

TEXTS  
(English)

“ODYSSEES”  
DELPHINE MASSON  
2020

Due to so many stories fuelling her imagination, at an early stage Marie-Anita Gaube chose painting in its most figurative dimension. Since the very outset in 2012, the artist has produced bright and colourful paintings, buzzing with a myriad of details filling her favoured large formats, immersing viewers in her world to the maximum. An Edenic world where everything seems to serve as a reminder of the joys of being alive: lush environments, palm trees and birds of paradise, fairy-tale-like waterfalls, transparent lakes and sun loungers form the recurring settings of idyllic scenes.

However, a sense of restlessness reigns beneath these cloudless skies. There is no respite for the eyes with the hectic compositions and chromatic rhythms. Braving excess, the painting is overflowing with events and unexpected details covering every inch of the canvas.

As the artist likes to point out, each of her paintings always incorporates several of them. She appears to make this heterogeneity the very substance of her dynamic compositions linking people, objects, colourful patterns and landscapes in entwined stories that converge. The surface of the canvas is home to a multitude of co-existing universes simultaneously featuring day and night. The inside space of the house opens out into the landscape, as if the boundaries between inside and outside were non-existent. Vanishing points multiply, various planes are juxtaposed like screens and merge into complex constructions that extend the portrayal space.

By linking these disseminated worlds, Marie-Anita Gaube accommodates contradictions and tensions. Imbued with perceptible vital energy, more hidden concerns seem to pervade her work. Something strange emanates from these people captured in positions with obscure purposes, these bodies that are a little lost in the landscape absorbing them at times to the point of concealment. Still lifes laid out like vanitas, masks and hieratic statues resonate with the most archaic concerns of a humanity facing its finitude.

The exhibition *Odysseys*, in the black gallery at the CCC OD, takes us on an exploration of the world invented by Marie-Anita Gaube, perhaps encouraging us to address ours differently. Her works are not just distant dreams, they also draw upon a shared reality of which we recognise snippets. For the artist, her paintings are heterotopias, as Michel Foucault elaborated: “spaces that are other”, enshrined in reality rather than a utopian dream. Living in her imagination is not a means for escape or withdrawal, but in fact a response to the world surrounding us.

INTERVIEW BY ISABELLE REIHER AND DELPHINE MASSON- 2020

ODYSSEES, catalog published by CCC OD (Centre de création contemporaine Olivier Debré)

How did you start painting? Was it during your course at the École des beaux-arts de Lyon?

I only presented paintings for my entrance exam for the École des beaux-arts. However, undoubtedly like many at the time, this school did not really embrace teaching painting. When it did, it was a very conceptual approach the opposite of what I was doing. That is why I focussed on installation and sculpture when I was studying.

I switched my medium from sculpture to painting when I spent a year in Mexico as part of my course. My desire to paint returned while I was there, initially through the discovery of Diego Rivera's frescoes at the Palacio Nacional in Mexico. Even if he is not an artist of reference for me, his works made a big impression due to their political and revolutionary dimensions, as well as their monumentality, their way of integrating architecture and drawing us into the painting. The colours and lights in Mexico also left a permanent impression on my visual memory.

This journey was therefore a defining moment in your decision to become a painter.

Yes, I really got into painting when I returned. It was my last year at the École des beaux-arts de Lyon and I had to fight to secure this choice, as I had more or less solely concentrated on sculpture for four years. In retrospect, I am rather pleased not to have been encouraged to paint as it enabled me to grow and develop on my own, to find very personal references without being influenced. It therefore gave me an opportunity to formulate my work and develop my own unique world.

Did your time in Mexico also influence the exoticism that prevails in your paintings?

Evidently, it influenced my landscapes and patterns!

But aside from these memories, think that I couldn't stop exoticism from being an integral part of my painting. It happens without thinking. What I love most is for my painting to be full of life and flourishing. This exotic nature is also related to my more remote influences: Flemish painting, books of hours and of course Hieronymus Bosch's painting with his very exotic Garden of Delights, these flowers, imaginary trees and almost psychedelic colours. There is a certain amount of resonance with my painting, something supernatural.

Do you need specific energy to work in the realm of the imagination?

