cell towers are normally installed in inconspicuous locations to seamlessly integrate into urban landscapes, Echard’s visitors are encouraged to seek out and view this edifice at close range. In the 2024 book *Frictionlessness*, philosopher Jakko Kemper suggests that the easiest way for tech and communications companies to “reduce the risk of friction” is to “hide a plenitude of technological operations from the user’s gaze altogether.” Echard’s intervention operates in direct contrast to this ethos, necessitating a pilgrimage to the top of a parking lot in Toulouse, away from most human activity, to inspect the networks of modern-day communication itself. The symbolism of foxglove (processed for use in heart medicine, yet lethal if consumed in high quantities) engages the hazardousness of digital overconnection. As we interact over social media and messaging platforms, we maintain our relationships on terms that aren’t necessarily our own. Any reckoning with the isolation and anxiety endemic to digital life necessitates a close examination of the infrastructure of communication, making one aware of the immediate and physical foundations of interaction.

In 2023, Echard began making compositions with anti-radiation fabric, an industrial material used to block electromagnetic signals and insulate spaces from harmful energies. In 2024’s “Surf” series, Echard’s process is easy enough to discern: The fabric is affixed to a canvas and covered by sheets of aluminum foil. The entire composition is then exposed to a corrosive liquid, which oxidizes the copper in the textile, drawing out a chemical-looking green that circulates through the narrow channels between the foil sheets. The results are distinctly fecund, and feel decrepit in the way of a rusted metal door. Initially sterile as industrial objects, they appear activated and alive in their decay. The functional elements of the fabric are revealed in blooms and blushes, bleeding hues in effervescent streaks. For that exhibition, Echard commented that the works were meant to “explore the idea of interference and penetration . . . and relate this overwhelming penetration to Minimalism.” Reading the artist’s interest in Minimalism as a concern for



**Any reckoning with the isolation and anxiety endemic to digital life necessitates a close examination of the infrastructure of communication, making one aware of the immediate and physical foundations of interaction.**





Opposite page, top: **Mimosa Echard, *Lady's Glove*, 2024**, vinyl stickers, cast aluminum charm, LED mesh net screen, iPhone videos screened at dusk. Installation view, Le Nouveau Printemps, Toulouse, France. Photo: Lydie Carpentier. Opposite page, bottom: View of "**Mimosa Echard: Surf**," 2025, Martina Simeti, Milan. Photo: Andrea Rossetti. Above: View of "**Mimosa Echard: Facial**," 2025–26, Amant, Brooklyn, NY. Hanging: *Lady's Glove*, 2025. Walls: *Facial*, 2025. Photo: New Document. Right: **Mimosa Echard, *Facial* (detail)**, 2025. Light, industry sodium gel filters, canvas, aluminum stretchers, aluminum foil, cast aluminum, metal chain, digital C-prints, Plexiglas, powder-coated steel drain grate, sponge, ginkgo eggs, depilatory wax, silk scarf, synthetic fabric, oxidized anti-radiation fabric, organza, shower curtains, epoxy resin, urine, reflective glass beads, faux brick wallpaper stickers, novelty straws, hairpin, crystals, banknotes, coins, bra strap, lock, earrings, lily pistils, lemon pips, book pages, packaging, wrapping paper, glitter, acrylic adhesive, acrylic paint, acrylic varnish, digital videos (bébé.mp4, tide.mp4), dimensions variable.



making the viewer acutely aware of their own body and their relationship to space, form, and time, one may view the canvases as adeptly reflecting her long-standing interests in organic interactions and industrialized systems of exchange.

By replicating the functions of the body and the architecture of communication in a single pictorial space, Echard's anti-radiation fabric works question the means through which we try (and fail) to insulate ourselves from the onslaught of information and energies that both sustain and determine our daily lives. Too weak to resist Echard's weathering, the works' protective textile must be buttressed, even if only by common kitchen foil. The metallic sheets cannot stop the damage Echard seeks to impose on her canvases, much like those tinfoil hats that some use in confused, futile efforts to shield themselves from pernicious invisible forces. When the compositions aren't foiled, the chemicals break down the fabric even further, facilitating oxidation and the subsequent development of radiant green coats. Hung next to the foil-covered pieces, the bare canvases convey the ebullience that comes from being open to the world and its unpredictable nature, both glorious and cruel. To minimize or avoid the vulnerability at the heart of human interaction is to represent a limitation of experience, an insistence that all organic exchange is little more than pollution.

"Facial," Echard's show at Brooklyn's Amant, her first solo outing in the United States, features the largest anti-radiation fabric work she's ever made. This multi-panel behemoth, the exhibition's namesake, presides over the gallery's main space. Rising more than ten feet, the square tableau combines a variety of patterns into a single integrated network, terminating at a central intersection. Created during the artist's stay at Amant last year, it's like a revamped version of Mondrian's 1942–43 painting *Broadway Boogie Woogie* for the anxious mind: a map of avenues that seem to develop as they decay. The jostling, disruptive friction animating this stylized city does not reinforce the perfect grid, but corrodes it, creating new channels for interaction. *Facial* is the apotheosis of Echard's anti-radiation works, offering a vision of the world that overlaps with the artist's urine waterfall and varnish-soaked "Numbs" pieces, suggesting that porousness and decomposition are organic and generative wellsprings of inspiration. In this era of aridly slick technofuturist aesthetics, objects and images revealing their sutures and seams appear to be utterly alive. By breaking through sterile perfection, we make new opportunities for strangeness, inconstancy, and growth. □

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## 4Columns

### Mimosa Echard

*A material girl in a material world: hyperfeminine stylings commingle with industrial structures and materials in the artist's exhibition.*



*Mimosa Echard: Facial, installation view. Courtesy the artist and Amant. Photo: New Document.*

In his sprawling, unfinished tome about proto-shopping malls in nineteenth-century Paris, *The Arcades Project*, Walter Benjamin saw the ambulatory figure of the *flâneur* as a vision of the future: a perspective in perpetual flux; a psyche cut with shard-like images of the surrounding city, its industrial logic of glass, iron, and steel and its glittering cacophony of commodities. Arguably, in our present world of endless screens, we are all *flâneurs*, drifting through a phantasmagoria of consumer culture—of “dream images that rise into the waking world.”

A self-proclaimed *flâneuse* herself, the Paris-based artist Mimosa Echard has fashioned *Facial*—her first solo show in the US—after fragmented urban experience. From a distance, *Facial*, which is currently on view at Amant, might resemble a series of sculptural paintings and photographs.



Mimosa Echard: *Facial*, installation view. Courtesy the artist and Amant. Photo: New Document.

But its parts comprise a single installation meant to evoke a hallucinatory trip around New York City, which Echard called a kind of “sexy jail” in an interview with *Cultured*. The aesthetic treatment brought to mind by the title underscores the show’s investment in facades; in the work of creating impressions in a figurative sense. The word’s usage in porn—in which a performer’s face is a canvas for cum—also hints at Echard’s enchantment with trashier expressions of femininity: the overly contoured, bimbo-eye sort that exists in male fantasy as opposed to real life. Stepping into the gallery space, you’ll immediately spot two overlapping 4x6 photo prints taped to the wall, the image on the bottom covering half of the one above. What we see is a mascara-enhanced eye—the airbrushed, tastelessly aspirational kind used for beauty-salon storefronts—peeking over a set of brick steps covered in leaves and illuminated with tawdry flash.



Mimosa Echard, photograph taken on Grand Street, Brooklyn, 2025. Courtesy the artist.

Other similarly eerie manifestations of this glam single-eyed gaze are scattered throughout the rooms like yassified minions of panopticonic power. They stare at us, alluring and menacing, from isolated photographs or as individual elements in richly layered collages, thick accretions of conventional and found materials with an occlusive veneer. As encapsulated by this sultry surveyor, girlish stylings—earrings, wrapping paper covered in red hearts, leopard print—mesh with the installation’s authoritarian streak. Evocative of the city’s grid system and riffing off what Edith Wharton called “rectangular New York[’s] . . . deadly uniformity of mean ugliness,” the exhibition abounds in latticed patterns and rectilinear formations: a powder-coated drain grate, a short video clip of ant-like cars filtering on and off the Brooklyn Bridge. One photograph shows the topless torsos of several mannequins, their heads obscured by a half-closed rolling shutter. Appearances to the contrary, it’s not really a commentary on the tyranny of female beauty standards—the show is ultimately too wry to feel seriously under the thumb of such pressures; its insights, instead, operate through affective registers; we glean moods and feelings from the material world in the mode of the *flâneur*’s transient passages.



Mimosa Echard: *Facial*, installation view. Courtesy the artist and Amant. Photo: New Document.

In 2022, Echard won the Marcel Duchamp prize for her multimedia installation made that year, *Escape more*, in which liquid flows over a glass wall through which one can make out the blurry pink outlines of what might be a bedroom or studio. This play with transparency and deceptive surfaces is fundamental to Echard's practice; the artist regularly employs thick layers of disparate substances to create a porous boundary between organic and synthetic objects, masculine- and feminine-coded imagery. Several Plexiglas works in *Facial* that appear like marbled expanses of bubblegum-pink and gold take on an epidermal density up close. Swirls of dried depilatory wax commingle with oxidized blotches, while crinkly wrapping paper or a bumpy layer of brick wallpaper stickers make up the background. As on the streets of Gotham, urine is splashed throughout, though it's uncertain where exactly these golden showers have fallen. This riot of textures resembles bacterial cultures suspended in the gooey membrane of a petri dish.



Mimosa Echard, untitled, 2025. Courtesy the artist and Amant.

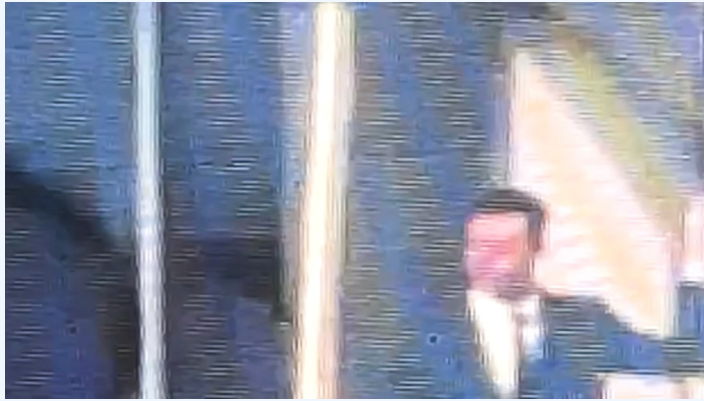
Raised in a hippie commune in the south of France—a community she documented in her 2016 film *The People* through a psychedelic mishmash of MiniDV camera footage—Echard draws inspiration from plants and the seemingly alien reproductive systems found in nature. Harkening back to this fascination, the starting point for *Facial* is the ginkgo tree, a ubiquitous sight in the city that's revealed to have strange, ghostly resonances with what Echard views as Gotham's penal architecture.

In Echard's hands, the noble ginkgo, which has weathered not only Hiroshima but multiple ice ages, recalls, for instance, the stark, windowless monolith at 33 Thomas Street—the only building in New York designed to withstand a nuclear bomb. Ginkgo eggs, those stinky orange berries that litter the sidewalks, are embedded throughout the installation, while the acid yellow-green of the tree's fallen leaves is used to temper the carceral severity of some pieces—for instance, a twenty-foot-tall painting of jade grid-like squares overlaying what looks like smashed concrete, or perhaps cracked tree bark.



*Mimosa Echard: Facial*, installation view. Courtesy the artist and Amant. Photo: New Document. Pictured, far left: *Lady's Glove (NYC)*, 2025.

Opposite this behemoth is a canvas a tenth of the size decked out in a curtain of glass beads, anti-radiation fabric, and sundry seductive eyes. Like flatter versions of Joseph Cornell's memory boxes, Echard's tableaux are works of surrealist compression in which the history, plastic dreams, and paranoid nightmares of a fluttering cityscape are metabolized to create unique organisms. In a looping video at the end of the show, Times Square is captured in extreme close-up to look almost like a flicker film, its Jumbotron advertisements whittled down to bouncing digital grains.

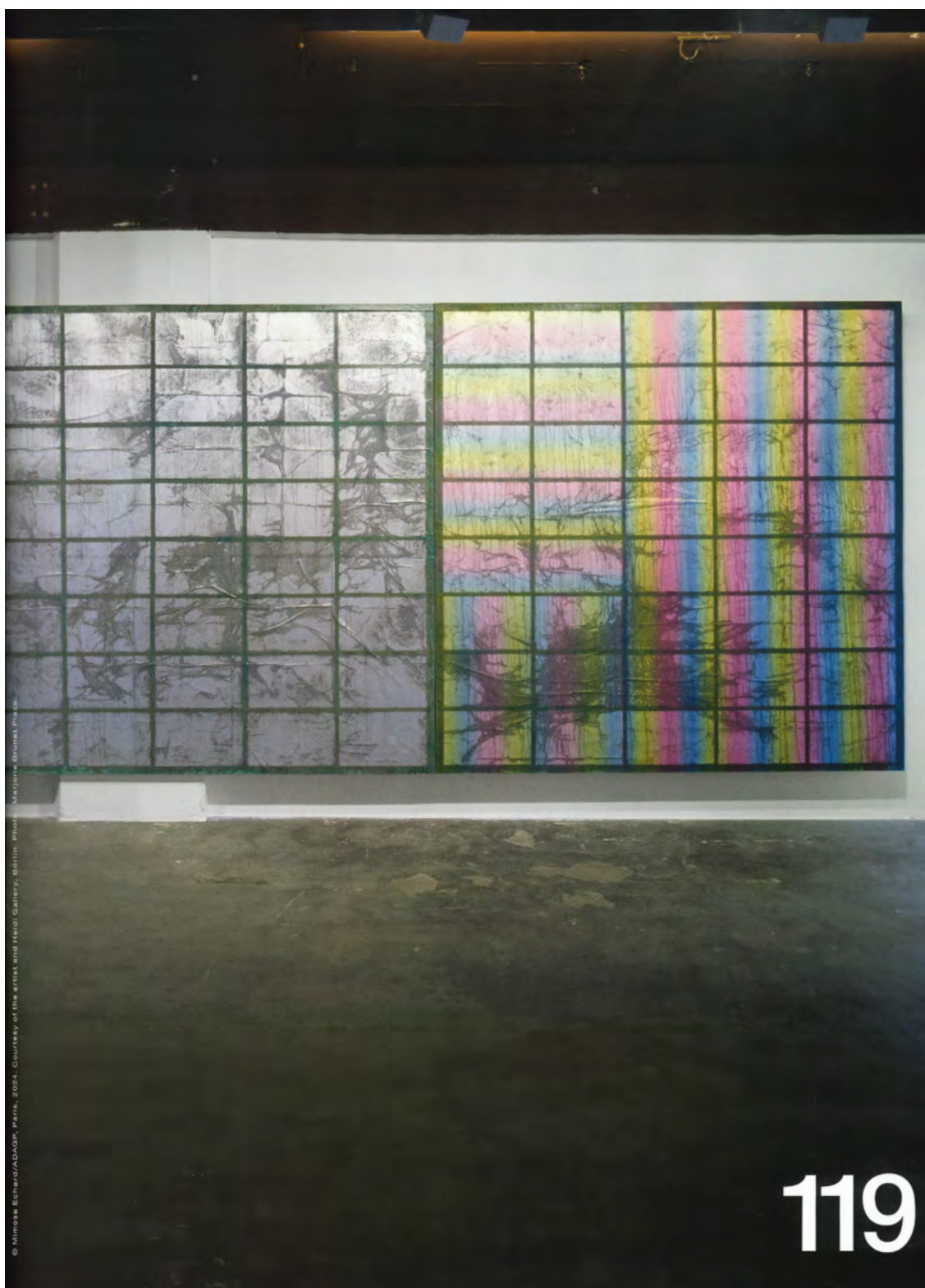


Mimosa Echard, *Tide*, 2025 (still). Courtesy the artist and Galerie Chantal Crousel.

Despite the show's metropolitan breadth, Echard also folds herself into her practice, aligning its urban rover's point-of-view with that of her own. *Escape more*, after all, invites (though ultimately obstructs) the voyeur's gaze into her personal territory; and Echard's monograph *Lies* (2025) is in part a collage of loosely associated images from her ramshackle adolescence in the country and the iconography of '90s and 2000s commercial culture—especially the aesthetics of Y2K hyperfemininity—that inevitably filtered through her consciousness during those impressionable early years. (Echard was born in 1986.) In *Facial*, there is a photograph of a woman, perhaps in East Williamsburg, with her back turned away from the camera as she leans over a table and assembles a piece. One of her legs is marked by a slash of glittery depilatory wax and her ass, bare save for a striped thong, is at the center of the frame. Across the room is a massive metal phone charm, *Lady's Glove* (NYC) (2025), whose name might refer to the accessories of high-society women or the purple, trumpet-shaped flower. Both conjure Echard: as urbane artist; leaky, libidinal human woman; and purveyor of kitsch drawn from the recesses of her own girlhood.

## Numéro





## L'artiste du mois – Mimosa Echard

Propos recueillis par Nicolas Trembley

Un large public avait fait la découverte de Mimosa Echard lorsqu'elle avait remporté le prix Marcel Duchamp au Centre Pompidou en 2022. Élevée dans les Cévennes, elle porte un prénom prédestiné pour une artiste qui met au centre de son travail... les plantes, et qui cultive un jardin devant son atelier. Le végétal sert aux teintures des tissus qui lui permettent de fabriquer ses œuvres, appelons-les "peintures", qui en réalité s'apparentent davantage à des collages, des reliefs dans lesquels on retrouve aussi bien des objets que de la photographie. Ces peintures rappellent peut-être des fonds marins et leur cohorte de coraux, ou au contraire de nouvelles textures de reliefs futuristes et artificiels. Pour Mimosa Echard, les plantes ne sont pas simplement un médium qui sert à "faire", non, ce médium sert à penser et à élaborer une réflexion sur les différences, les tensions entre l'organique et le synthétique. Comme par exemple ces tissus artificiels qui ne laissent pas passer les ondes et qu'elle utilise dans son exposition personnelle à la Galerie Chantal Crousel pendant Art Basel Paris. *Lies*, "mensonges", c'est le titre qu'elle a voulu donner à son exposition et elle nous explique pourquoi.

**NUMÉRO : Quel est votre parcours ?**

**MIMOSA ECHARD :** Je suis née à Alès dans les Cévennes. J'ai grandi dans un hameau à la frontière du Gard, de l'Ardèche et de la Lozère. Plus tard, je suis allée au lycée dans les quartiers nord de Marseille et je suis montée à Paris pour faire l'École des arts décoratifs, dans le département "art-espace". J'ai toujours gardé un lien fort avec les Cévennes, j'y fais des choses, j'y filme, j'y prends des photos. C'est aux antipodes de ma pratique dans les grandes mégapoles comme New York ou Paris.

**Comment avez-vous compris que vous vouliez devenir artiste ?**

Adolescente, j'ai découvert, dans des livres de la bibliothèque de Saint-Antoine, à Marseille, des artistes qui utilisaient leur corps, et ensuite cela m'a obsédée. Le travail de Michel Journiac, de Gina Pane, de Paul McCarthy ou d'Ana Mendieta...

**Vous puisez vos inspirations principalement dans la nature, l'écologie, l'organique.**

**Quel rapport vos œuvres entretiennent-elles avec l'environnement ?**

C'est vrai que je m'inspire souvent des

organismes vivants, les plantes en particulier. C'est ce que je connais le mieux, c'est là où je me sens *nerdy* [absorbée dans son monde]. À vrai dire, pour moi, ce sont moins des sources d'inspiration que des sources de questionnement. Qu'est-ce que la nature ? Qu'est-ce qui différencie vraiment l'organique du synthétique ? Par exemple, en ce moment, je prends beaucoup de photos aux arcades des Champs-Élysées [galerie marchande], qui ont été construites dans les années 20. Cela ressemble à un bateau échoué avec ses marchandises de seconde zone, un non-lieu, un portail vers le vieux monde morne. Dans mes recherches, je suis tombée sur cette idée de Walter Benjamin selon laquelle la mode "*accouple le corps vivant au monde inorganique. Vis-à-vis du vivant, elle défend les droits du cadavre*". Avant de lire ces phrases, je n'avais jamais réfléchi au rapport entre la mode, les cadavres et l'organique.

**Vous avez différentes pratiques, peinture, vidéo, sculpture, collage, etc. Comment naviguez-vous entre elles ? Une pratique est-elle plus importante qu'une autre ?**

Enfinement, dans mon travail, la pratique la plus récurrente et la plus importante est la photographie. Je possède un appareil photo depuis mes 10 ans et je photographie en permanence. Ce médium se situe en quelque sorte dans un interstice entre les autres, dans une zone grise où on ne peut pas vraiment dire ce que c'est. Depuis un peu plus d'un an, j'ai entamé une série dans laquelle je recouvre des toiles de tissu anti-ondes – un matériau utilisé pour bloquer les ondes électromagnétiques – et de feuilles d'aluminium. Ils sont à la fois image et objet, bouclier et espace virtuel. Cette ambiguïté m'excite beaucoup.

**Quelle est l'importance de l'atelier pour vous ? Avez-vous une routine ? Comment organisez-vous votre travail ?**

Je suis très nulle pour tout ce qui est routine et je n'ai pas une grande discipline. Ça ne m'intéresse pas vraiment. Mais je vais quasiment tous les jours à l'atelier. Parfois, pour ne rien y faire. Le simple fait de bouger des choses, de ranger mes collections d'images ou des objets peut créer de nouvelles correspondances, qui sont ensuite importantes dans les processus liés à de nouveaux projets. Mon atelier donne aussi sur un jardin, dans lequel je passe beaucoup de temps.

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## L'artiste du mois – Mimosa Echard

**Vous présentez une nouvelle exposition personnelle à la Galerie Chantal Crousel, à Paris. En quoi consiste ce projet ?**  
L'exposition est une rencontre entre deux séries d'œuvres : les tableaux que j'ai décrits plus haut, composés, entre autres, de tissu anti-ondes et de feuilles d'aluminium, et des photographies prises dans ces arcades aux Champs-Élysées. Tout y est mangé par un acide invisible. Il y a une vague ambiance des années 20. Je présente également de nouvelles sculptures-colliers.

**Pourquoi ce titre, *Lies* ?**

J'ai choisi ce titre – qui signifie "mensonges" en anglais – pour son côté théâtral et pour, en quelque sorte, faire surgir un barrage. Mais le mot est également très vulnérable. C'est cette tension qui m'intéressait. Je trouve aussi que le titre parle de la futilité du langage face à des œuvres d'art qui résistent, qui échappent aux catégories de la pensée. Il y a aussi un jeu esthétique autour du double, de l'artifice et de la construction matérielle et historique des images photographiques dans l'exposition. Et c'est aussi un mot qui a plusieurs sens, comme "s'allonger". J'aime l'état d'inertie que cela implique. En français, le mot "lie" véhicule l'idée de dépôt et de rebut. Cela décrit bien l'ambiance désuète des arcades commerciales des Champs-Élysées.

**Comment savez-vous qu'une œuvre est terminée ?**

Ça peut paraître assez romantique, mais je dirais qu'une œuvre est terminée quand elle le décide. Disons que c'est une décision que je ne prends pas seule. C'est très complexe comme processus, parce qu'il y a aussi des œuvres qui, en quelque sorte, refusent, qui deviennent des séries... J'aime l'idée que les œuvres deviennent d'autres œuvres, qu'il y a une sorte de continuité et de logique souterraine qui m'échappent.

**Vous donnez des titres très particuliers à vos œuvres. Pouvez-vous nous en dire plus ?**  
Souvent, je m'inspire d'un détail faisant partie d'une œuvre, ou de mots pris sur un emballage, par exemple. Le titre de mon installation *Escape More* renvoie à une phrase que j'ai tirée d'une publicité d'American Express sortie en

1994. On y voit une cascade qui ressemble à de l'urine. Elle date de la même année que la fameuse collection Golden Shower d'Alexander McQueen, financée par American Express. J'imaginai déjà l'installation comme un espace clos, mais aussi comme une machine à pisser. Donc, ça m'intéressait de faire résonner ces mots publicitaires différemment. J'aime bien l'idée que le titre peut fonctionner comme un portail qui ouvre sur plusieurs possibilités d'interprétation, comme les tableaux *Mostly Cloudy*, ou la série *Private Picture*. La musicalité est importante aussi. J'aime bien les titres qui ressemblent à ceux des chansons.

**Comment installez-vous vos pièces dans un espace de présentation ? Quelle est l'importance de la disposition et de l'architecture dans vos expositions ?**

Je suis très sensible à l'espace et j'essaie toujours de le faire entrer en dialogue d'une manière ou d'une autre avec mon travail. Je cherche souvent une forme de frontalité. Je fais de la sculpture, mais je vois très plat. C'est pour cette raison que je n'ai pas mon permis de conduire et que les vitrines m'inspirent beaucoup. Je trouve que c'est ça qui est très fort chez Joseph Cornell, la manière dont il détourne le langage capitaliste des vitrines en espace ambigu et énigmatique. L'espace des rêves. Ça m'inspire beaucoup.

**Dans quelle histoire aimeriez-vous inscrire votre travail ?**

Je ne me pose vraiment pas cette question. De toute façon, je ne crois pas que l'on puisse décider ce genre de choses. L'idée d'inscription dans l'histoire est pour moi l'anti-désir total, ou la mort.

**Vous placez-vous dans une communauté artistique ou un mouvement ?**

Je vis et je travaille avec beaucoup de personnes : mes amis, mes étudiants, ma famille, etc. Mais l'idée de me situer ne me correspond pas. Et je ne sais pas si on peut réellement parler de "mouvements" aujourd'hui, d'un point de vue contemporain. Je citerais donc l'épithète de Guillaume Dustan, "*J'ai toujours été pour tout être.*"

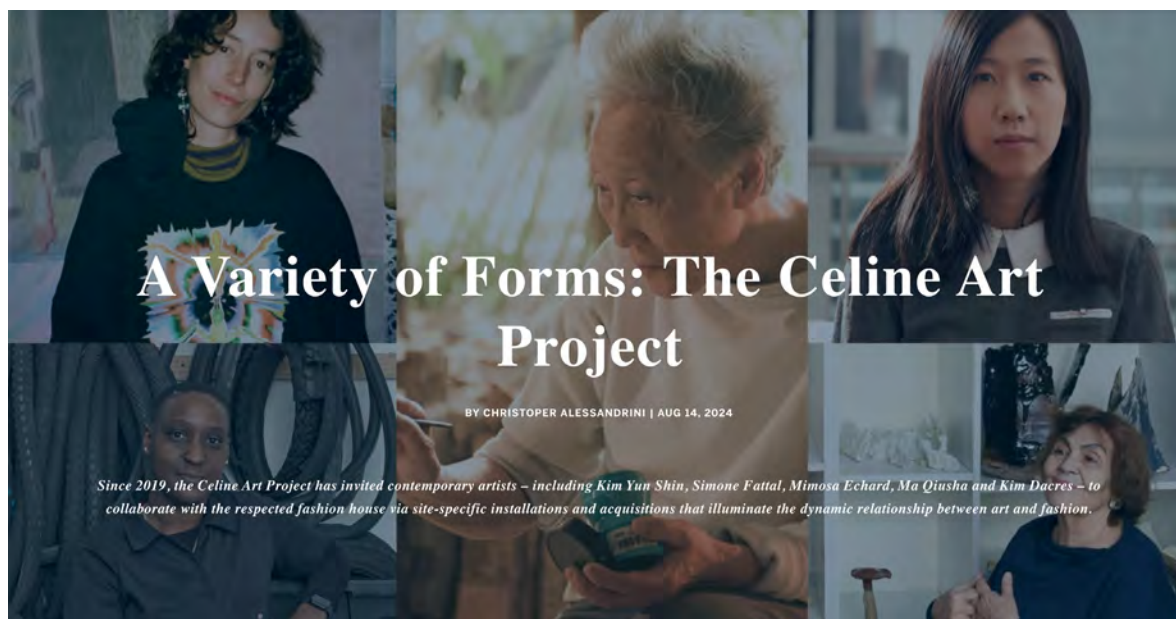
Double page précédente :  
vue de l'exposition *I think my cells are fucking behind my back* de Mimosa Echard, galerie Heidi, Berlin (2023).

Exposition *Lies* de Mimosa Echard, à la Galerie Chantal Crousel, 10, rue Charlot, Paris III<sup>e</sup>, du 15 octobre au 16 novembre.

Mimosa Echard est représentée par la Galerie Chantal Crousel, [www.crousel.com](http://www.crousel.com)

# 122

Sotheby's EST. 1744



## A Variety of Forms: The Celine Art Project

BY CHRISTOPHER ALESSANDRINI | AUG 14, 2024

*Since 2019, the Celine Art Project has invited contemporary artists – including Kim Yun Shin, Simone Fattal, Mimosa Echard, Ma Qiusha and Kim Dacres – to collaborate with the respected fashion house via site-specific installations and acquisitions that illuminate the dynamic relationship between art and fashion.*

Soon after joining Celine as Creative Director in 2018, Hedi Slimane launched the **Celine Art Project**. Since then, the couture house has commissioned site-specific installations and acquired distinctive artworks for its flagship locations around the globe – from iconic storefronts on Madison Avenue in New York and New Bond Street in London to a newly revamped boutique in Taipei 101. The collection includes more than 50 artists, whose bold, formally sophisticated works complement the designer’s forward-thinking aesthetic and his commitment to elucidating the continuities between art and fashion.

Throughout the early 2000s, Slimane photographed the underground scenes of Berlin and London, capturing their grit and glamor in extraordinary black-and-white portraits that distilled the cultural moment. This sensibility – cerebral, intimate, slightly punk – remains visible across the wildly heterogeneous collection he has assembled for Celine, where the marvelous and strange prevail in equal measure.

Christopher Alessandrini  
*A Variety of Forms: The Celine Art Project*  
Sotheby's, August 14, 2024.  
<https://urlr.me/23jfm>

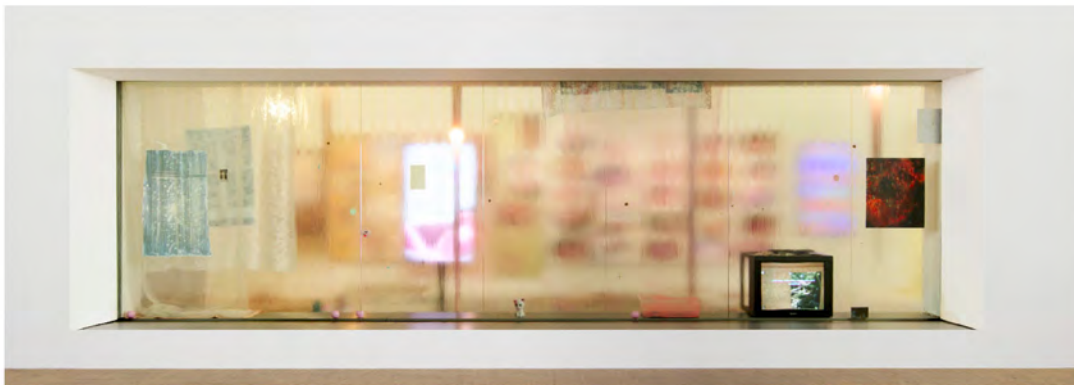
## Mimosa Echard



A PORTRAIT OF MIMOSA ECHARD BY AODHAN MADDEN. MIMOSA ECHARD, MOSTLY CLOUDY 2, 2023. IMAGE COURTESY CELINE HANGZHOU

Whenever Mimosa Echard arrives in a new city, her countdown begins. “I have this short window, maybe two days, when I’m so excited and my eyes work differently,” the Paris-based artist says, before briskly disappearing offscreen. She returns moments later with a pixelated pink tray that resembles a bouquet of anemones or fingers. “These are my pussy straws,” she laughs – souvenirs from a sex shop in Brooklyn, retrieved on her last trip to New York.

Travel allows Echard to indulge in the euphoria of visual overstimulation – when the hierarchies of attention are thrown into flux and certain details pop with sudden, vivid clarity. It’s an almost-childlike state of wonder, yet Echard has spent most of her career refusing to sentimentalize childhood or fetishize purity. For her, a desire for purity in the age of the internet and hyperglobalization is worse than foolish: it belies a more insidious and ultimately sinister desire for control.





MIMOSA ECHARD, *ESCAPE MORE*, 2022. INSTALLATION VIEW, "PRIX MARCEL DUCHAMP," CENTRE POMPIDOU, PARIS, 2022. PHOTO BY AURÉLIEN MOLE, COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND GALERIE CHANTAL CROUSEL, PARIS © MIMOSA ECHARD / ADAGP, PARIS, 2024

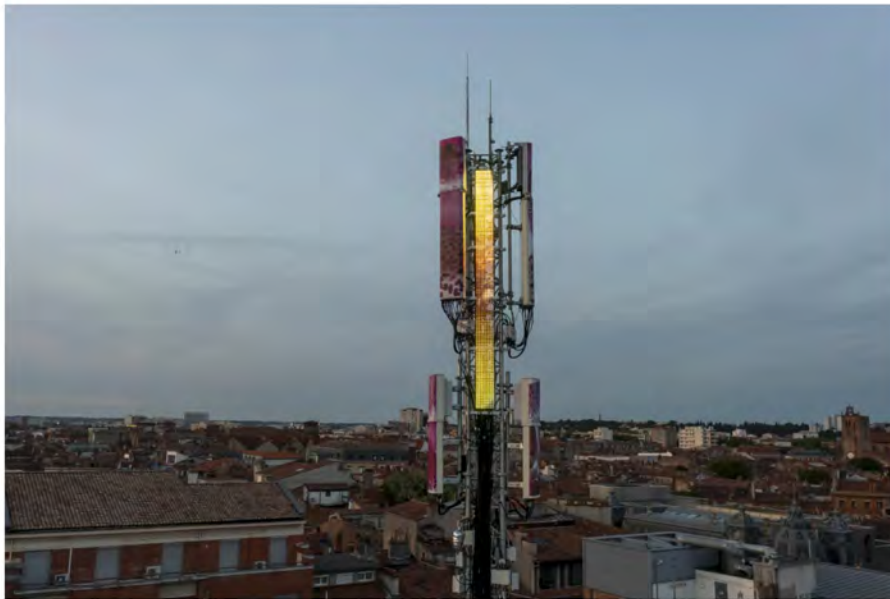
**“Transformation is always at the center of my practice. ... I try to recreate this very specific moment in between.”**

- MIMOSA ECHARD

Nothing could be further from the animating spirit of her playful, rigorously layered mixed-media artworks. After receiving the 2022 Prix Marcel Duchamp, Echard has quickly established herself as one of the most unpredictable and protean young artists working in Europe. Her winning entry was a cryptic “liquid tableau” called *Escape more* (2022), a deceptively straightforward fountain-like installation of photographs, advertisements, commercial products and looped videos slightly obscured under a steady stream of yellowish fluid meant to invoke the mares’ urine used in hormone-replacement therapy for menopausal women.

“Transformation is always at the center of my practice,” she says. While the works possess a talismanic charge, they might also be read as time capsules: distillations or encapsulations of specific moments in time, memories of friends and lovers. In her “A/B” series (2016-present), she carefully arranges spreads of natural and synthetic elements on plexiglass sheets before dousing them in fluids: epoxy resin, Coca-Cola, depilatory wax. Once the flotsam settles after the deluge, a pattern emerges, pleasingly choreographed by chance and entropy. “I try to recreate this very specific moment *in between*,” she says, although the final composition must always have a sense of “balance.”

Underlying any fantasy of control is a thread of erotic paranoia that Echard finds amusing but generative – a fear of permeability that structures broader geopolitical arguments, including the obsessive policing of national borders and mounting concerns over “penetration” by 5G radio waves. “There is this contradiction about the relation between what is polluted and what is pure,” Echard says, reflecting on the artificial distinctions, including human versus nature, devised to exploit natural resources.



MIMOSA ECHARD, LADY'S GLOVE, 2024. INSTALLATION VIEW "NOUVEAU PRINTEMPS," PARKING DES CARMES, TOULOUSE, FRANCE, 2024. PHOTO BY LYDIE LECARPENTIER, COURTESY OF THE ARTIST © MIMOSA ECHARD/ADAGP, PARIS (2024)

This general anxiety around contamination is a recurring theme across Echard's oeuvre. In her “Mostly Cloudy” (2023) series, one of which is on view at Celine's Wulin Square shop in Hangzhou, Echard stretches antiradiation fabric and aluminum foil across her canvas and overlays a grid of oxidized green. Each panel appears like a window into some desperate near-future: a gray, postapocalyptic landscape after the end of nature.

Most recently, Echard's fascination with invisible electromagnetic waves has culminated in *Lady's Glove* (2024), an “anti-monument” affixed to a 5G mast on top of a parking garage in Toulouse. The sculptural assemblage is composed of close-up images of foxglove flowers that sheath the tower, an aluminum heart installed like a bracelet charm, and a narrow transparent LED screen where a constant stream of the artist's personal videos is played at nightfall.



MIMOSA ECHARD, *MOSTLY CLOUDY 2*, 2023. IMAGE COURTESY CELINE HANGZHOU

The pollution of water supplies and airspace can make it feel impossible to opt out of our hyperconnected reality. “You want to be part of society,” she says, “but also you’re scared – you want your body to be protected.” The quandary reminds Echard of two films: Todd Haynes’ *Safe* (1995), about a suburban housewife beset by a mysterious environmentally triggered illness, and *The Swimmer* (1968), based on John Cheever’s famous short story of existential angst.

In the latter, Burt Lancaster plays a handsome, seemingly ordinary man who decides one afternoon to swim across the backyard pools of his suburban neighborhood. “I almost feel like him,” Echard says, contemplating how to navigate the profusion of content available on the internet. “I thought about all the information that we have going inside and outside, all this data, and I got overwhelmed.” She pauses. “I wanted to work with that.”

## crosscurrent

### *Strange Encounters*

Artist MIMOSA ECHARD  
constructs layered ecosystems alive with  
cultural contamination

Interview RUBA KATRIB  
Photography OLA RINDAL





Furnished by materials both organic and synthetic,  
tangible and intangible, foreign and deeply personal,  
Mimosa Echard's mixed-media artworks explore  
interactions between the technological and the natural  
to realise saturated worlds of heightened wonder.

The French polymath sat down with Curator and  
Director of Curatorial Affairs at MoMA PS1 Ruba  
Katrib to discuss her Marcel Duchamp Prize win and  
subsequent exhibition at the Centre Pompidou, the  
evolution of the doll, 5G penetration, and surface tensions.



RUBA KATRIB How long have you been in New York?

MIMOSA ECHARD About two months, I'm leaving tomorrow.

RUBA KATRIB What have you been doing?

MIMOSA ECHARD I've seen so much; so many shows. I've been meeting friends, meeting new people, walking around the city. In terms of what I have been working on, I have mainly been collecting materials. I've also taken a lot of pictures.

RUBA KATRIB So it's mostly research?

MIMOSA ECHARD It's all research. It's been very interesting. It was an occasion to have a break, to step back a little bit from the studio. But I have also been working on my archives, because I'm working on a new book. It's also been a time to think about that and get things in order.

RUBA KATRIB Were you able to collect anything good? Photograph anything good?

MIMOSA ECHARD I still need a bit more time to look at everything. I work with film, so there's some rolls that I haven't developed yet. I got some good dolls though. I went to Mood.

RUBA KATRIB The Mood Fabrics shop? It's so nice.

MIMOSA ECHARD I was amazed by all the funny fabric. They have a lot of sequins and beads—stuff you can't find in Paris even though it's a fashion city.

RUBA KATRIB Are there not many supply stores?

MIMOSA ECHARD You can find amazing fabric in Paris, but not these specific showtime fabrics! It's very Broadway and theatrical.

RUBA KATRIB And were you thinking of something in particular, or was it more about collecting to come up with potential projects?

MIMOSA ECHARD I have become obsessed with this Joseph Cornell work at MoMA. It's called *Untitled (Bébé Marie)*.<sup>1</sup> It's this doll in a box peeking out from behind some branches. I have been trying to make a cover version of it, as though it were a song. In the process, I ended up making a little zine inspired by her. (fig.6)

1.

*Untitled (Bébé Marie)* is a sculpture by American visual artist Joseph Cornell made in the early 1940s consisting of a wooden box housing a doll partially obscured by branches. Cornell is best known for creating work that imbues common objects with a spellbinding significance.

RUBA KATRIB Is it in a gaudy fabric?

MIMOSA ECHARD It's not very gaudy. I tried using a glitzy beaded webby fabric, but I ended up sticking to the original branches.

RUBA KATRIB Did you get the materials from Mood Fabrics?

MIMOSA ECHARD No, from that street of florists in Midtown. [Creating my own] *Bébé Marie* became my way of circulating inside the city, trying to reproduce her with the materials [New York City] offered me. At the same time that I've been thinking about the Cornell box, a parallel obsession has developed [around] these structural 5G antennas all over the city.

RUBA KATRIB Your zine expanding on the Cornell box is like entering into the interior space of this doll figure. Like a lifestyle publication.

MIMOSA ECHARD It also makes me think of the Darwinist evolution of the doll, and how the doll looks now.

RUBA KATRIB With Barbie being a huge thing again now with the movie—surpassing the moment of the Bratz doll, which was big competition for Barbie for some time—it's like an evolution, but also a back and forth. I don't know how popular Bratz dolls are now.

MIMOSA ECHARD [Bratz have] those crazy eyes and they really pop. And they're more about fashion.

RUBA KATRIB They became popular in the 2000s right? I was too old by the time they came out.

MIMOSA ECHARD Me too.

RUBA KATRIB But I was definitely into Barbies, and Lego bricks.  
Are these the drawings of the 5G towers that you made?

MIMOSA ECHARD Yeah. I'm going to make a sculpture in relation to an existing 5G antenna. It's for an art festival in France, Le Nouveau Printemps Toulouse, curated by Alain Guiraudie. Growing up in a New Age environment, antennas were like the image of the devil. I don't know exactly what I want to do, but I want to make a collage and add sculptural elements; it's just the beginning. I was working with an anti-radiation fabric in my last show at Heidi Gallery in Berlin, this idea flowing on from a desire to break down the binary between pure and toxic in relation to 5G towers.

RUBA KATRIB These are towers photographed in New York?

MIMOSA ECHARD Yeah, on a rooftop.

RUBA KATRIB It's interesting to think about this image in relation to the 3G scare. How some people think that 3G towers are causing radiation and that they are going to bring upon the end of the world.

MIMOSA ECHARD There are a lot of conspiracies. I like working with the invisible and thinking about it in almost an erotic way. You have a ton of waves that penetrate you all the time— I wanted to draw attention to that.

RUBA KATRIB I recently watched a film about this town where people go to avoid any kind of radioactive frequencies and electronic sound in Greenbank, West Virginia— weirdly not too far from where I grew up— called *Quiet Zone*.<sup>2</sup> It was about these people who feel sick or negatively impacted by all the sounds, frequencies, and radioactive waves, and so they go to this remote place where there's no cell service and no towers in the vicinity. No one is allowed to plug anything in.

2.

*Quiet Zone* is a 2015 documentary exploring a community of people suffering from electromagnetic hypersensitivity.

MIMOSA ECHARD Which is pretty rare, right?

RUBA KATRIB Very rare. It's become this mecca to escape. [People] go there to cure illness, but maybe they make themselves more ill by trying to find this perfect environment in which nothing is impacting them. I think that idea of toxicity is really interesting when we're in such a toxic world, it's sort of impossible to avoid. The effort to escape toxicity starts to unravel you psychologically sometimes. Everything becomes dangerous.