I complete a world from scratch. My paintings stem from mental images that I totally invent. Sometimes I work from existing images, but these are just mediums, starting points. It's very difficult to switch from a mental image to a pictorial image. A great deal of concentration and open-mindedness are required to employ this creativity. Each

time I paint, I need to enter my world. This is how I work at the moment: when I get to my studio in the morning, I try to imagine the vibe in my paintings: what the weather is like, the heat, humidity, noise, smells, etc. The images and colours originate from the prevailing vibe. They can also come from memories. I must continually ask myself questions: what's happening in this scene, what's being narrated? When I paint a character with particular and at times absurd body language, I have to get into that stance myself, enter their body and find that energy.

Is there a narrative dimension in your paintings, stories that they are being expressed?

I need to tell myself stories to create. It's my way of delving into the subject.

I imagine what is happening on the canvas, but also beyond the scene that I'm painting. Therefore there's a myriad of stories in each of my paintings, but the spectator does not necessarily have the key to it. It's almost oneiric, there is a certain degree of dream even if I don't like using this term.

Why don't you like talking about dreams regarding your work?

What I paint extends well beyond a dream. It's a response to the world around me. My work lies between the notions of utopia and dystopia. It is closer to heterotopia. More generally speaking,

I think that painting itself is a heterotopia\*: it elaborates other places, a physical place as we can look at it. For me, dreaming is just a gateway. It prevents me from reproducing reality as I'm not interested in realism. However, I don't paint dreams. I paint my vision of the world. I use elements derived from reality, but I transform them and move them into another space. It's a way of inching the world in which I live towards something else in order to recreate it.

This is done through the composition of very particular pictorial spaces. In Hidden space [ p.22] for example, there are these screens as such that make you look in several directions, while a focal point always leads you back to the vanishing point.

Many of my paintings stem from this type of construction that I call "escarpist", in other words into which the gaze escapes. Either because there are openings in the image, or because I play with inverted perspectives to include the spectator in the world of the painting, as if the vanishing point were behind the viewer.

I often use several vanishing points that diverge in different directions and radically transform the space. David Hockney often does this. There are also "escarpist" perspectives in Flemish painting from the early Renaissance, with spaces that interweave kaleidoscopically.

The subject can thereby evolve in a panoptic perspective, within various spaces. That is what I'm looking for in my paintings. It enables me to extend the subject, to provide an interpretation of the image over time, to drive the narrative. It's a way of introducing movement to my paintings.

By introducing duration into the pictorial image, you seem to consider your paintings as short films.

Indeed, I often perceive my paintings like scripts. Moreover, I often make analogies between film editing and my compositions juxtaposing heterogeneous elements. Eisenstein's films made a big impression on me, in particular *Que viva Mexico!* that alternates black and white sequences with colour sequences. Eisenstein spoke of his desire to create a visual frenzy through his editing. This hysterical, restless and somewhat disturbing dimension is evident in the way I create my paintings. Images and colours clash. The gaze is unable to settle anywhere with everything unstable and everything in motion. The notion of rhythm and musicality is essential in the way I approach my compositions and the chromatic dimension of my paintings. They are very sonorous and can be loud.

The human figure is omnipresent in your works. However intriguingly, it is often ghostly.

There is in fact always a human presence, even when there is no actual person in the painting. This presence can be expressed by something else, an object, a chair, etc. The body is therefore represented in its absence. There are also many fragmented bodies in my paintings: damaged, decomposed and emaciated bodies. Sometimes they are hidden or transparent, as if dissolved in the landscape. Working with washes and cracking enables me to play with transparency and the extent to which the form is present. It's true that the bodies I depict have a degree of fragility. They often seem to be suspended, ready to collapse, diaphanous or in a state of metamorphosis. This fragile status is also achieved through absurd body language verging on burlesque, like Buster Keaton.

There is great ambivalence in your work, in terms of both life and death. How do you explain this need to introduce an element of morbidity in this heavenly beauty that you paint?

The worlds that I paint appear Edenic, but their characters somewhat drift. The subjects that I choose have something ephemeral about them, something that cannot be grasped. It's far from paradise in fact. For example, the sprawling character in *Le parloir céleste* [p.8] may evoke the pleasure of sunbathing but this posture also has a distressing dimension: it's a sort of recumbent statue, with skin that appears slightly burnt. The sun is prominent, but it radiates, burns and destroys. I don't necessarily express it, but I am extremely interested in the notions of death and impermanence. Many of my canvases speak of these archaic fears and rituals devised around these questions. It explains why masks and theatricality appeal to me. Addressing this fear of death and loss remains "the" universal question that human beings face and which can never be answered.

What are the new canvases that you produced specifically for the exhibition about?