MIMOSA ECHARD Have you seen the movie *Safe*?



'I like working with the invisible and thinking about it in almost an erotic way. You have a ton of waves that penetrate you all the time — I wanted to draw attention to that.'



Ruba Katrib  
*Artist MIMOSA ECHARD constructs layered ecosystems alive with cultural contamination*  
Crosscurrent, N°4, Spring—Summer, 2024, p.246-271.

RUBA KATRIB Yes.

MIMOSA ECHARD I was really struck by this movie. I saw it recently. Have you seen Todd Haynes's most recent one, *May December*?

RUBA KATRIB Not yet.

MIMOSA ECHARD It's interesting. It's less about material toxicity, but works with a kind of social toxicity in a disturbingly light-handed way.

RUBA KATRIB I think about this a lot. I went down some New Age tunnels a while ago and was also attempting to achieve a state of purity. I wouldn't even take Advil or aspirin or anything like that. I tried to only eat organic. The people I was around who were also into this stuff, a lot of them are anti-vaxxers of course. With the pandemic it got really dark. A lot of people got into these right-wing conspiracies, a lot of New Age groups got really into Trump. The whole ideology flipped so quickly.

MIMOSA ECHARD I also think about that. When I grew up Barbie was forbidden. And it was weird for me because the boys would play with robots and cars.

RUBA KATRIB In an effort to protect you from what Barbie may represent. A truck seems more harmless, but is it?

MIMOSA ECHARD Then there's the factor of time. We are the first humans to live with so much of this kind of radiation

'I'm going to make a sculpture in relation to an existing 5G antenna [...] Growing up in a New Age environment, antennas were like the image of the devil. I don't know exactly what I want to do, but I want to make a collage and add sculptural elements; it's just the beginning.'

through the use of mobile phones among other things. I think it's always more interesting to try to stay open to the complexity of this, working with this doubt. The effects could be exciting, or nothing, or they could be very bad.

RUBA KATRIB It's good and bad. It exists and we use it for so many things that we really need it for, but then of course it goes the other way.

MIMOSA ECHARD To me it relates to the fantasy of living in a bubble and of being protected. Possessing purity. I think purity is scary, the way it slides towards fascism.

RUBA KATRIB There is a tipping point. [At first] you're trying to only eat organic or not go through the X-ray machine at the airport to reduce your exposure to radiation. But then this behaviour starts to slip into this paranoid, potentially fascist worldview. Then the idea of purity becomes quite disturbing. How do you think about that line [between purity and fascism]? That's [a consideration] that seems quite present in your work; I see it in all the materials that you're using and how they come together into new combinations or mixtures.

MIMOSA ECHARD Absolutely. Blurriness is important to me. I think this intense ambivalence or entanglement of everything in everything has always come back to my relationship to nature, in particular to plants. [Nature] is something I have been obsessed with for so long. Moral purity doesn't exist organically. But I think it's also about working against simplification. I'm a woman, but I'm working to try to break down these categories because I think it's also important to move beyond the ways in which 'nature' is used against desire... This dynamic is something I am fascinated by. It's also exciting for me to think about evolution. For example, the evolution of dolls and their specific modifications.

RUBA KATRIB To see how the 'body' is changing. If you lined up dolls across time periods, it would look like a diagram of how an ape becomes a human.

MIMOSA ECHARD It's like a poem of plastic bodies.

RUBA KATRIB Do you want to talk about your work [*Escape more*] for the Marcel Duchamp Prize—which you won. I think it's always an interesting show as a competition, and your work did stand out as a singular installation. (fig.1)

MIMOSA ECHARD I had been working on that piece for so many years. The first time I was in New York [in 2011], I saw this bank with a glass entrance wall like a waterfall. The piece started there. There was something interesting about the water having the quality of transparent money. Without thinking about it at the time, I started to film gold coins. I had also been working on pieces that involve a lot of liquid, so fluidity was very present in

my work at the time. It wasn't until after finishing the work for the [Marcel Duchamp Prize] that I realised that it was somehow the combination of all these years. I also read an article about pills made of the urine of pregnant horses.

RUBA KATRIB How they make hormones?

MIMOSA ECHARD Yeah. So the water also became urine, chemicals, drugs. . . It was a way to write about transparency. I love how Dan Graham's glass works speak to the relationship between the city, the body, and society.<sup>3</sup> I wanted to make an architectural piece without it really being architectural.

3.  
American artist Dan Graham's glass and mirrored pavilions blur  
the line between architecture and sculpture to interrogate the voyeuristic  
elements of the built environment

RUBA KATRIB The murkiness was amplified by the tinge on everything. That water feature was like architecture that's old and has gotten dirty.

MIMOSA ECHARD Exactly. The blurry murkiness also makes it like a painting, like a moving painting. It's also about the idea of recycling because you have the loop of the water and the loop of three different videos. It was about exploring the possibility of perception and a room that's only visible through water. I had been excited about that idea for a long time.

RUBA KATRIB I think to foreclose something, or to blur it out, is an interesting move as well because it makes you curious about the space that lies behind the space.

MIMOSA ECHARD Looking back at it, there were actually a lot of personal materials inside that you can't really see.

RUBA KATRIB The list of materials for the work reads: glass, aluminium, pumps, pipes, wall fabrics, capsules, silver prints, natural and artificial hair, calendula petals, gardenia, lotus, cherry. Maybe you could talk a little about the specificities of these materials?

MIMOSA ECHARD The materials themselves become incorporated almost naturally. Most of the time, it's just what I have in the studio at any given moment. The gardenia, for example, is a material I work with a lot for its yellow pigment, as well as its presence in all kinds of cosmetics. For this work, I also specifically played with the materials list as a material [in and of itself]. I made a little plexiglas work using epoxy and urine that was displayed behind the wall, suggesting perhaps why the water was yellow. . .

RUBA KATRIB Like a urine wall?

MIMOSA ECHARD Yes! I was playing with that idea, the suspicion that exists between language and substance.



RUBA KATRIB So what you can see is what's on the surface—like these prints and videos—but the majority of the works are the elements behind the wall.

MIMOSA ECHARD There are so many [different] surfaces. One of the videos is someone licking themselves as though they were a cat. It's a little erotic, but fun. Another video I actually made in New York, a crazy close-up of a Bella Hadid advertisement. The eyes of Bella. It becomes quite experimental, and almost abstract, because I'm so close to the screen. The video placed closest to the water was taken from my personal archives. I grew up in a really tiny village, and this is a video I made when I was 20-something. I used an old camera, and that's why it's also shown on an old monitor because of the format of the TV. It's of my sister and my mother cleaning the clède together, which is traditionally a place where you store chestnuts. I thought it was kind of amusing to leave them cleaning on a loop with a subtitled poem.

RUBA KATRIB The whole thing feels autobiographical. It feels like the intimate space of a bedroom, and as if you're looking into the windows of a house you can't enter. It feels very personal, even if you don't know what everything means. Some of the objects you included, little toys or knick-knacks and things like that, make it feel that there's a meaning behind them and an attachment to them—that they signify something. In all of the materials you're using, things like newsprint or rubber bands, it creates a space where someone is living a certain kind of life. The necklaces, bracelets, plants, lace, toys, stuffed cat, the fake eyelashes, they're all spatializing a self.

MIMOSA ECHARD I'm glad you get this impression of giving something, but also protecting, or withholding. [It's about] this ambivalence.

RUBA KATRIB It's like the image of the doll you were showing me earlier—it's packaged. This reminds me of your recent show *I Think My Cells Are Fucking Behind My Back* at Heidi in Berlin. There seems to be an idea of packaging within these other works as well. There is an act of covering that takes place, there's what is on the surface that points to the more hidden layers behind it. I was wondering how you think about the tension between what is sculptural—all these different materials being read as layers—and the idea of a singular image that's created. There is still an image that's being created on the surface, but it's a play between the visible and the invisible. (fig.2, 3)

MIMOSA ECHARD That's really interesting. It makes me think of anti-radiation foil, or beeswax. Materials that are in themselves surfaces.

RUBA KATRIB Again, it's like packaging, not only to cover, but as protection from physical and psychic exposure. The idea of collaging, too, becomes a part of this on an extreme level. It amplifies

‘I think purity is scary,  
the way it slides towards fascism.’

what you said earlier about voyeurism. Using the work to hide  
itself. What is that?

*[Mimosa shows Ruba an image on her iPhone]*

MIMOSA ECHARD This is a work that was in the show at Heidi.  
I found the poster in the street ages ago. It must have been on  
someone’s bedroom wall before being in the work. (fig.1)

RUBA KATRIB The voyeurism is amplified by having a surface or a  
covering that you have to try to look through. What is that?

*[Ruba points to the centre of the work]*

MIMOSA ECHARD I think it’s a dog bowl.

RUBA KATRIB What’s the surface?

MIMOSA ECHARD I’d say silk.

RUBA KATRIB These parts of the work that are wrapped in silk are  
interesting because you can see them, and at the same time you  
can’t see them fully. It provokes the feeling of, ‘I’m not sure what  
I should be seeing or should not be seeing.’ It asks what the limits  
are, and the threshold of looking becomes very present. Similar  
to the [Marcel Duchamp Prize] piece.

MIMOSA ECHARD Interesting. They’re like perspective machines, or  
consciousness machines. They loop back to the viewer. I am in-  
terested in the process of simultaneously looking *and* not looking

at something—the idea of a truly ‘private picture.’ These works loop back to the installation at the Pompidou [for the Marcel Duchamp Prize] as well. For that work, I didn’t know if the effect I wanted would actually materialise. It was difficult to get it right. But when everything was done I was like, ‘Wow, this is cool. Something is happening.’

RUBA KATRIB The production is quite ambitious. But of course you don’t know exactly what it’s going to be until it’s actually done.

MIMOSA ECHARD It was a risk, honestly.

RUBA KATRIB Do you think [the ambition of that project] changed things for you in terms of future work and the kinds of things you might take on in the future on a production level?

MIMOSA ECHARD I felt this calm, and then this emptiness once everything had come together, all these years of work. It was like the wave finally crashed. I also enjoyed the distance that was incorporated into the process. I was working with engineers in this quite abstract way, not knowing what we were making until the last moment. I would love to continue to work in this way.

*[Ruba brings up another piece from Mimosa’s show at Heidi]*

RUBA KATRIB What are the materials in this piece?

MIMOSA ECHARD There’s lots of makeup stuff and lots of different personal items—things that you find in your pockets. I often use objects that aren’t really objects, they’re too minor or fragmented or too abstract. And there are certain materials related to reproduction and sexuality. Like the artificial pistils that mimic the reproductive organs of flowers, evoking pollen, nectar, and a network of bees. This was the start of the radiation theme. This series also has sheets of propolis harvested from my friend’s beehive. I wanted the works to have a sweet smell. (fig.2)

RUBA KATRIB There’s a fine line between the synthetic and the organic, the real and the fake. All of these dynamics are playing out. There’s multiple narratives that are coming through in the work, with the image versus the material. The materials can tell a story, and work as a poem (as you said), but then there’s a story within the materials that can come together as an image, which is another mode of representation and its own narrative device. Do all of the materials come together from your perspective? Are you more interested in the clash between the image and the story? Or are they somehow representing themselves formally?

MIMOSA ECHARD I’m happy that you said all the materials can be read like a script. They’re all here for a specific reason, even if that reason is never clear or stated. Often when I am making a work or an exhibition, I am looking for a ‘story,’ something that I can tell myself. This can be quite literal: my exhibition *Sluggy Me*

came from watching *The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills*. But it usually remains vague, something that leads me to different materials that then help write the story. And it never actually materialises or develops. When the work happens, the story ends. Because I know that the specificity of all of the materials together goes beyond anything that can be ordered like a story. I just hope together they make a new image. It's something that I get excited about, something I can't predict. (fig.5)

RUBA KATRIB It's like you're stirring a pot of all these ingredients, and you don't know what the end result is going to be. Is it going to taste good or bad? There's experimentation there with the mixing of the materials. You start with the materials first?

MIMOSA ECHARD It depends. It could also be the image that comes first, like a found image. I'm often looking for a certain perspective or an emotion without necessarily knowing what it's going to be like [in the end].

RUBA KATRIB What is this piece on the back wall?

MIMOSA ECHARD These are the works made with the anti-radiation fabric and aluminium foil. I wanted to make these paranoid minimalist paintings. In the end, I was happy with them because they also look quite sculptural due to the oxidation. To make them I laid them in the garden outside [of my studio] and poured acid over them and they became quite greenish. It was interesting to work on this show because of the particularity of the gallery's architecture. I really wanted to do something that responded to the frontal nature of the space, as well as the immensity of the windows. It was also the first time I have worked with aluminium foil.

RUBA KATRIB So the aluminium foil is supposed to be an anti-radiation? That's what people cover their apartments with.

MIMOSA ECHARD Exactly.

RUBA KATRIB Maybe you can watch *Love Has Won: The Cult of Mother God* before you leave the US tomorrow. It's a TV show about this woman who became a small internet sensation as a spiritual leader and started a cult. She's an unhinged blonde lady who's an alcoholic, and this group of people come and stay with her. They believe that she's going to ascend. They talk about her channelling all these energies, which is really just her in a drunken rage. She's trying to process the energy of humanity to become enlightened. And then all these things go wrong because humanity is not becoming enlightened fast enough. At one point, one of the people in the group is talking about how it looks like she's sleeping to a normal person, but she's actually convening with all of these spirit guides.

I bring it up because they are taking colloidal silver as a medicine, which turns her blue and contributes to her death. After

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she died, her followers kept her body for weeks, and she ended up being mummified. There's one scene where one of the followers has an EKG monitor and she's measuring the electromagnetic field of Mother God, but she's dead. The woman measures her foot and it goes up by 300, then the follower puts it on herself, and it goes to zero. And it makes you think, is that the silver? Has she turned herself into this magnetic field?

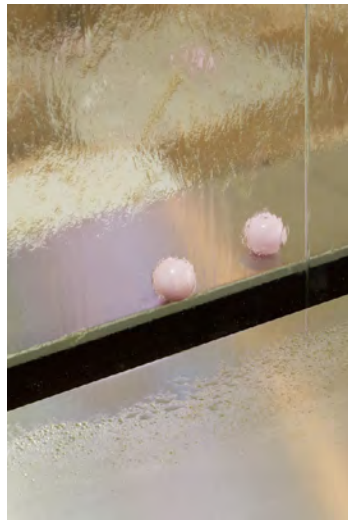
MIMOSA ECHARD That is so interesting.

RUBA KATRIB It's extra bizarre because she is this blonde, attractive woman, who is New Age and had some family problems growing up, but her story doesn't seem to justify how out of whack she gets. It's like an American Barbie gone wrong.

MIMOSA ECHARD Maybe she's *Bébé Marie*.

Mimosa Echard is currently exhibiting  
work at Lafayette Anticipations in Paris as part  
of the group show *Coming Soon*.

fig.1  
*Escape more*, 2022  
Variable dimensions



Glass, aluminium, pumps, pipes, urine, wool, fabrics, capsules, silver prints, natural and artificial hair, acrylic paint, plastic lids and trays, calendula petals, gardenia, lotus pollen, cherry pits, necklaces, bracelets, beads, thread, cotton and plastic rope, electrical systems, coconuts, geisha balls, rubber bands, varnish, glue, lace, Financial Times newsprint,

plasma screens, monitor, bitch\_im\_a\_cat. mov, bella.mov, la\_clède. mov, coloured distilled water, fluorescent sun, moon and stars, dolls, 'Hello Keta' stuffed cat, plastic balls, ginko egg, compact, scotch tape, false eyelashes, make-up sponges, glass tassels

fig.2  
*Private picture (what's in your bag)*, 2023  
180 × 55 × 12cm



Poster, money, coins, playing cards, business cards, entrance tickets, Polaroid, analogue print on paper, dry eye drops, silk rope, makeup sponges, empty pills, plastic beads, threads, rhinestones, wool, plastic egg, maga-

zine ad, faux flower pistils, gardenia seeds, plastic curtain, plastic placemat, plastic balls, plastic lids, hand-painted silk scarf, natural hand-dyed silk, flower-shaped mesh fabric, acrylic paint, acrylic laquer

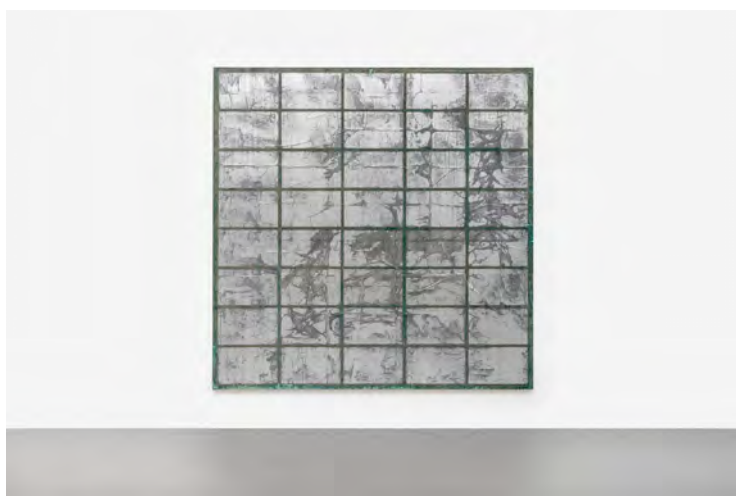
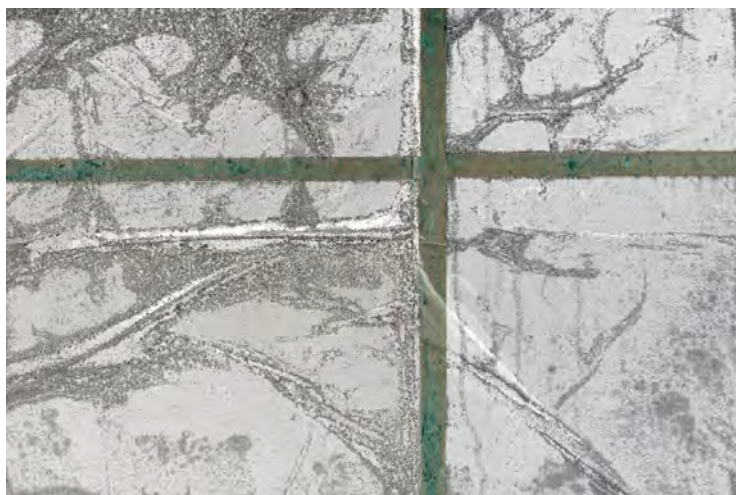
fig.3  
*Private picture (stay open)*, 2023  
180 × 55 × 11cm



Poster, raw propolis grid on fabric, plastic centipede, metal key, metal ring, wire, makeup sponge, empty pills, promotional sex toy member card, remote control, coins, acorn, metal pendant, metal hair pin, faux

flower pistils, plastic placemat, plastic balls, plastic hair ties, massage ball, plastic alien toys, plastic beads, flower-shaped mesh fabric, gardenia seeds, natural dye, natural hand-dyed silk, acrylic paint, acrylic laquer

fig.4  
*Mostly cloudy 3*, 2023  
235 × 235 × 3cm



Canvas, anti-radiation fabric, aluminium foil, acrylic transparent varnish

fig.5  
*Sap (Slip)*, 2021 (detail)  
300 × 7cm



Glass beads, photographic print, hair clip, bracelet, electrical system

fig.6  
*Bébé Marie*, 2023  
22 × 30cm



Colour photocopies

- fig.1 Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris  
Photo: Aurélien Mole  
© Mimosa Echard/ADAGP, Paris (2024)
- fig.2 Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris  
Photo: Jiayun Deng—Galerie Chantal Crousel  
© Mimosa Echard/ADAGP, Paris (2024)
- fig.3 Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris  
Photo: Jiayun Deng—Galerie Chantal Crousel  
© Mimosa Echard/ADAGP, Paris (2024)
- fig.4 Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris  
Photo: Jiayun Deng—Galerie Chantal Crousel  
© Mimosa Echard/ADAGP, Paris (2024)
- fig.5 Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris  
Photo: Grégoire d'Ablon  
© Mimosa Echard/ADAGP, Paris (2024)
- fig.6 © Mimosa Echard/ADAGP, Paris (2024)

Ruba Katrib

*Artist MIMOSA ECHARD constructs layered ecosystems alive with cultural contamination*

Crosscurrent, N°4, Spring—Summer, 2024, p.246-271.

**ELEPHANT**



Nia Thomas  
*Mimosa Echard*  
Elephant, N°49, 2024, p.174-181.

# MIMOSA ECHARD



PLAYING ON THE SECRETS, MAGIC AND AWE THAT SEEP INTO THE MATERIAL WORLD

Born in 1986, artist Mimosa Echard grew up in a commune in Cévennes, a south-central region of France with a long history of counter-cultural and community experiments. Her early video work *The People* (2016), more than a decade of MiniDV family archival footage stitched together into a two-hour film, serves as a vision of commune life. Scenes of the everyday—children playing outside, men foraging, and laundry strung between trees—are juxtaposed with swaths of pine and spruce, and a flickering TV screen airing an athletics competition. The home footage celebrates the beauty and mystery of life in a place where politics is lived on a very personal level.

Coming of age in the 1990s when portable person-centred technology was taking hold, Echard grapples in her body of work with a long-held sensitivity to the fact that we exist in symbiotic and at times esoteric ecosystems alongside bacteria, mould, computers, the spiritual, nature and phenomena outside our comprehension. This is reflected in the intense materiality of her two and three dimensional work, in which she commonly uses thick layers of latex and glue to enmesh glass and plastic beads, silk rope, jewellery and netted fabrics onto canvas or within sculpture.

*I Still Dream of Orgonon* (2016) is a sculptural series made up of plastic drink bottles filled with organic and inorganic matter ranging from old batteries to stones and fabrics set in resin. The title is a reference to the work of twentieth-century psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich, whose home, laboratory and research centre, Orgonon, was named after his theory of 'orgone energy'.<sup>1</sup> Orgone—from the same root as 'orgasm' and 'organism'—was coined by Reich to define an omnipresent cosmic life force that permeates all living organisms, as well as weather, gravity, galaxy formations, emotion and sexuality. By channelling the powerful libidinous energy that runs through our bodies and connects us to the world around us, Reich believed we could de-lodge the emotional trauma and social conditions that bind us to alienated lives under patriarchal capitalism.

Echard's sculptures are reminiscent of Reich's 'orgone accumulators': telephone-box-like cells made of alternating layers of organic and inorganic materials intended to enhance the body's natural healing abilities. The elements held in an amniotic-like fluid of resin in *I Still Dream of Orgonon* highlight the beautiful intensity of materiality inherent to all matter. Viewed alongside the life on the fringes presented in *The People*, the work leads us to contemplate the rigid categorisation between science, spirituality and sexuality that delineates all areas of our lives.

"The sexuality of plants has always fascinated me", Echard told *Crash Magazine* after winning the prestigious Prix Marcel Duchamp in 2022.<sup>2</sup> This lifelong interest led the artist to begin research into myxomycetes whilst on residency at Villa Kuhoyama in Kyoto. Myxomycetes are unicellular organisms whose classification lies at the intersection of the animal, plant and fungi kingdoms. They are isogamous, meaning that their reproductive cells are all the same size and cannot be categorised into genders. Inspired by her research, Echard created an experimental video game titled *Sporal* (2022) exhibited at Palais de Tokyo last year, in which she plays on the slippery queerness of the slime mould.

During *Sporal* the main character travels through an unknown organism that is in a perpetual state of transformation. With a soundtrack by Yvan Etienne and a script from Aodhan Madden, the game unravels a sensuous imaginary world in a contemporary psychedelic aesthetic featuring glossy flowers and microbes. Encounters with non-binary beings such as a seahorse and bee orchid involve an exchange

Photography: Aodhan Madden

of fluids that unlocks various "sexual types"—a reference to the 720 different sexual types into which myxomycetes can mutate. The game's playfulness calls out the way normative hetero-biology forces restrictions on a world that is, as Myra J Hird says, "naturally queer".<sup>3</sup>

*Sporal* (2022) allows us to experience agency within new worlds where interactions take the form of erotic exchange. "Am I sick or am I sexy?" one flower teases, while the game dares potential players to "Bend your hot interior over another horizon."<sup>4</sup> We are probed to listen and feel with and through other beings. Led by desire, we surrender to the porosity of the non-human material world and are invited, in the introduction to the game, to "Get wetter and wetter and wetter and wetter ..."

Much of Echard's work speaks to feminist new materialist thinking, a more-than-human intersectionality whereby our flesh, mucus, cum, saliva and other viscosities exist in a slow-flowing system of entanglements with the slime, sap and nectar of the non-human world. "I've always liked that art doesn't have to be distant or cold or dry", she told *Crash Magazine*. "Can't we imagine pieces that keep that vivid intensity that comes with liquids, fluids, blood, tears, sexual fluids, everything that moves through the body and in nearly every material around us?"<sup>5</sup>

Nowhere is this liquidity more present than in *Escape More* (2022) exhibited at the Centre Pompidou. The installation consists of a large glass display window, within which various materials, screens and items hang and rest. Views and meanings of individual elements are merged and obscured by a curtain of transparent liquid that flows down the glass vitrine. Pink plastic balls dot the base of the installation, where a fluffy pink cat is also found. Its one pink ear is axiomatic of its gender, reminding viewers that its name in French—*chotte*—is slang for pussy. To the left of the cat is a screen in which you can just about make out a video of a naked figure moving from a sitting to a standing position. A handwritten note from previous collaborator Madden is taped in front. Playing on the already obscured view, the left-hand side of the piece includes an image of a window with lace curtains hanging behind, transferred onto fabric. Things you might find on the set of a teen girl's bedroom in a 90s sitcom also appear in the piece. A box of false eyelashes sits in its plastic casing, the closed eyes on the illustrated packaging shielding a view through the vitrine.

Stringing together the signifiers of the obscured nude, Echard builds a view of how bodies are inscribed with gendered meanings manufactured for profit by capitalism's patriarchal logic. Rather than an ode to girlhood, the inclusion of 'girly' materials, colours and accessories—prominent in much of her work—relates to Echard's early life in the commune where such things were disallowed. Looking from the outside in, Echard says that as a child, a fascination developed with the "idea that merchandise could supposedly talk about my body and my gender, and my relationship to the world".<sup>6</sup>

Echard reveals attempts to define the body as a closed system that can be labelled and defined in binary terms as completely futile. What emerges in its place is a much more interesting and complex vision of the unpredictable, fluid body in orbit with nonhuman creatures, ecological systems, chemical agents and technology. The liquid that flushes through *Escape More*, for example, is both a reference to mare's urine, a key ingredient in some synthetic estrogens that have caused irreparable physical damage to women's bodies, and to the urine of humans that is tested for the presence of drugs. Here Echard presents the world we have devised out of the malice of capitalism back at us, accessorised in pink, observed through the pissing liquid wall of glass.

In *Baigneur (sad girl)* (2021), *Numbs (Evatar)* (2021) and *Your Sleeping* (2023), Echard transforms the neat, traditional art-historical nude into a site of bodily and material unruliness. All three works have a lubricious quality, both in the sense of 'arousing or expressive of sexual desire' and 'slippery'.<sup>7</sup> The sensuality of the works stems from the interaction of the body with the materials layered on the canvas. In each case, the liquidity of the body extends beyond its biological confines to the canvas, where a thick glutinous

layering of matter from plastic, nacre and synthetics, to cherry pits, glass and fabric seep from the background to the foreground, encroaching on the nude.

The body in *Numbs (Evatar)*, lies facing away from the viewer across a deep red mattress. The duvet is pulled down, leaving the figure naked. A pasted image of a fawn caught in headlights and shrouded in wiry branches looks across the scene out towards the viewer.

In *Baigneur (sad girl)* the nude body lies in a blue bathtub, the arm holding a shower head up to the opening of the arse. In a play across cleanliness and pleasure, we see the stream of water wet the flesh. Overlapping the skin and encasing the scene are layered images depicting dense groves of vegetation on top of which fabric, capsules, mirror, glass, plastic eggs, fake flowers and synthetic hairs are held in lacquer and gloss.

In *Your Sleeping*, a roughly folded pillow takes the place of the shower head, straddled between the figure's thighs, the arm positioned underneath the weight of the body, suggesting a scene of masturbation. Here, collaged above the body is a medicine cabinet, its open shelves crowded with various cosmetic and health products. Beyond the nude is an open laptop and keyboard, a reminder of the corrupted sanctity of the private sphere in an era of obsessive connectivity. In a world constantly turned on, the bed itself has become "a topos of never-ending, mediated waking", says curator and theorist Paul B. Preciado.<sup>8</sup> This again brings to light our failed attempts at delineation. What Echard presents to us is not the lost separation or collapse of binaries between the private and public, nature and man-made but the fact that these separations have never existed. Where bodies are present, where materials exist, everything is in constant flux.

In the tangled, enraptured scenes of Echard's work, there is a sense of relief as she encourages us to give ourselves back up to the natural unruliness of the world. As in Reich's theory of orgone energy, there is a power that lies in harnessing the sensuousness that runs through and around us. Playing on the secrets, magic and awe that seep into the material world, Echard presents desire beyond the confines of our interiority, encouraging us to pause and succumb to the wonder of what grows, lives and exists around and in us.

Nia Thomas

- 1 [www.theguardian.com/books/2021/apr/17/wilhelm-reich-the-strange-prescient-sexologist-who-sought-to-set-us-free](http://www.theguardian.com/books/2021/apr/17/wilhelm-reich-the-strange-prescient-sexologist-who-sought-to-set-us-free)
- 2 [www.crash.fr/mimosa-echard-wins-the-marcel-duchamp-prize-2022](http://www.crash.fr/mimosa-echard-wins-the-marcel-duchamp-prize-2022)
- 3 MJ Hird, 'Naturally Queer', *Feminist Theory*, 2004.
- 4 [www.sporal.net](http://www.sporal.net)
- 5 [www.crash.fr/mimosa-echard-wins-the-marcel-duchamp-prize-2022](http://www.crash.fr/mimosa-echard-wins-the-marcel-duchamp-prize-2022)
- 6 [pw-magazine.com/2021/mimosa-echard-then-the-liquid-brings-chaos](http://pw-magazine.com/2021/mimosa-echard-then-the-liquid-brings-chaos)
- 7 [dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/lubricious](http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/lubricious)
- 8 Paul Preciado, 'Pornotopia, an Essay on Playboy's Architecture and Biopolitics' (New York: Zone Books, 2019), 146.





Stills from *The People*, 2016





*I Still Dream of Orgeon*, 2016  
Photography: Aurélien Mole



*I Still Dream of Oregon*, 2016  
Photography: Aurélien Mole

## SERVICE95



Mimosa Echard © Aodhan Madden

### The Way I Work... Mimosa Echard

Mimosa Echard is a French visual artist and 2022 winner of the Marcel Duchamp Prize – the most prestigious art award in France. Her work, which explores the relationship between nature and consumer items – from ceramics to video games – is described by *Art News* as “a dreamy world where people and plants co-exist”. Echard, on the other hand, says: “I find it impossible to describe my work, so my friend told me that I should just say that it is ‘pink’.” She sits down with [Service95](#) Global Editorial Director Funmi Fetto to discuss gardening, her dream of freedom and how *The Real Housewives Of Beverly Hills* inspired her work.



Studio, Mimosa Echard

**On Her Morning Routine...** My day starts by going from my home in Gare du Nord in Paris to my studio in Nogent-sur-Marne in the eastern suburbs. There's a train that goes there directly from my apartment. I love this moment, [it is when] I organise my day, write, read. At the moment, I am reading Kate Bush's biography *The Secret History Of Kate Bush And The Strange Art Of Pop* (above) by Fred Vermorel. Once I arrive in my studio, I look at the garden. I spend a lot of time looking at every plant, speaking to them... Then I go back inside and get to work. Sometimes alone, sometimes with collaborators.



Oumou Sangaré; Liturgy; Charli XCX

**On Her Working Playlist...** I listen to a lot of [music](#), really loudly when I'm alone. I have been listening to a lot to Belgian rapper Shay, Charli XCX, Oumou Sangaré, and I am crazy about this transcendental metal New York-based band Liturgy. I also listen to NTS radio a lot.



*Yolanda* (2021) Mimosa Echard, Grégoire d'Ablon, Galerie Chantal Crousel Paris ©  
Mimosa Echard/ADAGP (2023)

**On Being Inspired By The Small Screen...** I love *The Real Housewives Of Beverly Hills*. I once made an entire show about 'digesting' this kind of show.



Dries Van Noten; Alexander McQueen SS98

**On Her Work Uniform...** I am very inspired by the colours of Dries van Noten's older collections. Also, last year, I became obsessed with Alexander McQueen's 1998 Golden Shower collection.

**On Childhood Inspirations...** I grew up in the mountains in Les Cévennes in the south of France, which is perhaps why I often work with materials and people from there. As a kid, I spent two days with other kids in a big cave – we slept and cooked there. There was a beautiful, intense, and quite weird underground lake and the light and temperature mean you lose the sense of the outside world's lifecycle. I remember the shock of the light and scent when we finally left.

**On Artists...** Mike Kelley will always be an inspiration. But I also love Ana Mendieta, [Jean Siméon] Chardin, Carolee Schneemann. And a long time ago, my mother wove a wool tapestry of a bleeding swan. It is both very delicate and really mysterious.



*Sporal* (2022) Mimosa Echard, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, Aurélien Mole, Galerie Chantal Crousel © Mimosa Echard/ADAGP (2023)

**On Prized Possessions...** There are so many objects that I treasure. But rather than getting too caught up in the idea of possessing anything, I end up glueing most things inside my artwork. It's like a positive form of loss. My dream would be to have a completely empty space – no attachment, complete freedom.



Mimosa Echard © Aodhan Madden

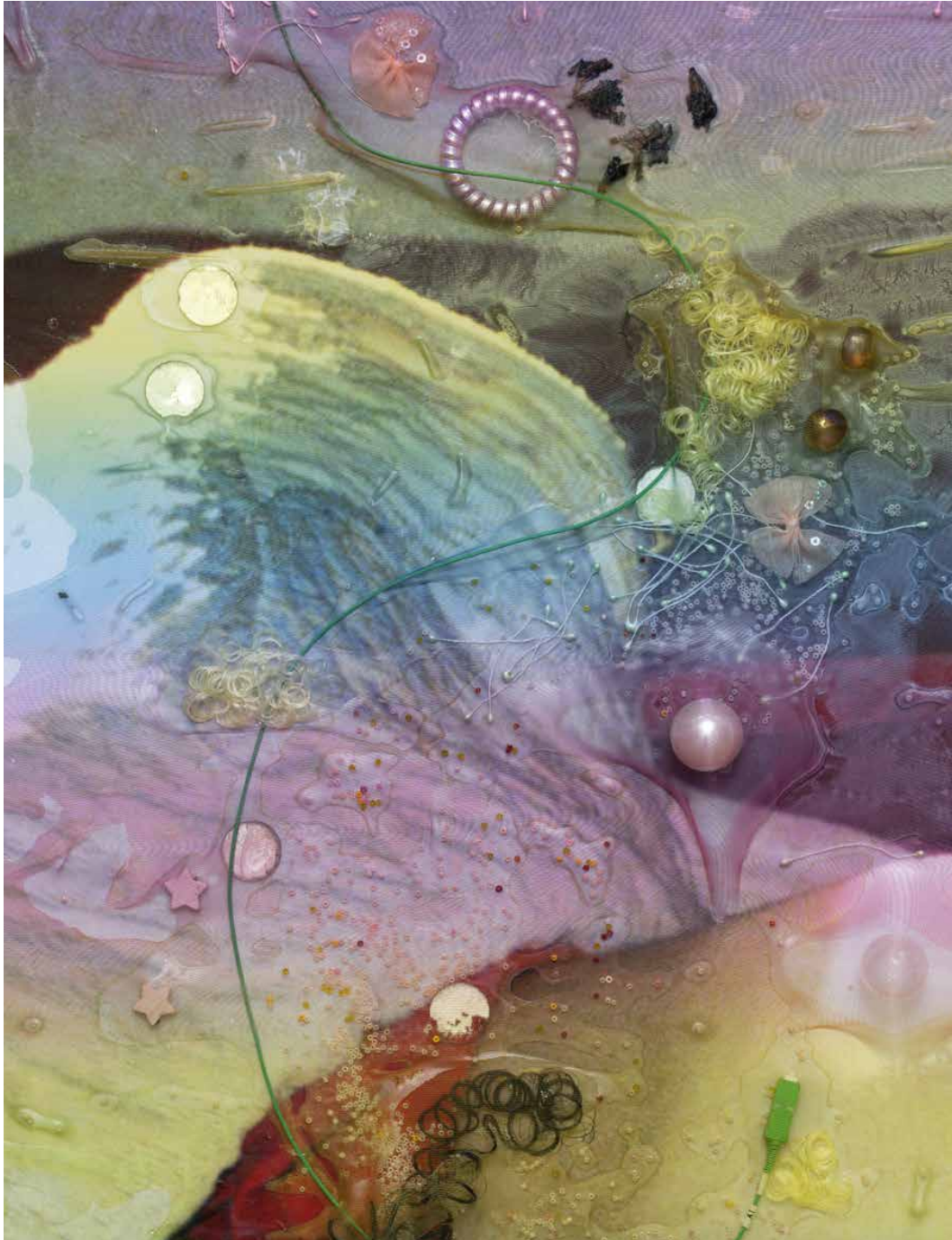
**On Walking...** Walking is the most important thing for me in terms of finding inspiration. It's like going into a trance; you dissolve into the landscape, the streets... The idea of dissolution is very important in my work. I am currently working on a show – opening in September at the [Heidi Gallery in Berlin](#) – which will try to express the sensation of surveillance within a kind of DIY aesthetic, something between electricity and privacy.



*Don't Believe The Hype*, Public Enemy; Bruce Lee

**On Best Career Advice...** This can be summed up in the song *Don't Believe The Hype* by Public Enemy and the famous quote by Bruce Lee: “Be water, my friend.”

# Flash Art



Pascale Krief  
*Escape More, See Less*  
Flash Art, Spring, 2023, p. 170-181.

## Escape More, See Less

### MIMOSA ECHARD

WORDS BY

### PASCALE KRIEF

**With great homogeneity of purpose, French artist Mimosa Echard's work unfolds from one exhibition to the next in an ongoing formal renewal that challenges the limits of expanded painting and sculpture. Each exhibition makes reference to those that came before, providing a syntactical scaffolding in support of stunning innovations that liberate Echard's work both from its intense materiality as well as any risk of repetition.**

*Numbs (Narcisse)*, 2021. Detail. Aluminum frame, analog photographic print, glass beads, plastic beads, mirrors, elastics, bracelets, synthetic hair, flower pistils, silk rope, fake flower pistils, electric cables, capsules, glass phial, sequin thread, pearl beads, organza, acrylic medium, acrylic lacquer, and gloss. 260 x 120 x 2.5 cm. Photography by Aurélien Mole. Courtesy of the artist; Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris; and Martina Simeti, Milan. © Mimosa Echard / ADAGP, Paris (2023).

*Escape more*, 2022. Detail. Glass, aluminum, pumps, pipes, urine, wool, fabrics, capsules, silver prints, natural and artificial hair, acrylic paint, plastic lids and trays, calendula petals, gardenia, lotus pollen, cherry pits, necklaces, bracelets, beads, thread, cotton and plastic rope, electrical systems, coconuts, geisha balls, rubber bands, varnish, glue, lace, *Financial Times* newsprint, plasma screens, monitor, *bitch\_im\_a\_cat.mov*, *bella.mov*, *la\_cède.mov*, colored distilled water, fluorescent sun, moon, and stars, dolls, "Hello Keta" stuffed cat, plastic balls, Ginkgo egg, compact, scotch tape, false eyelashes, make-up sponges, and glass tassels. Variable dimensions. Photography by Aurélien Mole. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris. © Mimosa Echard / ADAGP, Paris (2023).





Pascale Krief  
*Escape More, See Less*  
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MIMOSA ECHARD BY PASCALE KRIEF

*Yolanda*, 2021. Acrylic paint, fabrics, gardenia seeds, organic dyes, berry juice, ink, and acrylic gloss. 125 x 95 cm. Photography by Grégoire d'Ablon. Courtesy of the artist, Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris; and Martina Simeti, Milan.

*Escape more* (2022), her installation recently on view at the Centre Pompidou as part of the 2022 Marcel Duchamp Prize, for which she was awarded top honor, seems to be a quasi-architectural piece. At first glance it appears to be to be embedded — almost hidden — within the thickness of a wall in the exhibition space, but it turns out to go even deeper, as a kind of metaphor or synecdoche for the artist's entire oeuvre. The uninformed visitor could almost walk past the work without really seeing it, as if it only required a swift glance — just as there are some swift nudes<sup>2</sup> — but that, indeed, is not the case. *Escape more* consists of a large rectangular display window that brings to mind a vivarium or a diorama. Its slightly disjointed — in infrathin dis-adjustments — glass panels reveal a large space that could be the artist's bedroom or studio, the walls and floor of which are partially covered with two-dimensional red or pink monochrome elements. These appear to be chromatic tests for a palette or a pictorial work, with subtle echoes of recurrent colors in Echard's other works. In the midst of the vitrine, magnetizing the gaze, is what may surreptitiously appear as the artist — or not — naked, successively sitting or lying on a bed, evoking updated pictorial figures<sup>2</sup> or their revisited versions in the modern and contemporary artistic field.<sup>3</sup>

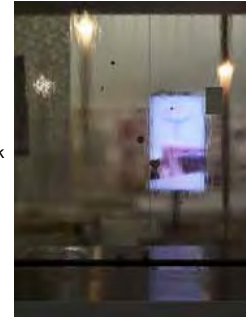
- 1 Marcel Duchamp (MD), *The King and Queen Surrounded by Swift Nudes*, 1912. All these parallels are mine.
- 2 Such as Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, *Bather*, 1808, and *An Odalisque*, 1814.
- 3 Such as Man Ray, *Violon d'Ingres*, 1924; and Andy Warhol, *Sleep*, 1963.