In my previous paintings, bodies were of secondary importance. Since the end of 2019, the roles have reversed: people feature more prominently on the canvas, they are more stable than before. By coming to the fore, each movement becomes more important and expresses something more specific. That's what led me to produce three canvases [*Études amoureuses #1,2,3 p.12*] in which I tackle more specifically the body through its body language. Each gesture represents a posture that evokes a specific feeling for me. It's a question of dancing bodies, bodies that are ecstatic or in a trance. Dance inspires me a great deal, particularly the tilting, rise and fall motions associated with Pina Bausch and Martha Graham.

The body seems to become a fully-edged subject in your paintings. Does this involve another way of depicting it?

Heterogeneity, a profusion of elements and details juxtaposed in a setting is a constituent part of my realm. There is always a myriad of paintings in each of my paintings. However, these new works have fewer narratives, the body is no longer lost in the middle of something else, now it is the actual subject of the painting. This led me to paint it differently. Flesh for example is not regarded as such. The bodies are less outlined, less contained in their sheath. They are diaphanous, fragmented, deformed and very colourful. Particular attention is paid to colour, expressing a certain character, feeling or sensation. Above all I wanted to represent energy through the bodies. It reminds me of the way in which Francis Bacon viewed the body. Not just by focussing on its outward appearance but by exploring its inner character, the feeling of this body in space, its soul as such. It's something that I also had in mind when producing these new paintings that represent, it seems to me, a turning point in my work.

At the exhibition you're exhibiting in a space that is unusually black. How do you foresee this exhibition backdrop and this experience for your painting? How does your colour react to it?

To begin with, I must admit that I was afraid of this room. But I am surprised by the result. The black really highlights the colours. My paintings are quite loud. However, the black wall tends to have a calming effect on the painting, making it more intimate. It tempers these restless paintings.

It's as if each were in a crate, as if each could speak without interfering with the others. I always put together my exhibitions in the same way as I create my paintings: by telling stories. I lay out a logical suite of events. It's very interesting for me to discover which new relationships develop between my paintings in this black gallery.

\*. Heterotopia is a concept formulated by Michel Foucault in 1967, to designate "spaces

MARION DELAGE DE LUGET

Where painting can take place -2016

Could the title under which Marie-Anita Gaube groups together her last paintings have been more explicit? Out of place – that which has been moved, literally and figuratively – to indicate the astonishing mobility that is part of her paintings. She is already well-known for her games of juxtaposition, the superposition of elements and disparate plans that already used to encourage a certain circulation between objects and places reunited on canvas. Here she succeeds in making this geography even more complex, in particular by accentuating the discrepancies in scale in her landscapes. Exaggerating the differences between the foreground and background in order to better dig vertiginous rising perspectives: tiny profiles of birds sailing out at sea on frail and weak barges, concise outlines, sketched in a few translucent strokes, miniature characters, going about we don't know what under cover of the trees; and this tiny cabin squeezed onto the horizon of the body of water, huddled in front of a grove of thorough vegetation that we imagine to be rich despite the distance. These playlets, which are almost out of range, make us continuously adapt our vision, or better still, make us come closer and they invite us to a paradoxically intimate reading, as close as possible to these considerably large sized paintings.

Marie-Anita Gaube depicts distant lands abound with a mass of tiny details. And as with other Flemish Primitives, many strange activities take place there in unique contortions, the characters are abruptly catapulted overboard, or they brandish axes to inspect the depths. In Pluton they bathe, naked, taking on incongruous, grotesque positions which are sometimes reminiscent of the grotesque figures by an artist like Hieronymus Bosch. With his head underwater, a man is trying to get his balance, one leg half folded, revealing his genitals; and this completely crazy pose summarizes the inappropriate nature of the exhibition's title. Nearby, another character, standing with his back to us, is covering his shoulders with a towel. In time the gesture is disarmingly daily. With Marie-Anita Gaube the body is often clumsy, betraying the abandon which only happens in the most ordinary situations. Finally, a body is totally domestic, even though, conversely, it is part of an improbable wilderness. So much so, in fact, that it willingly loses some of its corporality. It is another constant in the way work evolves: broken up, smaller and becoming marginal in these oversized environments, here the figure is often close to decay – like this individual taking an unsteady step in Hidden Space, with the few highlights and weak links used to draw him almost ready to collapse into a pile of shapeless pictorial matter. Using transparency, overlapping, the figure sometimes even changes enough to become inextricably intertwined with the depths. Liquefied, scattered, the body that Marie-Anita Gaube delivers ends up by no longer existing.