These monochrome elements, like the moving nude<sup>4</sup> images that are actually displayed on a large vertical monitor within the installation, are blurred and partially concealed by a curtain of transparent liquid that flows vigorously along the glass walls and continuously submerges them. *Escape more*, like all of Echard's works, is above all about the gaze

and the viewer, the artist's game with the latter; about scopic impulses and how they are thwarted: the gaze seems to be at once shrouded in desire and prevented by elements that act as a screen. *Escape more*'s liquid flow is this impediment, which simultaneously conceals and reveals — thus tracing a "liquid or lachrymal painting."<sup>5</sup> It is redoubled by several girly elements, some of an aphrodisiacal or fetishistic nature, that can be seen at the front of the window. A key part of Echard's syntax — in which nothing is left to chance — they might seem cute or vain, but in fact contribute to the formation of a powerful landscape with multiple meanings that is articulated around a reinvented pictoriality with a hidden erotic charge.<sup>6</sup> Glued next to a metal ring affixed to the window with simple tape that slightly obstructs sight, a pink plastic heart serves as a box for a pair of "Magic Girl" false eyelashes that look like two closed eyes. They may bring to mind the eyelets through which it is possible to observe the nude that is hidden from the gaze,<sup>7</sup> but they actually obstruct vision, depending on the angle at which the viewer is positioned. Some white lace and gauze with feather elements, affixed like a curtain that evokes a bridal veil,<sup>8</sup> cause a redoubled blurring of the vision of a small girly cat — or more likely a female cat, as the French *chatte* is the equivalent slang for *pussy* — in front of which is placed a bald, pink, plastic ball: one inside and one outside of the glass, with a potential erotic charge that focuses the gaze, like the

- 10 In French, *gas* is spelled *gaz*: adding an "e" turns it into *gaze* (in English).
- 11 In French, *gauze* is spelled *gaze*.
- 12 MD used black feathered gauze to make the *Pistons de courant d'air* that were used as the basis for the "Milky Way" that appears in the upper part of *The Large Glass*.
- 13 Mimosa Echard interviewed by Pascale Krief, January 3, 2023.

sheet of paper torn from a notebook with scriptural elements on it that is directly taped to the vitrine. All of Echard's Seeing Machines are thwarted, as they are also Machines-For-Not-Seeing that put the viewer in the position of a voyeur — but a voyeur who cannot see. Here too there may be "Water and Gas" (light)<sup>9</sup> "on every floor," as well as *Gaz(e)*,<sup>10</sup> even. Inserted high up in the layers of feathered gauze — in French *gaze*<sup>11</sup> — three vast and mysterious white-and-gray elements seem to take up the motif of a Milky Way observed through a window whose frame can be seen.<sup>12</sup> Looking pictorial in nature, the elements in fact result from a photographic transfer process.<sup>13</sup> A small photographic image of an open French-style window with lace or net



*Escape more*, 2022. Detail. Glass, aluminum, pumps, pipes, urine, wool, fabrics, capsules, silver prints, natural and artificial hair, acrylic paint, plastic lids and trays, calendula petals, gardenia, lotus pollen, cherry pits, necklaces, bracelets, beads, thread, cotton and plastic rope, electrical systems, coconuts, geisha balls, rubber bands, varnish, glue, lace, Financial Times newspaper, plasma screens, monitor, bitch\_in\_a\_cat.mov, bella.mov, la.clède.mov, colored distilled water, fluorescent sun, moon, and stars, dolls, "Hello Keta" stuffed cat, plastic balls, Ginkgo egg, compact, scotch tape, false eyelashes, make-up sponges, and glass tassels. Variable dimensions. Photography by Aurélien Mole. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris. © Mimosa Echard / ADAGP, Paris (2023).

4 This notion evokes MD, *Nude Descending a Staircase*, 1912.

5 Mimosa Echard, *Centre Pompidou Magazine*, 2022.

6 MD, 1967: "I believe strongly in eroticism [...]. It replaces [...] what other schools of literature called symbolism, romanticism. Eroticism was a theme, indeed an 'ism,' which was the basis of everything I was doing at the time of *The Large Glass*."<sup>2</sup>

7 Cf. MD, *Given: 1. The Waterfall, 2. The Illuminating Gas*, 1968.

8 Cf. MD, *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even* or *The Large Glass*, 1923.

9 Pun between MD, *Water and Gas on Every Floor*, 1958, and MD, *Given... The Illuminating Gas...*, 1968, redoubled with a pun between the latter and the verb "to gaslight."<sup>10</sup>



*Bisouffeur*, 2019. C-print, latex, glue, fabric, and cherry pits. 63.6 x 42.8 x 0.7 cm. Fondation d'art contemporain - Paris Collection. Photography by Florian Kleinfenn. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris. © Mimosa Echard / ADAGP, Paris (2023).



*Bisouffeur*, 2019. C-print, latex, glue, and fabric. 22.4 x 14.9 x 0.7 cm. Photography by Florian Kleinfenn. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris © Mimosa Echard / ADAGP, Paris (2023).



Pascale Krief  
*Escape More, See Less*  
Flash Art, Spring, 2023, p. 170-181.

MIMOSA ECHARD BY PASCALE KRIEF

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14 The initial project of MD was to make a photographic transfer onto the glass.

15 MD, *Fresh Widow*, 1920.

16 Mimosa Echard, *Centre Pompidou Magazine*, 2022.

17 Centre Pompidou Film Service, *Mimosa Echard*, 2022.

curtains that seem to flutter in the wind seems to complete these secret reminiscences, in possible allusion to essential figures in the history of art.<sup>14</sup>

Still, the interpretation of Echard's work is always multiple and the meaning layered, partly secret, or unspoken. The liquid flowing powerfully over the glass could, according to Echard, recall *Golden Shower* (1998), an Alexander McQueen fashion show produced with the support of American Express,<sup>16</sup> during which the models, dressed in white, seemed to be showered with a yellow liquid, conjuring Duchamp's *Fountain* (1917), whose erotic subtext is also well known, or other more Pop works, such as an iconic Warhol. In fact, *Escape more* also refers to mare's urine, from which synthetic estrogens are derived for use in drugs that have done irreparable physical damage to women; and to women's urine, from which their own estrogen and drug levels are measured.<sup>17</sup> Yet the elements visible on the walls are made from a series of advertising images for these drugs,<sup>18</sup> and this "lachrymal painting" might be a mourning ode to these women. Body fluids, a recurrent notion in her work, evoke what unites Man with Nature, and what links Man to Machine — here by way of a reference to the two apparatuses in operation.

In that sense, according to Echard, *Escape more* might also recall the money that floods certain sectors — a flow symbolized by the walls of water that can be seen in corporate headquarters or in certain spas.<sup>19</sup> The glimpsed nude might therefore be in the equivalent of a Turkish bath<sup>20</sup> near a (spa) waterfall.<sup>21</sup> However, a small monitor, half slung across the front of the display case, shows old footage of her sister Othilia cleaning out a *clède* that her two older sisters had converted into a bedroom: Echard emphasizes the analogy with the desire to create a "pure" space like the exhibition space, and the impossibility of this desire. This video also includes the motif, recurrent in Echard's work, of a rectangular pink basin — of which we also find a specimen at the front of the showcase, here containing pigments that correspond to the chromatic range we see on the walls.

Echard's *Large Glass* renews the painting-form and the notion of expanded pictoriality. *Escape more* appears opaque or illegible at first glance, but the work is accompanied by a set of textual and non-textual elements that provide elements of understanding and make it possible to envisage it nourished, or irrigated, by a set of references in a kind of secret rhizome, one of the dimensions of which corresponds to the title of the Prize<sup>22</sup> in an extensive game of allusive clues and references. But these are not monolithic, and they intersect with sets of meanings specific to Echard's work.

*Cushions*, 2017. Detail. Fabric, acrylic, cherry pits, sheepskin, dry Clitoria flower, blueberries, plastic ball, shirt, pearl necklace, wire, ferns, Ikea heart-shaped cushions, baseball cap, yarrow, plastic fruit, latex, coral, Love Heart sweets, magazine cutouts, and plastic flowers. Variable dimensions. Photography by Rob Harris. Courtesy of Cell Project Space, London.

18

Ibid.

19

Ibid.

20

Cf. Ingres, *The Turkish Bath*, 1862.

21

Allusion to the waterfall that appears in *Given* (1968).

22

Prix Marcel Duchamp.

*Escape more*, 2022. Detail. Glass, aluminum, pumps, pipes, urine, wool, fabrics, capsules, silver prints, natural and artificial hair, acrylic paint, plastic lids and trays, calendula petals, gardenia, lotus pollen, cherry pits, necklaces, bracelets, beads, thread, cotton and plastic rope, electrical systems, coconuts, geisha balls, rubber bands, varnish, glue, lace, *Financial Times* newsprint, plasma screens, monitor, *bitch\_im\_a\_cat.mov*, *bella.mov*, *la clède.mov*, colored distilled water, fluorescent sun, moon, and stars, dolls, "Hello Keta" stuffed cat, plastic balls, Ginkgo egg, compact, scotch tape, false eyelashes, make-up sponges, and glass tassels. Variable dimensions. Photography by Aurélien Mole. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris. © Mimosa Echard / ADAGP, Paris (2023).





Pascale Krief  
*Escape More, See Less*  
Flash Art, Spring, 2023, p. 170-181.

**Materiality of a secret and mysterious work**

This reinvention of pictoriality is one of the constants in Echard's work, as well as introducing into it various collected girly and unique materials. In one of her first series, titled "A/B" (2016),<sup>23</sup> large plexiglas frames seem to form abstract paintings, but their "Face B" reveals their rough materiality. Comprised mostly of pink hair-removal wax, which forms a set of intertwined shapes that bring to mind the way it spreads when using it, it thus evokes an adolescent world where painful tearing-away turns into a girly sororal wax-sharing party. However, it can also bring to mind the erotic art-historical obsession with hairs and shaving,<sup>24</sup> as well as a magical world in which hair is used to make potions. In fact, the series is made from a set of materials that constitutes a kind of magical pharmacopoeia: seaweed, lichen, kombucha, *phallus indusiatus* mushrooms, ginseng, *clitoria*, St. John's wort, chamomile, eggshells, flies, Diet Coke, glass beads, false nails, car body parts, contraceptive pills, etc. These items add up to a set of meanings that become active when read, and reveal their mysterious, geometric complementarity and ecosystems, wherein plants and manufactured products, living and non-living, coexist. Their magical charge also comes from their collection method, as some materials are carefully gathered by Echard herself in shops, while others are mainly collected in the Cevennes countryside by the inhabitants of the village where she grew up,<sup>25</sup> to become part of a carefully preserved archive for future use in the studio.

23 Now in several institutional collections.

24 Various direct allusions can be found in MD's work, for instance.

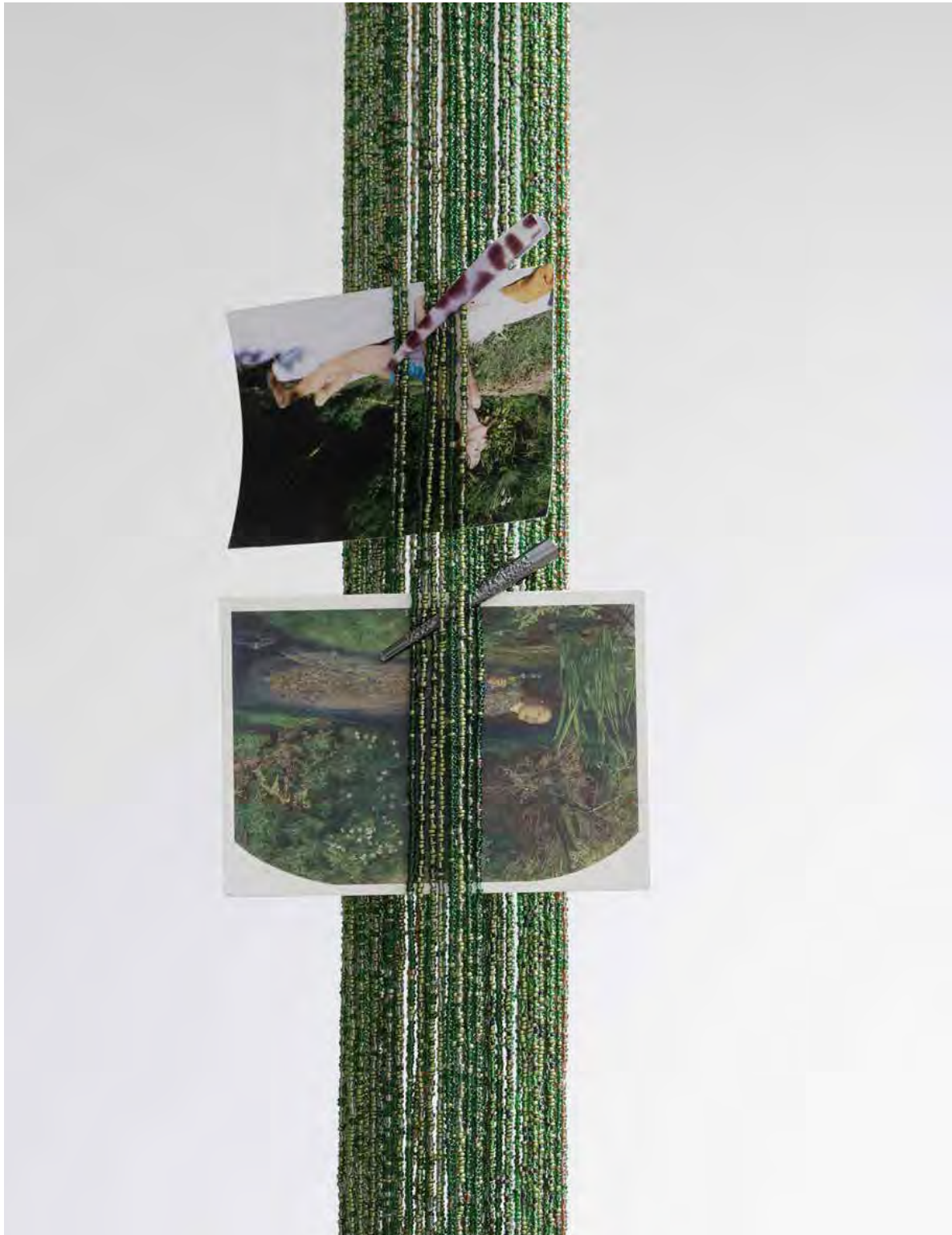
25 Mimosa Echard interviewed by Pascale Krief, June 2019.

This unique material basis was obviously present in former works, but the important "Numbs" series (2021) has broken free from the preeminence of the language of materials, although it still draws on the same syntax. "Numbs" are large-scale pictorial works on canvas with the repeated photographic motif of a semi-nude androgynous figure, possibly taken from personal or family archives, lying three-quarter length and partially dressed in a T-shirt, showing their buttocks to the viewer. The canvases are augmented with painted elements and various girly or erotic objects — small bracelets and necklaces with red and pink plastic hearts, fake flower pistils, geisha balls — that cover the image to various degrees. They are all unified by fluid materials such as latex, glue, or acrylic paint, which solidify when they dry, thus uniting the elements through a process of chemical transformation that seems to fuse the materials and give them a new dimension.



*I Still Dream Of Orgonon*, 2017. Detail. Cherry pits, chrysanthemum, glass pearls, quail eggshells, lichen, pink salt, artichoke ampoule, salmon eggs, pink salt, dragon blood resin, sugar, cow milk, lavender, green clay, iron and leather necklace, brass earring, alum rock, batteries, white crystal, moss, silver foil, white quartz, chamomile, oak moss, Euro coins, turquoise, tobacco, chrysanthemum, moss, mushrooms, opium poppies, lavender, and epoxy resin. Variable dimensions. Photography by Rob Harris. Courtesy of Cell Project Space, London.

"Sporal." Detail of the exhibition at Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 2022. Photography by Aurélien Mole. Courtesy of the artist; Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris; and Martina Simeti, Milan. © Mimosa Echard / ADAPG, Paris (2023).



MIMOSA ECHARD BY PASCALE KRIEF

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**Recurrences, transfers, superimpositions**

Echard's second exhibition at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris, "Sporal" (2022), escaped more from this kind of materiality. The ensemble of works shown were based on motifs from Echard's eponymous video game, *Sporal* (2022), based on the hydrophilic modifications that occur during the reproduction process of a myxomycete, a single-cell organism similar to a fungus that escapes traditional animal and plant biological categories, and has 720 sexual variants. The game explores, in an epic mode, a set of dreamlike images, the cavities of an organism undergoing constant transformation.<sup>26</sup>

26 Mimosa Echard interviewed by Pascale Krief, January 5, 2023.

The exhibition's central visual element was a reprise of the syntax of the curtain that is recurrent in Echard's work, in this case as a quilt made of various fabrics augmented by photographic transfers — here composed of images of psychedelic motifs, documentation of the game-making process, and the game developer's bank of personal screensavers — upon which was projected a video from the game. The exhibition was presented as a journey during which visitors could download *Sporal*, and where they encountered a series of works related to the universe of this game and constitutive of Echard's vocabulary, such as rectangular plastic basins containing technological, erotic, girly, and natural elements affixed to painted backgrounds. A sumptuous, violent, almost fluorescent-pink work attached to the wall consists of a set of elements entirely obscured by a thick paint material, at the center of which is a small photograph that is reused in a video projected onto a second large screen that constitutes the key to the installation.

This second video shows a succession of different characters sleeping. One of them, partially naked, constitutes the basis of the pictorial series "Numbs" (2021). It recalls Warhol's *Sleep* (1964), or the people on Twitch who self-film themselves while asleep. In front of it, a set of cushions filled with various elements is placed on the floor, inviting the viewer to rest while contemplating the video, in a mirroring set-up.

Mimosa Echard's powerful work unfolds a layered interplay with the viewer that is full of secret meanings and art-historical references. Its recurrences constitute her personal syntax within a constantly evolving visual reflection that carries on from one exhibition to the next. Their archaeological stratifications, nourished both by her own intimacy and by collective and universal meanings, echo the complex and historicized weaving of thought, as well as the stratification of art history.



A/B 24, 2017. Detail. Contraceptive pill, skincare capsules, lecithin capsules, vitamin E, B9, taurine, omega 3, coenzyme Q, Boots and Schaebens dietary supplements for skin, fertility, lactation, and tranquility. Courtesy of the artist and Ceil Project Space, London. © Mimosa Echard / ADAGP, Paris (2023).

Sap 4, 2021. Detail. Glass beads, light bulb, chain, electrical wiring, hair clips, postcards, and photographic print. 279 × 15 × 9 cm. Photography by Aurélien Mole. Courtesy of the artist, Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris; and Martina Simeti, Milan. © Mimosa Echard / ADAGP, Paris (2023).



Carlton, 2021. Detail. Acrylic paint, fabrics, gardenia seeds, organic dyes, berry juice, ink, and acrylic gloss. 125 × 95 cm. Photography by Grégoire d'Ablon. Courtesy of the artist, Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris; and Martina Simeti, Milan.

**Mimosa Echard** (1986, Alès, France) creates complex ecosystems combining natural and artificial elements that trace the contours of a new history of tactility with the process of metamorphosis at its heart. Her work will be featured in the group exhibitions "Ridiculously Yours" at Deichtorhallen, Hamburg, from May 12 through August 27, 2023, and at Halle für Kunst Steiermark and Neue Galerie Graz from October 14, 2023, through February 25, 2024; "Worldbuilding. Gaming and Art in the Digital Age" at Centre Pompidou Metz from June 10, 2023, through January 15, 2024; and "The sentiment of flowers" at Gus Fischer Gallery, Auckland, through May 5, 2023; and in a solo show at Martina Simeti, Milan (Fall 2023). In 2023, Echard will be in residence at Ville Albertine in Paris for the second time.

**Pascale Krief** is a French art critic and curator based in Paris with a master's degree in contemporary art history from Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne and a PhD from the École des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS). She is a *Flash Art* contributing editor. Her research explores the interplay of the photographic medium in modern and contemporary art fields since the twentieth-century avant-gardes.

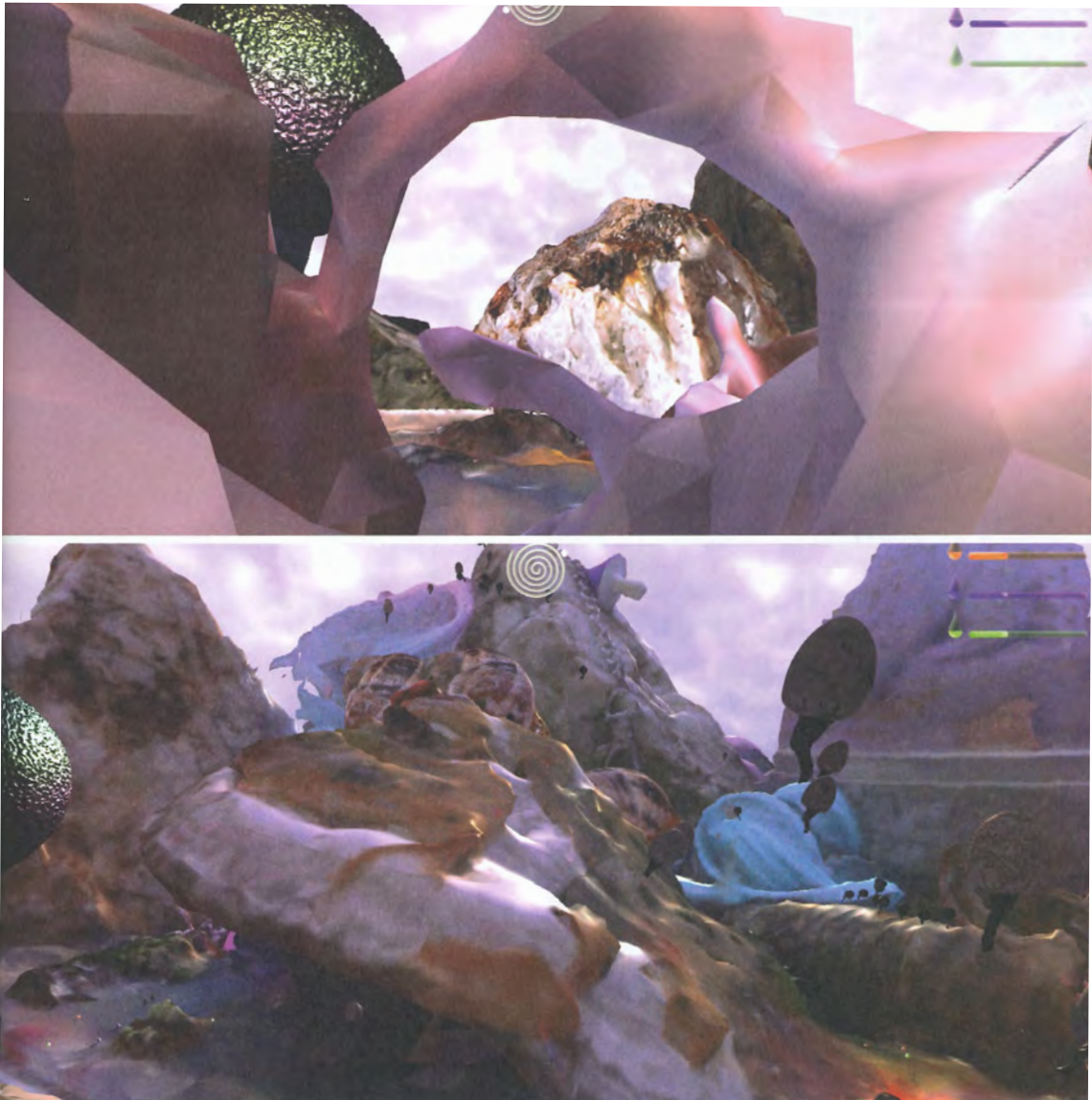


# LE SENS *du jeu*



Dire qu'elle est *cérébrale* ne serait pas rendre justice à la *démarche* de Mimosa Echard : à l'inverse, *viscéralement* ancrée dans le monde *vivant*, elle met en jeu les problématiques liées aux *mystères* de la mémoire.

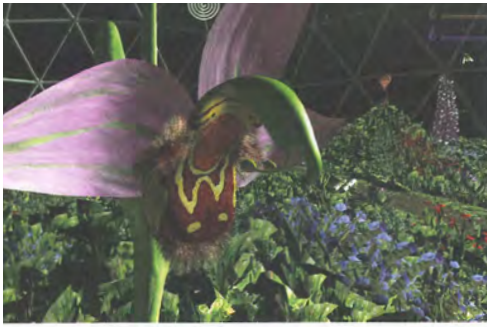
Par BAPTISTE PIÉGAY - Portrait CAMILLE VIVIER



Elle a travaillé pour la Maison Dior, et son extraordinaire exposition au Palais de Tokyo, "Sporal", a durablement marqué les esprits. Son travail sur les organismes unicellulaires – les situant, au regard des classifications biologiques, à la croisée des mondes animal, végétal et des champignons – est renversant de singularité, d'expressivité et de malice. Un jeu vidéo, imaginé par la développeuse Andréa Sardin et l'artiste australien Aodhan Madden – inspiré aussi bien par les comic books, pour leur sens de l'organisation de l'espace-récit, que par la géométrie et le monde scientifique – vu par un prisme romanesque, était au cœur de la scénographie de l'exposition à travers un impressionnant patchwork "éclatant" le jeu; on devrait plutôt écrire "l'expliquant", en revenant à l'étymol-

ogie du verbe, désignant le processus de déplier, explicite, soit "déployer, exposer clairement". "Sporal" instaure donc un dialogue entre les univers vivants et non-vivants, illuminant l'hybridation entre l'humain et la nature, pas si loin du cinéma de David Cronenberg ou d'Apichatpong Weerasethakul – en considérablement moins anxiogène –, auquel l'on pense fortement en explorant le jeu, pour sa dimension luxuriante, sensuelle et vénéneuse.

Déjà en 2019, son œuvre *Bisoufleurs* soulignait avec force à quel point les frontières étaient poreuses. "Sporal" met donc le joueur au cœur même du propos, le laissant perdu (mais il est bien agréable de s'égarer, parfois) dans un réseau d'énigmes, matrice de l'exposition, dans les cavités d'un organi-



pos de la nature, "Rien ne se crée, rien ne se perd, tout se transforme", s'appliquerait aisément à son joyeux travail faisant de notre environnement un terrain de jeux, de conquêtes, de libération. Support d'expression artistique, le jeu vidéo porte en son sein bien plus qu'un exercice de style ludique, il est ici fécond, nous interpellant avec beaucoup de force sur notre rapport au monde. Tout simplement, il nous incite à ne pas prendre notre environnement pour un acquis immobile et immuable. Plus que jamais, il est évident que nos actions, des plus élémentaires aux plus réfléchies, ont un sens.

[www.sporal.net](http://www.sporal.net)

“LES MYXOMYCÈTES  
*apparaissent* COMME  
DES FORMES DE VIE  
ROBUSTES, *mystérieuses*  
ET *indifférentes*, DONT  
LA FAMILIARITÉ  
AVEC LE *passé* ET LE  
*futur* LEUR PERMET  
DE *s'accommoder*  
AUSSI BIEN DE LA  
*décomposition* DE NOS  
*structures* SOCIALES  
QUE DE CELLE  
DE *l'environnement*.”

sme en mutation perpétuelle – fidèle à la vie du myxomycète, appartenant à ces organismes unicellulaires évoqués plus haut. Entre échanges de fluides et énigmes à résoudre, l'on débouque des "types sexuels". Formulés ainsi, ce postulat pourrait convoquer des souvenirs de cours de biologie, et pourtant, rien de tristement académique ici, mais plutôt une joyeuse expérience, amenant à s'interroger, pour reprendre les propres mots de Mimosa Echard, sur les problématiques que les myxomycètes formulent : "Les myxomycètes apparaissent comme des formes de vie robustes, mystérieuses et indifférentes, dont la familiarité avec le passé et le futur leur permet de s'accommoder aussi bien de la décomposition de nos structures sociales que de celle de l'environnement; et de rêver, dans une forme confuse et gluante, les formes prises par la technologie." Une formule, possiblement apocryphe, de Lavoisier, à pro-

PAGES PRÉCÉDENTES ET SUR CES PAGES : Détails du jeu vidéo Sporal.





## ARTFORUM

### Mimosa Echard

PALAIS DE TOKYO

In conversation with a bee orchid, how best to obtain its sweat? (a) Tell it you are thirsty? (b) Ask it to make you wet? (c) Tell it you want to be sucked by a mushroom? The answer, in the world of Mimosa Echard's role-playing game *Sporal*, is that any of the above approaches will get you the goods. Distributed across an exhibition at Palais de Tokyo, a book, and a downloadable video game, *Sporal* (all works cited, 2022) featured, as its protagonist monocellular organism, a being who seeks to mutate into other life-forms using fluids it takes from other species. The character is based on Echard's research into myxomycetes (otherwise known as slime molds), which are intelligent and have the ability to learn and adapt, and which in the past decade have inspired work by numerous artists and theorists, including Karen Barad, Lynn Margulis, and Jenna Sutela. Myxomycetes are known to have 720 possible sexual types—so far—inspiring this project's slippery erotics of transformation and the tone of the character's speech, which itself is a kind of hybrid form of address: Imagine a cross between talking to a secretive character in a video game such as *The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild* and sexting with a plant.



Mimosa Echard,  
*Sporal*, 2022,  
video game.

The abundant imaginativeness of this new world is located in the game itself, an ambitious endeavor involving the collaboration of a software developer, musicians, and actors (Charli XCX plays a snake), among others. Such a work could only be difficult to represent in the exhibition space, though I think it's fair to say that one got a taste of it in sporadic episodes recorded from the game. These episodes appeared every few minutes or so projected onto a huge hanging screen made of patchwork fabrics, including hippieish psychedelic prints, and laces that broke up the light of the projector. The picture could be hard to see, yet the messy chaos of the screen seemed to emulate the mulchy world that played on top of it, in which a pink seahorse told us that it got so depressed it sucked up the world.

Echard grew up on a neo-rural commune in Cévennes, in south central France, where tinctures, dyes, and medicines were made from local plants, and her aesthetic universe often includes girlish fabrics and accessories, natural dyes and juices, and plants, combined in a way that rows very close to gooey abjection. Away from the screen were a number of lumpy cushion sculptures that visitors could sit on, as well as some paintings, such as *Batchat*, in which hard protrusions push forward from behind thin, fleshy fabric like alternative nipples or other erogenous zones. Tall spill sculptures constructed from multiple strings of hanging colored beads were strung with lights, droplet-shaped beads, and photographs, each titled after a different sap from *Sporal*, such as *Sap (rose oil)* or *Sap (butterfly tree mucus)*.

Reader, I cannot lie to you. At the time of writing, the video game at [sporal.net](http://sporal.net) was still very glitchy. I got lost in various holes. Yet the world it conjures is strange and rich, and its script imagines a seductive and humorous approach to interspecies relations. The orchid notes that it both sells real estate and fucks bees. And though every element might not have arrived at its most resolved or refined version, the strength of the project lies in its coupling of ecological thinking with the powerful forces of fantasy and desire, rather than solely with the apocalyptic terror to which we have become accustomed. In this porous, interdependent universe, gender and sexuality exist in new liquid forms, and transformation is an end in itself.

—Laura McLean-Ferris

## CURA.

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SPECIAL PROJECT

BY MIMOSA ECHARD

# MIMOSA ECHARD INTIMATE PERCEPTIONS OF THE LIVING WORLD

In a recent interview,<sup>1</sup> Mimosa Echard, a French artist born in 1986, tells of a strange, intimate encounter with the living world: when young, she wanted to keep a sea anemone. After being preached at by her father, she reluctantly had to put it back into the water. To bid it farewell, she kissed it on its tentacle-decked mouth, which immediately set off a violent allergic reaction.

This experience has perhaps remained as a backdrop to her memory: how to depict intimate perceptions of the living world without idealizing them? What are the limits of our relationships with non-human otherness and how can they be expressed? As the offspring of a mountainous region in the Cévennes (Massif Central) and of the MTV channel, Mimosa Echard has conducted her work towards the

borderlines of a queer, pop living which is crammed full of culture and industry. In a protean body of work, mingling sculpture, painting, installations and more recently video games, she has rethought the body in its sexual and cyborg dimensions, by using plants, amebae and fungi. It is an oeuvre that aims at drawing close to the living world, while avoiding any romantic stumbling blocks.

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TEXT BY

FLORA KATZ

### Digestion

After graduating from the École nationale supérieure des Art Décoratifs in 2010, she developed a sensual relationship with images, in which pictures of nature or extracts from pop magazines for teenagers became superimposed. After her early collages, in which an egg can be found above a portrait of the young Leonardo DiCaprio (*Leo*, 2013), she included more and more of the elements that she picks up, from forests, or else from supermarkets or pharmacies: insects, seaweed and dietary supplements are taken into large formats (*A/B 8*, 2016, 180 × 200 × 6 cm) then mixed and surrounded by various liquids, such as Coca Cola, resin and hair-removing wax. The latter, with its synthetic colors and viscous appearance, is a symbol of women's subservience to modern society's beauty canons. What followed were abstract compositions with fluorescent, earthy hues, depicting a state in the transformation of matter that has become stuck, caught in the traps of modern industry and nature. Other elements have since turned into tools so that not just materials, but also images, might be digested more concretely. With *Margo* (2020), or *Baigneur (Egg)* (2021), photos of packaging, sculptures, or eroticized bodies swim among fabrics, pearls, seeds and flowers.

These pictures can suggest a mix between Robert Rauschenberg's *Combine Paintings* and Mike Kelley's *Memory Ware Flat*. The artist explains, on this topic, that the inclusion of liquids have allowed her to stand back from the result and diminish her position as an author, by allowing elements to transform themselves. A work can thus derive from a collective, less anthropocentric process.

This type of collectiveness can be seen in various aspects of her work. Mimosa Echard has worked on several collective projects, a fanzine published with Jean-Luc Blanc and Jonathan Martin, entitled *Turpentine*, and the *Kombucha Project Center* with Michel Blazy, where artists are invited to extend a long swathe of fermenting Kombucha. More generally, her entourage often collects for her objects which may then appear in her work as time goes by. This plurality is played out both in the diversity of such collaborations and in the elements that have been drawn together. They are all digested by the processes of the transformation of matter which have been developed during her practice: latent, interior states, swallowed up by water.

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SPECIAL PROJECT

BY MIMOSA ECHARD

### Critical intimacy

In 2019, Mimosa Echard began a residency in Japan, at the Villa Kujoyama in Kyoto. In collaboration with Japanese researchers, she launched an exploration of myxomycetes, an organism able “to learn, memorize and transmit, though they have just one cell.”<sup>2</sup> While the memory of the living world interests her, the particularity of its sexuality also fascinates the artist: this being has “up to 721 types of different sexualities,”<sup>3</sup> a non-binary sexuality, allowing the living world to be seen from a queer viewpoint, beyond modern categories (which the artist had already clearly transcended in her work where she has mingled the industrial with the natural, or the artificial with the organic). Japanese culture, which has gender codes that are different from those in the West, has also been inspiring. Myxomycetes thus appear in her paintings, spreading across images in a network of colored lines, while also becoming the inspiration for the immersive quest during a video game *Sporal*, with a screen grab shown at the Palais de Tokyo in 2022.<sup>4</sup> Accessible online,<sup>5</sup> it presents the interior of a unicellular being, which needs to be allowed the possibility to grow thanks to the ingestion of liquids. Its players encounter non-binary beings, such as a seahorse or a bee orchid whose juices have

to be gathered, while engaging in cosmic conversations written by a longstanding collaborator, Aodhan Madden, as follows: “Well one day I got so depressed I sucked up the world deep inside me and lost it somewhere.”<sup>6</sup> Or, “Sometimes I wonder whether the sun would prefer to just throw itself underground. Just to prove the fact that all plants, me included, are just the symptom of this sick desire.”<sup>7</sup> On the borderlines along an investigation into growth, *Sporal* examines the sickly, depressive wanderings of an undefined being.

At the Palais de Tokyo, the presentation of this intimate encounter has not been conceived as being immersive. While growth and entanglement lie at the heart of Mimosa Echard’s creative process, the visitors’ position remains more external. This installation aims at being minimal: a huge patchwork, on which an extract from *Sporal* is projected, in a vast 1000 m<sup>2</sup> space. Visitors look on from afar, from a wooden bench set against a partition. This implies a clear, critical distance from the internal processes of a living being. Such a play on ways of looking became even more complex during the fall of 2022 at the Centre Pompidou in Paris, during the award of the Prix Marcel Duchamp, for which the artist had been nominated. Rather than allowing a liquid to penetrate a painting, an entirely liquid painting,

over 7 meters long, shall cross over the entire space. Inspired by mural fountains which can be perceived as much in Zen thought as in shopping malls, there will also be the muffled sound of yellowish, urine-like liquid as it drips down. Behind this screen videos, paintings and sculptures will be presented, shaken up by this liquid. Inspired as much by Marcel Duchamp's apparatuses of gaze (*Fountain*, 1917; *Étant donnés: 1° la chute d'eau, 2° le gaz d'éclairage...* (*Given: 1. The Waterfall, 2. The Illuminating Gas...*), 1946-1966) as by those developed by such artists as Paul B. Preciado in his *Pornotopia*,<sup>8</sup> which examines the architectures surrounding

Playboy magazine, Mimosa Echard triggers a reversal of the *voyeur's* forbidden position. In *Étant donnés*, it is through a keyhole that can barely be made out the groin of an androgynous body<sup>9</sup>. But, in this case, it will be behind a urine-colored spray, as if this were an attempt to attain a perception from within. Such an internal position is uncomfortable: will it recall that anemone when the artist kissed it? Instead of constantly seeking to make a connection with the living, Mimosa Echard focuses on our position as *voyeurs*. This realistic assessment allows to steer away from the idealization of human relationships with the living.

All Images

Mimosa Echard, *Escape more*, 2022

Color photocopies

Courtesy: the artist and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris

1. Mimosa Echard, *Faire de l'art avec la nature : Mimosa Echard & Bianca Bondi*, available on *Tracks*, Arte, 30 Sept. 2021 (link consulted on 20 August 2022: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PpJtbqlu\\_Hw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PpJtbqlu_Hw)).

2. Mimosa Echard, "À ma seule cellule, entretien entre Mimosa Echard et Daria de Beauvais," in *Sporal*, edited by Daria de Beauvais and Frédéric Grossi (Paris: Palais de Tokyo, 2022), 91.

3. Echard, "À ma seule cellule..."

4. Mimosa Echard, *Sporal*, curated by Daria de Beauvais (Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 15 April - 4 September 2022).

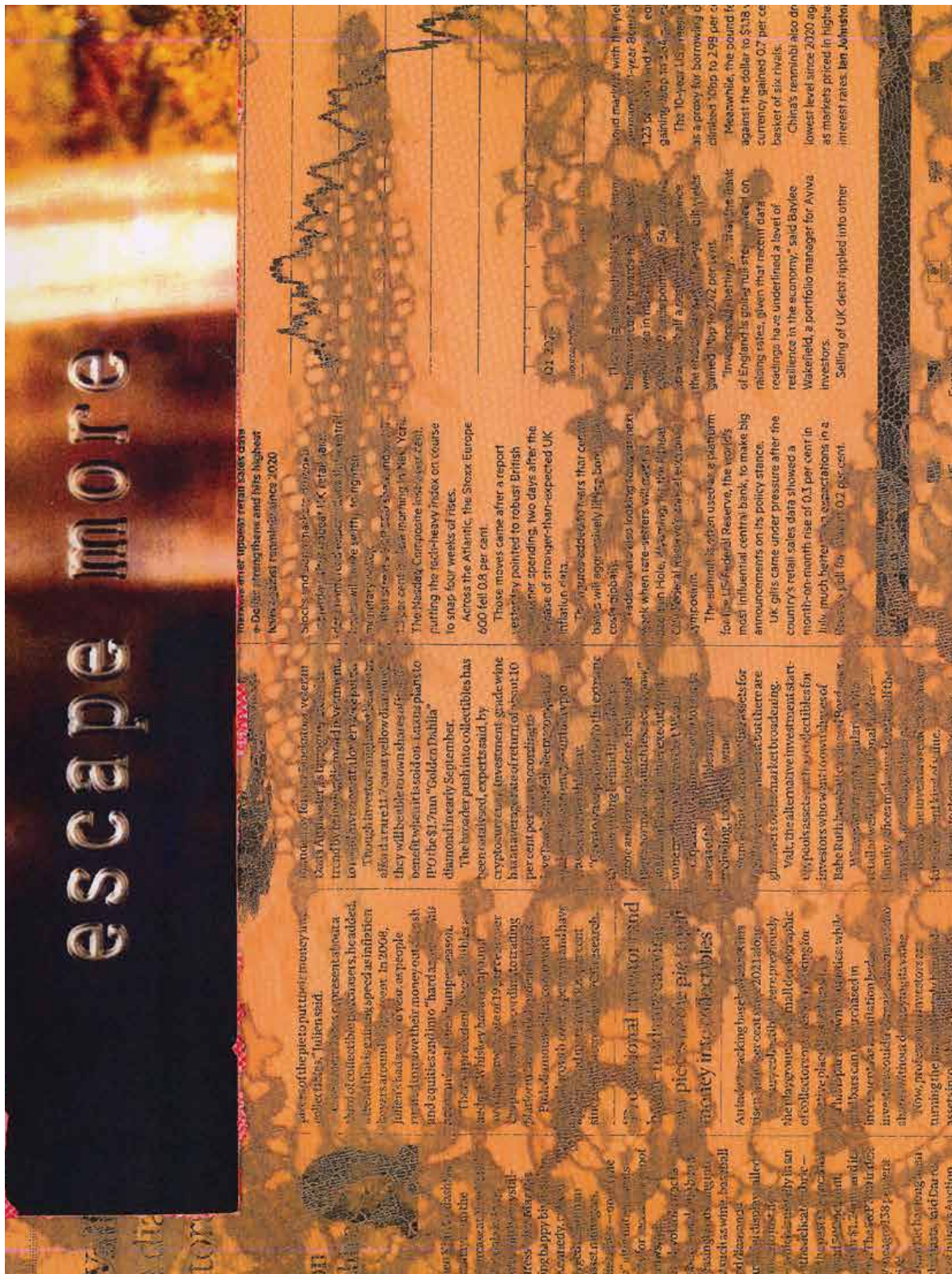
5. Mimosa Echard, *Sporal*, video game, conception: Andréa Sardin, Aodhan Madden and Mimosa Echard; soundtrack: Aodhan Madden and Yvan Étienne. Available online: <https://sporal.net/>.

6. Echard, *Sporal*, 107.

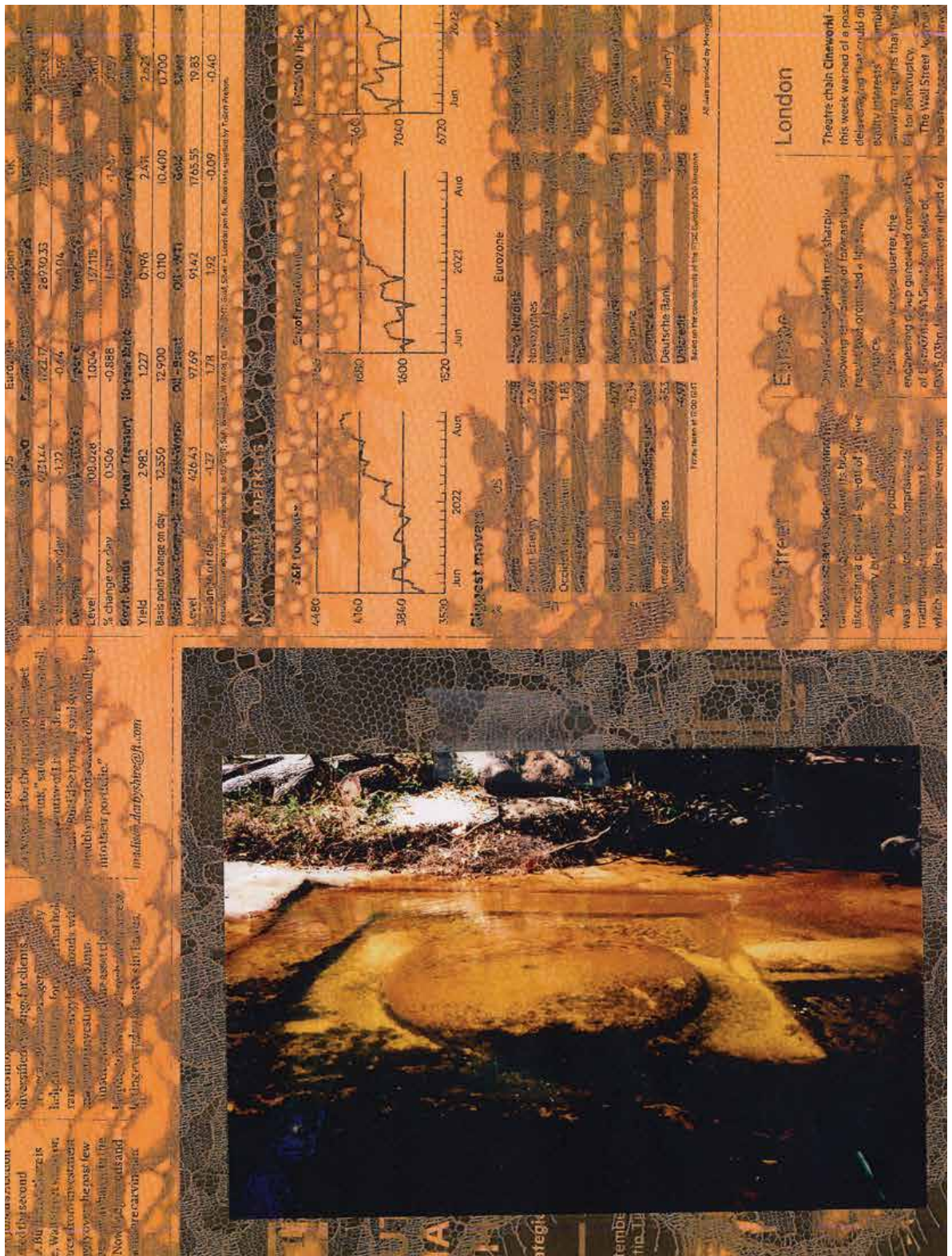
7. Echard, *Sporal*, 83.

8. Paul B. Preciado, *Pornotopia: An Essay on Playboy's Architecture and Biopolitics* (2010) (New York: Zone Books, 2019).

9. In her research, Echard has taken an interest in the ambiguous gender of the body as depicted by Marcel Duchamp in *Étant donnés*.



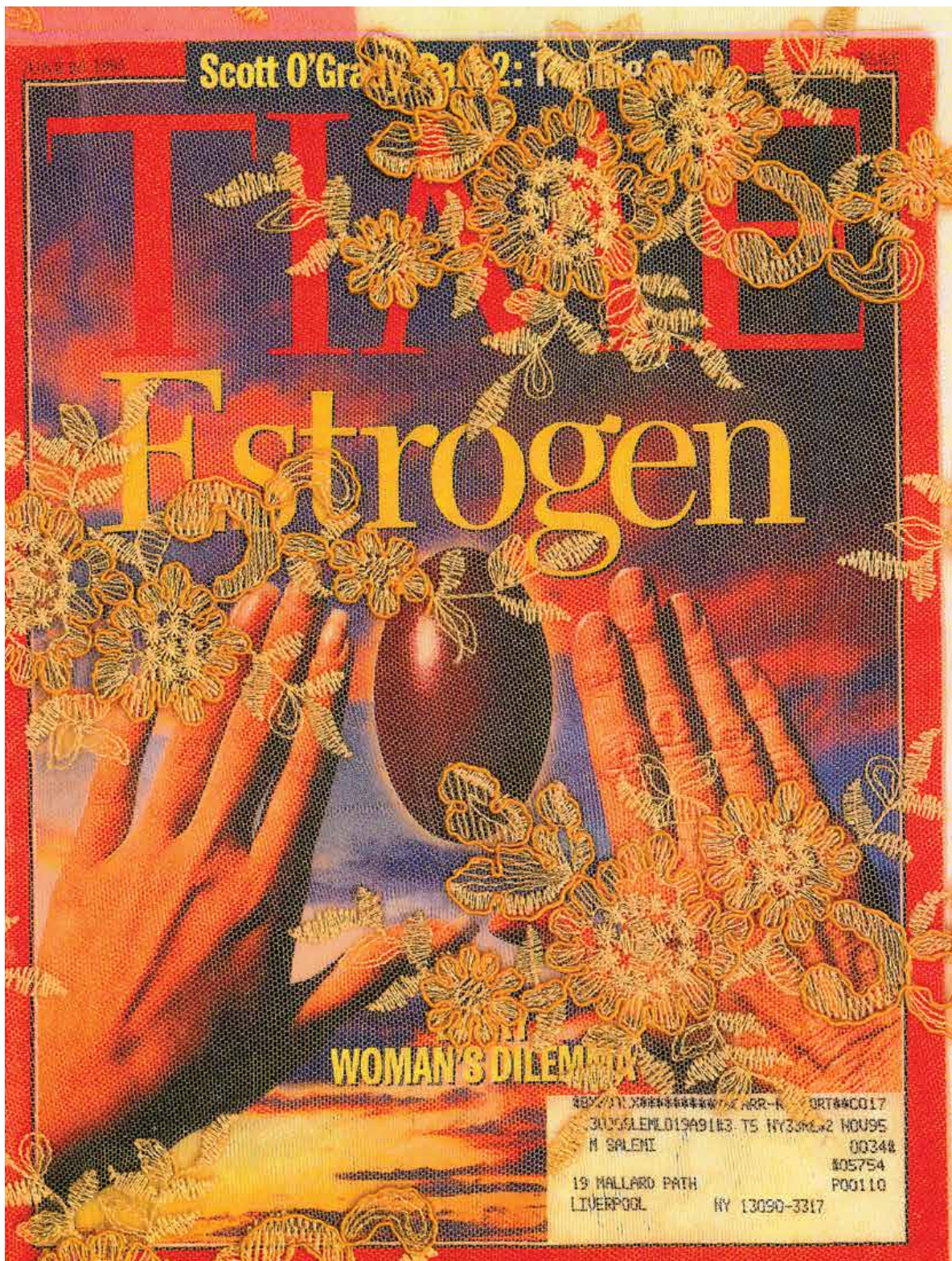
Flora Katz  
*Mimosa Echard Intimate Perceptions Of The Living World*  
Cura, N°39, Fall—Winter, 2022—2023, p.274-298.



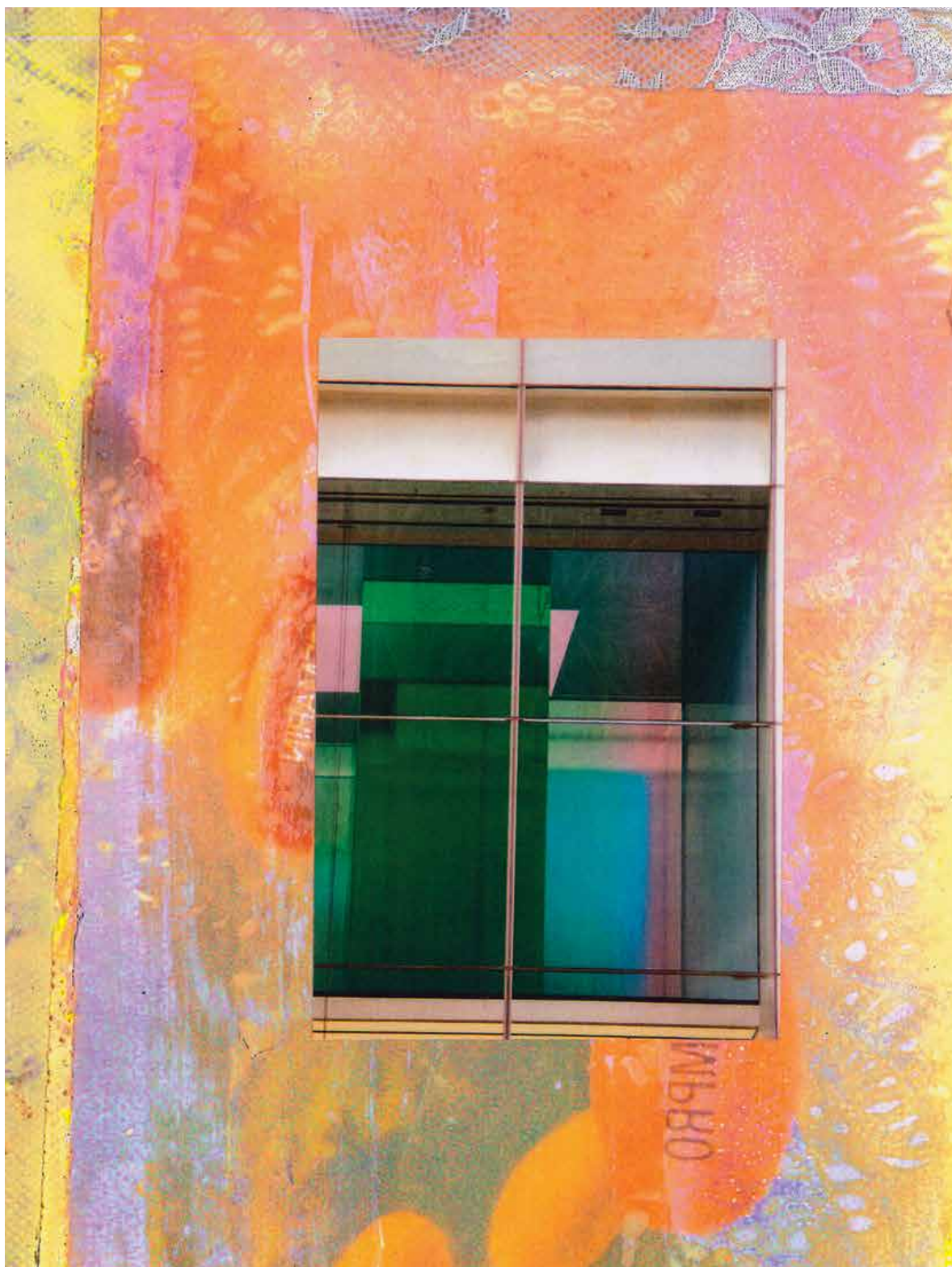
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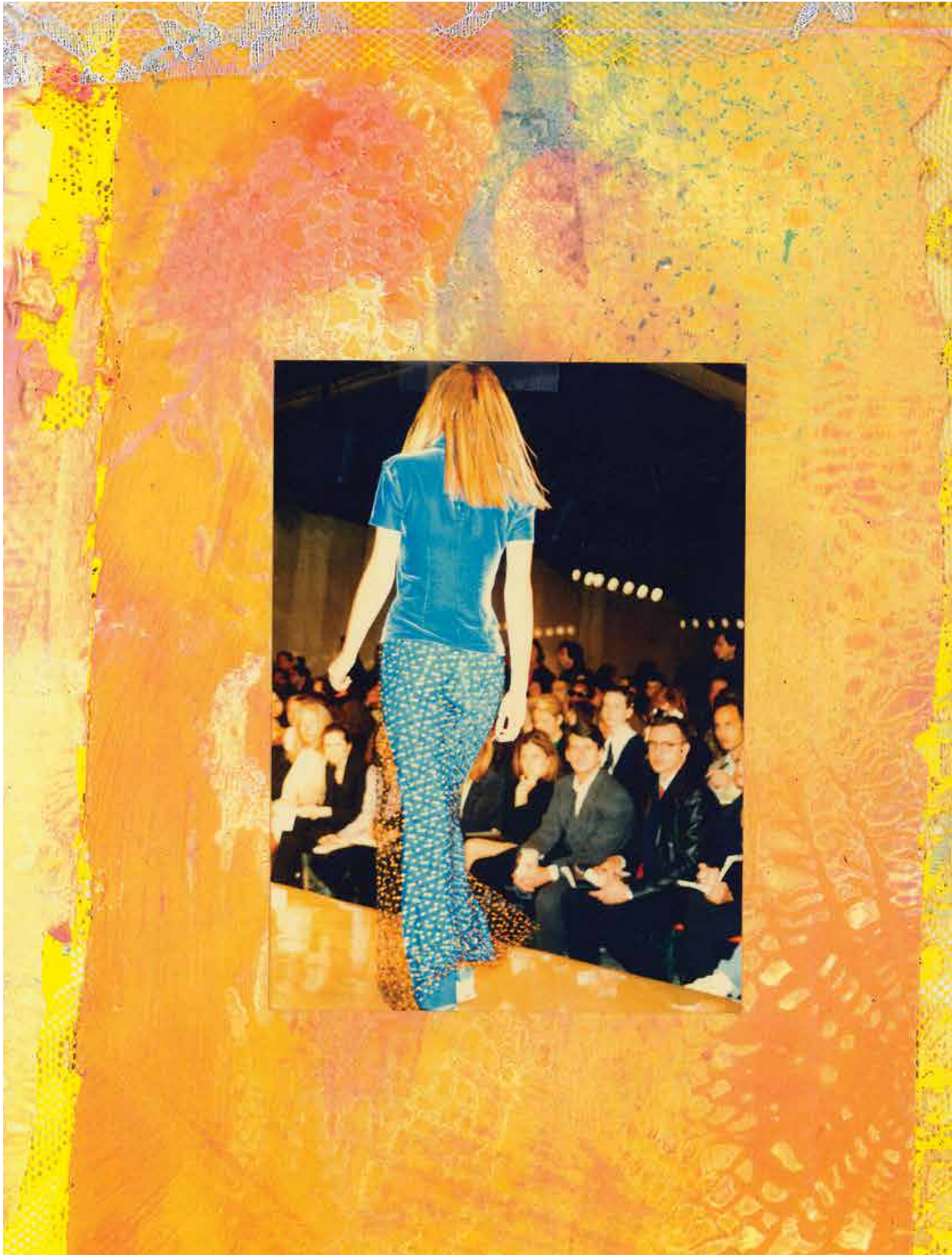


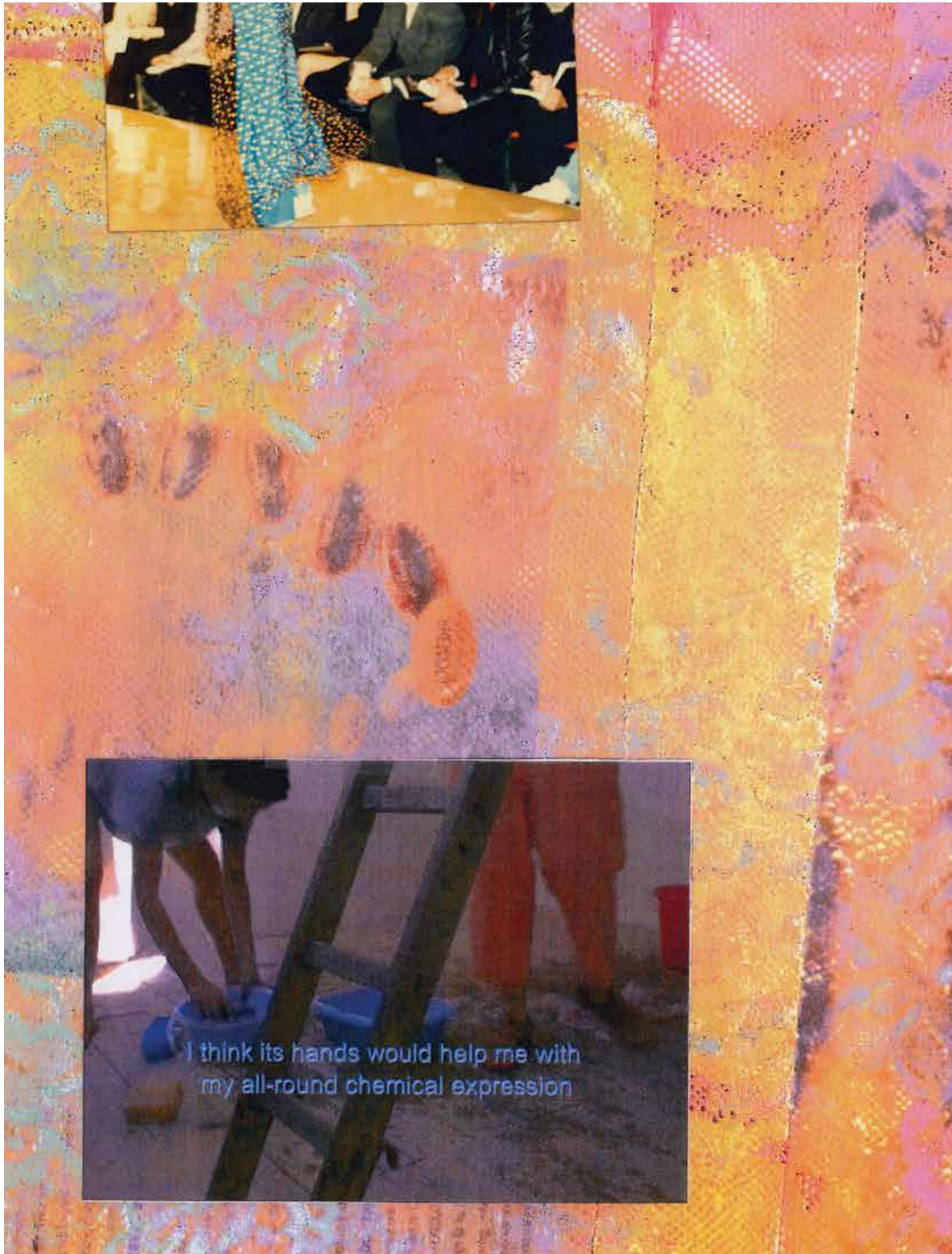
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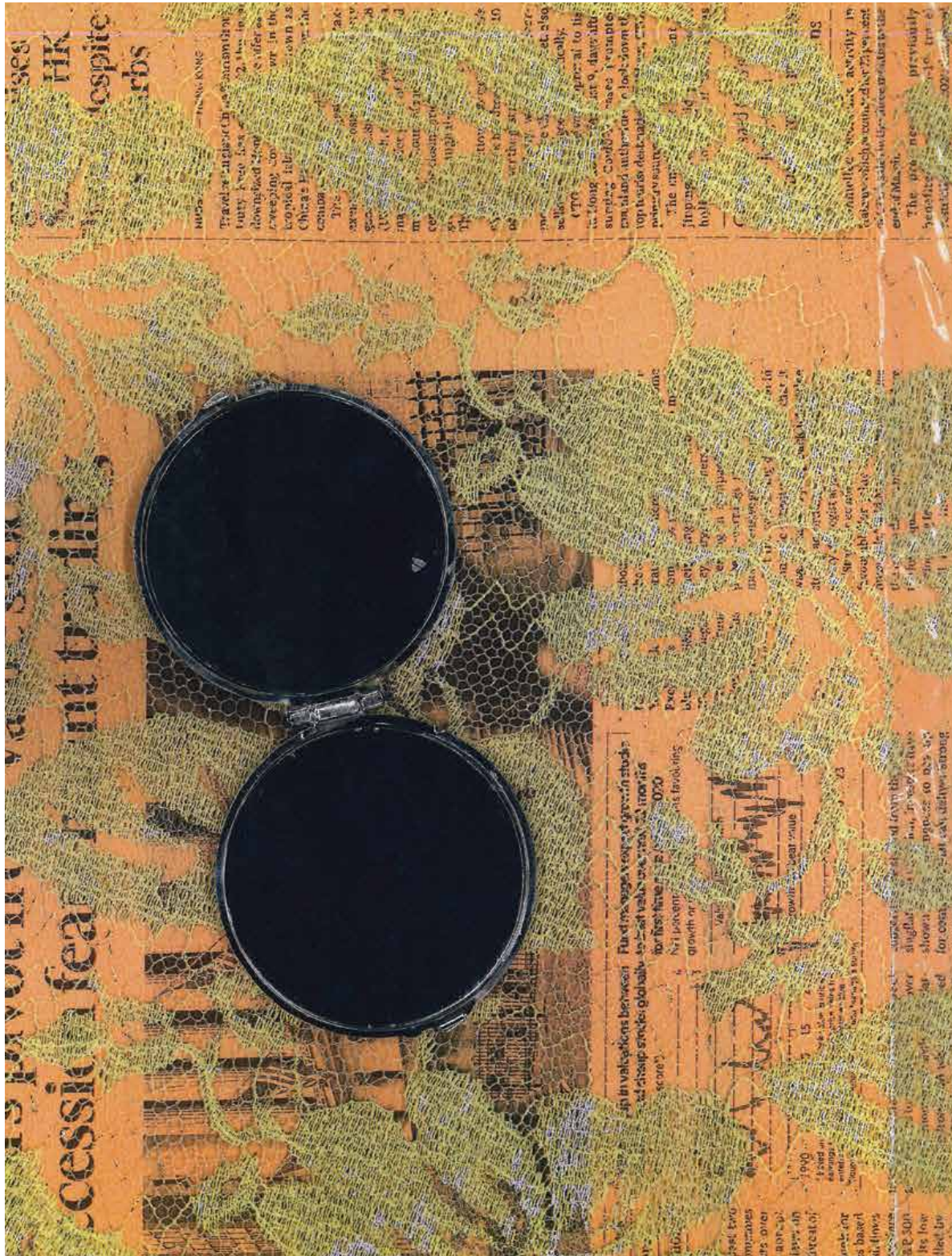




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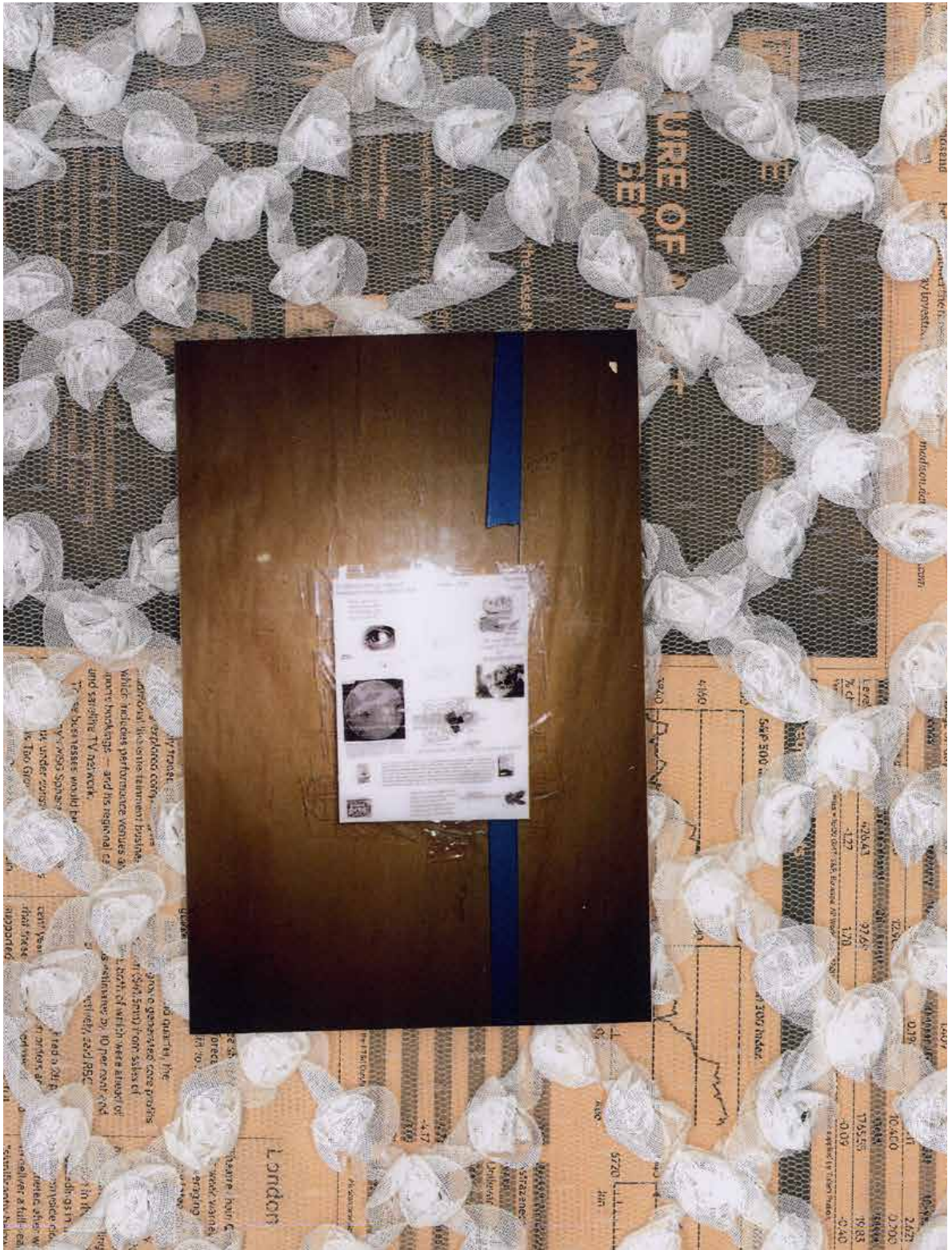
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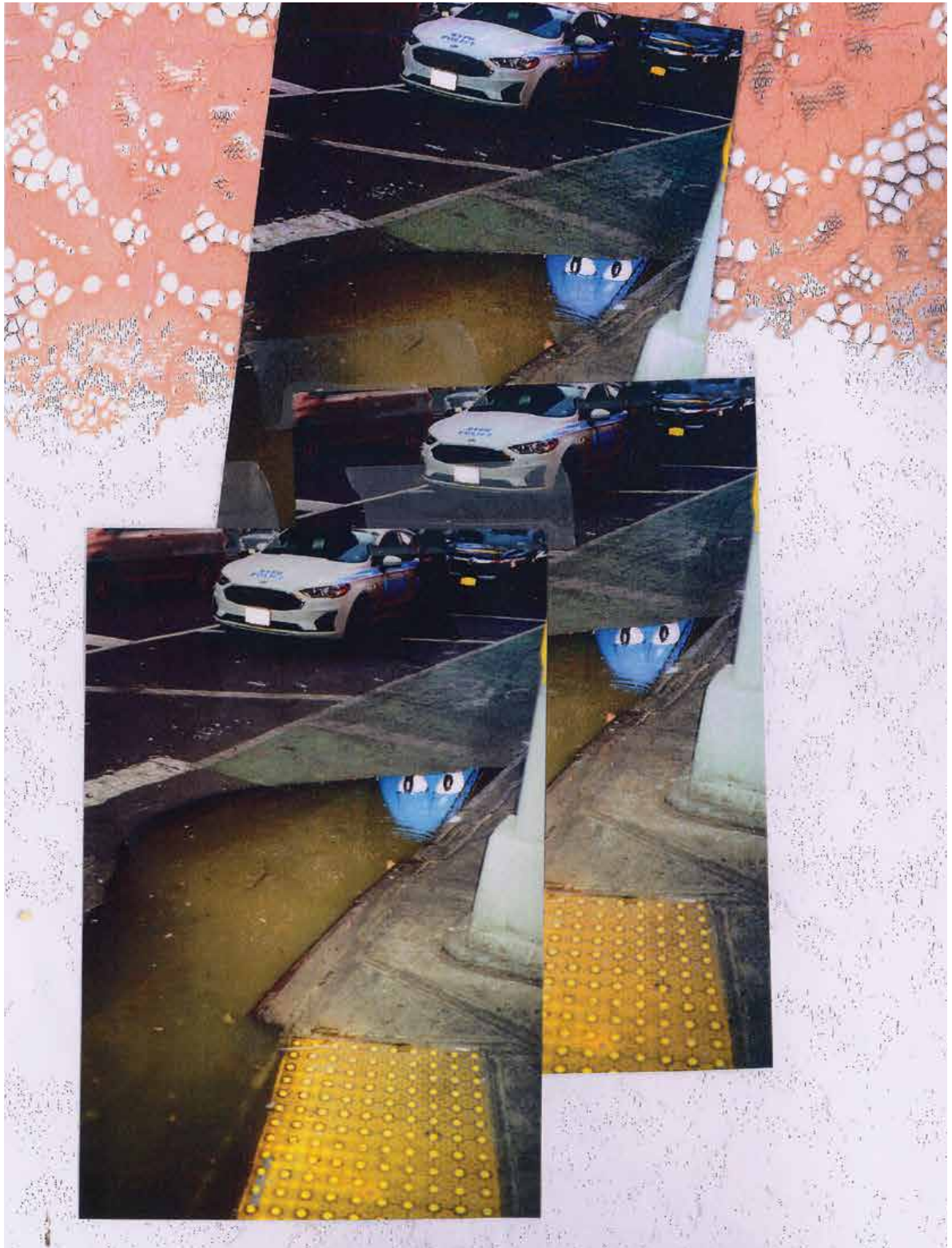


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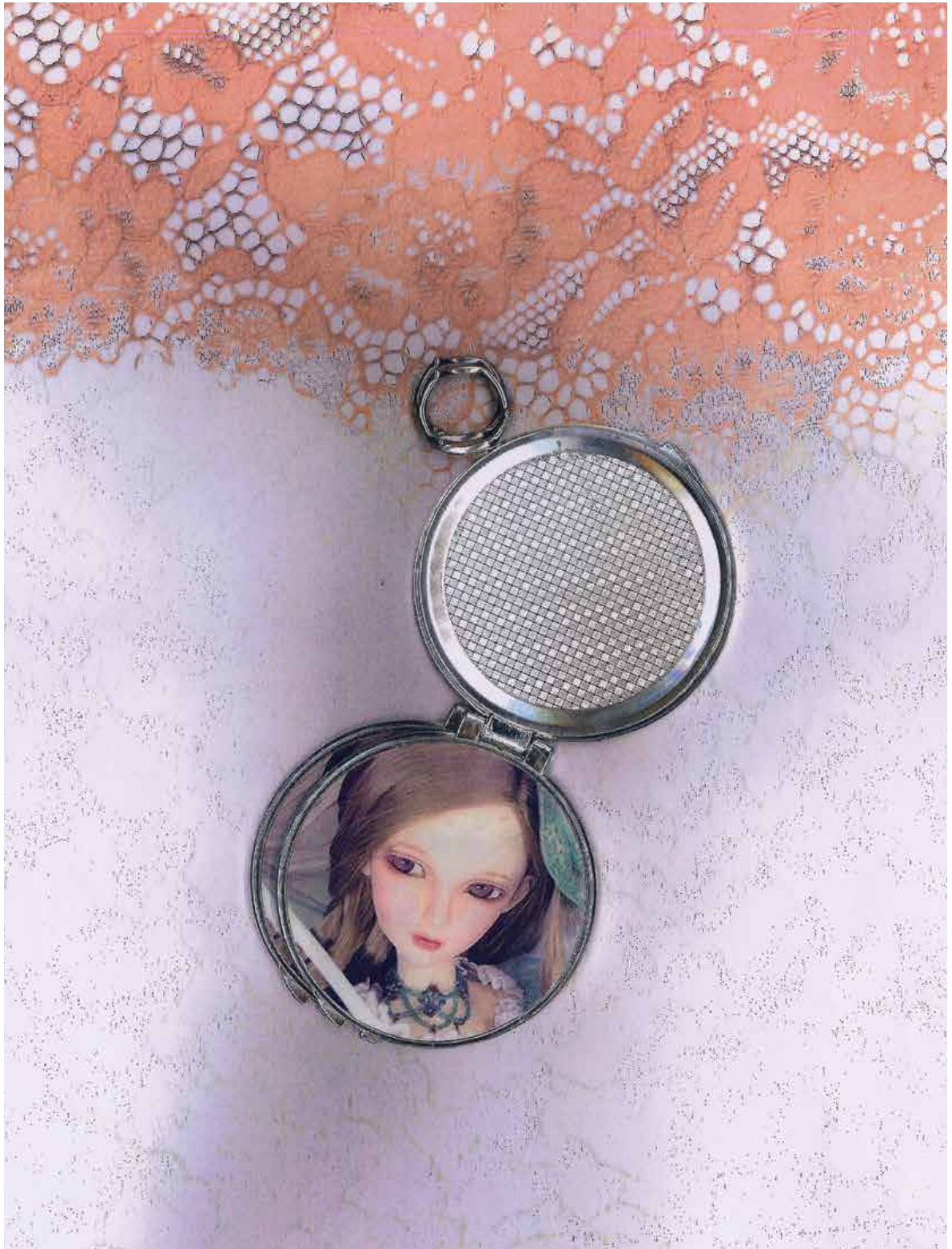


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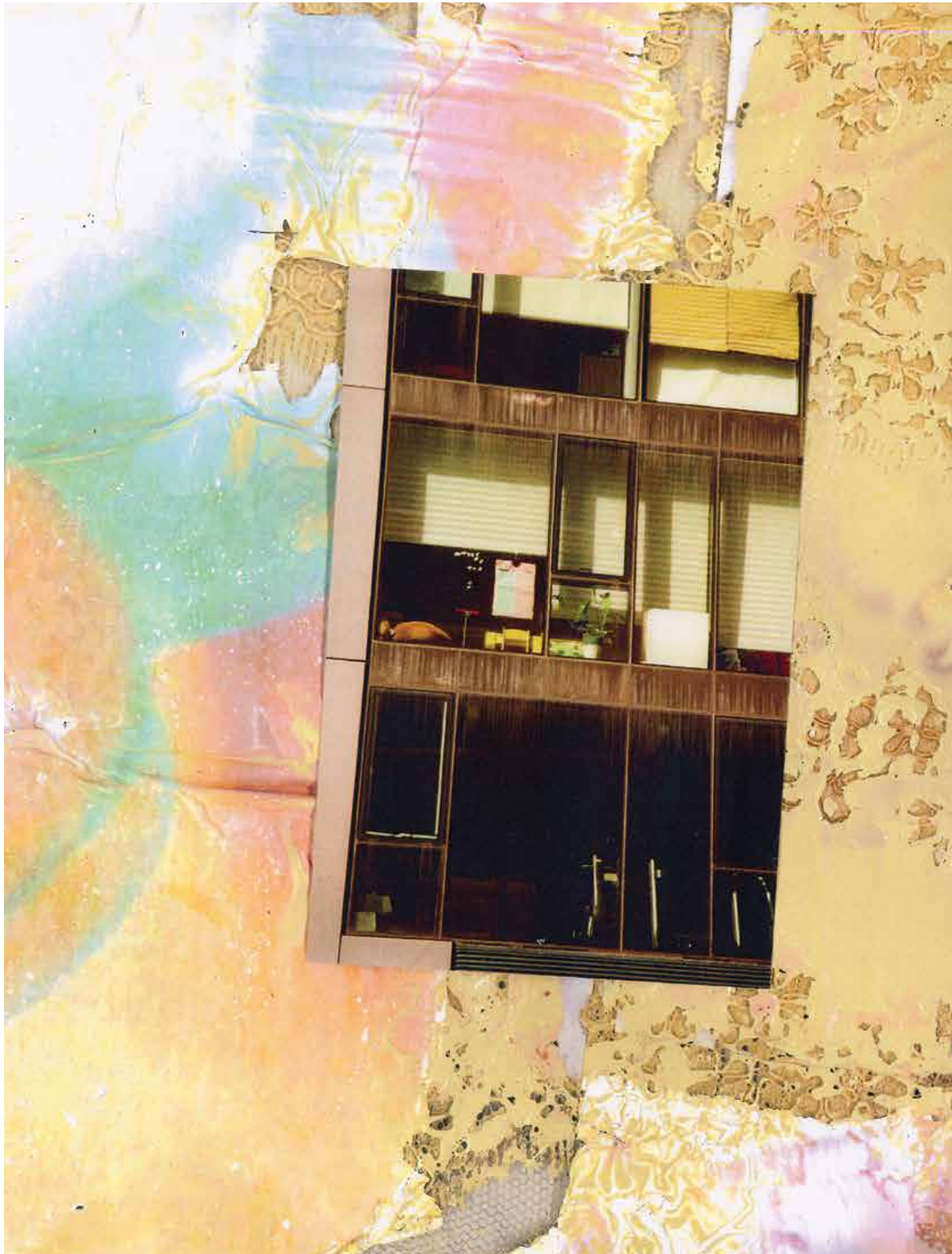


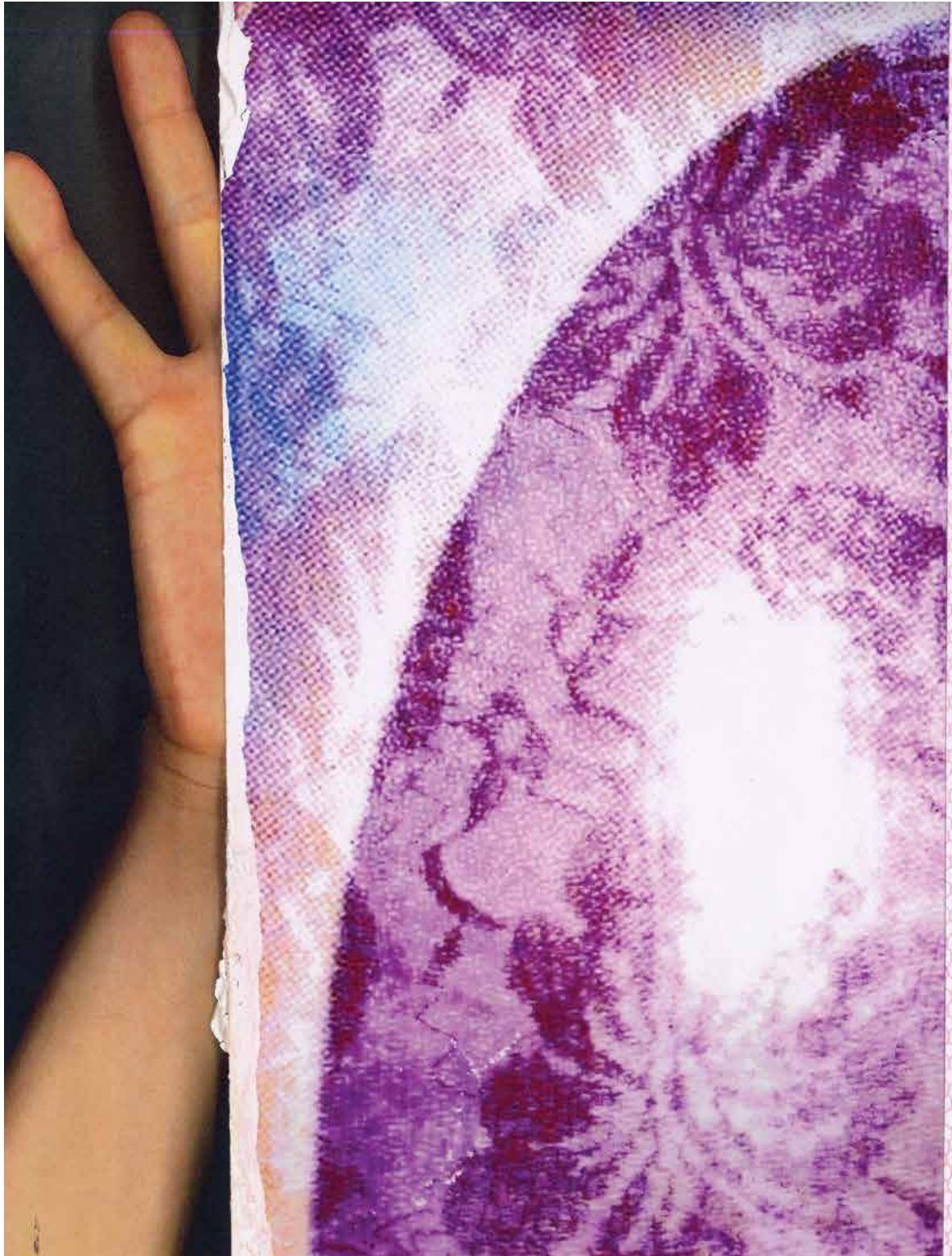
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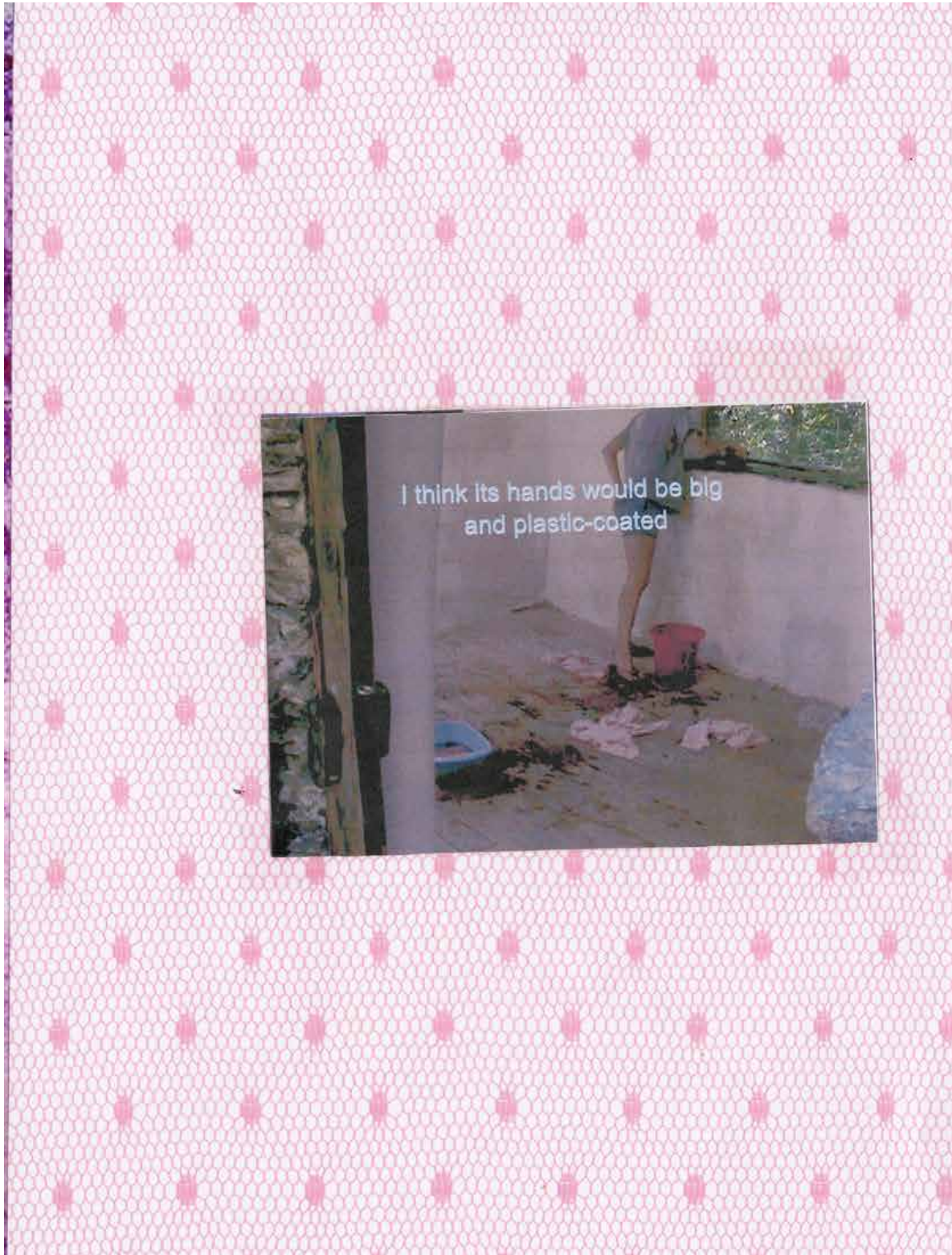