Freed of the limits of its initial phenomenality, it brings this utopic dimension attributed to it by Foucault: "It is the ground zero of the world"<sup>1</sup>, this absolute place, simul-

taneously here and elsewhere, from which point "[...] I dream, I speak, I move forward, I imagine."<sup>2</sup>

And after all Marie-Anita Gaube's painting is always shown in this way, by the contrasting of antithetical concepts. Furthermore this is why she fragments, unlevels the pictorial space, in order to create unpredictable passages between these radically opposed places that she likes to introduce. In this way, everything is linked and yet everything is in contradiction: the foregrounds at the front, with solid surfaces – the jetty, the canoe's bow, slats of wood – ending which is slightly dipped in order to emphasize the alignments – that project towards the unfathomable expanses of water which seem to bathe everything. Within, without, inextricably entangled. Everything in this painting is represented, contested, inverted all at once. For example, water keeps changing state – it runs down a waterfall, is raised into monumental icebergs, is scattered as if by snowflakes. With Eldorado we don't seem to know anymore: one character wanders across the lagoon as he would across an ice floe, while another dives into it. Unless the horizontal line that radically splits the painting in two actually indicates the shift of mirror symmetry with this other blue beach, these polar skies in which broken ice seems to float.

This potential for reversibility is the main means used by Marie-Anita Gaube to find a way around the logical form that image and reality must have in common. In this way she blurs what would otherwise be a representation. Even more, she is not content with organising an improbable closeness of things, but she also seeks to make the site itself impossible for these things to come close together. She does everything so that we intentionally lose the place where the painting unfolds; everything to stop it happening, in a radically plural spatiality which is reminiscent of these other spaces, that Foucault called heterotopy – these locations where, he says, "[...] the world feels less like a great life that will develop through time than like a network that links points and intertwines its web."<sup>3</sup>

PIERRE-JACQUES PERNUIT "NOUVELLES AIRES" 2015

The first thing to do is to find a fixed position. The onlooker must have cause to enter, to penetrate into the world of Marie-Anita Gaube. However, a patient quest is required in order to achieve an analytical review, to apply a knowledgeable eye. The images which are presented before us do not make it easy: We must approach them along crisscrossing paths. They do not surrender to, as much as they stride across, the observant eye. The eye explores, its routine perturbed.

What does one see? What is it at stake in this painting referred to elsewhere as « hybrid »? What does one really see? By Marie-Anita Gaube's own admission, the titles speak to us in riddles.

The image resists a single interpretation. Should one, in order to grasp the mystery, undertake a comparison of the different canvasses in order to establish an ultimate « difference » amidst the differences, something which would unravel the workings of a definitive painting style, give away a glimpse of the broad outlines of a particular style, a world? And yet this would go against the grain of the disposition to take vis-à-vis the paintings of Marie-Anita Gaube. Such a disposition would suffer the misfortune of the painting being reduced to a mystery frozen in a single word, when it is really intrinsically unsettled, in motion, yet to arrive. The mystery is essentially not quite born, still in the making.

There is never one single scene portrayed, but a crowd of them, a plethora of actions and references in time, the different facets of a singular narrative from which logic has fled. It is, as Marie-Anita Gaube puts it, « the theatre of the canvas », something « out of time » which witnesses the comings and goings of the figures.

The tableau is sprinkled with ghosts, where individuals appear and disappear. It thus gives the impression that a complex mental construct as a « grand image »\* has preceded the canvas. In the beginning, therefore, was an idea.

Nevertheless, what is the nature of the mental construct implied? Is it elements of a landscape? Or is it there to outline the space of the painting to come?

L'antichambre, here, is a word which echoes throughout my encounter with Marie-Anita Gaube: This idea of an undetermined owing space, not frozen, inhabited by characters from nowhere. Hence, this « grand image »\* which precedes the act itself of painting is revealed to us only through cursory glimpses. We can see only certain faces, fragments which show the impossibility of seizing the totality of the mental space.

One could conceive the « grand image »\* as a free-standing sculpture which does not give itself away other than from one angle at a time. There is an admission of the paintings' narrative limits set by its narrative constraints, which evokes something unseen, an « otherness » drawing upon a deeper mystery.

It is truly a painting of « movement », a flow, an image which anticipates and precedes the scene. The characters, their backs turned to the onlooker, perhaps just on the verge of turning away, are set towards an asserted identity, while one remains unaware if this has been accomplished or still to be. The only certitude: The transitional state, the task to be accomplished.

Border handles the themes of migration, uprooting.