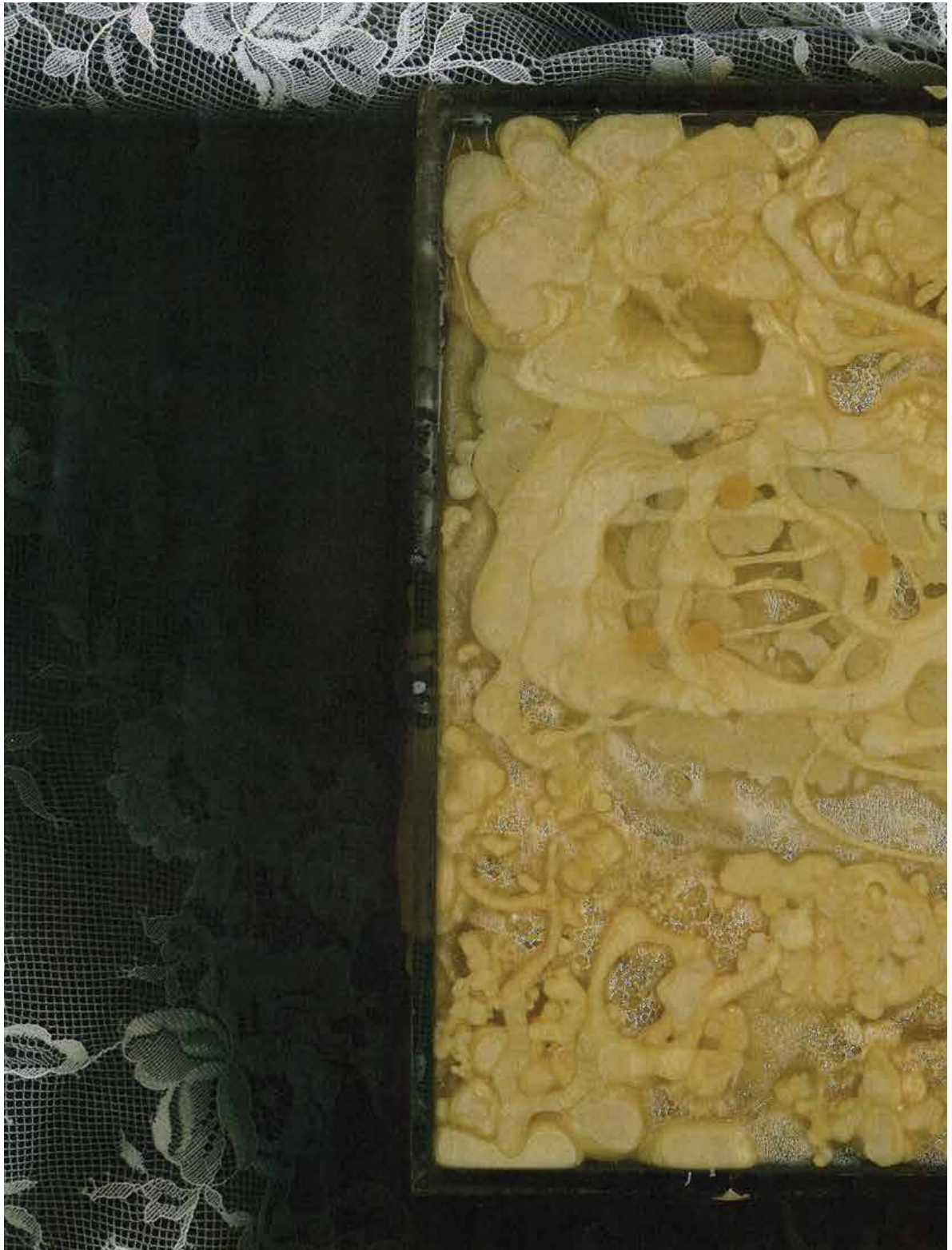
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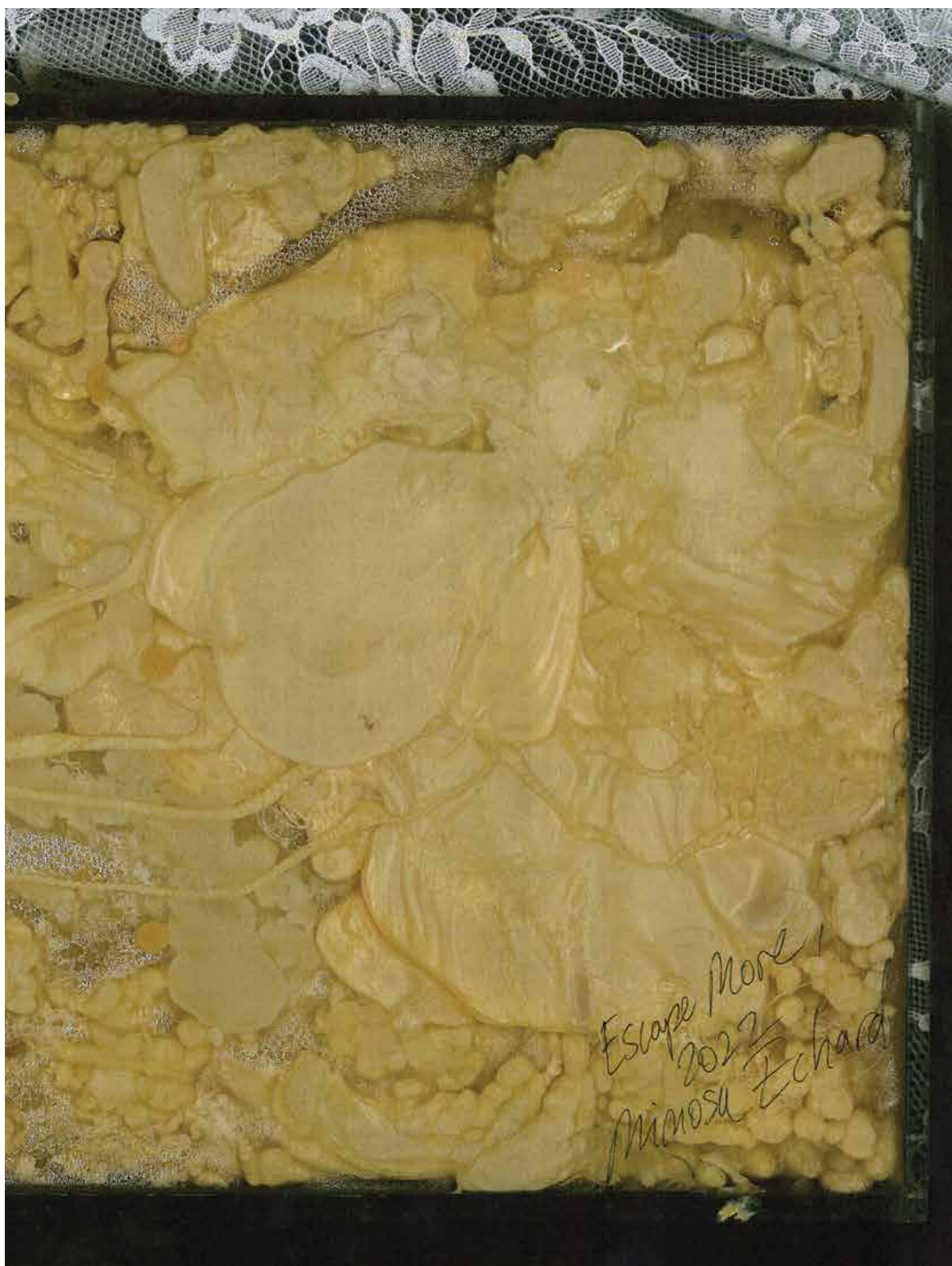












## Le Monde

# Mimosa Echard, lauréate du 22<sup>e</sup> prix Marcel Duchamp

A 36 ans, la plasticienne a été distinguée parmi les quatre artistes de la scène française en lice pour la prestigieuse récompense d'art contemporain.



Mimosa Echard, en janvier 2022. HUGUES LAWSON-BODY

L'annonce a été faite un peu avant 20 heures depuis le Forum du Centre Pompidou, lundi 17 octobre, par Xavier Rey, le directeur du Musée national d'art moderne, en compagnie de Claude Bonnin, le président de l'Adiaf, association de collectionneurs pour la diffusion internationale de l'art français. Mimosa Echard remporte le 22<sup>e</sup> prix Marcel Duchamp, le plus prestigieux de la scène française en matière d'art contemporain, et qui récompense un artiste en milieu de carrière.

La somptueuse pièce de l'artiste consiste en une large fenêtre panoramique, qui est aussi une image en mouvement perpétuel, brouillée par un flux transparent ininterrompu, et à travers lequel on distingue un patchwork de détails plus ou moins proches, donc plus ou moins identifiables : téléviseur, lumières, faux-cils, un poème plaqué à la vitre sur un corps un peu cyborg dans une planète foutue, des graines, de la dentelle en plastique...

La plasticienne désigne ce dispositif en métamorphose, tout en flux et fluides contradictoires, organiques ou synthétiques, comme un « *objet architectural ambigu* », mi-« *machine lacrymale* » mi-« *écran désirant* ». « *Je trouvais intéressant de faire une pièce qui soit à la fois bidimensionnelle et tridimensionnelle, qui soit comme un tableau liquide et à la fois un espace, intime, mais qui ait quelque-chose d'assez muséal. Cette pièce est pour moi liée à la perception, c'est comme un peu comme plonger à l'intérieur de l'œil, à l'intérieur de l'écran* », confiait l'artiste, émue à l'issue de l'annonce.



L'œuvre de Mimosa Echard au Centre Pompidou, 2022. BERTRAND PRÉVOST

« *Les débats ont été très longs et très vifs* », a précisé Xavier Rey avant d'annoncer le nom de la lauréate. Le président du jury était entouré de six personnes, trois représentants d'institutions – Cécile Debray, présidente du Musée national Picasso, Elsy Lahner, conservatrice à l'Albertina Museum, à Vienne (Autriche), et Akemi Shiraha, de l'Association Marcel Duchamp – et de trois collectionneurs, Claude Bonnin pour l'Adiaf, Pedro Barbosa (Brésil) et Nathalie Mamane-Cohen (France).

Le jury international avait voté dans l'après-midi, à l'issue des exposés des rapporteurs de chacun des artistes, soit Jill Gasparina, critique, commissaire indépendante et professeure assistante à la HEAD-Genève (Suisse), pour Mimosa Echard ; Kathryn Weir, directrice du musée Madre, à Naples (Italie), pour Ivan Argote ; Julien Fronsacq, conservateur en chef au Musée d'art moderne et contemporain de Genève (Suisse), pour Philippe Decrauzat ; et Nadia Yala Kisukidi, maîtresse de conférences en philosophie à l'Université Paris-VIII Vincennes-Saint-Denis, pour Giulia Andreani.

### **Cadette des quatre nommés**

Les quatre artistes avaient été retenus à la mi-janvier, à l'issue d'un long processus de sélection par l'Adiaf. Le 5 octobre ouvrait au Centre Pompidou la traditionnelle exposition des quatre artistes en lice, exposition visible jusqu'au 2 janvier 2023.

A 36 ans, Mimosa Echard est la cadette des quatre nommés cette année, et elle prolonge la série de femmes lauréates du prix d'affilée, après Kapwani Kiwanga en 2020 et Lili Reynaud-Dewar en 2021. Diplômée de l'Ecole nationale supérieure des Arts décoratifs de Paris, l'artiste est représentée par la galerie Chantal Crousel à Paris et la galerie Martina Simetti à Milan. Elle a été exposée notamment au Palais de Tokyo à Paris cette année et à la fondation Lambert à Avignon en 2021.

Avec le prix Duchamp, Mimosa Echard se voit aussi récompensée d'une nouvelle résidence à la Villa Albertine, ce nouveau programme de résidences français ayant la spécificité de proposer plusieurs lieux à travers les Etats-Unis. En 2019, elle avait résidé à la villa Kujoyama à Kyoto.

## Deux Japans

PAR ADRIEN MALCOR

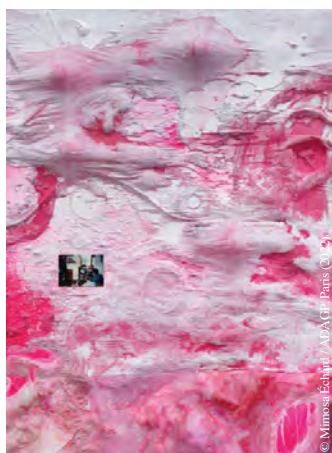
Je viens d'évoquer Kumagusu Minakata. On en trouve un dessin à l'entrée de l'exposition de Mimosa Échard, *Sporal*, au Palais de Tokyo. C'est son « mandala », reproduit sur une carte postale japonaise fichée dans des fils de perles colorées qui tombent du plafond dans un bac en plastique posé au sol, rempli de filaments rosâtres englués dans un fond de laque. Mimosa Échard, née en 1986, fut comme Julien Guinand pensionnaire de la Villa Kujoyama (en 2019-2020), et s'intéressa, elle, au Minakata mycologue ; c'est une biologiste du Minakata Museum qui initia l'artiste à la culture des myxomycètes, ces organismes unicellulaires dont le mode de reproduction (par spores) a inspiré le titre de l'exposition.

Le lustre de perles s'appelle *Sap (Orchid Sweat)* (Sève (Sueur d'orchidée), 2020) ; le bac, *Rose Balls* (Boules roses ou Boules de rose, 2022 (y surnagent les restes d'un blister de boule de geisha, ainsi qu'une fausse rose en verre)). On trouve d'autres systèmes perles-bac plus loin dans l'exposition, avec à chaque fois des titres indiquant de quelle « sève » s'alimente le curieux bouillon de culture évoqué par le bac. J'avais vu quelques-unes de ces *Saps* l'an dernier, galerie Chantal Crousel, dans une exposition personnelle intitulée *Numbs* (Engourdis). Il n'y avait pas encore les bacs, mais déjà une carte postale, la reproduction de la célèbre *Ophélie* (1851-1852) du peintre préraphaélite John Everett Millais. Les *Saps* sont les chevelures d'une nouvelle Ophélie, m'étais-je dit, en constatant combien l'image de la noyade florale de la sœur d'Hamlet s'accordait avec la picturalité narcissique-narcotique de *Numbs*. Or ce sont les symbolistes qui ont vu en Ophélie un équivalent féminin du Narcisse antique, et j'avais interprété les incrustations mangas des tableaux exposés comme une plaisante reprise « pop » du japonisme fin-de-siècle...

*Sporal* apparaît immédiatement dans et comme un jeu de lumières artificielles. L'espace de la première salle est divisée en deux par un grand patchwork de tissus imprimés qui fait office d'écran de projection pour une captation du jeu vidéo *Sporal*, conçu par l'artiste avec l'aide de quelques collaborateurs. La superposition

des motifs imprimés et des images projetées (errances en vue subjective dans de vastes paysages 3D biomorphiques, séquences stroboscopiques...) est assez riche d'effets. Les bulles de dialogues, écrites par le poète irlandais Aodhan Madden, évoquent tour à tour les questions-réponses des jeux d'aventures, le *chat* de site de rencontres et la conversation philosophique. Il y a « *des fleurs qui parlent* », comme la fleur de l'arbre à papillons ou l'orchidée abeille, mais aussi un hippocampe et un mystérieux entremetteur appelé « *l'Inconnu* » (« *the Stranger* »). Des êtres enceints, trop pleins, en quête de délivrance : ils doivent s'échanger leurs liquides vitaux (« *sueur* », « *larmes* », « *huile* » ou « *mucus* ») pour exprimer la fluidité pansexuelle de la nature, et on voit bien ici comment érotiser l'étrangeté du vivant pousse à résorber la distinction libérale de la sexualité et de la reproduction. L'idée d'artifice, elle, demeure, mais rattachée aux ruses du mimétisme floral. L'orchidée abeille est moins artificielle qu'artificieuse et, à l'en croire, plus surnaturelle que « contre-nature » : « *Être soi-même l'artifice, l'incarner réellement, c'est ça, être ouvert-e. Je suis une abeille et je ne suis pas une abeille, et aussi une main divine qui efface la possibilité d'une telle pensée. Tu vois ça, comme on vient de fissurer la fenêtre<sup>4</sup> ?* »

La vidéo est visible depuis l'autre côté de l'écran-patchwork, où l'artiste a aménagé une sorte de réduction intimiste de l'espace de projection : un écran LED devant un grand tapis entouré d'objets semblables à de gros édretons multicolores. Ce second écran, translucide lui aussi, montre un personnage filmé pendant son sommeil par une caméra fixe : *I'm Only Sleeping* (Je suis seulement en train de dormir, 2022). La fenêtre ouverte au-dessus du lit donne sur un bois, mais



Mimosa Échard, *Batchat*, 2022 (détail).  
Photo : Aurélien Mole



Mimosa Échard, *Sporal*, vue d'exposition, Palais de Tokyo (courtoisie de l'artiste et de la galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris).  
Photo : Aurélien Mole.

les clignotements irisés qui colorent les rideaux (et que magnifient ceux des LED elles-mêmes) évoquent plutôt les lumières d'un quartier de nuit. Les grandes formes 3D du jeu vidéo planent à travers cette image de sommeil, on entend aussi sa bande-son touffue, tissée de pop japonaise, et on comprend soudain où on est : on est perdu, mais à l'abri, au cœur de la mégapole cyberpunk, de la Tokyo hypertechnologique et interlope des romans de William Gibson, avec ses labyrinthes de câbles, ses néons et ses énormes enseignes holographiques volant au milieu des immeubles.

Dans un entretien, Mimosa Échard remarque que les tentures industrielles de son patchwork distillent « quelque chose d'un peu triste », qu'elle associe à « la descente du psychédéisme des années 1970 » vers les sociétés de surveillance numériques<sup>4</sup>. Le cyberpunk dystopique des années 1980 fut bien la science-fiction de cette « descente » postutopique.

L'artiste en a finement capté la mélancolie cinématographique – celle qui, dans *Blade Runner* (1982), imprègne justement les pauses de l'action.

Car la ville cyberpunk est la ville des traques totales ; le sentiment d'intimité revient avec une intensité sombre quand, avec le héros ou l'héroïne, on y est très profondément *caché*. Il faudrait en conclure qu'un certain lyrisme romanesque a changé le signe du phénomène « *sleep stream* », mais l'important est ici pour moi que Mimosa Échard ait voulu peindre, à la LED, « une chambre à Tokyo »<sup>6</sup>. Une caméra de surveillance est démontée et couchée, inoffensive, dans le bac posé devant l'écran. La nuit a provisoirement éloigné les menaces : on est dans l'œil du cyclone cyberpunk, protégé de la ville par la ville elle-même, bercé par sa cyclopéenne rumeur.

La seconde salle, plus petite et étroite, apparaît d'autant plus crûment éclairée que la première est plongée dans la pénombre. Les bacs s'autonomisent, se multiplient, et je pense à une sorte de laboratoire biotechnologique de coulisse. Voilà : le laboratoire communique avec la chambre comme l'expérience virtuelle avec le rêve – contiguïté et porosité toutes cyberpunks. L'œuvre la plus volumineuse de la salle est un grand tableau-collage (*Batchat*, 2022) dont la surface rose et blanche, parsemée de renflements globuleux, fige encore une fois la substance poétique de l'exposition (le flux des spores-cellules-graines-œufs-perles-gouttes-larmes). Une modeste photographie-souvenir collée en son centre montre un groupe d'adolescents réunis devant ce qui semble être un jeu vidéo de snowboard ; la forêt enneigée du jeu se prolonge étrangement dans la vue encadrée par la fenêtre. Il y a là une mise en abyme des jeux d'écrans de l'exposition, peut-être aussi une

clé autobiographique, en tout cas l'explicitation de la référence à *Videodrome* (1983) de David Cronenberg, à l'inoubliable image de l'écran biomécanomorphe poussant ses protubérances dans l'espace du spectateur « intoxiqué ». Nul doute que Mimosa Échard, qui a jusque-là fait peu de films, propose aujourd'hui sa version du « vidéodrome » (« *Long live the new flesh!* »). Un vidéodrome moins mécanique que floral, et moins épidémique que « *sporal* », en écho lointain et déformé, peut-être, au grand rêve romantique-allemand de pollinisation spirituelle.

Je résume et conclus. Julien Guinand pense plutôt écologie politique, et décrit des campagnes japonaises ravagées par l'industrialisme, tout en cherchant les rémanences de la légende et du mythe dans les artificialisations du paysage. Mimosa Échard pense plutôt biologie queer, et procède à « l'ophélisation d'une ville »<sup>7</sup> imaginaire, la contre-cité du cyberpunk, où le psychédéisme high-tech s'est durablement miré dans l'artificialisme traditionnel de la culture nipponne (ce fut un autre japonisme « fin-de-siècle »). Il est intéressant de constater que leurs expositions, aussi différentes soient-elles, trouvent toutes deux des ressources dans une extrapolation plastique (métapicturale) du tableau. Resterait à voir comment chacune aborde l'architecture japonaise traditionnelle, avec ses murs-écrans mobiles...

Japon des villes et Japon des champs ? Non, Japon de la science-fiction et Japon de la réalité, deux Japans qui se ressemblent souvent, et dont on dit parfois qu'ils auraient été tragiquement réunifiés par l'accident de Fukushima. **Q**

<sup>4</sup> Les dialogues du jeu sont transcrits dans le livre paru à l'occasion de l'exposition : Mimosa ÉCHARD, *Sporal*, éd. Daria de Beauvais et Frédéric Grossi, Les Presses du réel / Palais de Tokyo, 2022. Ce dont l'orchidée veut en fait convaincre le joueur, c'est qu'elle est et n'est pas la fleur « *frankensteïnisée* », la fleur de culture ou de synthèse, la fleur de serre, de cloche ou de « bac », – qu'elle est précisément l'être « non-binaire », celui pour qui « *tout est crépuscule* » (ni jour ni nuit). Et cela passe par une renaturalisation de l'imaginaire décadent telle que celle opérée par Proust dans l'ouverture de *Sodomie et Gomorrie*, avec la « *rencontre miraculeuse* » du bourdon Charlus et de l'orchidée Jupien. J'ajoute que les joueurs de jeu vidéo appellent « *butin* » (*loot*) les objets qu'ils doivent collecter pour progresser dans le jeu. Or on *butine* son butin dans le jeu *Sporal* : l'entomologie y retrouve l'étymologie. Un indice en passant : ce jeu sur les mots se double, dans l'exposition, d'un jeu sur les « lettres ». J'invite ici le futur visiteur à « chercher du *loot* » dans la seconde salle.

<sup>5</sup> « À ma seule cellule. Entretien entre Mimosa Échard et Daria de Beauvais », dans *Sporal*, *op. cit.*

<sup>6</sup> « A Room in Tokyo » est le nom d'un des mondes ou niveaux du jeu *Sporal*.

<sup>7</sup> Gaston BACHELARD, *L'Eau et les Rêves* (1942), Le Livre de Poche, 2020 (chap. III, section VI, « Le complexe d'Ophélie »). La formule est employée par Bachelard au sujet du roman *Bruges-la-Morte* (1892) de Georges Rodenbach.

émergent magazine

Interview by Valeria Biamonti

Mimosa  
Echard

Born 1986

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## Mimosa Echard

To begin with, how did you come across art and how did you get involved in your art practice?

I grew up in the south of France, in the mountains, in a very wild and mystical region called les Cévennes. I used to spend my time making scrap books, cutting out images of artworks from the TV guide. My relationship to art came mostly from the television at first.

Do you have a specific memory that confirmed your interest in art?

I had many epiphanies...for example, when I was a teenager I found a book by chance about artists who used their body as a material, like Ana Mendieta, Cindy Sherman, Gina Pane, Michel Journiac...I was so obsessed. It opened a new field of possibility for me...a new way to think about material, meaning and commitment to art.

Could you tell us about the process of putting together different materials - including pills, fake nails and hair, acrylic glosses, but also dried flowers and seeds, snail shells, cherry pits, to name a few- and the symbolism you attach to it in your practice? Could you describe the selection process?

It depends on the series. I am not so much interested in an isolated object or a material in itself, but rather the relationships that materials evoke or construct with each other, either through their form, their provenance, their singularity or their multiplicity. A lot of the materials are given to me, for example, sent to me by my family or friends, or somehow end up in my work by chains of formal analogy, tangential research...things I see on the street. I think of it kind of like poetry... not so much in terms of symbolism but definitely abstraction...I'm interested in the moment when the object disappears or dissolves, absorbed into the surface.

The layering of organic elements and inanimate objects often recurs throughout your

practice. How do you question the dichotomy between what is natural and what is originated from our culture(s)?

This is a big question, I'm not sure how to answer it. In any case this dichotomy doesn't seem useful to me, in so far as what is natural is always in some way a social or cultural construction, the synthetic always a question of labour and control over natural materials/processes. As in the 'natural' doesn't exist, but we can't get rid of nature. I suppose I work with this contradiction, and the way it leads beyond binary ways of thinking about this troubled relationship.

To what extent do you think your work reflects on the contemporary environmental issues?

Hmm, I would be hesitant to say my work reflects contemporary issues per se, in the sense that these issues have been forever present in some sense, for example the idea of pollution and purity is something that Western culture has been obsessed with for a long time, an obsession that's obviously playing out differently today. Same goes for the questions of defining and controlling 'what a body is', or 'what a human is' etc...

Both chance and control seem to be present in the assembling criteria. Could you describe the way you approach the compositional aspect in your work? Is there any difference between the way you consider your installations and the wall pieces?

I would say most of the time, liquidity means losing control. I have no real idea what my work will look like until it's dry. It's kind of like analogue photography in that way. Recently I've been working on a video game with a group and friends and collaborators and there was a really beautiful moment the other day when the game glitched and two different worlds were superimposed, one flooding into the other. These moments are important to me, when something 'other' is revealed.



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Mimosa Echard

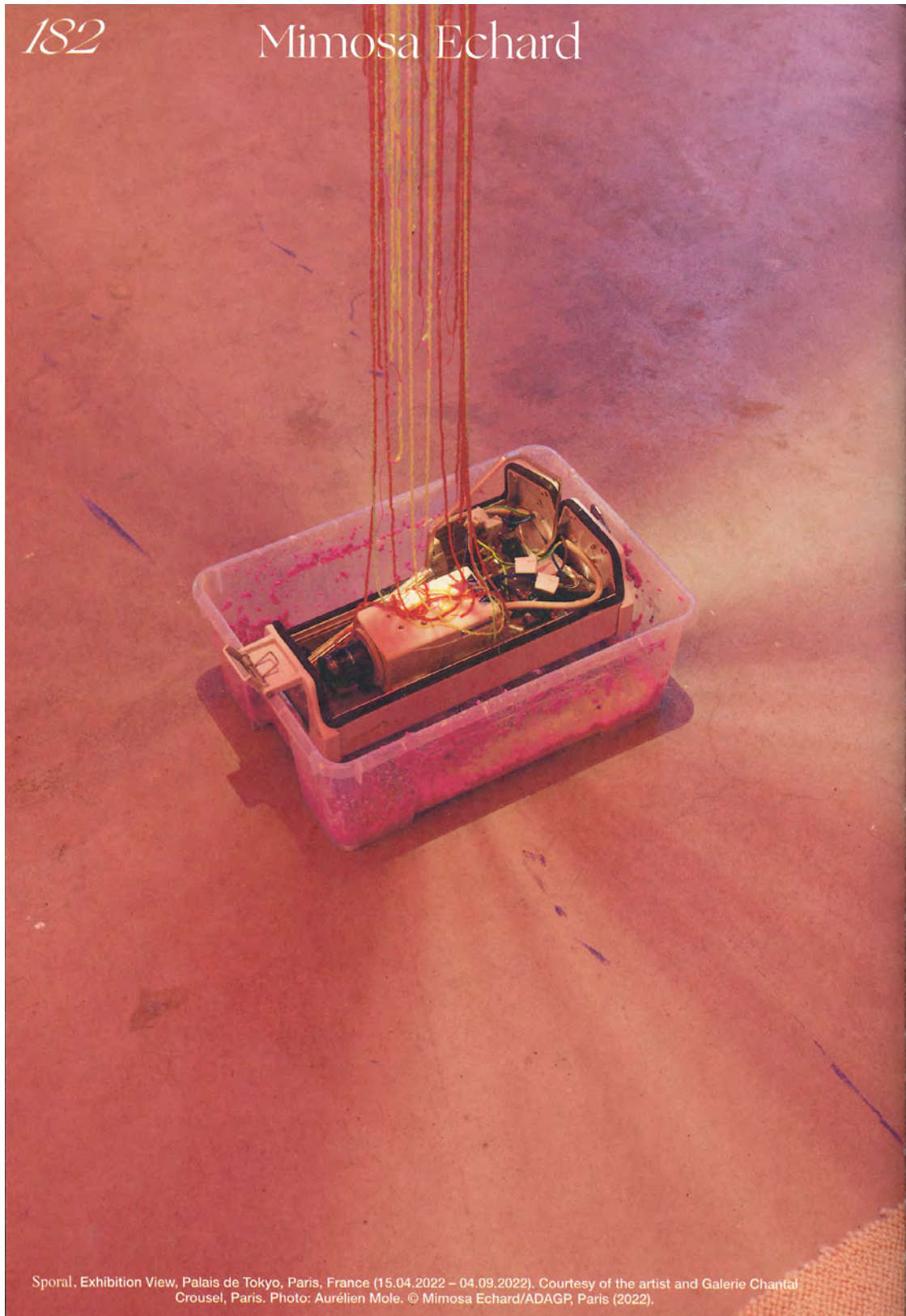




Sporal. Exhibition View, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France (15.04.2022 – 04.09.2022). Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris. Photo: Aurélien Mole. © Mimosa Echard/ADAGP, Paris (2022).

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Mimosa Echard



Sporal, Exhibition View, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France (15.04.2022 – 04.09.2022). Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris. Photo: Aurélien Mole. © Mimosa Echard/ADAGP, Paris (2022).

Most of your works show an extensive use of the colour pink, a colour that seems to stress a shift in society and fashion, challenging traditional colour associations. Could you expand on the use of pink in your practice? Is there a psychology of colour associated with a specific palette?

There is something that Mike Kelley once said that has always stuck with me, about how pink is the colour of deviance. I remember the exact moment as a girl growing up when you have to stop liking pink, as though it were a necessary part of being an adult, of being a part of society, of being a well-educated person. I love to think of artists as the opposite of grown-up well-educated human beings.

The formal seduction of objects seems to play a relevant role within your oeuvre. With your series Nymphs as well as the sculptures in the form of stars or foam-covered laundry bottles, I Still Dream of Orgonon... How important is plasticity to you?

Plasticity is fascinating in the sense that plastic, as a material, seems to be like the physical equivalent of 'forever', or its promise... a forever that is multiple, transportable, disposable. In my work, I think I am interested in plastic as a formal 'limit', a material that carries a complex emotional and conceptual weight (guilt, toxins, reassurance, hygiene, decomposed sea creatures i.e. crude oil... etc.) As for 'seduction', I am not sure that in my work this has to do with plastic per se, although the connection is interesting, but more to do with my fascination with 'pop'.

When staging an exhibition, do you think there is a specific way for viewers to look at your work? What is your personal relation to contemplation?

There is definitely no specific way... though I am interested in how artworks can provoke certain states of perception, particularly ones that encourage something other than contemplation in the classic sense, something more 'distract-

ed' or ambient. Like drugs. For example, in my show Numbs (Galerie Chantal Crousel, 2021) the almost repetition of the images in the paintings creates a weird sensation of seeing the same image appear and reappear, and with Sporal (Palais de Tokyo, 2020) I was interested in creating a dynamic between 'immersion' and its 'edge', each work bleeding into another. I think of it like a 'digestive' contemplation, something between the eye and the intestines...



Studio Mimosa Echard. © Mimosa Echard/ADAGP, Paris (2022)

Scale seems to be a quite relevant aspect in your practice. Could you talk a bit more about your interest with the corporeal?

Scale is very important in my work... I've recently been thinking about it in relation to the construction of psychedelia and its relationship with cinema. I always dream about cinema, like the scale of a theatre. The frontality, the separation between the zones in front of and behind the screen. I often find scale is really 'emotional', like when you sleep outdoors and you look



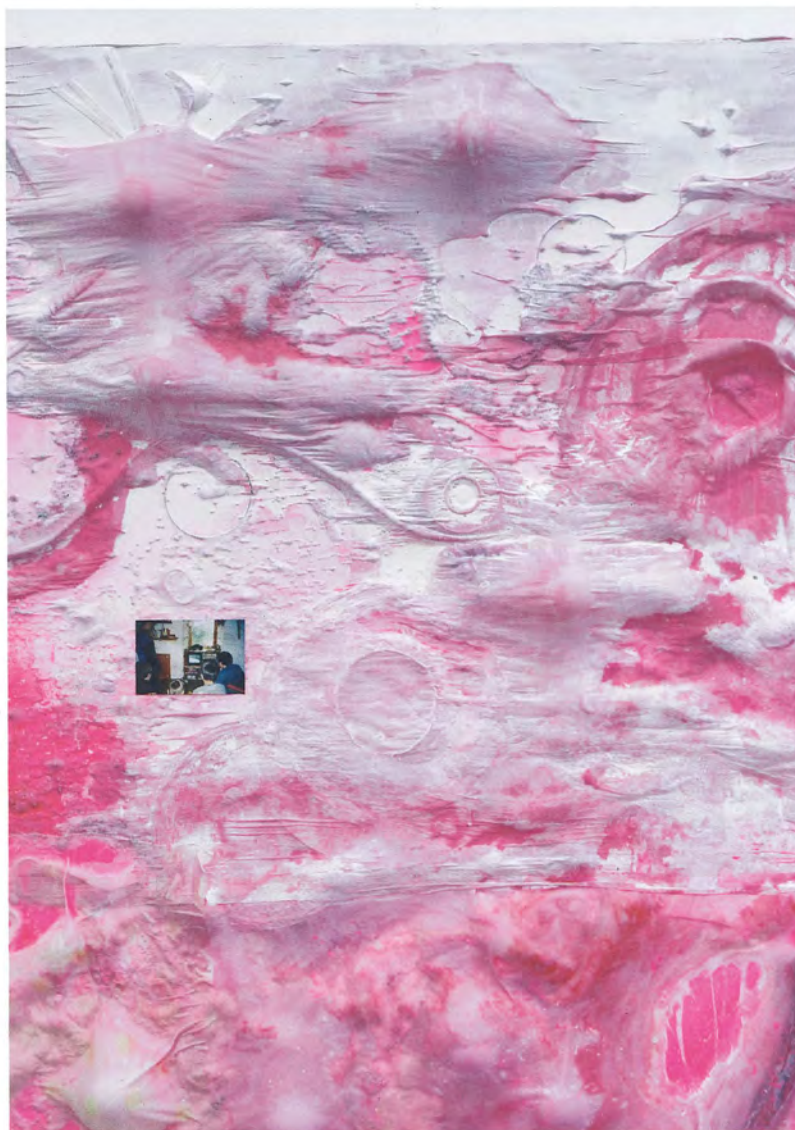
Sporal, Exhibition View, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France (15.04.2022 – 04.09.2022). Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris. Photo: Aurélien Mole. © Mimosa Echard/ADAGP, Paris (2022).



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Mimosa Echard



Sporal, Exhibition View, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France (15.04.2022 – 04.09.2022). Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris. Photo: Aurélien Mole. © Mimosa Echard/ADAGP, Paris (2022).

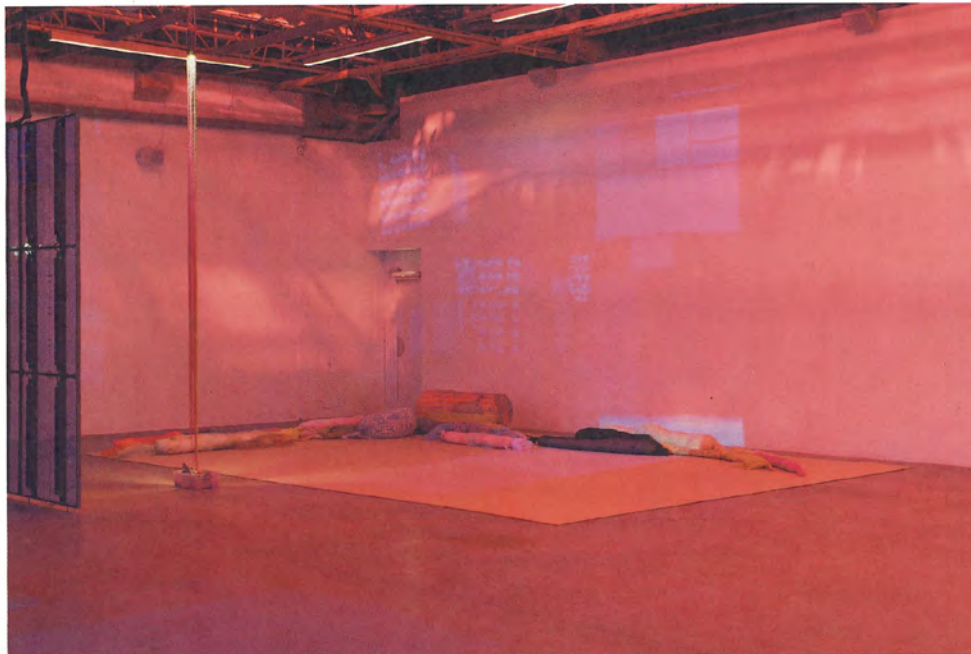
## Interviews

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at the sky at night, a large un-absorbable landscape. It is almost like your body disappears. Sometimes this is what I seek to do, absorb the body, creating a very frontal emotion that you either have to confront or refuse immediately. The opposite of obscure. Kind of like a pop song that you can be attracted to even though you think it's dumb or whatever. Digesting images, meanwhile the image is digesting you. Then there is also the minuscule, the molecular...

Could you talk a bit about the literature, authors, books that influence you the most? Is art a theoretical matter for you?

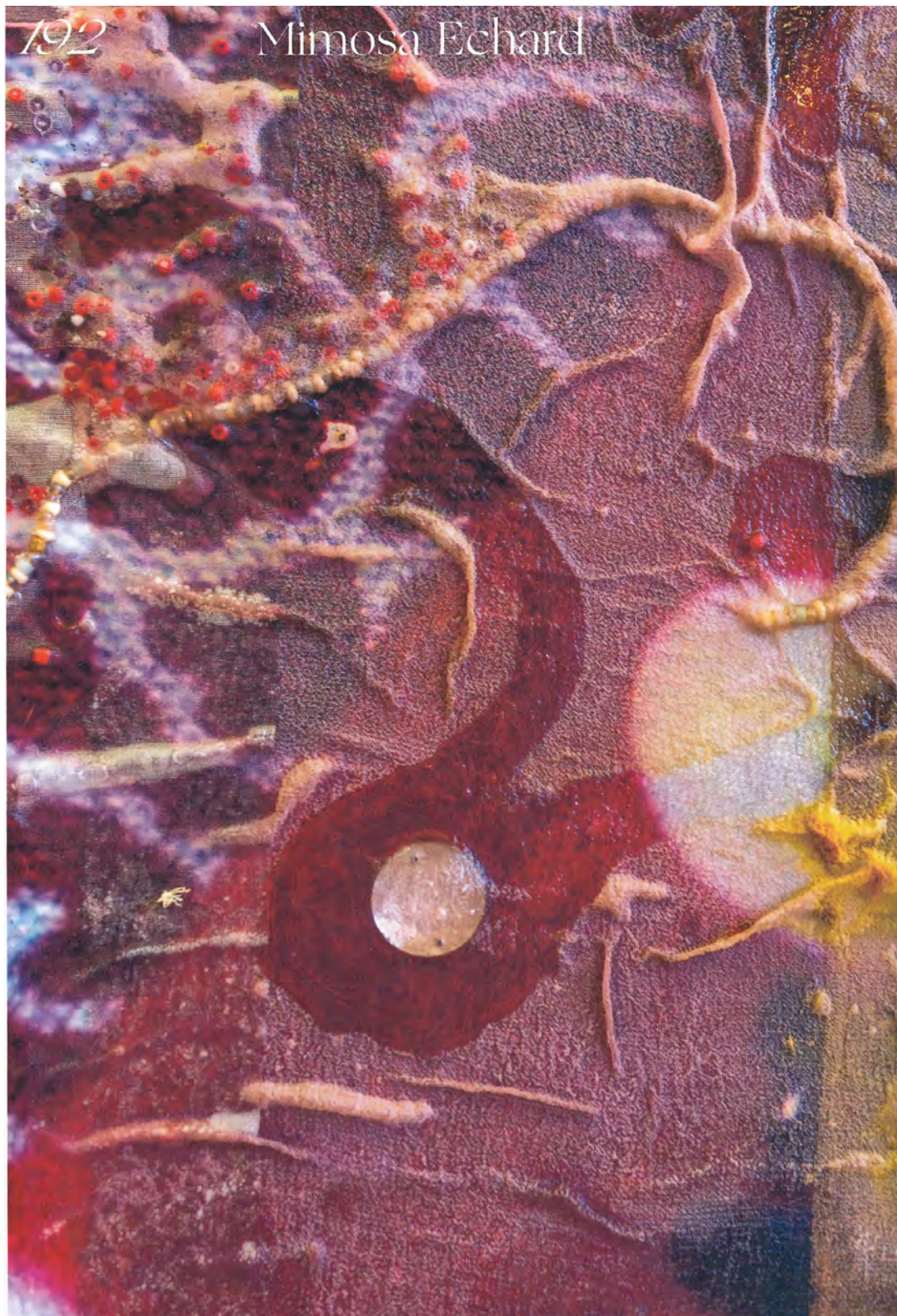
I like to think about theorists as sculptors and artists as theorists, circulating roles...the dynamic is very vivid. Although my practice (and art) is not (for me) an illustration of theory. I think of it more like pollinating fragments of different things... Yesterday I saw the latest Cronenberg movie at the cinema, and I was quite into the weird sensation of watching a new kind of erotic perception... 'new sex', 'old sex'. Otherwise for my most recent show, I was reading some Japanese folk tales as well as *The Snow Queen* by Hans Christian Andersen, *Moderato Cantabile* by Duras, *Écologies déviantes* by Cy LeCerf Maulpoix...among other things.



Sporal, Exhibition View, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France (15.04.2022 – 04.09.2022). Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris. Photo: Aurélien Mole. © Mimosa Echard/ADAGP, Paris (2022).



Sporal, Exhibition View, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France (15.04.2022 – 04.09.2022). Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris. Photo: Aurélien Mole. © Mimosa Echard/ADAGP, Paris (2022).



Valeria Biamonti  
*Mimosa Echard*  
émergent magazine, N°08, June, 2022, p.177-204.

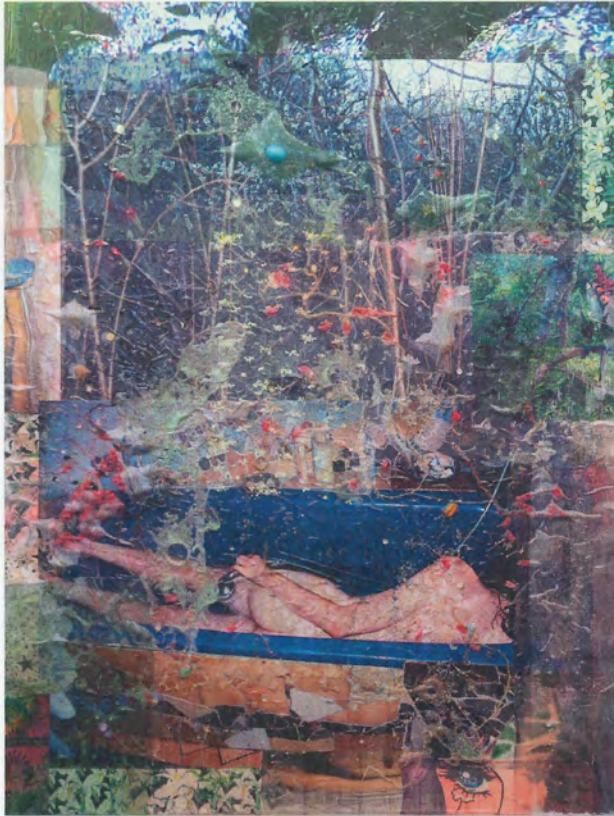
Baigneur (Egg), 2021, Tirage photo argentique, tissus imprimés, tissu, pillules, miroir, perles en verres, perles en plastiques, bracelet en métal, graine de gardenia, fleurs de pavot, faux pistil de fleurs, noyaux de cerise, faux cheveux, laque et gloss synthétique. | Photographic print, digital print on fabric, fabric, pills, mirror, glass bead, plastic bead, metallic bracelet gardenia seed, poppy flowers, fake flower pistils, cherry pits, fake hairs, synthetic lacker, gloss. 250 x 190 x 2.5 cm | 98 3/8 x 74 6/8 x 1 inches, Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris. Photo: Sebastiano Pellion di Persano. © Mimosa Echard/ADAGP, Paris (2022).



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## Mimosa Echard

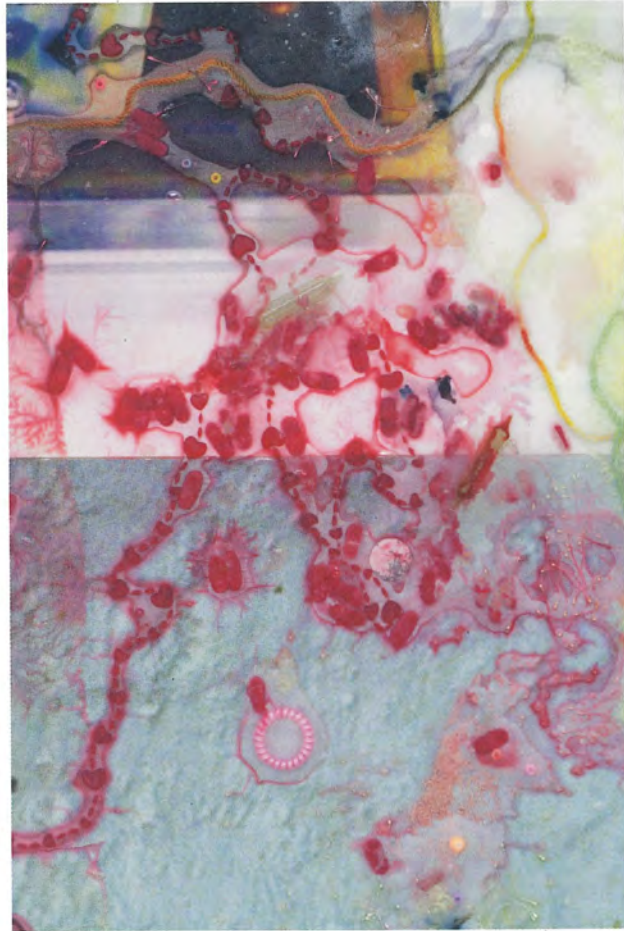
Baigneur (sad girl). Tirage photo argentique, tissus imprimés, tissu, pillules, miroir, perles en verres, perles en plastiques, fleurs de clitoria, bracelet en métal, graine de gardenia, oeuf en plastique, faux pistils de fleurs, porte clé, noyaux de cerise, étoile en nacre, faux cheveux, laque et gloss synthétique | Photographic print, digital print on fabric, fabric, pills, mirror, glass bead, plastic bead, clitoria flower, metallic bracelet, gardenia seed, plastic egg, fake flower pistils, keychain, cherry pit, nacre star, fake hairs, synthetic lacquer, gloss. 250 x 190 x 2.5 cm | 98 3/8 x 74 6/8 x 1 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris. Photo: Sebastiano Pellion di Persano. © Mimosa Echard/ADAGP, Paris (2022).





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émergent magazine, N°08, June, 2022, p.177-204.





Numbs (Evatar), 2021. Tirage photo argentique, tissus imprimés, tissu, pillules, miroir, perles en verres, perles en plastiques, fleurs de clitoria, bracelet en métal, graine de gardenia, oeuf en plastique, faux pistils de fleurs, porte clé, noyaux de cerise, étoile en nacre, faux cheveux, laque et gloss synthétique | Photographic print, digital print on fabric, fabric, pills, mirror, glass bead, plastic bead, clitoria flower, metallic bracelet, gardenia seed, plastic egg, fake flower pistils, keychain, cherry pit, nacre star, fake hairs, synthetic lacquer, gloss. 250 x 190 x 2.5 cm | 98 3/8 x 74 6/8 x 1 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris. Photo: Sebastiano Pellion di Persano. © Mimosa Echard/ADAGP, Paris (2022).



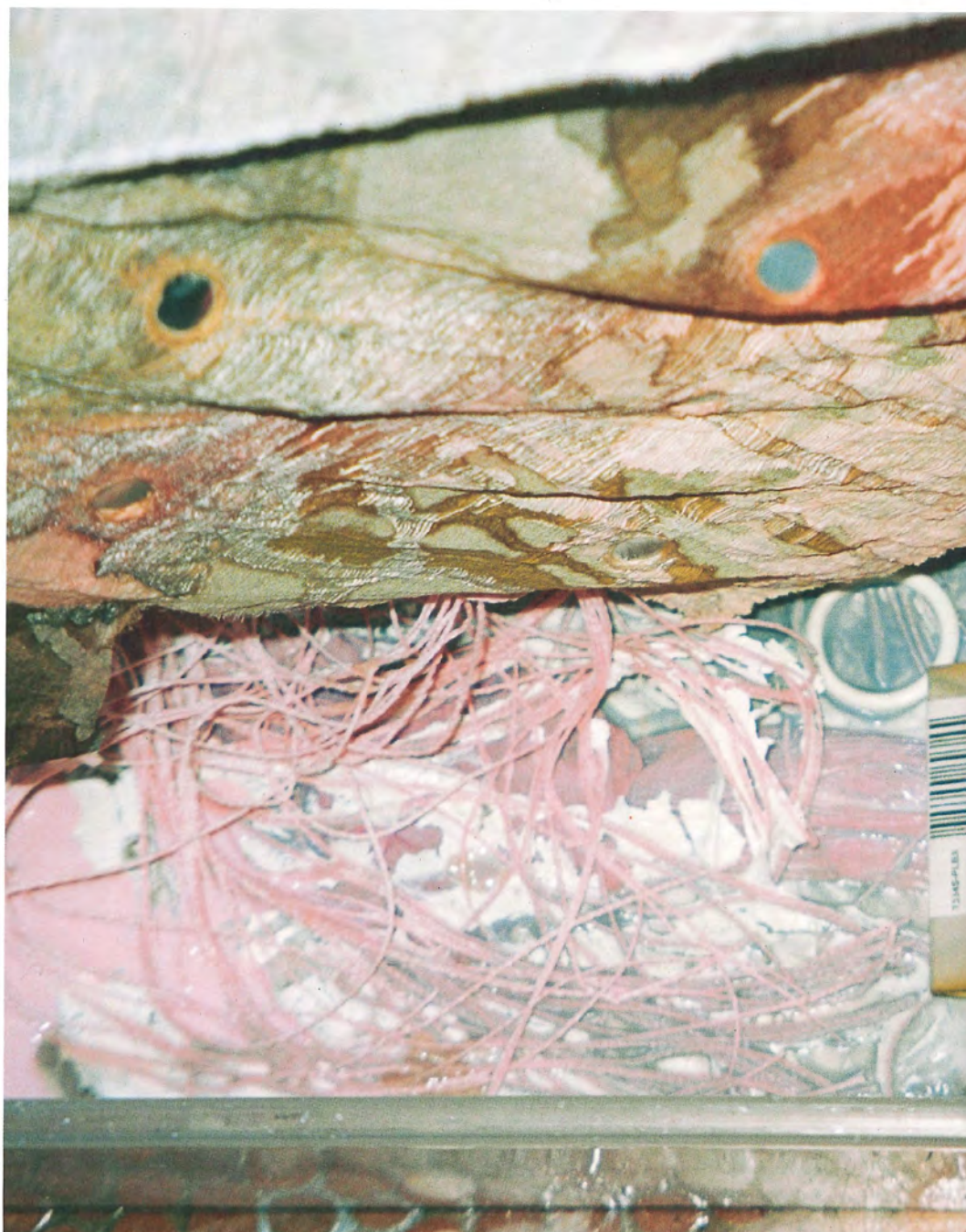
## Interviews

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Numbs (Evatar), 2021. Tirage photo argentique, tissus imprimés, tissu, pillules, miroir, perles en verres, perles en plastiques, fleurs de clitoria, bracelet en métal, graine de gardenia, oeuf en plastique, faux pistils de fleurs, porte clé, noyaux de cerise, étoile en nacre, faux cheveux, laque et gloss synthétique | Photographic print, digital print on fabric, fabric, pills, mirror, glass bead, plastic bead, clitoria flower, metallic bracelet, gardenia seed, plastic egg, fake flower pistils, keychain, cherry pit, nacre star, fake hairs, synthetic lacquer, gloss. 250 x 190 x 2.5 cm | 98 3/8 x 74 6/8 x 1 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris. Photo: Sebastiano Pellion di Persano. © Mimosa Echard/ADAGP, Paris (2022).

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Mimosa Echard





Studio Mimosa Echard. © Mimosa Echard/ADAGP, Paris (2022).







Valeria Biamonti  
*Mimosa Echard*  
émergent magazine, N°08, June, 2022, p.177-204.

GALERIE  
CHANTAL CROUSEL

**TEMPLE MAGAZINE**



Temple Magazine  
*Mimosa Echard*  
Temple Magazine, N°10, February, 2022, p.8-15.

Courtesy of the artist  
and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris.  
Photographies par Aurélien Mole.  
© Mimosa Echard / ADAGP, Paris (2021).

## TEMPLE MAGAZINE

Ton exposition Numbs qui a eu lieu chez Chantal Crousel en avril 2021, recrée des éco-systèmes hybrides. Comment as-tu articulé cette cohabitation entre naturel et artificiel, organique et manufacturé ?

## MIMOSA ECHARD

Pour moi il y a une continuité entre les deux, il n'y a pas de distinction, de ruptures. C'est une sorte de cohabitation. C'est davantage une relation entre les éléments que la volonté de forcément créer une opposition.

### TM

Par l'usage de matériau comme la résine, tu conserves des rebuts, des à-côtés, des matières organiques. Comment arrives-tu à cette accumulation d'objets ? À quel type de classement procèdes-tu ?

### ME

J'ai des collections de plantes qui peuvent provenir d'herboristeries ou de milieu sauvage comme mon jardin ou les Cévennes où j'ai grandi. Ce sont aussi des choses que je peux ramasser n'importe où, parfois des proches me les ont données, parfois trouvées lors de mes déambulations dans l'espace urbain, des magasins en tout genre, ça peut aussi venir d'Internet ou de pharmacies. En général ce sont des objets assez cheap, des marchandises. Le point de départ peut être une plante qui va me donner l'idée d'une série, c'est un jeu d'écriture qui s'installe où je vais dériver vers différentes sources. Dans Numbs par exemple le végétal principal utilisé est une fleur bleue que j'ai découverte en Thaïlande, *Clitoria ternatea*. Elle a un fort pigment et la particularité de déteindre dans le liquide.

Cette plante bleue et les gélules rouges sont les deux couleurs qui vont pigmenter les différentes couches de tissu de manière aléatoire. Dans cette série il n'y a pas de résine mais des laques, des gloss acryliques mélangés à de l'eau. L'image est noyée sous des couches de liquide et vernis, une fois sèche souvent la pièce est terminée.

### TM

Tu voyages souvent pour collecter ?

### ME

J'aime bien voyager pour collecter, quand on voyage on a le regard acéré.

Ça me permet de faire une sorte de reboot sensoriel, on se rend disponible. Vide et plein à la fois. C'est pourquoi j'ai tendance à beaucoup récolter pendant ces déplacements.

### TM

Comment le poème d'Aodhan Madden dans Numbs, accompagne-t-il ton exposition ?

**ME**

On peut lui demander directement, Aodhan ?

**AM**

Il y avait déjà l'idée de la musique ; la manière dont elle existe dans l'esprit et la conscience comme une sorte de boucle. Comme la sensation quand tu te réveilles avec une musique dans ta tête, tu ne l'as pas choisie mais elle est là. Je crois que pour moi c'est une manière de parler du rapport que l'on a avec les images, de considérer une image non comme un objet d'analyse mais comme quelque chose avec lequel nous vivons, comme des impressions. Par exemple, les publicités sont des images qui cherchent à habiter ton corps, ton cerveau... À la fin du poème il y a une métaphore qui suggère le processus de la photographie argentique comme procédé d'impression de la matière grise.

**ME**

Tu étais à la fois le modèle, tout le temps de dos, objectifié par moi et en même temps les seuls mots sont de toi. Comme un constant envers/endroit, on voit ton cul mais c'est ta bouche qui parle. On avait eu cette discussion sur le fait de devenir une image.

**AM**

Oui par exemple la chirurgie esthétique, ou Kim. Kim Kardashian habite nos corps, c'est une image.

**ME**

C'est presque comme une toxine, elle fait parti des choses que l'on intègre.

**AM**

On ne sait pas si c'est toxique ou pas.

**TM**

Dans tous les cas, ça nous traverse.

**ME**

Oui, cette idée du corps pénétré par toutes ces images, ces substances.

**TM**

Comment se passe ton processus de travail dans ton atelier ?

**ME**

Tout dépend du projet, du moment.



J'essaie d'avoir du temps pour divaguer, faire des tests. Ce n'est pas toujours concluant. Quand je pense une exposition il y a des pièces d'expérimentation qui vont être le point d'entrée et qui vont me lancer sur une série. Souvent je commence par faire des rapprochement de choses qui m'intéressent sur le moment, puis le travail d'écriture s'enrichit par des recherches. C'est comme une sorte de scénario qui va entraîner une collecte d'images, d'objets. Tous ces éléments vont constituer une sorte de partition, de collection ce qui donnera ensuite les séries. En ce moment je travaille à distance avec une amie sur un jeu vidéo. C'est un travail très collaboratif.

**TM**

Jeu vidéo qui sera présenté au Palais de Tokyo en 2022. Peux-tu nous parler de ce projet que tu es en train de développer ?

**ME**

Je me suis toujours intéressée aux jeux vidéo, j'ai grandi avec. J'ai une amie de longue date, Andréa, qui fait des jeux vidéos indépendants, et c'est quelque chose que l'on voulait faire depuis longtemps. Quand le Palais de Tokyo m'a invitée à faire une exposition, j'ai pensé que c'était l'occasion. Au final, il est question d'amitié, de fabriquer un monde ensemble. Andréa a une vie online et en même temps vit à la campagne dans le Perche et fait pousser des légumes. J'ai toujours trouvé qu'il y avait un lien intéressant entre sa vie en ligne et sa relation avec la nature, les animaux, son jardin, les plantes et les insectes, tout ce qui entoure sa maison. Sa communauté online est très active, elle me semble offrir de multiples possibilités de libérations vis à vis de l'identité et de la sexualité.

**TM**

Dans cet univers que vous mettez en place, est-ce que les visiteurs de l'exposition pourront y déambuler ?

**ME**

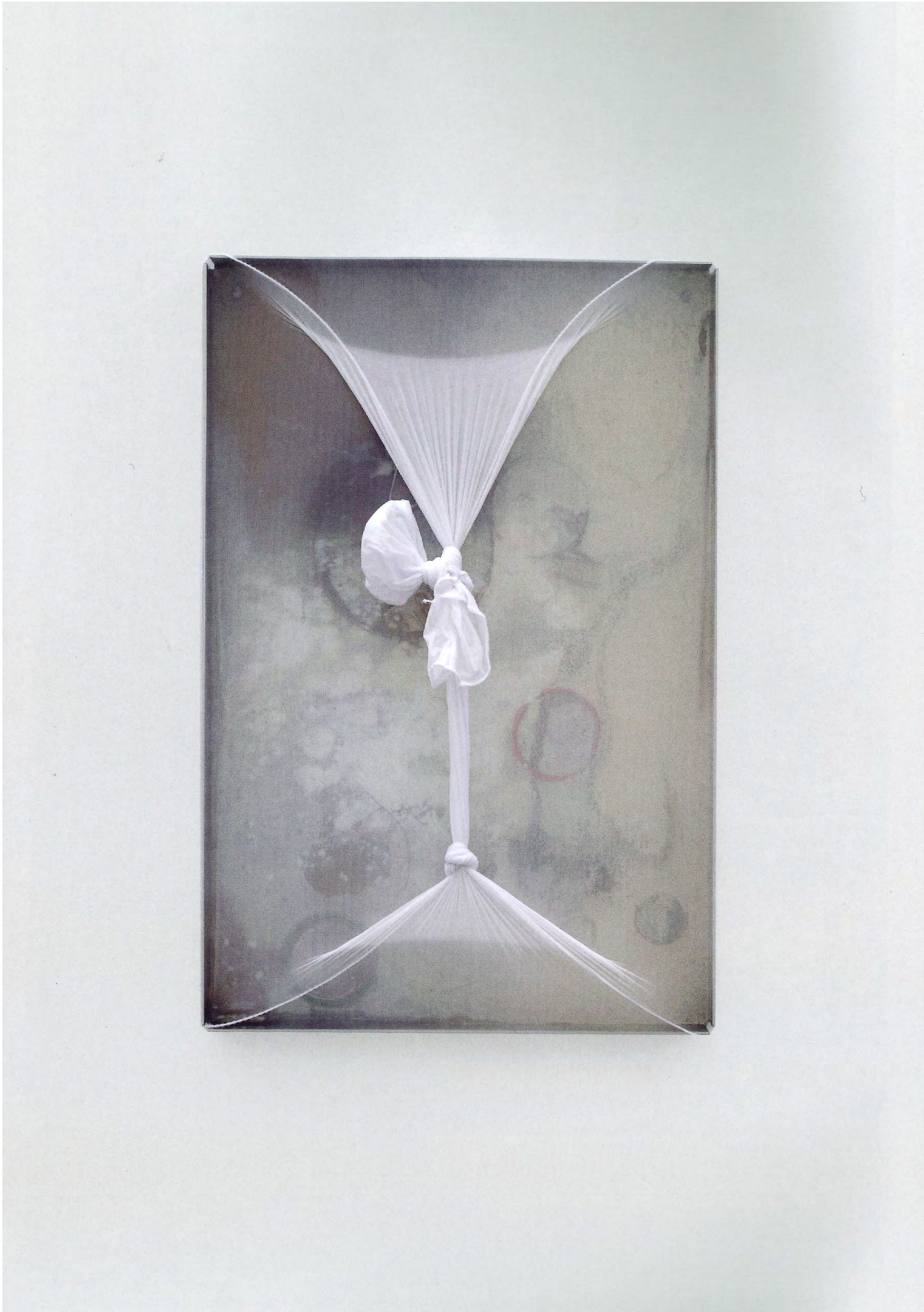
Oui et non. Ce sera un jeu en ligne gratuit et accessible, mais dans l'exposition ce sera une vidéo de quelqu'un qui joue, comme une partie en cours.

**TM**

Notre dixième numéro est sur le thème de la Farce, ce qui peut impliquer le côté vain des activités du vivant.

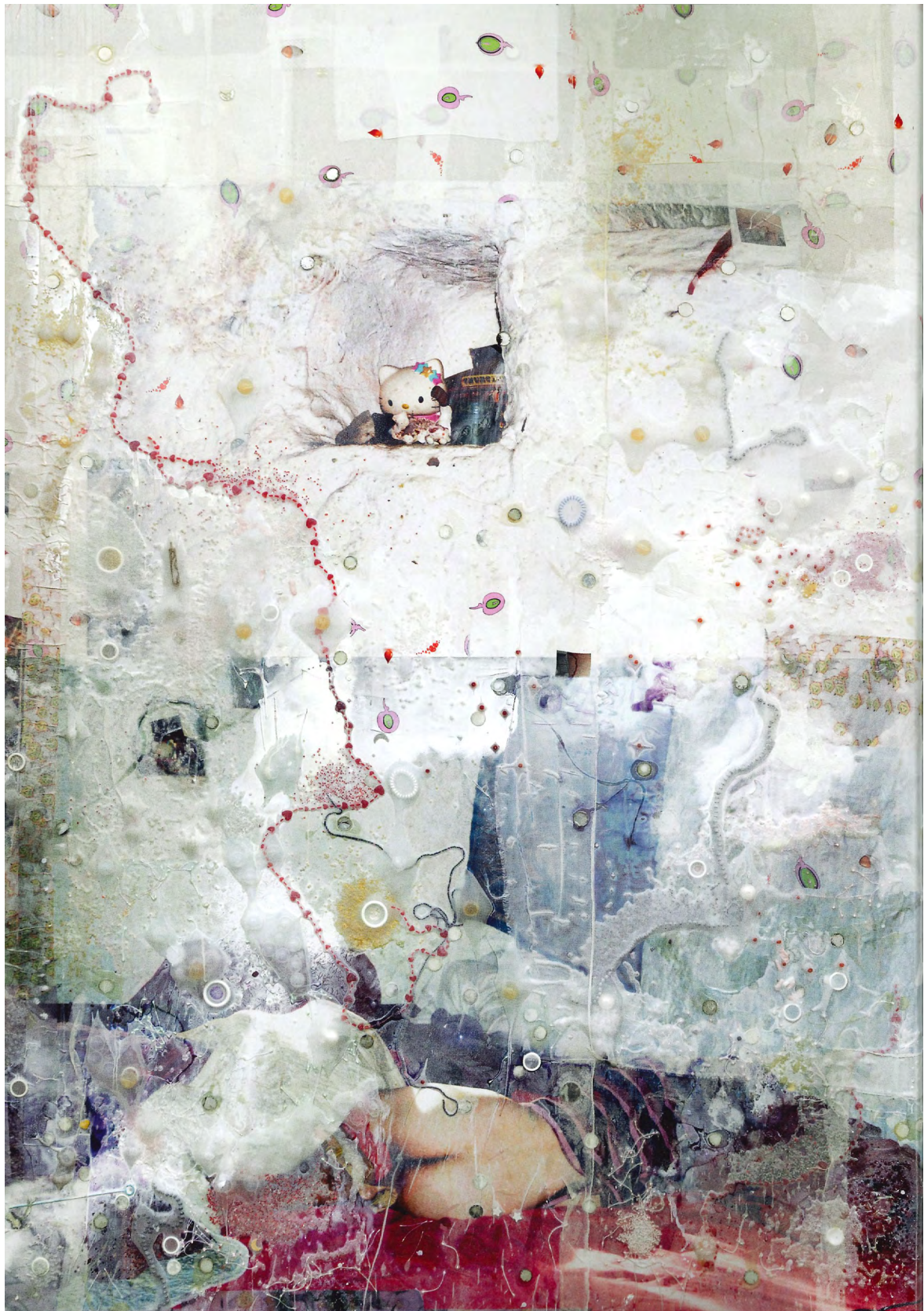


GALERIE  
CHANTAL CROUSEL



Temple Magazine  
*Mimosa Echard*  
Temple Magazine, N°10, February, 2022, p.8-15.









L'artiste dans son atelier,  
à Nogent-sur-Marne, le 5 juillet.

# L'art du vivant de Mimosa ECHARD.

LA PLASTICIENNE DE 35 ANS DÉPLOIE UNE ŒUVRE PROTÉIFORME, QUI MÊLE ÉLÉMENTS ARTIFICIELS ET NATURELS. ELLE ORCHESTRE ACTUELLEMENT CETTE FUSION TRÈS ORGANIQUE ENTRE LES MONDES SAUVAGE ET DOMESTIQUE À LA COLLECTION LAMBERT, À AVIGNON.

Texte Roxana AZIMI – Photo Alex HUANFA CHENG

**DANS UN CERTAIN MILIEU, L'ART CONTEMPORAIN EST UN ART DE VIVRE**, une détente après une séance de Pilates, une distinction sociale équivalente au sac monogrammé que l'on balade à son bras. L'exposition de l'artiste Mimosa Echard, à la Collection Lambert, en Avignon, ne s'adresse pas à ce public-là. Tableaux décentrés des murs, objets posés par terre ou sur le rebord des fenêtres : tout est fait pour désaxer notre regard. La Cévenole aux mèches oxygénées bouscule l'espace du musée, s'inspirant, dit-elle, d'une limace recouvrant le monde de sa bave. Ici, des images tirées du docu-soap *Les Real Housewives de Beverly Hills* disparaissent sous les lavis d'acrylique nacré et le voile d'organza. Là, des restes d'activité humaine semblent pétrifiés par une éruption volcanique. Ampoule de magnésium vitrifiée, céréales fossilisées, perles engluées dans la résine. On devine même le moulage d'un vibromasseur piégé dans un fond d'émail. Quant au tableau qui clôture le parcours, c'est un vrai bain de sang et de couleurs ecchymose, obtenues par du jus de mûre et des graines de gardénia. « *Ça palpète d'une vie qui n'est plus* », confie l'artiste, d'une voix douce qui contredit la violence gore de ce bouquet final. Il y a en Mimosa Echard, 35 ans, de l'alchimiste et de la biologiste, voire de la sorcière, brassant dans sa marmite graines et fanfreluches, plantes et colifichets. Pour questionner les normes féminines, cette glaneuse de petits riens allie les contraires : calmants et excitants, pilules contraceptives et plantes dopant la fertilité, cire dépilatoire et gélules de croissance capillaire. Avec l'ambition presque prométhéenne de « *tenir à la fois l'ordre et le chaos* », le domestique et le sauvage, la culture et la nature. Aussi loin que

l'artiste s'en souvient, le vivant l'a toujours intéressée, comme les savoirs vernaculaires et la pharmacopée des plantes. Élevée au sein d'une communauté hippie dans les Cévennes, Mimosa Echard a de qui tenir. Sa mère créait des boutures à partir des poupées de ses filles, laissant toutes sortes d'objets moisir et décrépir en extérieur. Aujourd'hui encore, l'artiste se reconnaît dans les gestes maternels, comme dans le biotope de la communauté. « *Mon village, explique-t-elle, c'est ma matrice, là où j'ai du désir.* » Là où elle filme ses nièces ou collecte les végétaux qu'elle absorbe dans ses œuvres. Inscrite en 2006 aux Arts déco, Mimosa Echard se laisse d'abord happer par la céramique et la sensualité de la matière. La discipline était alors en disgrâce, le four de l'école inutilisé. Dans l'atelier de fresque délaissé, elle crée sa petite cuisine. Dès la sortie de l'école, elle expose au Salon de Montrouge, puis aux Galeries Lafayette, avant d'être nommée au Prix Meurice. Les collectionneurs se passent le mot, les galeries la courtisent. D'autres seraient pris de vertige. Mimosa Echard prend son temps, préférant au tourbillon parisien une retraite studieuse à Kyoto, en 2019, à la Villa Kujoyama. Dans le cocon nippon, elle étudie les myxomycètes, ces chimères unicellulaires popularisées sous le nom de « blob », vrai défi pour les biologistes. Quand la pandémie freine les projets et les carrières, les planètes semblent s'aligner pour Mimosa Echard. Elle rejoint la puissante galerie Chantal Crousel, qui l'expose au printemps dernier, et prépare une exposition au Palais de Tokyo pour 2022. À peine le temps de digérer ces bonnes nouvelles que la voilà nommée professeure aux Beaux-Arts de Paris. La perspective

l'enchanter. « *Les étudiants vont m'apprendre beaucoup de choses* », glisse l'artiste, qui conçoit l'enseignement comme « *un organisme vivant où chacun apporte quelque chose* ».

Comme beaucoup d'artistes de sa génération, Mimosa Echard se nourrit au contact des autres, collabore avec musiciens et écrivains. Sans vouloir œuvrer en collectif, elle s'est d'emblée entourée. Du peintre Jean-Luc Blanc tout d'abord, rencontré quand il enseignait aux Arts déco. Ensemble, ils lancent le fanzine *Turpentine* et partagent un atelier à L'Île-Saint-Denis (Seine-Saint-Denis). Dans ce lieu s'agrègent encore d'autres plasticiens, comme Michel Blazy, de vingt ans son aîné. Avec ce dernier, Mimosa Echard a plus d'un point commun. Lui aussi aime laisser les œuvres fermenter, jusqu'à ce que les germes prolifèrent et que la moisissure les gagne. En duo, ils imaginent, en 2017, une membrane de kombucha, mélange de levures et de bactéries macérant dans du thé sucré. Leur idée : que ce ventre avide se nourrisse de petits objets (photos, dessins, figurines...) donnés par des artistes. En trois ans, il a déjà avalé suffisamment pour atteindre 30 mètres de long. Mimosa Echard en a désormais la garde, dans son atelier de la Fondation des artistes, à Nogent-sur-Marne (Val-de-Marne). Pliée sur cintre, la membrane dégage une curieuse odeur, mi-aigre, mi-sucrée. Pas de quoi indisposer une artiste pour qui l'amitié est un bouillon de cultures et l'art une pratique mouvante. ☞

"SLUGGY ME", DE MIMOSA ECHARD, COLLECTION LAMBERT, 5, RUE VIOLETTE, 84000 AVIGNON. JUSQU'AU 26 SEPTEMBRE. COLLECTIONLAMBERT.COM



Numbs (Narcisse), 2021. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND GALERIE CHANTAL

## Mimosa Echard, trouble épaisseur

**L'artiste surcharge ses tableaux de fanfreluches en tout genre pour montrer la confusion du temps présent.**

L'image du garçon à demi-nu, couché sur le côté, tête enfouie dans l'oreiller, les fesses sans drap dessus, n'est clairement visible dans aucun des tableaux exposés à la galerie Chantal Crousel. Car Mimosa Echard a jeté sur elle comme un drap de choses diverses et variées. La photographie de ce corps endormi s'y love paresseusement ou au contraire, par endroits, brusquement, s'en débarrasse comme si elle avait trop chaud. La jeune artiste, il est vrai, lui a fait un cocon bien fourni, en la saupoudrant d'une poudre de perlimpinpin épaissie d'une couche de réalité. Sur le châssis en aluminium, elle dépose, ainsi que le détaillent des cartels longs comme le bras, des perles en plastique, des miroirs, des élastiques, des bracelets, des cheveux synthétiques, des cheveux, des fleurs de châtaigniers, des pistils de fleurs, des gélules,

des câbles, du gloss et on en passe. Il y a donc là-dessus, sur l'image, cette couche en surface qui prend toute la place et mêle à la fois du synthétique et du naturel. Sans qu'on puisse faire le tri à l'œil nu. Et encore moins au toucher – c'est sans surprise interdit –, même si cette gangue translucide où dominent les teintes roses et jaunâtres, résineuse et boutonneuse quand l'artiste a englué ses colifichets, appelle à mettre les mains dans le pot. Épaissir la surface d'un tableau n'est pas nouveau. Julian Schnabel y a collé des assiettes cassées, Daniel Spoerri, les restes de ses dîners, tandis Frank Stella soulevait des pans du tableau comme s'il était mû par les lois de la tectonique. La surface d'un tableau est un lieu déjà amplement travaillé dans l'histoire de l'art. Mais il l'a peut-être été surtout dans un désir de conquête de l'espace. En prêtant du volume à leurs toiles, les artistes s'avançaient au-devant du spectateur pour leur lécher le nez, et en refusant de bien se tenir dans les limites de la platitude traditionnelle de leur lignée. Echard, tout en gonflant la surface, ne partage pas cette prétention. Cette couche, fatras compact mais éclectique, dont elle berce sa

photographie d'un dormeur, est finalement une litière molle, plastique, malléable, où il se réfugie avec une sensualité brouillonne et une indifférence érotique. Quant à nous, tenus à distance, il ne nous reste qu'à skater ou à surfer les vagues que forment aléatoirement ces surfaces bosselées et creusées par la résine et la résille qui les recouvrent.

L'artiste semble mettre sur la table le tableau, les détritrus irrécupérables ou recyclables, l'ordinaire, un peu mortifère et chimique (des cheveux synthétiques), et le vivant (les fleurs de châtaigniers). Cette hésitation, cette intermitte du cœur et de l'esprit peut ainsi se formuler : à quel endroit, à quel moment, on peut prendre l'air, sortir de sa couche et de ses draps, sans trop s'exposer ? On n'en est pas près, semble dire l'expo. Dont les tableaux, avec leurs fanfreluches, incitent les images de la vie ordinaire à rester couchées, par gros temps de confinements successifs, au creux d'une litière douillette en attendant, au fond, de refaire surface.

**JUDICAËL LAVRADOR**

**MIMOSA ECHARD NUMBS**  
à la galerie Chantal Crousel,  
jusqu'au 10 avril.

# MATTO

## THERE IS A FOSSIL-LIKE FEELING TO IT MIMOSA ECHARD

Magazine page, acrylic paint, cosmetics, pearls, egg shells, moxibustion, ginkgo ovules, ginger root, tobacco, white clay, titanium quartz, amethyst, ring, yarrow leaves, rock crystal, metal chain, epoxy resin, sage, glass crystal ball, fish roe, vibrator, ink, pigment, ribbon, latex, necklace, synthetic fabric, hangers, plastic ball, stickers, stone egg, cherry pit, clitoria flower, wire, false nails, pills, condom packaging, fern, ginseng, gardenia, glitter, synthetic foam, vinyl glue, calendula, skin capsule, lotus seeds, kitchen trolley, aluminium glass, mimosa flower.

### **When did you start working with the materials that you now use in your paintings?**

I always collected objects from nature. I grew up in the mountainous region of Les Cévennes in the south-east of France, and as a child, I had a collection of weird things from the natural world. Then, when I came to Paris, I started using cosmetics and more personal items in my work. Maybe also because I was sleeping in my studio, so the borderline between the personal objects and studio materials blurred. I walk a lot in Paris, or anywhere I am travelling, and I like to go to random shops everywhere. It's the same process for me as searching for objects from nature.

### **How do you resist the attraction of all these aesthetically pleasing and attractive objects around us? Do you see that everything could be a potential material to use?**

I have a kind of system, but it's not strict. I'm not using everything! I see a connection between the materials I use, maybe because of their relation to the body or because of their shape. I think some objects have the possibility to talk about human body or gender. I am also intrigued by how the industry can create some odd objects. I work with plants, again mostly because of their relation to the body, like the effects of medicinal plants. People in my home village collect them for me. I guess it's more like an intuitive relationship, an attraction or fondness for those objects or materials.

### **What material have you used since the very beginning?**

Maybe cherry pits? I have a lot of them. I always been using the acrylic laquer, this liquid. I have a lot of pictures. The image has And beads! I was always beading. It's something I always been important in my work. I collect was doing as a child. I think I was fascinated by different types of images, then I print them, them because they are like little seeds, or little and I glue them on the canvas. I also collect eggs, or like pollen, or pieces of information, data. all those objects, that I place within the Those hanging sculptures, that you can see here, piece, before starting a series. Then there's made of beads, in one hour I can make maybe a composition of fabrics that comes on four strings maximum. It's like cracking the code of time. I really enjoy making them.

**What is the dialogue that you have with yourself when deciding to use something, or not, and if it's going to be understood the way you want, because objects have connotations. There can be a certain ambiguity when you place one object next to another. I guess that's also where**

**all imagination is.**

I don't think about that. I like to create a scenario or a story, but I'm really fine that it has become abstract, or that people will understand it the way they want. I can't

I don't predict their sensation. I also play with that using everything! I see a connection between the mystery, I am aware that people sometimes can't recognise all the original objects or the body or because of their shape. I think some images covered by layers of fabrics and objects have the possibility to talk about human liquid. I think it's an interesting question. Perhaps it's about not knowing what the reaction will be. Even for me, it is not often clear. I work with this desire to not know exactly what it will be like. The work will have its own intention. It becomes something else.

**What is the process of making the paintings? Where do you start? There are so many layers, so much overlapping.**

I start with photo prints, often of my own I'm realizing more and more that The image has And beads! I was always beading. It's something I always been important in my work. I collect was doing as a child. I think I was fascinated by different types of images, then I print them, them because they are like little seeds, or little and I glue them on the canvas. I also collect eggs, or like pollen, or pieces of information, data. all those objects, that I place within the Those hanging sculptures, that you can see here, piece, before starting a series. Then there's made of beads, in one hour I can make maybe a composition of fabrics that comes on four strings maximum. It's like cracking the code of time. I really enjoy making them.

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*There is a fossil-like feeling to it — Mimosa Echard  
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*There is a fossil-like feeling to it — Mimosa Echard*  
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Mimosa Echard, from the exhibition *Mimosa*, 2021, Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris. Aluminium frame, analog photographic print, glass beads, plastic beads, plastic rings, elastics, synthetic foam, fake flower pistils, mirrors, capsules, bulbs, hair, organza, acrylic medium, acrylic lacquer, gloss, Backround: extract from Mimosa's zine LUCA, Dortmund Kunstverein, 2019.

I compose the fabrics a bit like a bed, and I add pieces of transparent fabrics, which create a connotation of a membrane, the skin. It's a composition in the end! A very pictorial composition. The idea is that all the things underneath are comfortable enough so that when I add all the liquid, it works. I add a lot of liquid; gloss, lacquer, transparent acrylic. I know that certain elements will lose their bright colour, and some flowers will inject colour into the liquid when in contact with it. The liquid makes things twist a bit. So everything is going to be in a kind of symbiotic relationship for a while. At that moment, I can't see anything because the liquids, even if they become transparent in the end, they are very white, milky. So there's a moment when the whole image is totally cloudy white, covered with liquid, and then it re-appears. So there is this moment of rest where in fact, the liquid makes its own life and when I completely withdraw myself. Then I look, I adjust, I wait for it to dry, sometimes I add a bit of liquid to certain places.

**Do some lucky accidents happen during that process?**

Yes, they happen all the time! I do try to pay attention to this and then exploit these phenomena. One of the examples is metal rusting inside the latex. I don't have an explanation for that! It makes slightly black juice, well, very rusty, inside the liquid of latex. It happens very quickly. I tried to make paint with it. This relationship where metal goes inside an organic membrane, as a rupture, but it will rust, and integrate with the rest. I also worked a lot with red pill capsules, these empty capsules used in acupuncture that I found in Korea. There are a bit of all colours, but I had found the red ones, and I used them, and they started to bleed, a bit like blood, and it tinted everything red. I'm very interested in the relationship between blood, plants, sap. Later I also bought sky-blue ones too, and I liked to imagine the sky-blue liquid, flowing in the painting and dying everything, but it did not work at all. Nothing happened. It's the unexpected, un-calculated, that becomes important.

**Your sculptures tend to take the dimension of a painting. What interests you about this dimension, the space within the frame?**

Well, I never really thought about it like that, from the perspective of formal questions of paintings, of pictures. In the beginning, I was deploying my process on just photographic prints, so it made a much of a softer painting in a way. But it's true that the whole game with the edges is a bit obsessive. There's always this moment between the edges, the place where the fabric will overflow its frame, its edge. There's also the relationship to a support. It's true that I realise as time goes by that, yes, there's a bit of a relationship to the frame. I never conceptualise much, but it's true that my work is more painting than sculpture. When I make sculptures, some end up being like paintings, say, in the sense that they roll up. Then this idea of the edge, it's again connected to the skin, a feeling of limit, between us, the world, the inside of the body, the outside, and a bit of a back and forth between the two.

**When the painting is out of its habitat of the studio in the pristine gallery, this relationship of the edge is even more evident. The border is much more pronounced. Do you think of the materials you use in terms of how stable they are?**

It depends on the project. With some projects I don't care, I don't even think about it. I think my work also plays with this idea of 'something happening, or living inside'. For example, for the show *Pretty Anna* in 2018, I made these big sort of see-through cushions, that were quite scary for people, they were saying: 'What is inside, is it going to explode?' But to be honest, it's not really like that. My work is quite stable because there are a lot of chemicals inside that preserve it. Over time, there might be some colour fading. I have some projects that are *really living*, like the kombucha project. You have to take care of it, and there's always an evolution. I store it here at the studio, it's not active right now because it's struggling with the temperature during cold months. But I was never concerned about conservation. I think it's something so boring to think about.

**Has this changed since you became represented by a gallery?**

Yes, my gallery, Galerie Chantal Crousel, takes care of certain archiving. Before, I did some installation exhibitions, and then I threw almost everything away. For a long time, I had a way of working like this. For me, what's important is to create a moment, which was the moment of the installation. I don't have any fetishism about my work. I'm always transforming it. If it stays in my studio, you can be sure that it's either thrown away, or cut up, or I've repainted it. I'm not interested in the idea of preservation. It can be preserving, but at the same time destroying, of the moment. And in my personal life, it's the same too. I'm interested in the moment when things are happening. I live for moments. It's the same relationship I have with my garden, with all I do, to see what's going on, and to be attentive to it. There's no idealisation of anything, of nature nor of my body. I try to be in places that are a bit murky and a bit fluid. There's something sweet about it.



#### How did you start the kombucha project?

We started it with the French artist Michel Blazy. We were sharing the same studio at the time, and we both used kombucha in our work, but in really different ways. For me, it was just this dry flat thing, that my family gave to me, and I used it in my painting compositions.

#### You mean the plant?

It's not really a plant. It's like a biotope. And Michel, he was growing them in small swimming pools for children. It became a beautiful piece. And then, we decided to work together, we started to grow the membrane in a tray, and added some objects into it. As the membrane grew, we decided to invite other artists to put some of their projects or objects inside, and then it became *the Kombucha Project Center*. We now say it's the world's first and only kombucha-based artists residency program, installed in an ever-extending tape of kombucha biofilm!

In summer, when I have the time, I will activate it again. I will put this dry part you see here into the new membrane, and it will just continue on living. There are times when it becomes a little too dry and fragile, and I have a way of making little bandages with new membranes. It's not the easiest to live with. Sometimes flies come and lay eggs on it, and it smells!

**In the exhibitions, all 'the ingredients' and objects you have used to make a painting are listed in the section of materials used. It evokes a lot of sensations just reading that. I wondered after reading some online exactly that: How does it smell?**

Most of my work does not really smell. The kombucha smells like sweet vinegar. And sometimes I work with beeswax, or cosmetic wax, or artificial perfumes like vanilla and grenadine. For *Pulsion Potion* in 2016, I made these cushions with my older sister, who makes yoga cushions. We filled them with what I collected in the mountains, so they smelled of wild mint, but at the same time, they smelled like plastic because inside, there were also these polystyrene balls. I liked that a lot. As for the list - I enjoy to do that. I like to list everything, so that it almost becomes the caption, or like a title, or me explaining my work. It's not always easy to list everything. Sometimes I forget. But I think it adds something vivid. It also says something about us living in the city, and being a human right now. There is a fossil-like feeling to it, connected to technology.

**You have also made a film for the *Pulsion Potion* exhibition.**

Yes, I did make a two-hour film called *The People*. It's an important one for me. I made it about my village. I started filming when I was twenty years old, and I filmed over six years. In my practice, everything is a bit non-hierarchical, mixed. I treat the film as I do my paintings, superimposing all the dailies together, everything becoming mixed in one.



Mimosa Echard, 00/00, found objects, 2018.  
Opposite page background: extract from Mimosa's zine LUCA, Dorfmuender Kunstverein, 2019.

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Mimosa Echard, *Kim Cushion*, 2021, Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris. Sheepskin, cherry stones, glass beads, sequins, chestnut flowers, *Clitoria ternatea* flower, newspaper clippings, synthetic scarf, lycra, lacquer, acrylic, glass. Opposite page background: extract from Mimosa's zine LUCA, Dortmund Kunstverein, 2019.



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Mimosa Echard, detail of *Un bout de toi Salomon n.4*, 2020 Mixed media. Courtesy: the Artist and Martina Smeti, Milano. Photo Hector Chico/Andrea Rossetti.