The landscape is subjected to a similar lack of definition. It is a Paysage poreux (a « porous landscape »), a Pursuite in the « pursuit » of a reliable spatial quality. The gouache and graphite pencil drawings exist between two temporal states: A monochrome suspended in time as in a memory retrieved, in contrast with a more present, more conceivable vision, bursting forth with colour.

The resulting impression of the painting is of something destined for the creation of « a place » which does not really exist. The brush-work of characters in a pattern, as if borrowed from classical painting, has been diverted away from its narrative role. The perspective which governed the arrangement of figures, according to their significance in a painting, has now become a tool of the unreal, one of the deconstruction of the topos. But this diversion is not meant to be derisory or to ridicule, it pertains more to the process of deconstruction.

Marie-Anita Gaube's painting induces one to see beyond the frame set by the image, to open up a path to imagination, to raise oneself beyond the one-dimensional surface colours. She says, « The colour is there to stir up a disturbance. It has been applied as if to contradict. It sets it apart ».

There is a discrepancy between colour and reality; it is a lever leaning the sight towards an opening into the picture.

It is a painting of the point of access, an approach, a painting of the waiting room, whose nature is not fixed; it is still in motion. One looks upon the painting of Marie-Anita Gaube as one would retain the memory of a cinema sequence. It is an invitation to enter an area to be, one of anticipation.

\* "La grande image n'a pas de forme ou du non-objet par la peinture" - François Julien, 2003

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MARC DESGRANDCHAMPS-2014

I first saw Marie-Anita Gaube's paintings two years ago. She was a student at the School of Fine Arts in Lyon and was working on a large format painting that I was only to see finished in a photograph and which has since been stolen.

The painting depicted a world of human and animal figures and plants of varying sizes, in a setting featuring a river flowing through meadows: a landscape whose horizon was delimited by a chain of mountains worthy of the Beatles' Magical Mystery Tour.

I was intrigued by this painting, whose whimsical atmosphere reminded me of the playful spontaneity of English Pop Art, especially early David Hockney.

Seeing her subsequent work has only made me more deeply intrigued.

This feeling is linked to the mysterious arrangements that give structure to the compositions, accompanied by titles that are no less enigmatic. It is hard to make out a subject. It seems that these paintings are like the life or rather the lives—we lead, made up of instants whose meaning only becomes clear to us later, when the actions or projects that motivated us and blinded us have vanished.

The fresh, sometimes acid colours contribute to this state of things, along with a representational freedom that seems to combine fragments of dreams and figures from reality. A t-shirt with a target on it becomes the central feature of a moonlit, dreamlike scene. Two headless bodies, one of which could be from a painting by Francis Bacon, face each other.

A head in the form of a mask lies on the grass, and all is bathed in moonlight. The title of the work envisions dialogue, even if this dialogue remains wordless to us. It might be a peaceful nightmare, the harmony of certain colour shades and a few warmly lit cold colours creating a sense of the ambiguous sweetness of this world.

Paradoxically enough, the apparent spontaneity of certain paintings is the result of a long process of adjustment and superimposition. The colours are not laid down without remorse: they are contradicted by other hues that qualify what a distracted eye might see as mere expanses of solid colour. Like the red that Daniel Arasse glimpsed under Matisse's blue, it might be the source of visual pleasure where painting, beyond one-sided determination, materialises in the subtlety of a colour scheme built up in successive stages. It's the last brushstroke that matters, but it's amplified by everything that came before.

The substance of the paint is not uniform; instead we see varying thicknesses, as in *Métamorphose*, a work whose title seems to refer both to what is happening to the figures and to the way they are depicted on the canvas. *Métamorphose* also reminds me of a painting by Martial Raysse entitled *Les Deux Poètes* in which seated two figures face the viewer.

The same frontality is at work in Maria-Anita Gaube's painting, but in her work the figures remain uncertain, and only a few precise details—hands or a shoe—elliptically identify their presence. There's also a kind of encryption of the scene, seen as a fact of painting rather than the encryption of a representation that depends on a story that must be discovered.