There is no hierarchy at all. I made the film sort of by weaving of different tapes of the Mini DV, and letting them run. For me, there was something very liquid about it. It generates itself. I made another video in Japan when in residency at Villa Kujoyama. And once again, I used what was a bit liquid, I tried to film water, for example. It's a way for me of bringing 'living' inside the images.

**Your zines made on a photocopier have a certain similarity with your paintings and the video, in the way that many objects and images merge into one. The photocopy has the effect of flattening, of zipping all together without a hierarchy.**

Yes! Each time I use a little photocopier to make these zines. I did some for an exhibition in Hachimonjiya bar in Kyoto in 2019. And then I make zines with a collective *Turpentine*, with Jean-Luc Blanc and Jonathan Martin.

**Do you still have the same relationship with your region that you had as a child?**

Yes and no. I think it's quite stable in a way, but what changed is that now the region is part of my work. But yes, I feel I have as strong a relationship as before. Maybe even more so because when I go there, I'm as active as when I'm in my studio. I'm collecting stuff, I'm taking pictures. And that's great because it makes it more than a place of nostalgia. It's a way for me to see the relationship to the place as alive, to not be in the past. There is a sort of continuity, porosity, between my childhood relationship to there and the adult one.

**In many articles they speak of you as a contemporary witch.**

Yes, everyone projects that. I think the witch is obviously a political and feminist figure that interests me but it's not a statement I make in my work. There's a sort of continuity in the way I relate to the world. Yes, I have dried insects and lizards, I have plants everywhere, I love spiders and I grew up with very ecofeminist women, my sisters, my mother, you could define them as witches - but that's not something I would have actualised. It's an intimate affinity. I don't mind people saying that, but I don't see myself as a witch in my studio at all. And I'm not particularly interested in alchemy, for example, but I have a very special relationship with plants. In the place where I grew up, there are a lot of women who have botanical knowledge in relation to healing. I've always been interested in botany and this ancestral relationship with plants - and - I'll contradict it with my interest in the ultra-technological side of the whole cosmetics industry. It's a bit ambiguous and complex. I have also always been interested in Chinese medicine. What fascinated me was when I discovered what different parts of the same plants we were using in the West, compared to say in Korea or Japan. We use the flowers, we are focusing on the sexual organ, and they use the underside - the roots, the much more earthy, underground part, related to the growth.



**How much do you preoccupy yourself with the question of aesthetics?  
The question of what is beautiful and pleasing to the eye.**

For sure, there is a certain seduction and aesthetic in my work, that can also be contradicted by the material or a certain aspect of the work. For example, the pieces I did for show *Un bout de toi, Salomon* at Galeria Martina Simetti, Milan, they were resembling these big intestines filled with *stuff*, squashed and squeezed behind a framed glass. For me, I find them really appealing! I'm attracted to those kinds of shapes, the spiral, how the intestine works. How it could speak about connections, or be like a portal, something you can go through. I think the emotion that I like to create can be quite abstract, noisy, a bit scary, disgusting, and at the same time also quite sexy, and appealing somehow. These are the sensations that I like. My work talks about desire, something sensual too. Sometimes I like to compare my work to music; think of the very bright, hysterical side of pop, for example. I like that there is a kind of cry, or an emotion that is a little bit shiny. Objects or images that are going to be almost violent in their seduction, or in their appearance. In the end, the work is a story about the aesthetic of emotions.

**Do people want to touch your work?**

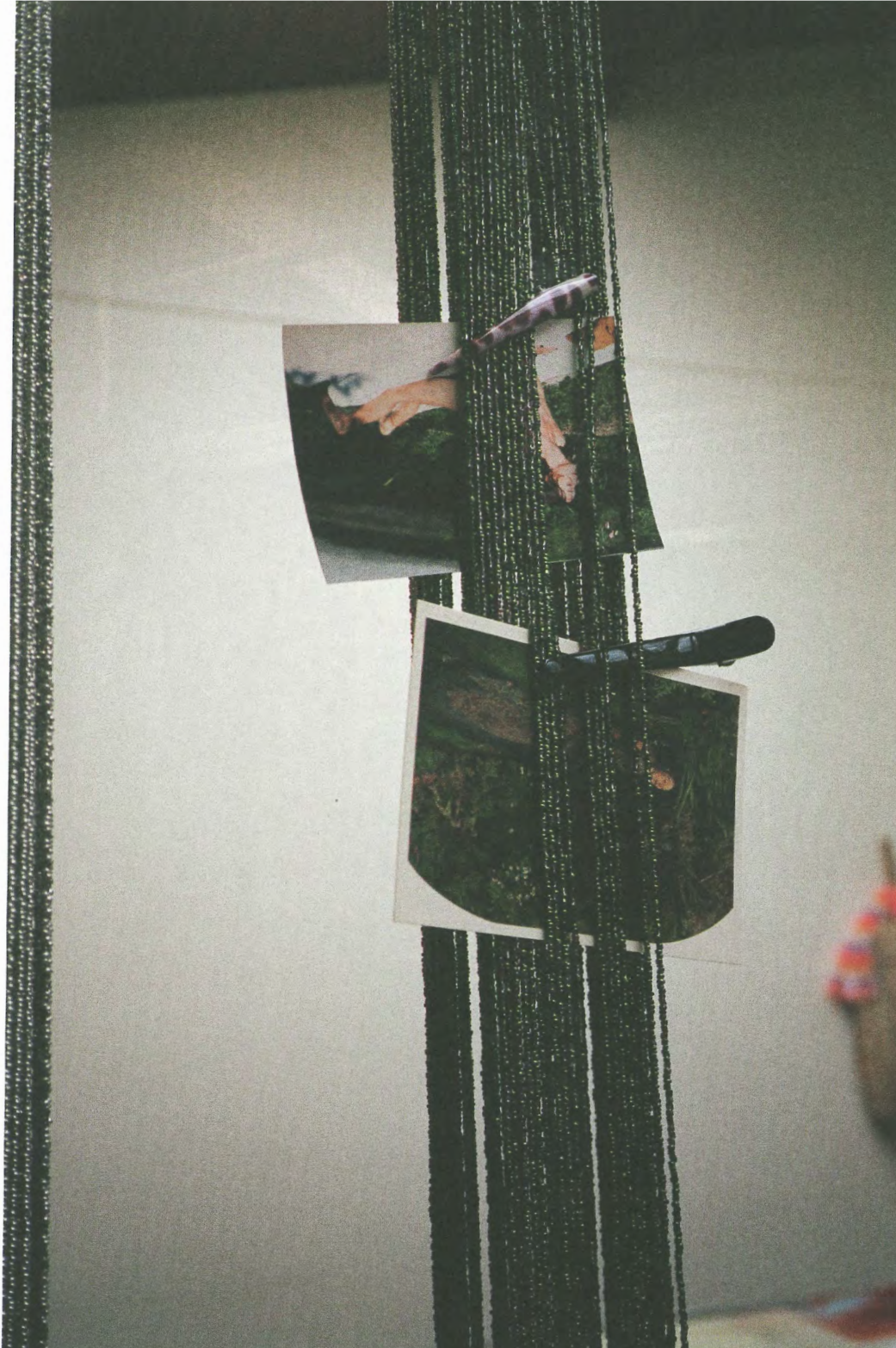
Yes. But I think there's all the sensations going on by just looking. I think you could get that tactile feeling without touching, inside your brain. I think that in the end, touching doesn't bring any additional information in case of my work. It's a bit like that.



*There is a fossil-like feeling to it — Mimosa Echard  
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Mimosa Echard, *Sap 4*, 2021, Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris. Glass beads, light bulb, chain, electrical wiring, hair clips, postcards, photographic print.



*There is a fossil-like feeling to it — Mimosa Echard*  
MATTO, N°5, 2021 .

# MANIFESTO.XXI



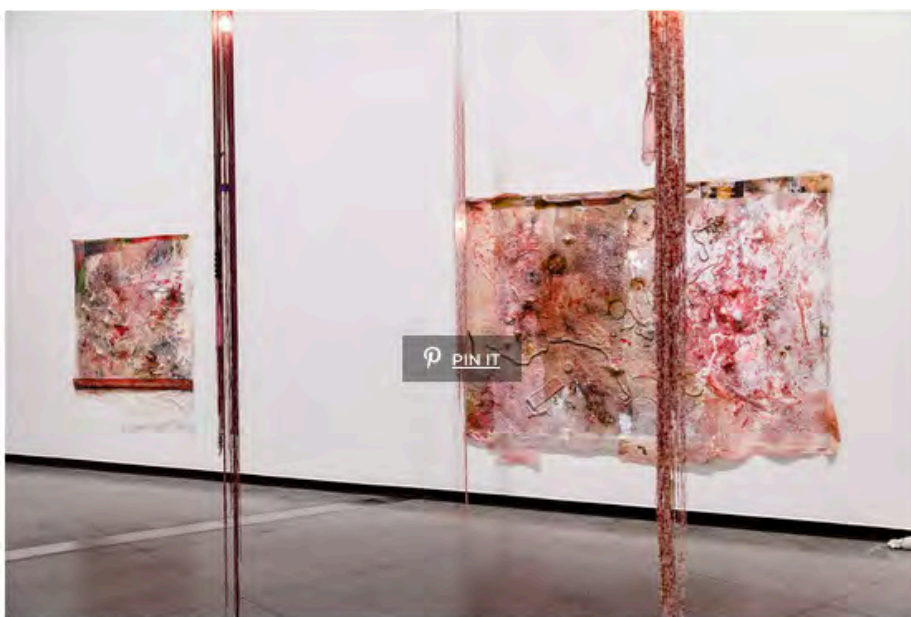
Plasticienne née en 1986 à Alès, Mimosa Echard envisage l'art comme un espace privilégié de liberté et de réflexion sur la nature. Son œuvre protéiforme, conjuguant vidéos et installations, orchestre la rencontre entre l'humain et le non-humain, le végétal et l'industriel. À l'occasion de son premier *solo show* à la Galerie Chantal Crousel (Paris), elle nous a parlé de sa pratique artistique, de son rapport critique à la féminité et de ses projets et métamorphoses à venir.

**M**imosa Echard a grandi au sein d'une communauté hippie dans les Cévennes. Là-bas, elle a toujours été curieuse. Enfant, elle collectionne des végétaux récoltés dans la nature et dessine beaucoup. Adolescente, elle quitte son village natal pour s'installer à Marseille. Après un bac arts appliqués, elle suit une formation en communication visuelle dans les quartiers nord de la ville et crée des fanzines, notamment au sein de la structure éditoriale associative le Dernier Cri. En 2006, elle intègre l'École Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs de Paris où elle rencontre le peintre Jean-Luc Blanc, avec qui elle co-fonde ensuite un fanzine et collabore régulièrement depuis.

Lea Pagnier

*Interview Art - Mimosa Echard : « je veux que l'œuvre puisse avoir sa propre vitalité »*  
Manifesto XXI, March 1, 2021

Mimosa Echard développe une relation sensuelle à la nature en créant des écosystèmes chaotiques en mutation. Ses œuvres « mentales », où s'entremêlent des éléments contradictoires, comme des plantes médicinales et des compléments alimentaires (*A/B N°24*, 2017), des noyaux de cerise et des perles de verre (*A, B, Eye*, 2020), des produits cosmétiques genrés et des organismes vivants (*I Still Dream of Organon*, 2016), opèrent une « réconciliation » des contraires. Ses œuvres ont déjà été présentées, entre autres, au [Palais de Tokyo](#) (Paris, 2019, 2017), au [CRAC Occitanie](#) (Sète, 2018), au [Cell Project Space Gallery](#) (Londres, 2017) et à [Lafayette Anticipations](#) (Paris, 2016). Aujourd'hui, elle vit et travaille dans un atelier de la [Fondation des artistes](#) à Nogent-sur-Marne. Rencontre.



Mimosa Echard, « Overlapping Magisteria: The 2020 Macfarlane Commissions », vue de l'exposition, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne, Australie, 2021.  
Courtoisie de l'artiste et de la Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris. © Andrew Curtis.

“ Quand je réalise des pièces, il y a un moment où je ne les vois pas. J'aime ce moment aussi angoissant que jouissif où je perds le contrôle.

**Manifesto XXI – Comment définis-tu ta pratique artistique ? Peux-tu nous parler de ton processus de création ?**

Mimosa Echard : C'est toujours difficile de définir une pratique car elle est mouvante. Mon œuvre se situe entre l'installation, la peinture, la sculpture, mais aussi parfois la photographie et la vidéo. Il y a toujours une tension, une idée de métamorphose. Je crée un cadre dans lequel j'ai une grande liberté. Ma pratique artistique se redéfinit tout le temps. J'aime me disperser et me tourner vers d'autres médiums. J'entretiens une relation mentale, finalement assez légère, avec mes travaux. Quand je réalise des pièces, il y a un moment où je ne les vois pas. J'aime ce moment aussi angoissant que jouissif où je perds le contrôle. À cet instant-là, je n'ai plus qu'à attendre.

Lea Pagnier

*Interview Art - Mimosa Echard : « je veux que l'œuvre puisse avoir sa propre vitalité »*  
Manifesto XXI, March 1, 2021

**Tes œuvres sont composites, alliant des végétaux à des produits manufacturés. Comment sélectionnes-tu ces objets disparates qui peuplent tes compositions ?**

Il y a des objets personnels – des objets de la vie domestique et des objets que j’achète ou qu’on me donne, mais aussi des plantes et des végétaux souvent collectés par des proches dans les Cévennes. Cette pratique de la collecte, qui est arrivée un peu par hasard dans mon travail, s’inscrit dans un système de circulation et de don lié à mon entourage et au village dans lequel j’ai grandi. J’utilise aussi plein d’autres objets technologiques ou industriels. Par exemple, en ce moment, j’utilise des petites perles en verre qui, pour moi, sont comme des œufs, du pollen, une information, du data ou de l’ADN... Certains objets résonnent particulièrement parce qu’ils ont une histoire singulière. Tout ce processus de sélection est très mental. C’est important que les objets choisis entrent en relation avec les autres tout en étant indépendants. L’œuvre devient ainsi le support de la rencontre entre ces éléments hétéroclites.

“ Je veux que l’œuvre puisse avoir sa propre vitalité. Pour le meilleur et pour le pire.

Mimosa Echard



Mimosa Echard, A, B, Eye, 2020  
Algues, perles de verre, perle en plastique, lichen, ovule de Ginkgo, noyaux de cerises, Achillée, Lys, Tanaisie, coquillage, Larmes de Job, papillon, emballage Pregnancy Support, gélule pour la beauté de la peau, Millepertuis, noyaux de pêches, cire d'abeille, cire dépilatoire, résine époxy. 30.5 x 20.5 x 3.5 cm  
Courtoisie de l'artiste et de la Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris. © : Thomas Lannes

Lea Pagnier

*Interview Art - Mimosa Echard : « je veux que l’œuvre puisse avoir sa propre vitalité »*

Manifesto XXI, March 1, 2021

**Dans ta série « A/B » (2017), tu mêles à des matériaux organiques des objets associés à un univers féminin saturé de diktats esthétiques, comme des pilules contraceptives, de la cire dépilatoire ou des gélules pour la croissance des cheveux. Comment naissent ces associations d'éléments contradictoires, et quelle part d'aléatoire contiennent-elles ?**

Mes peintures « A/B » sont construites comme des poèmes en *dripping* [de l'anglais *to drip* (goutter), procédé pictural qui consiste à laisser couler ou projeter de la peinture sur des toiles, ndr]. Je joue sur des oppositions, des alliances de contraires, comme celle entre antidote et poison ou celle entre fécondité et stérilité. Plusieurs catégories d'objets s'entremêlent : des plantes rencontrent des médicaments, des pilules contraceptives, des compléments alimentaires, des vitamines, qui se vendent en pharmacie. Je suis fascinée par toutes ces substances. Dans la série, les différents matériaux se contredisent, faisant écho à monde en croissance qui est aussi mortifère. Tous les éléments sont figés dans la résine, la cire dépilatoire, la cire d'abeille récoltée dans mon village, puis enfermés dans une boîte en plexiglas. Il y a un jeu entre l'organique et le synthétique. Je sélectionne, mais je suis aussi très perméable aux accidents. Je suis très attentive à tous les micro-phénomènes qui peuvent se passer à l'intérieur des œuvres. Je n'aime pas avoir trop de contrôle. Je veux que l'œuvre puisse avoir sa propre vitalité. Pour le meilleur et pour le pire.

“

Depuis l'enfance, l'art est pour moi un endroit très personnel et très intime où j'ai la liberté de ne pas être une femme.

Mimosa Echard

**Dans tes œuvres, il y a un rapport ambigu entre la nature et la culture. Que souhaites-tu énoncer ou dénoncer ?**

Je m'approprie les matériaux de consommation, qui sont liés à une certaine technologie du corps féminin. Je les regarde avec autant de curiosité que des insectes extravagants par exemple. Cette esthétique *girly* était quasi absente dans mon enfance. J'éprouve à la fois de la répulsion et une forte attraction pour ces objets et cette esthétique très complexes. J'ai choisi de les incorporer dans mon travail de manière instinctive. Je les utilise pour ce qu'ils disent en eux-mêmes, mais aussi pour me les réapproprier. Comment parlent-ils du corps ? Et de quels corps ? Depuis l'enfance, l'art est pour moi un endroit très personnel et très intime où j'ai la liberté de ne pas être une femme.

**Tes œuvres sont souvent associées à des réflexions féministes et écologistes. Comment te places-tu par rapport à l'écoféminisme ?**

Ces dynamiques m'intéressent et traversent mon œuvre, mais mes travaux en eux-mêmes sont indépendants. J'ai grandi dans un milieu hippie avec des personnalités sensibles à l'écoféminisme qui m'inspirent beaucoup, mais aujourd'hui je suis artiste à Paris, je produis constamment et j'utilise parfois des matériaux très polluants. Ce serait assez malhonnête de ma part de me qualifier d'écoféministe.

Lea Pagnier

*Interview Art - Mimosa Echard : « je veux que l'œuvre puisse avoir sa propre vitalité »*  
Manifesto XXI, March 1, 2021



Mimosa Echard, *The People*, 2016. Extrait vidéo.  
Courtoisie de l'artiste et de la Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris.

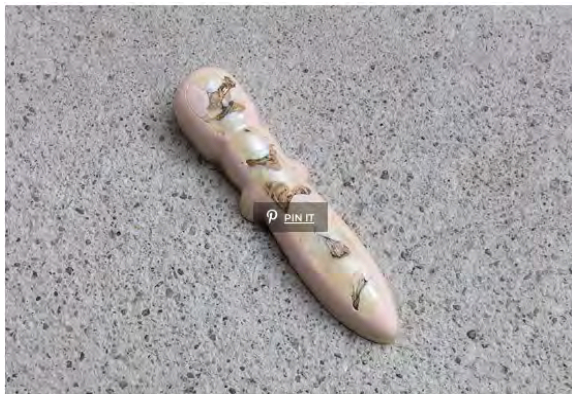
**Tu fais aussi de la vidéo. Tu as d'ailleurs réalisé le film *The People* sur ton entourage et l'environnement dans lequel tu as grandi. Quelle place occupe aujourd'hui la vidéo dans ta création ?**

*The People* est une longue vidéo, que j'ai commencée quand j'avais vingt ans, à mon arrivée à Paris. Elle a principalement été filmée dans le village d'où je viens. Quand j'ai eu l'idée ce film, je ne savais pas trop où j'allais. Au départ, je voulais filmer ma génération et montrer des décalages intergénérationnels et culturels. Mais finalement, j'ai développé un rapport sensuel avec le médium vidéo. Grâce à ce projet, j'ai aussi trouvé toutes les prémices de mon travail. Je filme des plantes, des fleurs, de l'eau, des animaux, des emballages pop, sans hiérarchie. La bande-son est très importante dans ce long film de deux heures : j'ai collaboré avec le musicien Raphaël Henard qui a travaillé à partir de tracks hardcore des années 1990, qui sont comme joués dans une fête lointaine. *The People* résonne avec tout ce que je fais maintenant, avec la transparence, la liquidité, la cohabitation de monde humain et non-humain... La projection du film est pensée comme une expérience immersive où le public peut rester deux heures comme deux minutes.

Lors d'une [résidence au Japon en 2019](#), j'ai commencé une nouvelle vidéo sur les myxomycètes, des organismes unicellulaires popularisés en France par l'[éthologiste française Audrey Dussutour](#), qui les appelle les « blobs ». On s'est aperçu-es que les myxomycètes pouvaient apprendre, mémoriser et transmettre. Ces plantes sont autant animales que végétales, et se situent entre plusieurs catégories. Au Japon, il y a toute une contre-culture dans laquelle ces organismes occupent une place particulière. Là-bas, j'ai rencontré des scientifiques et des artistes qui s'intéressent aux myxomycètes et à l'idée de mémoire chez les plantes et les champignons.

**Dans quels autres travaux abordes-tu ce rapport aux sexualités ?**

En ce moment, je suis en train d'écrire un jeu vidéo avec Andrea, une amie développeuse qui est très impliquée dans la communauté des gameuses transgenres. Toutes les deux, on a toujours beaucoup discuté de sexe, et on a eu envie de faire un jeu vidéo à partir des myxomycètes. Dans ce jeu, on s'inspire de cet organisme monocellulaire qui a 720 types sexuels différents. Soit 720 manières d'entrer dans une relation sexuelle avec d'autres organismes. Le jeu vidéo s'articulera autour de questions liées au genre et à la sexualité. Le jeu existera en tant que tel et sera présenté au Palais de Tokyo en 2022.



Mimosa Echard, *Nymphe*, 2016. Courtoisie de l'artiste. © Hector Chico.



Mimosa Echard, Michel Blazy, « LUCA - Last Universal Common Ancestor », vue de l'exposition, Dortmunder Kunstverein, Dortmund, Allemagne, 2021.  
Courtoisie des artistes et Dortmunder Kunstverein, Dortmund. © Simon Vogel.

**Dans ta série « Nymphes », tu crées des sculptures qui prennent la forme de vibromasseurs en cire dépilatoire. Ces objets ont-ils une dimension critique ? Quel regard pose cette série sur le plaisir féminin ?**

J'ai souvent utilisé des vibromasseurs dans mon travail et dans ma vie. La coque vient d'un des miens et je trouvais qu'il ressemblait à une nymphe, le stade du développement intermédiaire entre la larve et l'adulte, c'est comme une coque protectrice. Il y a des relations symboliques et poétiques entre la cire d'abeille, la cire cosmétique, les vibrations du sextoy et l'insecte en métamorphose. La cire vient envelopper les différents éléments qui composent l'œuvre : des plantes médicinales, la cire dépilatoire aux couleurs codifiées de la cosmétique.

**Ton œuvre *Ollol* ressemble un peu à tes Nymphes...**

*Ollol* pourrait en effet faire partie de cette série, mais il ne s'agit pas de sextoy. C'est en réalité un assemblage d'outils de massage. La série a commencé lors d'une exposition à Séoul, j'avais trouvé ces objets dans un supermarché. Je les ai emboîtés aléatoirement, sans liant. Ils peuvent évoquer des sortes d'organes reproducteurs inconnus, humains, extraterrestres ou végétaux...

Lea Pagnier

*Interview Art - Mimosa Echard : « je veux que l'œuvre puisse avoir sa propre vitalité »*  
Manifesto XXI, March 1, 2021

“

Je crée des pièces complexes et expérimentales avec des strates d'émotions. Mes œuvres sont faites de couches, de flux, qui peuvent être autant ceux des corps que de la pop culture.

Mimosa Echard



Mimosa Echard, *Calli*, 2018. Courtesy of LaBête. © Meryt Montigny

**En 2010, tu as créé le fanzine *Turpentine* avec les artistes Jean-Luc Blanc et Jonathan Martin. Peux-tu m'en parler ?**

Avec Jean-Luc Blanc et Jonathan Martin, on participait à une exposition à Los Angeles. On n'avait pas de voiture, on marchait beaucoup. Une fois, on a découvert un centre de photocopieurs ouvert toute la nuit, on a commencé à travailler là-bas. Puis, en rentrant, on a souhaité continuer à faire des nouveaux numéros, à créer des moments et des espaces de liberté propres à cette pratique de fanzine. Au sein de *Turpentine*, je fais beaucoup de dessin, alors que ce n'est pas l'aspect que je développe dans ma pratique individuelle.

Lea Pagnier

*Interview Art - Mimosa Echard : « je veux que l'œuvre puisse avoir sa propre vitalité »*  
Manifesto XXI, March 1, 2021

**En parallèle, tu es aussi investie dans le [Kombucha Project Center](#), que tu as ouvert avec Michel Blazy en 2017. Quel est ton rôle dans ce projet ?**

Quand on travaillait dans le même atelier, [Michel Blazy](#) réalisait des grandes pièces de kombucha [organisme vivant issu d'une culture symbiotique de levures et de bactéries, *ndlr*], et moi, j'en utilisais dans mes peintures. Un jour, on a souhaité faire une pièce en collaboration. On a créé une membrane de kombucha qui encapsule des objets divers. Au bout de deux mètres de kombucha, on a commencé à inviter d'autres artistes à venir nourrir la membrane. Aujourd'hui, cette œuvre vivante et collective est dans mon atelier, et demande une attention particulière. Il faut enlever le jus, prendre soin de la membrane repliée sur elle-même dans un bac, ajouter une membrane nouvelle pour réactiver l'ancienne et parfois intégrer des nouvelles créations. Pendant le premier confinement, au printemps dernier, on a lancé un *open call* ouvert aux artistes souhaitant participer au Kombucha Project Center. Ainsi alimentée, la membrane réagit, engloutit ou révèle les objets – textes, photos, etc. – qu'elle renferme. C'est une œuvre collaborative et infinie qui rappelle les pratiques d'écriture automatique et collective.

**Parfois des symboles et des icônes de la pop culture apparaissent dans tes créations, comme dans les étonnantes poupées que tu présentes dans [La vie des tables](#) au Crédac (2020). Pourquoi convoques-tu ces références ? Qu'est-ce que cela t'inspire ?**

Je crée des pièces complexes et expérimentales avec des strates d'émotions. Mes œuvres sont faites de couches, de flux, qui peuvent être autant ceux des corps que de la pop culture. Au Crédac, j'ai présenté trois petites poupées qui portent un masque de Gollum imprimé numériquement sur du tissu et une combinaison fétichiste seconde peau en lycra, dissimulant chacune sous ses attraits un petit cœur électronique lumineux et sonore. Disposées les unes sur les autres, ces corps sont entremêlés, et on peut y déceler une tendresse ambivalente. Si ces pièces sont nées d'un accident et n'avaient pas vocation à être exposées, elles ont justement trouvé leur place dans cette proposition d'exposition originale.

**Du 6 mars au 10 avril 2021, tu présentes *Numbs*, ton premier *solo show* à la Galerie Chantal Crousel. Peux-tu nous en parler ?**

Dans *Numbs*, je présenterai trois nouvelles séries qui font dialoguer monde industriel et organique, sexualité humaine et végétale, matériaux métalliques et substances organiques. À la galerie, ce corpus de nouvelles œuvres que je nomme « peintures » sera accompagné d'une chanson et d'un poème visuel de l'écrivain irlandais Aodhán Madden. Je suis très contente de faire ce *solo show*, surtout dans ce contexte très particulier de repli et d'enfermement lié à la crise sanitaire.

CRASH

Rencontre avec **MIMOSA ECHARD**  
dans un endroit où des ma-  
tières mouvantes infusent,  
une exposition personnelle à  
la galerie Chantal Crousel en  
vue. L'artiste définit son es-  
pace de liberté.

INTERVIEW  
LISE GUÉHENNEUX  
PHOTOGRAPHIE  
MOTORS MONITO  
STYLING  
ANSELLE LETURCO  
Vue de l'atelier de  
Mimosa Echard,  
2021



**T**on travail est souvent associé à une certaine contre-culture, ainsi qu'à la figure de la sorcière, à la notion du biopolitique de Michel Foucault. Le mélange de l'usage de choses mortes et vivantes est également souvent relevé. Dans ta pratique, les changements d'échelles sont intéressants et incluent de petits éléments dans des dispositifs plus larges prenant place dans un espace, un territoire que tu as habité et dont tu sembles tout juste de partir, - la scène d'un événement. On pense également à un certain art californien qui lie l'assemblage à la performance. Mais où en es-tu en ce moment ?

**ME** En ce moment je fais de grandes "peintures" comme celles que tu vois dans mon atelier, où des grands tirages photographiques sont recouverts de multiples couches de tissu, d'images imprimées sur tissu, de gélules, de fleurs, d'objets... Il y a un moment liquide dans le processus, les éléments qui vont juter et se mettre en relation. J'ai mis du temps à comprendre à quel point la liquidité était importante dans ma pratique. Pendant un moment, j'avais l'impression que c'était de la peinture liquide type acrylique qui m'aidait à faire en sorte que toutes les choses se mettent à interagir ensemble. J'avais alors un endroit dans l'atelier où je faisais de la peinture, c'était un peu fluide, un peu sale, et les choses séchaient, se transformaient. Et puis j'ai exploité cela pour aller plus loin dans cette liquidité, avec l'eau, les colles synthétiques diluées, le latex... C'est important qu'il y ait à un moment, des pièces sèches, des pièces liquides, d'autres entre deux, il y a une certaine logique structurelle propre à la vie organique de l'atelier. Dans certaines de mes installations, j'ai développé cette idée de laisser des moments qui soient entre ces deux états, entre le sec et l'humide, et il y a souvent un rapport au corps - cela sent encore les odeurs, un truc encore chaud qui peut être un peu dérangeant. J'ai toujours aimé que l'art ne soit pas forcé à distance ou froid ou sec. Ne peut-on pas imaginer des pièces qui gardent cette intensité vivante que permettent les liquides, les fluides, le sang, les larmes, les liquides sexuels, tout ce qui passe à l'intérieur du corps et presque dans chaque matière qui nous entoure ? Je fais de l'atelier un endroit où il n'y a peu de catégories, où le déchet est un objet comme un autre.

**LG** Ce qui signifie également l'absence de hiérarchie ?

**ME** Oui. Aussi, c'est vrai que j'habite dans mon atelier et que j'ai la chance d'avoir un jardin. Il y a une circulation entre la salle de bain, les produits cosmétiques, le jardin, l'alimentation, les objets intimes et ceux plus spécifiques au travail. Chaque objet existe en tant que tel mais également se transforme - il y a toujours cette idée de transition et de transformation. L'idée de l'organisme vivant vient de là. Faire de l'art pour être un autre corps et entrer dans un système de relations sensorielles avec la matière, comme avec les plantes par exemple. La sexualité des plantes m'a toujours fasciné. J'ai développé une connaissance empirique et un imaginaire érotique botanique assez obsessionnelle depuis l'enfance. D'ailleurs, quand j'ai rencontré le biologiste Pierre-Henri Gouyon, je me suis rendu compte qu'à la base de ses recherches scientifiques existait la même fascination pour la sexualité végétale. Il avait son bureau au Jardin des Plantes où il a pu me montrer de très vieux herbiers. C'était incroyable. Dans un texte, il mentionne un groupe de recherches féministes en botanique, dirigé par Betty Lord à l'Université de Californie qui a démontré dans les années 1980 que l'idée d'une semence mâle (le pollen) qui aurait la vigueur et ferait tout le travail de la fécondation était une erreur. Cela m'a amenée à comprendre que cette idée scientifique de la sexualité est à déconstruire.

**LG** Tu utilises donc des matières en allant très loin dans leur compréhension ?

**ME** Chaque plante que j'utilise a ses histoires et ses propriétés. Par exemple, j'ai commencé à travailler avec l'Achillée que l'on trouve un peu partout sur les bords de routes et dans les terrains vagues. Ses tiges rigides étaient utilisées pour tirer le Yi-King en Chine. De l'endroit d'où je viens, cultiver les plantes thérapeutiques et soigner avec est une tradition, et une amie m'a raconté l'usage de l'Achillée pour ses propriétés abortives. Elle m'a raconté en avoir tellement bu qu'elle était maintenant écoeuvée à la simple vue de la plante. Dans cet exemple particulièrement, la relation entre le *Livre des Transformations* chinois, la tentative d'une I.V.G. et les terrains vagues urbains, il se passe une sorte de fiction à laquelle je m'accroche et qui crée

un désir d'utiliser la plante. J'ai aussi travaillé avec l'orchidée qui vit grâce à un système de symbiose assez rare dans la nature en déployant des stratégies sexuelles très précises et élaborées. Elle se nourrit grâce à un champignon qui lui sert en quelque sorte de paille alimentaire. Ce système reconstitué artificiellement par l'industrie a fait de cette plante l'une des plus hybridées au monde actuellement. Je n'utilise jamais une fleur parce que je la trouve belle mais parce qu'elle me renvoie à d'autres histoires. Cette connaissance botanique m'a toujours passionnée. Dans mon enfance, j'avais des relations très passionnelles avec des arbres fruitiers ou des plantes.

**LG:** Est-ce un moteur à ta pratique ?

**ME:** On peut bien sûr regarder mon travail sans penser à cela, mais je ne pourrais jamais utiliser une plante sans prendre en compte tout ce système de relations. Peut-on désirer comme une plante ou désirer une plante ? Lorsque j'étais au Japon, en résidence à la Villa Kuroyama, j'ai rencontré beaucoup de scientifiques, de mycologues intéressés par la notion de mémoire dans le monde végétal. Je me suis intéressée au myxomycète, un organisme qui est entre la plante, le champignon et l'animal, et que l'on a pris longtemps pour un champignon mais qui est en fait plus proche d'une amibe. Au Japon, il y a toute une culture et une contre culture de ça, avec une production de fanzines par exemple.

**LG:** Quelles sont les propriétés du myxomycète qui ont attiré ton attention ?

**ME:** C'est un organisme qui peut mémoriser, apprendre et transmettre alors qu'il ne possède qu'une cellule et qu'il n'a pas de système nerveux. C'est fou d'imaginer ce dont est capable un organisme unicellulaire et de ce fait, ce qui peut se passer à l'intérieur de notre corps et de nos millions de cellules, ainsi que dans tous les êtres vivants qui nous entourent. De plus, le mixomycète m'intéresse particulièrement parce qu'il possède 720 types sexuels différents. Le mixomycète ouvre sa membrane ou pas en fonction de l'individu avec lequel il entre en contact, et il peut l'ouvrir à 720 types sexuels différents. Donc, au-delà de ces représentations scientifiques, il y a cette idée de sexualité, de dyna-

MIMOSA ECHARD,  
NUMBS, A LA GALERIE  
CHANTAL CROUSEL,  
DU 6 MARS AU 10 AVRIL.

miques, d'énergies qui passent un peu dans mon travail. Cette idée de symbiose dans la nature, d'incessantes interactions, vient d'études réalisées dans les années 1990 comme avec l'ouvrage de Lynn Margulis *L'Univers bactériel*. Aujourd'hui ses recherches sont devenues plus *mainstream* et permettent de concevoir l'idée d'un monde culturel et politique qui n'est pas binaire.

**LG:** Dans ta pratique, tu envisages de petits éléments, tels que les champignons, les plantes, les insectes, etc., pour les inclure dans un dispositif plus vaste.

**ME:** C'est vrai, j'ai un rapport attentif aux petits phénomènes puis j'essaye ensuite, d'explorer au maximum ces phénomènes pour faire de la place à certains événements qui vont devenir plus vastes. Travailler sur des grands formats permet cette expérience sensorielle d'immersion. Cette idée presque mentale de l'intérieur du corps, et comment quelque chose peut s'extérioriser tout d'un coup pour devenir quelque chose d'autre.

**LG:** L'immersion s'effectue donc dans un espace ouvert aux surprises ?

**ME:** Oui. Dans le travail, existe un moment un peu trouble où les objets ne sont pas entièrement définis en tant que sculpture, peinture, ou installation. Dans la prochaine exposition en mars dans la galerie Chantal Crousel, je pense montrer ces éléments que tu nommes "Polochon" et que

je nomme "Boudin" (je ne sais pas vraiment nommer ces pièces), au mur comme des peintures repliées sur elles-mêmes qui peuvent se replier et se déplier à nouveau.

**LG:** Peut-être offres-tu une nouvelle aventure au polochon, ce volume associé étroitement au corps ?

**ME:** Oui, je l'espère ! Quand j'ai commencé ces pièces, je ne savais pas où j'allais, au début il y a du liquide à l'intérieur, parfois des vêtements, des objets personnels, des choses que je ne me rappelle même pas avoir mises dedans. Souvent j'utilise des fleurs qui ont un pouvoir de pigmentation comme le Clitoria, le Gardenia... Ces plantes vont juter, colorer l'intérieur des membranes en tissu jusqu'à ce que tout se mette à vriller à l'intérieur de ces sortes d'emballages ambigus qui peuvent se tordre, avoir l'air d'être encore humides. On a l'impression, comme dans les films fantastiques, qu'un nouvel être bizarre va en sortir. L'idée qui peut nous épouvanter aussi c'est l'existence de la peau comme une frontière, qui va contenir des choses innommables. J'aime bien que les objets créent un doute. En réalité, ils sont assez stables mais le passage par un moment liquide crée cette sensation très vivante. Le travail joue là-dessus pour d'une certaine manière, aller plus loin dans la déconstruction et arrêter de vouloir catégoriser tout, réinventer des corps qui ne sont pas juste des constructions sociales. Les matériaux que j'emploie déjouent les codes, notamment ceux qualifiants certains matériaux de "matériaux féminins" que l'artiste doit justifier comme elle doit le faire constamment à propos de sa culture spécifique. Faire de l'art, c'est redéfinir tout ça. En tout cas c'est l'endroit où je me sens libre. J'aime bien cette idée de métamorphose, que tout peut encore se transformer dans l'atelier. Je jette beaucoup, je récupère. Je suis tout le temps en train de découper d'anciennes pièces. Il y a une sorte de moment furieux à l'atelier au moment de la production, où toutes les pièces communiquent entre elles et sont un peu hors de contrôle. Mais au moment de l'exposition, il y a un moment de douceur, d'accalmie, de confort même, où elles restent à peu près à leur place. L'objet va alors jouer son rôle de séduction, de marchandise tout en restant ambigu et dissident.

**“JE FAIS  
DE L'ATELIER  
UN ENDROIT  
OÙ IL N'Y A PEU  
DE CATÉGORIES,  
OÙ LE DÉCHET  
EST UN OBJET  
COMME UN AUTRE.”**

GALERIE  
CHANTAL CROUSEL

Vue de l'atelier de  
Mimosa Echard,  
2021



Lise Guéhenneux  
*Mimosa Echard*  
Crash Magazine, N°93, March, 2021, p.60-71.



Vue de l'atelier de  
Mimosa Echard,  
2021



# MOUSSE

Horn of Plenty: Mimosa Echard  
Charles Aubin

A bunch of cherry pits swells over foam; a bundle of synthetic white pearls coils between purple lace underwear and metal chain; plastic jewelry here, snail shells there. *Salomon* (2020), Mimosa Echard's most recent series, is a cornucopia of refuse. Mounted in Plexiglas boxes, these human-size, wall-hung works appear like bowels that pullulate with cheap junk opulence. They encapsulate, quite literally, the French artist's obsession with the stuff of the everyday, reworking the mundane leftovers of our lives into viscous compositions that mischievously allude to the spills and stains of Abstract Expressionism, although Echard's works dribble past boundaries of medium as well. They indulge in a state of undecidedness, straddling the line between sculptural assemblages and gestural abstractions.

A great deal of stuffing, soaking, infusing, dyeing, and drying is required to produce these gaudy entrails. Each work is replete with a varying mix of organic and manufactured components, from lotus seeds and lichen to synthetic foam, face masks, and condoms. With close observation, trinkets from her recent time spent at Villa Kujoyama in Kyoto also pierce through: a locket, for instance, decorated with a goggle-eyed manga character. The artist then plunges these intestinal tubes into buckets of water, letting the colors from entrapped flowers bleed and spume. A mix of beeswax and hair-removal cream furthers the process of amalgamation. In the studio, Echard watches for accidents of commingling that she will then try to repeat and let degenerate. The alchemical process is only complete when she drowns the result in epoxy resin, which arrests the contamination process.

Hung on the wall, these resin-frozen assemblages, with their variegated lumpy or flat surfaces, are almost bas-reliefs—not quite painting but not quite sculpture, either. Beyond this matter of medium, the solidifications of living and artificial matter recall, in a sideways fashion, a technique devised by Bernard Palissy, the great misfit of sixteenth-century French decorative arts. In Palissy's ceramics workshop, platters and bowls took on the forms of petrified life: snakes, lizards, fish, and lobsters floated against fern leaves, shells, or flowers, all frozen *in medias res* when the artist's assistants fired the pottery. Likewise, Echard's winding bundles of organic and inorganic junk thicken into intricate compositions whose diverse parts—girlish tchotchkes ensnared in puddles of beauty products, tangled with New Age crystals and medicinal plants—converse with one another. And like the Renaissance potter, Echard draws heavily on her botanical know-how, letting the flowers' petals dictate color arrangements: flashy orange oozing out of calendula petals, bright yellow from gardenia leaves, deep blue from butterfly pea flowers.

Look for no biblical references in Echard's *Salomon* series: no wise king of the Kingdom of Israel is to be found here. *Salomon* is the name of a stuffed snake that a friend gave her—a plush animal lends its name to her 2020 show at Martina Simeri, Milan.<sup>1</sup> Echard's assemblages often grow out of accumulations of objects and plants hoarded while traveling, traded with friends, or foraged in her native Cévennes, a mountainous region in southern France with a long history of countercultural and

communal experiments. Echard regularly visits the small village where she grew up and where several family members still live; it both nurtures her work's thematics and remains a reliable source for her collection of pharmaceutical plants and recipes. Family also appears in works such as *The People* (2016), a video installation in which the artist created a ghostly portrait of the village by overlaying footage of family archives shot over a decade on antiquated MiniDV format. More recently, her family has even taken an active role in the production of Echard's work, as with *Sap, Martina* (2020), a hanging sculpture collectively created during long sessions of threading beads with her sisters and nieces.

Solidifying junk into art was a key tactic of the Nouveaux réalistes in 1960s Paris. The French sculptor Arman, specifically, deployed resin to mummify everyday objects—including women's stockings and beauty products, in several cases—into sculptural form. Yet Echard cares less about the economic or social value of each composition's congealed ingredients than about the memories and emotional associations that sediment within them. This psychological imprinting places the *Salomon* series closer to Mike Kelley's late series *Memory Ware* (2000–10). Drawing from the example of US folk artists, who covered household goods like vases and jugs with DIY mosaics of small personal keepsakes like beads, buttons, or keys, Kelley produced large-scale canvases that merged craft with pointillist abstraction to probe the American psyche. In similar ways, *Salomon* bears witness to the artist's life and affective networks, in and out of her Parisian studio, in movement between her rural Cévennes and the 100-yen shops of Kyoto.

But beyond Palissy's desire to entrap and congeal life (and eventually take control of it), or Kelley's fascination with the vernacular, Echard shows deep concern for the commingling of the self and the environment, often sullied, that surrounds it. If her loops of pantyhose containing profusions of depilatory wax and nail polish playfully flirt with gender associations, they also point at the intertwining of our bodies with the plants and fluids that constitute, nourish, embellish, alter, and pollute them. Echard's serpentine, lumpy compositions show the imbrications of a life where synthetic and organic cohabit, contaminate each other, and reformat one another.

<sup>1</sup> The exhibition is titled *Un bout de toi Salomon*, which can be translated as *A Piece of You, Salomon*.

141 Mimosa Echard, *Sap, Martina* (detail), 2020. Courtesy: the artist and Martina Simeri, Milan. Photo: Hector Chico/Andrea Rossetti

142 Mimosa Echard, *Un bout de toi Salomon n.3* (detail), 2020. Courtesy: the artist and Martina Simeri, Milan. Photo: Hector Chico/Andrea Rossetti

143 Mimosa Echard, *I Still Scream of Oregon*, 2019. Courtesy: Martina Simeri, Milan

144 Mimosa Echard, *Luca (Aline)*, 2019. Photo: Simon Vogel

145 Mimosa Echard, *Anais*, 2019. Courtesy: Martina Simeri, Milan. Photo: Hector Chico/Andrea Rossetti



Tidbits

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**klima**

**POP LOVE APOCALYPSE**  
*rencontres avec* **MIMOSA ÉCHARD**  
*par* **ROMAIN NOËL**

**FR** Mimosa Échard est née en 1986 à Paris, diplômée de l'École Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs de Paris en 2010 et nommée au Prix Meurice en 2015. La pratique de Mimosa Échard parcourt une large diversité de procédés et de médiums (assemblages, peinture, céramique) et explore différents stades intermédiaires entre le monde naturel et celui de la marchandise. Les objets qui en résultent suggèrent à la fois leur propre destruction et leur retour vers un stade d'évolution antérieur; ils retracent une sorte d'archéologie non-linéaire rassemblant végétaux, personnages pop et autres fossiles précieux et légèrement déliquescents.

**EN** Mimosa Échard was born in 1986 in Paris, graduated from the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs de Paris in 2010 and was nominated for the Prix Meurice in 2015. The practice of Mimosa Échard covers a wide variety of processes and media (assemblies, painting, ceramics) and explores different intermediate stages between the natural world and the world of merchandise. The resulting objects suggest both their own destruction and their return to an earlier stage of evolution; they trace a kind of non-linear archaeology that brings together plants, pop characters and other precious and slightly deliquescent fossils.

I.

La première fois que j'ai rencontré l'œuvre de Mimosa Echard, c'était à l'occasion d'une exposition qui s'appelait *Friends*. Visiter cette exposition n'était pas une expérience commune. On avait en effet l'impression d'entrer dans un corps ami, dans la viande d'un corps ami, avec tout ce que cela implique de tendresse et de cruauté. Arpentant de l'intérieur l'espace sanglant de ce corps, je suis littéralement tombé en amitié. Quelques mois plus tard, étendu sur un nuage d'herbe, j'ai réalisé qu'il serait dommage, pour ne pas dire théoriquement inacceptable, d'aborder l'œuvre de Mimosa Echard par un autre prisme que celui de l'amitié. C'était déjà l'été: le soleil brillait, l'odeur d'herbe brûlée formait le mot «*bonheur*» à l'intérieur de mon nez, le souffle du vent faisait ressembler les feuilles des arbres à des nuées de colibris, et je compris, ou cru comprendre (que cette compréhension soit une croyance, voilà qui m'importe peu) que cette catégorie de l'amitié n'était pas, loin s'en faut, indigne de l'histoire de l'art. Pour honorer cette catégorie injustement sous-estimée, j'ai décidé de raconter certaines histoires, plus ou moins légendaires, à l'intérieur desquelles se déploie mon rapport à l'œuvre de Mimosa Echard.

Par exemple, je me souviens très bien avoir été frappé par la justesse de l'onomastique – la science des noms propres. Qu'il y ait là, sous l'impersonnalité d'un nom de famille, quelque chose comme une écharde, voilà qui avait tout pour me plaire. J'avais immédiatement compris, en m'aventurant pour la première fois dans *Friends*, presque par hasard, que le monde de Mimosa était un monde blessé (comme ce torse lacéré de Bruce Lee, tapi sous la matière d'une des œuvres exposées) et que ce monde blessé était un monde tout à la fois désirable et désirable – le monde du désir lui-même, qui toujours manque de tout, pour toujours rejouer sa sauvage liturgie. Derrière l'écharde de ce nom m'apparut immédiatement la flèche de l'amour, dont les sectes orphiques avaient fait la clé de leur initiation. Je repensai aussi à la scène de la Légende Dorée dans laquelle un lion terrorise une ville et où Saint Jérôme, ayant quitté la solitude du désert, s'approche du lion, retire en douceur l'épine qui lui endolorissait la patte, et s'en fait un ami pour la vie. Je me fis alors la réflexion que Mimosa devait avoir éprouvé plus d'une fois, glissées sous sa propre peau, ce genre d'épines qui nous mettent hors de nous, comme pris de passion. Je me disais aussi qu'elle devait connaître personnellement beaucoup de lions de ce genre. Beaucoup d'objets, d'ombres, de bactéries. Beaucoup de fleurs aussi. En somme: beaucoup d'amis-e-s, visibles et invisibles. Dans ma tête, le nom de Mimosa Echard se métamorphosait ainsi en Fleur Blessée, Buisson d'Épines, Plaie Profonde ou encore Bloody Bloom. Ces noms n'ont rien de ridicule pour qui a connu, ne serait-ce qu'un instant, l'anonyme passion de la matière mouvementée.

Lors de notre dernière rencontre, Mimosa Echard m'a exposé quelque chose comme une théorie de la pop, qui devait me permettre de comprendre non seulement son recours à certains motifs,

I.

The first time that I discovered the work of Mimosa Echard was at an exhibition entitled *Friends*. Visiting this exhibition was not like an everyday experience, but rather like entering a friend-body, the meat of a friend-body, and all which that implies in its cruelty and tenderness. Walking into the bloody interior of this body, I literally fell into friendship. A few months later, laying on a cloud of grass, I realized that it would be a shame, if not theoretically unacceptable, to consider the work of Mimosa Echard through a prism other than that of friendship. It was summer, the sun was shining, the smell of burning grass formed the word "*happiness*" inside of my nose, the wind made the leaves of trees look like clouds of hummingbirds, and I understood, or believed to understand (that this understanding is a belief is of little importance to me) that this category of friendship is not unworthy of entering the history of art, far from it. To honor this unjustly underestimated category, I decided to tell various stories, more or less legendary, in which my relationship to the work of Mimosa Echard unfolds.

I remember, for example, being struck by the pertinence of onomatology – or the study of proper names. That it was there under the impersonality of a surname, or a splinter (*écharde* in French, evoked by the surname of the artist, Echard), was enough to please me. I immediately understood while exploring *Friends* for the first time, almost accidentally, that the world of Mimosa is a wounded world (like the lacerated torso of Bruce Lee lurking under the material in one of the works on display), and that this wounded world was a world both desiring and desirable – the world of desire itself which lacks everything, always replaying its wild liturgy. Behind this name's thorn appears the arrow of love, whose Orphic cults have made the key to their initiation. I thought back to a scene in the Golden Legend in which a lion terrorizes a city. Saint Jerome, having left the solitude of the desert, approaches the lion and gently removes the pain causing thorn from his paw, making a lifelong friend. I realized that Mimosa must have experienced this thorn, the kind that puts us besides ourselves as if taken by passion, slipping under her own skin more than once. I also thought that she must personally know many lions like this. Many objects, shadows, bacteria, and flowers too. In other words, many friends, both visible and invisible. In my mind, the name Mimosa Echard transforms into Wounded Flower (*Fleur Blessée*), Thorn Bush (*Buisson d'Épines*), Deep Wound (*Plaie Profonde*), or even Bloody Bloom. These names are not ridiculous for those who have known, if only for a moment, the anonymous passion of the tumultuous matter.

During our last exchange, Mimosa Echard exposed a kind of theory of pop to me, which allowed me to understand not only her appeal for certain motifs, but also the gestures at work in her visual practice. Yet, Mimosa never stands in the place of positive knowledge. She does not separate her visual work and theoretical thought, allowing



Mimosa Echard, Exhibition view of "*Cracher une image de toi*",  
at VNH Gallery, 2019. Courtesy the artist and VNH Gallery.

mais aussi le geste à l'œuvre dans sa pratique plastique. Pourtant, Mimosa ne se tient jamais dans le lieu du savoir positif. Chez elle, il n'y a pas d'un côté un travail plastique et de l'autre une pensée théorique, qui trouveraient à se rencontrer à l'endroit d'un discours. Non, la pensée de Mimosa est une pensée radicalement esthétique, au sens étymologique du terme : une connaissance sensible, sensuelle, où les idées semblent provenir d'une zone incertaine de non-savoir. C'est pourquoi, lorsque je dis que Mimosa m'a « *exposé une théorie* », il faut entendre le terme « *exposition* » en son sens premier, comme il apparaît par exemple dans l'expression « *s'exposer aux rayons du soleil* » ou dans la formule biblique « *Moïse exposé sur le Nil* » (c'est-à-dire, littéralement, posé dans le dehors, offert à la morsure du fleuve, mis en danger)<sup>1</sup>. Lorsque Mimosa

them to meet through discourse. No, Mimosa's thought is a radically aesthetic one, in the etymological sense of the term: a sensitive, sensual knowledge where ideas seem to come from an uncertain area of the unknown. This is why the term “*exposition*”, as I said Mimosa “*exposed a theory*” to me, must be understood in its first sense, as it appears in the expression “*exposure to sunlight*” or in the biblical phrase “*Moses exposed on the Nile*” (literally, placed outside, offered to the river's sting, endangered<sup>1</sup>). In thinking, Mimosa navigates a tumultuous river that she voluntarily exposes herself to. Sharing her fundamental intuition about pop with me, Mimosa only replayed live the gesture of self-exposure before my eyes, as if nothing had happened.



Mimosa Echard, Exhibition view of “*Cracher une image de toi*”, at VNH Gallery, 2019. Courtesy the artist and VNH Gallery.

pense, elle navigue à vue sur un fleuve tumultueux auquel elle s'expose volontairement. Me faisant part de son intuition fondamentale quant à la pop, Mimosa n'a fait que rejouer en direct, sous mes yeux, comme si de rien n'était, ce geste d'auto-exposition.

La pop, m'a-t-elle alors dit en substance, opère quelque chose comme un plaquage : elle attrape des choses et les plaque au sol, comme le lutteur ou la lutteuse plaque au sol son adversaire ou son amant-e. La pop telle que Mimosa Echard la pratique et la pense, consiste ainsi à terrasser les choses, c'est-à-dire à les rendre plus basses, à les mettre à portée de main des créatures qui, comme elle, foulent le sol accidenté de la planète terre. Dans cette perspective, la pop retrouve son sens originnaire, c'est-à-dire sa popularité. En pratiquant le plaquage pop, en terrasant les formes, en détruisant les références, Mimosa se réapproprie l'aliénation elle-même. Elle fait usage de ces corps étrangers qui, à l'échelle globale, travaillent nos existences. Par là, elle invente un espace où les choses animées et inanimées, vivantes et

Pop, she said, is in essence like a tackling: it catches things and slams them on a ground, just as a wrestler does to their opponent, or lover. Pop, as Mimosa Echard practices and thinks it, consists in putting things down, making them lower, at the hand of creatures that, like her, tread the uneven grounds of planet Earth. In that respect, pop regains its original meaning – popularity. By practicing the tackling of pop, by putting down forms and destroying references, Mimosa appropriates alienation itself. She uses these foreign bodies that shape our existence at the global scale. In this way, she invents a space where things both animate and inanimate, living and non-living, can meet, forming the people of the Earth.

Since Adorno and Horkheimer's reflections on cultural industry, social critics have repeated that mass culture (and popular culture) exercise a detrimental and alienating power over individuals. I do not know if Mimosa Echard's theory contradicts this hypothesis, but it surely surpasses this. Mimosa

non-vivantes, peuvent se rencontrer et, se rencontrant, former le peuple de la terre.

Depuis les réflexions d'Adorno et Horkheimer sur l'industrie culturelle, la critique sociale aime à répéter que la culture de masse (et, avec elle, la culture populaire) exercerait un pouvoir néfaste, aliénant, sur les individus. Je ne sais pas si la théorie de Mimosa Echard infirme cette hypothèse, mais il est certain qu'elle la déplace et la dépasse. Mimosa n'a pas peur des aliens, bien au contraire. Son usage de la pop pourrait même tendre vers quelque chose comme une Internationale Alien : c'est-à-dire vers un peuple pop passé maître dans l'art de nouer de nouvelles relations et de transformer l'aliénation en altération. En travaillant la matière, Mimosa plaque tout contre terre pour que tout puisse se rencontrer et, se rencontrant, relancer en secret les sombres spirautés du désir.

C'est pourquoi, comme on l'a suggéré plus tôt, le peuple qui est en jeu dans cette étrange théorie de la pop est un peuple d'amant-e.s, un peuple d'ami-e.s, un peuple qui n'a d'autre Loi que les désirs qui circulent comme des fluides entre les corps. Ce qui frappe tout de suite, dans cette théorie, c'est qu'il ne s'agit surtout pas d'utiliser la pop pour mettre en place une distance ironique ou critique avec les choses. Bien au contraire, il s'agit d'abolir toute distance, de laisser les choses se monter les unes sur les autres, comme dans un chaudron où mijoterait une potion qui serait bien sûr un philtre d'amour, c'est-à-dire une mixture relationnelle, comme le sont les pâtes, les cires, les résines et les colles qui, dans l'œuvre de Mimosa, jouent le rôle de la peinture et composent des mondes.

Dans l'œuvre de Mimosa Echard, la révolte a revêtu le costume rose moulant et l'air faussement naïf d'une icône pop. Et en effet, une singulière violence se déploie derrière ces voilures légères, ces teintes roses et ces textures soyeuses. La théorie de la pop précédemment exposée dit bien cette ambivalence : il ne s'agit pas tant de faire référence à la pop que d'opérer en passant par la pop un plaquage, un écrasement, une destruction de la référence. Je suspecte que derrière tous les motifs tendres et heureux mobilisés par Mimosa Echard se cache en réalité une sorte de cruauté. Derrière le désir : le trou noir du manque. Derrière le plaisir : la possibilité de la morsure. Derrière la passion : le spectre de la souffrance et le souffle sauvage de la pulsion. Derrière la fée : la sorcière nageant dans le bain du diable. Derrière les bidons d'orgone : du sang de bœuf<sup>2</sup>. Comme si l'œuvre de Mimosa devait trouver ici son équilibre : entre tendresse et cruauté, amour et violence, eros et thanatos, etc., là où le rose vire au noir, le noir au rose, et où le monde, je crois, épelle sa vérité.

## II.

Le 25 avril 1981, onze ans et dix jours avant ma naissance, la revue Gai Pied publiait un entretien avec Michel Foucault, sous le titre «*De l'amitié comme mode de vie*»<sup>3</sup>. Foucault y affirmait que le problème n'était pas de «*découvrir en soi la vérité de son sexe*», mais plutôt «*d'user désormais de sa sexualité pour*

is not fearful of aliens, quite the contrary. Her use of pop may even tend towards a kind of Alien International, or to pop people who are masters of the art of forming new relationships and transforming alienation into adaptation. By working material, Mimosa tackles everything to the ground so that it all can meet, and that through these encounters, dark spirals of desire can secretly arise.

This is why, as suggested early, the people at play in this strange theory of pop are a populace of lovers, friends, a people that have no other laws than the desires that circulate them, like fluid between bodies. What is shocking in this theory is the fact that it is not at all about using pop to create an ironic distance from or critique of things, but rather about abolishing all distances to let things mix together, like in a cauldron brewing a potion – which would be of course a love potion – or a relational mixture, like the pastes, waxes, resins and glues that play the role of paint and compose the worlds present in Mimosa's work.

Revolt has donned the tight pink costume and falsely naïve look of a pop star in Mimosa's practice. Indeed, a unique violence unfolds behind the light sails, rose tints and silky textures. The theory of pop previously exposed explained this ambivalence: it is not about referencing pop but rather to proceed through a tackling, crushing and destruction of the reference. I suppose that behind these tender and joyous motifs employed by Mimosa Echard hides some kind of cruelty. Behind desire, the black hole of longing. Behind pleasure, the possibility of burning. Behind passion, the spectrum of suffering and wild breath of impulse. Behind the fairy, a witch swimming in the devil's bath. Behind the drums of Orgonon, ox blood<sup>2</sup>. As if the work of Mimosa needed to find its balance between tenderness and cruelty, love and violence, eros and Thanatos, and so on, where pink turns to black and black to pink, and where the world, I believe, spells its truth.

## II.

The 25<sup>th</sup> of April 1982, eleven years and ten days before I was born, the magazine Gai Pied published an interview with Michel Foucault entitled "*Friendship as a way of life*"<sup>3</sup>. In it, Foucault confirmed that the problem was not to "*discover in oneself the truth of sex but rather to use sexuality henceforth to arrive at a multiplicity of relationships*." Continuing that, "*the development towards which the problem of homosexuality tends is the one of friendship*." He presented this as "*a relationship that is still formless*" that need to be "*invent[ed] from A to Z*" which corresponds to "*the sum of everything through which they can give each other pleasure*." He thus was opposed to "*a kind of neat image of homosexuality*" that cancels "*everything that can be uncomfortable in affection, tenderness, friendship, fidelity, camaraderie and companionship, things which our rather sanitized society can't allow a place for without fearing the formation of new alliances and the tying together of unforeseen lines of force*."

If this reflection about homosexuality is her starting point, Mimosa tends towards something



Mimosa Echard, Exhibition view of "*Cracher une image de toi*", at VNH Gallery, 2019.  
Courtesy the artist and VNH Gallery.

arriver à des multiplicités de relations». «Ce vers quoi vont les développements du problème de l'homosexualité, poursuivait-il, c'est le problème de l'amitié.» Il y présentait cette dernière comme «une relation encore sans forme» qu'il s'agirait d'«inventer de A à Z» et qui correspondrait à «la somme de toutes les choses à travers lesquelles, l'un à l'autre, on peut se faire plaisir.». Disant cela, il s'opposait alors à «une espèce d'image propre de l'homosexualité» qui aurait annulé «tout ce qu'il peut y avoir d'inquiétant dans l'affection, la tendresse, l'amitié, la fidélité, la camaraderie, le compagnonnage, auxquels une société un peu ratissée ne peut pas donner de place sans craindre que ne se forment des alliances, que ne se nouent des lignes de force imprévues.»

Si cette réflexion a l'homosexualité pour point de départ, elle tend en réalité vers quelque chose de bien plus vaste. Foucault lui-même insiste sur le fait que l'homosexualité n'est ici qu'une «occasion historique» d'inventer de nouvelles règles du jeu. En cela, cette méditation sur l'amitié ne proposait ni une théorie de la relation en tant que telle, ni un programme politique bien défini, mais une invitation à s'emparer, dans nos propres vies, d'une certaine puissance affective qui serait aussi une forme d'engagement micropolitique. Je me réfère ici à ce texte car je crois que l'œuvre de Mimosa Echard explore précisément, par ses propres moyens, le territoire de l'amitié tel que Foucault l'avait entrevu. D'un côté Mimosa explore le territoire de l'amitié afin d'inventer quelque chose comme une nouvelle grammaire affective et relationnelle, et de l'autre elle revendique le côté pervers, déviant et hors-pouvoir de cette exploration.

Ce qui se passe ici, c'est quelque chose comme une sexualisation de l'amitié qui est aussi, réciproquement, une amification de la sexualité. Dans cette perspective, la moindre relation qui s'établit entre un corps et un autre corps, entre une matière et une autre matière, ressemble à une pratique sexuelle perverse ou déviante capable de s'opposer au cercle vertueux de la sexualité hétéronormativité. C'est pourquoi, dans l'œuvre de Mimosa, exactement comme dans l'entretien de Michel Foucault, l'amitié se trouve dotée d'une charge révoltée, anti-sociale, qui la fait ressembler à ces paraphilies, ces sexualités hors-normes répertoriées au début du siècle dernier dans la *Psychopathia Sexualis* de Richard Von Krafft-Ebing. Comme le faisait en effet remarquer Foucault: «[...] les codes institutionnels ne peuvent valider ces relations aux intensités multiples, aux couleurs variables, aux mouvements imperceptibles, aux formes qui changent. Ces relations qui font court-circuit et qui introduisent l'amour là où il devrait y avoir la loi, la règle ou l'habitude.»

Pour Mimosa, «introduire l'amour où il devrait y avoir la loi», cela consiste le plus souvent à faire déborder les fluides sécrétés par le corps et, ce faisant, à éprouver du plaisir. Ce débordement plaisant, la mystique l'a longtemps nommé extase, terme dont l'étymologie signifie tout simplement «sortie de soi». Faire déborder le corps, sortir de soi à partir de soi, c'est aussi et surtout une manière de refuser le dogme patriarcal exigeant des femmes

much more vast in reality. Foucault himself insisted on the fact that homosexuality is only an “historic occasion” to invent new rules to the game. This mediation on friendship did not propose either a theory of relationships as such, nor a well-defined political program, but rather an invitation to seize a certain affective strength in our own lives that would also be a form of micropolitique engagement. I refer to this text because I believe the work of Mimosa Echard precisely explores the territory of friendship just as Foucault envisioned it, but in her own way. On one hand, Mimosa explores the territory of friendship in order to invent something such as a new affective and relational language, and on the other hand, she assumes the side that is perverse, deviant and beyond control of this exploration.

What happens here is a sexualization of friendship that is also reciprocally a friendification of sexuality. In this sense, even the most minor relationship established between one body and another, between one material and another, resembles a perverse or deviant sexual practice capable of opposing to the virtuous circle of heteronormative sexuality. This is why Mimosa's work, exactly as in the interview with Michel Foucault, friendship is endowed with a rebellious, anti-social charge similar to paraphilias, non-normative sexualities classified in the beginning of the last century by Richard Von Krafft-Ebing in *Psychopathia Sexualis*. As noted by Foucault, “Institutional codes can't validate these relations with multiple intensities, variable colors, imperceptible movements, changing forms. These relations short-circuit it and introduce love when there's supposed to be only law, rule or habit.”

For Mimosa, “introduc[ing] love when there's supposed to be only law,” is done by letting secreted bodily fluids overflow to experience pleasure. This pleasant overflow, has long been called ecstasy, a term that connotes in its etymology “the coming out of oneself.” To overflow the body, to come out of oneself, is a way to refuse the patriarchal dogma demanding women to contain their fluids and emotions. Mimosa Echard's practice is ecstatic and torrential: the bodies liquefy, come together and unfurl upon a world in which oppressive norms persist in the in relentless reproduction of the same lie by pleasuring themselves.

Mimosa Echard revealed the secret of pleasure in a series of sculptures entitled Nymphes. Mimosa's nymphs are statuettes in hair removal wax whose pastel and creamy tones range from yellow to green and pink. They were made from a mold of a sex toy that resembles, once again, a splinter or a weapon. In Greek and Roman mythology, nymphs personified the creative and productive activities of nature. Known for their numerous adventures, their name gave birth to the term “nymphomaniac,” which signifies hypersexuality. In myths, the nymphs were often associated with satyrs and fauns, who shared overwhelming libidos. Furthermore, in biology a nymph is the intermediary state between larvae and imago (the latter corresponding to the final state of individualization of the insect, as seen with butterflies). This is why the nymphs of Mimosas are

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”

qu'elles contiennent leurs fluides et leurs affects. La pratique de Mimosa Echard est extatique et diluvienne : les corps se liquéfient, se rassemblent, et, en se faisant plaisir, déferlent sur un monde dont les normes oppressives s'obstinent dans la reproduction incessante du même mensonge.

Le secret du plaisir, Mimosa Echard l'a révélé dans une série de sculptures répondant au nom de Nymphes. Les nymphes de Mimosa sont des statuettes en cire dépilatoire dont les tons pastels et crémeux vont du jaune au rose en passant par le vert. Elles ont toutes été réalisées à partir du moulage d'un sextoy qui pourrait bien ressembler, là encore, à une écharde ou à une arme. Dans la mythologie grecque et romaine, les nymphes personnifient les activités créatives et productives de la nature. Réputées pour leurs nombreuses aventures, leur nom a donné naissance au terme «*nymphomanie*», qui désigne une hypersexualité fantasmatique. Dans les mythes, les nymphes sont fréquemment associées aux satyres et aux faunes, dont elles partagent la libido débordante. Par ailleurs, en biologie, la nymphe désigne un stade intermédiaire de la mue, entre la larve et l'imago (ce dernier correspondant au dernier stade de l'individuation de l'insecte, comme par exemple le papillon). C'est pourquoi les nymphes de Mimosa sont tout à la fois des godes xenoféministes et des amulettes permettant de pratiquer l'art de la transmutation. Le plaisir, semble nous souffler Mimosa, serait ainsi l'état obtenu lorsque les liens du désir parviennent à mettre en contact des objets ou des formes, et où la puissance affective et sensuelle ainsi engendrée tend à métamorphoser les corps qui en font l'expérience. L'art permet ainsi d'accéder à un monde où tout s'interpénètre et se transforme, monde orgiaque où le désir montre les crocs, et où les plaisirs composent à voix obscure un alphabet révolté.

simultaneously xenofeminist dildos and amulets that practice that art of transmutation. Pleasure, as Mimosa seems to whisper, could thus be a state obtained when the bonds of desire manage to put objects or forms in contact, and where the affective and sensual power engendered tends to metamorphose the bodies creating the experience. Art gives access to a world where everything interpenetrates and transforms, an orgiastic world where desire shows its fangs and pleasures compose a revolted alphabet in an obscure voice.

Dear Richard von Krafft-Ebing, I am writing you today from a long off future to ask you some questions that torment me. What is the mania in trans-material friendships? What is the name of the creature whose nymphomania and object of desire is everything that composes all of the worlds? What is the name of the deity that, as certain legends go, hides in the trees to touch him/herself, and in doing so, learns how to touch others in order to increase the desire through which the world is transmuted? What is the name of the evil suffered by those like Michel Foucault and Mimosa Echard that tries "to make [themselves] more susceptible to pleasure"?

### III.

There is a wager, in the Pascalian<sup>4</sup> sense of the term, in the work of Mimosa Echard. Except here, the wager does not concern the existence of god, but the capacity to feel, suffer, be affected, and finally love and be loved. The initial postulate that animates her work presents an equivalence of empathy and plasticity. Plasticity refers to the ability to give and receive form. Empathy is based on the physical and psychological possibility of sharing pathos. Thus, between the beings, things and

Cher Richard von Krafft-Ebing, je vous écris aujourd'hui, depuis un futur pas si lointain, afin de vous poser quelques questions qui me taraudent : Comment s'appelle la manie de l'amitié transmatérielle ? Comment s'appelle la créature dont la nymphomanie a pour objet de désir et de plaisir toutes les choses qui composent tous les mondes ? Comment s'appelle la divinité qui, comme le racontent certaines légendes, se cache dans les arbres pour se toucher et, se touchant, apprendre à toucher d'autres choses afin d'augmenter le désir par lequel l'univers se transmatérialise ? Comment s'appelle le mal dont souffrent celles et ceux qui, comme Michel Foucault et Mimosa Echard, « travaillent à se rendre eux-mêmes infiniment plus susceptibles de plaisirs » ?

particles that compose matter and give the world its shifting shape, there would be a zone of affectivity where these beings, things and particles could encounter one another. In my opinion, the work of Mimosa consists of waging that such a zone exists, and that this pathic zone is simultaneously one of friendship, desire, pleasure and plasticity, an interstitial zone where forms are affected, affects are informed, and where material works to become the world. As friendship, love and sexuality, would consist of transforming one's own life into such a zone, a zone both erogenous (generator of pleasure) and cosmogonic (creator of the world).

For this reason, it seems to me that the work of Mimosa Echard could allow us to understand the ultimate sense of the mystique, which is not in relation to god but to the practice of exploring this zone of affectivity where the creature is in contact



Mimosa Echard, Exhibition view of "Cracher une image de toi", at VNH Gallery, 2019.  
Courtesy the artist and VNH Gallery.

### III.

Il y a comme un pari, au sens pascalien du terme<sup>4</sup>, dans l'œuvre de Mimosa Echard. Sauf qu'ici le pari ne concerne pas l'existence de dieu, mais la capacité à sentir, à souffrir, à être affecté et, finalement, à aimer et à être aimé. Le postulat de départ qui anime cette œuvre pose ainsi l'équivalence de l'empathie et de la plasticité elle-même. La plasticité désigne en effet la capacité à donner et à recevoir forme. L'empathie, quant à elle, repose sur la possibilité physique et psychique d'un partage du pathos. Il y aurait donc, quelque part, entre les êtres, entre les choses, entre les particules qui composent la matière et donnent au monde sa forme mouvante, une zone d'affectivité où ces êtres, ces choses et ces particules trouveraient à se rencontrer. De mon point de vue, le travail de Mimosa consiste à parier qu'une telle zone existe, et que cette zone pathique est tout à la

with another creature, that she sometimes calls god, other times world, matter, or refuses to name, since the simple fact of experiencing this zone of affectivity is in and of itself amply sufficient.

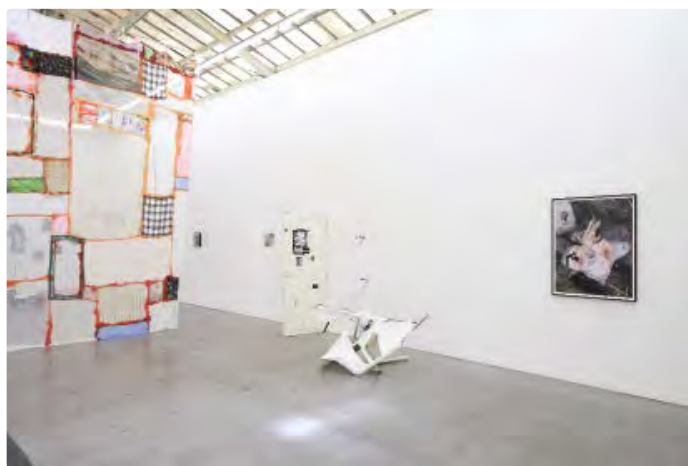
Mimosa Echard's materialistic ecstasies betray an attitude of rebellion that is not in line with recent developments on feminist/queer materialism, notably with Karen Barad's "trans-materiality" and Stacy Alaimo's "trans-corporeality". For Barad, "Matter cannot help but touch itself in an infinite exploration of its (impossible) be(com)ing(s). And in touching it/self, it partners promiscuously and perversely with otherness in a radical ongoing deconstruction and (re) configuring of itself. [...] Ever lively, never identical with itself, it is uncountably multiple, mutable. Matter is not mere being, but its ongoing un/going."<sup>5</sup> Following Barad, Stacy Alaimo asserts that "by emphasizing the movement across bodies, trans-corporeality reveals the interchanges and interconnections between various

fois celle de l'amitié, du désir, du plaisir et de la plasticité : zone interstitielle où les formes s'affectent, où les affects s'informent, et où la matière travaille à devenir monde. Le fait plastique, tout comme l'amitié, l'amour ou la sexualité, consisterait ainsi – ce n'est qu'une hypothèse – à transformer sa propre vie en une zone de ce genre ; zone tout à la fois érogène (génératrice de plaisir) et cosmogonique (créatrice de monde).

Pour cette raison, il me semble que l'œuvre de Mimosa Echard pourrait nous permettre de comprendre le sens ultime de la mystique, qui n'est pas dans la relation à Dieu, mais dans le fait de s'exercer

*bodily natures. But by underscoring the trans-indicates movement across different sites, trans-corporeality also opens up a mobile space that acknowledges the often unpredictable and unwanted actions of human bodies, nonhuman creatures, ecological systems, chemical agents, and other actors.*<sup>6</sup>

In this perspective, it may be that the queer has less horizon for the constitution of an exclusive identity than the invention of an art of links which is a way of resisting institutions in the name of an enlarged conception of friendship. Foucault wrote, "Homosexuality is an historic occasion to re-open affective and relational virtualities, not so



Mimosa Echard. Exhibition view of "Cracher une image de toi", at VNH Gallery, 2019. Courtesy the artist and VNH Gallery.

à explorer cette zone d'affectivité où la créature se trouve en contact avec une autre créature, qu'elle nomme tantôt dieu, tantôt monde, tantôt matière, ou qu'elle refuse de nommer, puisque le simple fait d'éprouver cette zone d'affectivité est, en soi, amplement suffisant.

Les extases matérialistes de Mimosa Echard trahissent par ailleurs une attitude de révolte qui n'est pas sans lien avec les développements les plus récents du matérialisme féministe/queer, et notamment avec la « transmatérialité » de Karen Barad et la « transcorporelité » de Stacy Alaimo. Pour Barad, « La matière ne peut s'empêcher de se toucher dans une exploration infinie de son devenir impossible. Et en se touchant, elle déploie sa perversité aveugle afin de s'associer à l'altérité, dans un mouvement de déconstruction et de (re)configuration radicale d'elle-même. [...] Toujours vivante, jamais identique à elle-même, elle est multiple, mutable. La matière n'est pas un simple être, mais le mouvement par lequel cet être se fait et se défait. »<sup>5</sup> Poursuivant les travaux de Barad, Stacy Alaimo affirme pour sa part qu'en mettant l'accent sur le mouvement entre les corps, « la trans-corporelité

much through the intrinsic qualities of the homosexual, but due to the biases against the position he occupies; in a certain sense diagonal lines that he can trace in the social fabric permit him to make this virtualities visible." Coming back to the work of Mimosa Echard, it is precisely in the name of the reopening of these "affective and relational virtualities" that I would like to state that such a mixture of porous membranes and softened aliens, of desirable matter and secret revolt, gives the feeling of an emancipating power of a queer apocalypse.

Etymologiquement, l'apocalypse consiste d'un unveiling movement. At the worst moment, a veil rises and reveals the secrets of the universe. Rather than showing us what is behind this veil, Mimosa Echard reveals the texture of the veil itself. For her piece LUCA, the exhibition space is structured by partitions of assembled fabrics. In the same sense, in the exhibition *Spitting an image of you*, the gallery white cube was slivered in two parts by a similar gigantic curtain. What was revealed than was something like the skin-being of the world. However, the skin in question is a true patchwork, an assemblage

*révèle les échanges et les interconnexions entre des natures corporelles variées» et «ouvre également un espace mobile qui reconnaît les actions souvent imprévisibles et indésirables du corps humain, des créatures non humaines, des systèmes écologiques, des agents chimiques et d'autres acteurs.»<sup>6</sup>*

Dans cette perspective, il se pourrait que le queer ait moins pour horizon la constitution d'une identité exclusive que l'invention d'un art des liens qui soit une manière de résister aux institutions au nom d'une conception élargie de l'amitié. «L'homosexualité, écrit ainsi Foucault, est une occasion historique de rouvrir des virtualités relationnelles et affectives,

of disparate elements. Writing this, I realize that each time I speak with Mimosa, the word "membrane" comes up in some way or another. By uniting skins that are membranes, Mimosa only replays the movements of desire, which is a movement of friendship, love, sex and pleasure, but that holds a dark secret in itself, the necessary possibility of suffering. Mimosa's body of work consists of making contact between membranes, creating encounters between forms that are initially divided and separated, as they are originally. But these membranes are like rocks, it is enough to rub them together to create heat, sparks, fire. This fire made by forms rubbing



Mimosa Echard. Exhibition view of "Cracher une image de toi", at VNH Gallery, 2019. Courtesy the artist and VNH Gallery.

*non pas tellement par les qualités intrinsèques de l'homosexuel, mais parce que la position de celui-ci, «en biais», et les lignes diagonales qu'il peut tracer dans le tissu social, permettent de faire apparaître ces virtualités.»* Revenant à l'œuvre de Mimosa Echard, c'est précisément au nom de la réouverture de ces «virtualités relationnelles et affectives» que j'aimerais pouvoir dire qu'un tel mélange de membranes poreuses et d'aliens attendris, de matière désirante et de révolte secrète, nous donne à sentir la puissance proprement émancipatrice d'une apocalypse queer.

Étymologiquement, l'apocalypse consiste en un mouvement de dévoilement. Au moment du pire, un voile se soulève et laisse apparaître les secrets du monde. Mais au lieu de nous montrer ce qu'il y a derrière le voile, Mimosa Echard nous révèle la texture du voile-lui-même. Ainsi, dans L.u.c.a., l'espace d'exposition est structuré par des cloisons faites d'étoffes assemblées. De la même manière, dans *Spitting an image of you*, le white cube de la galerie se trouve scindé en deux par un gigantesque rideau du même genre. Ce qui se révèle alors, c'est peut-être quelque chose comme l'être-peau du monde. Mais,

against each other, that affect each other, is the fire of passion. The veils that Mimosa reveals to us are burning veils. The curtains are burnt curtains. The membranes are hot like the dog's belly sleeping in the sun in Dürer's Melancholia, and in the heights of the central curtain in Spitting an image of you. That is all Mimosa Echard has to offer in terms of apocalypse. Nothing could be more fulfilling.

I call the movement queer apocalypse through which, at the moment of extinction, a certain zone of affectivity is revealed like a privileged place of resistance against the destructive forces of necropolitical capitalism. If we were to act out an apocalypse of this genre, I would like to think that the work of Mimosa Echard would be of great assistance and that Mimosa herself, worried about secreting new forms of love, would appear at the end of a dark alley or through a cloud of dust in a vaguely monstrous form of an apocalyptic beast.

I realize as soon as I shut up that the only way to be faithful to this body of work in the form of a pop love apocalypse, I must write a fantasy novel that would be like a long theoretical poem in

chose importante, la peau dont il est ici question est un véritable patchwork, c'est-à-dire un assemblage d'éléments disparates. Écrivant cela, je réalise qu'à chaque fois que je parle avec Mimosa, le mot «*membrane*» finit par revenir, d'une manière ou d'une autre. En unissant des peaux qui sont des membranes, Mimosa ne fait jamais que rejouer le mouvement du désir, qui est mouvement de l'amitié, de l'amour, du sexe, du plaisir, mais qui contient en lui-même, comme un sombre secret, la nécessaire possibilité de la souffrance. L'œuvre de Mimosa consiste ainsi à créer du contact entre des membranes, c'est-à-dire à faire se rencontrer des formes initialement divisées, séparées, comme elles le sont toutes à l'origine. Mais les membranes sont comme les silex : il suffit de les frotter les unes contre les autres pour qu'elles produisent de la chaleur, des étincelles, du feu. Ce feu que font les formes lorsque, frottant les unes contre les autres, elles s'entre-affectent, c'est le feu de la passion. Les voiles que nous donnent à sentir Mimosa sont des voiles brûlants. Les rideaux sont des rideaux brûlés. Les membranes sont chaudes comme le ventre du chien qui dort au soleil dans la Melancholia de Dürer et dans les hauteurs du rideau central de *Spitting an image of you*. C'est tout ce que Mimosa Echard a à nous proposer, en termes d'apocalypse. Rien ne pourrait nous combler davantage.

J'ai appelé apocalypse queer le mouvement par lequel, à l'heure de l'extinction, une certaine zone d'affectivité nous est révélée comme le lieu privilégié d'une résistance contre les forces destructrices du capitalisme néropolitique. S'il nous fallait performer aujourd'hui une apocalypse de ce genre, je veux croire que l'œuvre de Mimosa Echard pourrait nous être d'un grand secours et que Mimosa elle-même, toute occupée à sécréter de nouvelles formes d'amour, pourrait bien nous apparaître, comme au détour d'une ruelle obscure ou à travers un nuage de poussière, sous la forme vaguement monstrueuse d'une bête de l'apocalypse.

Je réalise au moment de me taire que pour être vraiment fidèle à cette œuvre en forme d'apocalypse pop love, il faudrait écrire un roman de fantasy qui serait un long poème théorique en forme de fanzine obscur ou de catalogue d'exposition imaginaire. Un jour peut-être j'écrirai ce livre de rêve. Mais peut-être ai-je déjà commencé à l'écrire, sans même m'en rendre compte, le jour où, visitant *Friends*, le champ de forces formé par les œuvres exposées traça sur mon front boueux les lettres qui, comme dans le mythe kabbalistique du golem, m'animèrent et me changèrent en ami.

- 1 L'étymologie latine du terme «*passion*» le relie au verbe «*exposer*». En cela, la passion, prise comme capacité à être affecté par les choses, est apparentée à la capacité à s'exposer à ce dehors. Le monde de Mimosa Echard n'est, me semble-t-il, pas étranger à ce double mouvement d'exposition/affectation.
- 2 Selon Wilhelm Reich, L'orgone serait «*le médium qui communiquerait émotion*

the form of an obscure zine or imaginary exhibition catalogue. Maybe one day I will write this book that I dream of. But maybe I already began writing it without even realizing it, the day that I visited the exhibition *Friends*. The force fields created by the works on display traced upon my brow the letters, which like in the Kabbalistic myth of the golem, animated me and changed me into a friend.

- 1 The Latin etymology of the term "*passion*" links it to the verb "*expose*". In this respect, passion, taken as the ability to be affected by things, is related to the ability to expose oneself to this outside. The world of Mimosa Echard is, it seems to me, no stranger to this double movement of exposure/affectation.
- 2 According to Wilhelm Reich, the orgone would be "*the medium that communicates emotion and perception, through which we would be connected to the cosmos and related to all that is alive*". In I still dream of Orgonon (2016), Mimosa Echard reinvents the orgonite, a material capable, according to Reich himself, of producing orgone. Mimosa Echard's orgonites bring together, in plastic cans and bottles made of synthetic resin, various materials from the worlds of plants, minerals and animals.
- 3 Michel Foucault, "*De l'amitié comme mode de vie*", Entretien avec R. de Ceccaty, J. Danet et J. Le Bitoux, Gai Pied n°25, avril 1981, pp. 38-39, in Dits et Écrits, Tome IV, texte n°293, Paris, Gallimard, Bibliothèque des sciences humaines, 1994.
- 4 Pascal's argument tries to prove that a rational person has every interest in believing in God, whether or not God exists.
- 5 Karen Barad, "*Transmaterialities. Trans\*/matter/realities and Queer Political imaginings*", in GLQ - A Journal of Lesbian Gay Studies, volume 21, "*queer-inhumanisms*", June 2015, p.411.
- 6 Stacy Alaimo, *Bodily natures: science, environment, and the material self*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington & Indianapolis, 2010.

*et perception, à travers lequel nous serions connectés au cosmos et mis en parenté avec tout ce qui est vivant».*

Dans *I still dream of Orgonon* (2016).

Mimosa Echard réinvente l'orgonite, matière capable, selon Reich lui-même, de produire de l'orgone. Les orgonites de Mimosa Echard rassemblent, dans des bidons et des bouteilles plastiques en résine synthétique, divers matériaux appartenant aux mondes végétal, minéral et animal.

- 3 Michel Foucault, «*De l'amitié comme mode de vie*», Entretien avec R. de Ceccaty, J. Danet et J. Le Bitoux, *Gai Pied* n°25, avril 1981, pp. 38-39, in *Dits et Écrits*, Tome IV, texte n°293, Paris, Gallimard, Bibliothèque des sciences humaines, 1994.
- 4 Le pari de Pascal est un argument philosophique mis au point par Blaise Pascal, qui tente de prouver qu'une personne rationnelle a tout intérêt à croire en Dieu, que Dieu existe ou non.  
/ Pascal's bet is a philosophical argument developed by Blaise Pascal, who tries to prove that a rational person has every interest in believing in God, whether or not God exists.
- 5 Karen Barad, «*Transmaterialities. Trans\*/matter/realities and Queer Political imaginings*», in *GLQ – A Journal of Lesbian Gay Studies*, volume 21, «*queer-inhumanisms*», June 2015, p.411.
- 6 Stacy Alaimo, *Bodily natures: science, environment, and the material self*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington & Indianapolis, 2010.