And yet the viewer can be tempted to undertake an interpretative exercise, prompted by recognisable elements borrowed from other realities scattered across the paintings. The red chevrons in *Diagnostique de la Mélancolie* recall Frank Stella's early work, and less obviously, the space located immediately above this reminiscence is somewhat evocative of Brice Marden's fluid work of the last thirty years. Linking Stella—whose name also means star—, the chevrons, and the astronaut standing to the left of them might seem a bold move, even if it reflects the fact that Marie-Anita Gaube's compositions can be seen as rebuses, or more fundamentally as repositories of clues based on which a meaning can be imagined and even reconstituted. The intrusion of emblematic elements from abstract art akin to minimalism shows that the artist's visual culture allows her to work from various sources that she recombines as a painter, assimilating them into the world of her canvases. Here we have all the key elements of an approach which, beyond the artist's current successes, promise a broad-ranging experimental territory for the future.

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VIVIANA BIROLI-2014

“[...] instead of being that from which discourse comes, I would have been at the mercy of its unfolding, its tiny lacunae, the point of its possible disappearance”. [Foucault, L'Ordre du discours, 1971]

Marie-Anita Gaube paints worlds that have all the instability of fantastic tales, eeting memories or other-worldly obsessions. By turns lyrical and hallucinatory, her paintings are the result of interwoven references and suggestions collected during daily searches for new images. They are composed according to a principle akin to surrealist collage or or film editing.

Constructed via a process of framing and unframing that is both visual and narrative, her works are palimpsests, rebuses made up of spatial and temporal fragments embedded within one another. This process of embedding makes the images into epiphanies, constellations where time is crystallised into pictures: “Like a double door or the wings of a butterfly, the act of apparition is a perpetually repeated movement of closing and opening, of swinging out and back”.

But they are also capricci of modern ruins. The real and the fantastic, erudite intertextuality and flights of the imagination combine along an axis that leads from Canaletto's impossible vedute to Goya's disturbing allegories.

The figures that underpin the syntax of Gaube's work are somewhat evocative of major painters of fantastic imagery such as Hieronymus Bosch, Peter Doig, Odilon Redon and James Ensor.

On the canvas, her sometimes shy and clumsy figures come together in a precarious world, a theatre whose paper sky might tear asunder at any moment, as in Pirandello's *The Late Mathias Pascal*. The atmosphere is sometimes that of a Beckett-like *huis clos*, sometimes that of luxuriant forests where all is *luxe, calme et volupté*: diaphanous settings for narratives made up of visual clues and dreamscapes imbricated within an intermediate, enigmatic space.

In Marie-Anita Gaube's most recent works, echoing the squares in de Chirico's metaphysical paintings, the human figure often signals absence or virtuality: pushed out onto the margins, conjured up by details, or subliminally evoked, Man inhabits the space of the canvas like the memory of a presence that will shortly become anachronistic or which belongs to the future: a figure of suspense or expectation arising from a desire for something to happen.

At once a stage, a setting and a landscape, the tense space that remains becomes a wounded background; the objects that dwell there are idols reminiscent of Francis

Bacon, while disparate perspectives, scales and motifs stand as invitations to pass through the looking-glass.

These scenes are constructed in counterpoint, shifting between different depths and levels of transparency, intricate pigmentary details and bare surfaces, figurative references and reflexive gestures involving both material and medium, in a hand-to-hand struggle between the painter and the canvas. The painterly form is built up by and in colour, using an anti-naturalistic palette rooted both in expressionist and Fauvist tradition and in contemporary technoartificial imagery.

The resulting paintings evoke instants where reality meets and slips inside fantasy, on the same ambiguous threshold that has characterised the timeless fascination of fantastic realism from the early 20th century to the present.

Although rooted in classic painterly tradition, Marie-Anita Gaube's works establish a network of enmeshed temporalities where the past short-circuits the present on the naturally dystopian plane of the imagination.

A tiny detail—a man wearing a gas mask, a veil of chemical colours might suggest scenarios typical of contemporary science fiction. A simple shift in perspective might turn a funfair into a hellish banquet, comedy into tragedy, man and his world into a carnival of grotesque masks or a psychedelic forest of confusing and confused symbols.

At the heart of these ambiguous interwoven tableaux, where each image suggests, evokes and conceals its own upside, are borrowed rituals, Ubuesque mythologies made up of drifting fragments, “quotes without quotation marks”, dysfunctional signs, and silent cracks where webs of discourse are spun.

In Marie-Anita Gaube's capricious paintings, the dream becomes a narrative chronotope involving the time and space of every image that reveals itself and every action that unfolds. As Queneau wrote in his introduction to *Fleurs Bleues*, quoting Plato, it is “ὄναρ ἄνχι ὄνειραχος”: a dream for a dream.

1 Georges Didi-Huberman, *Phasmes. Essais sur l'apparition*, 1, Paris, Minuit, 1998, p. 9.1  
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