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SAATCHI ONLINE TV & MAGAZINE

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EMILIE LEMAKIS: SAATCHI ONLINE CRITIC'S CHOICE BY VICTORIA CHAINE MENDRZYK



Emilie Lemakis was born in 1965 in St Louis, USA, and she lives and works in New York. She works with a wide range of media including drawing, installation, photography, performance and video, and often merges these forms together, to such an extent that the video monitor can resemble a sculpture within an installation made of drawings.

Looking at artworks from various periods ranging from Neolithic time and ancient Greece to the abstract expressionist, design and contemporary art is fundamental to understand Emilie Lemakis' practice and she notes that being a museum guard at the Met in New York and in daily contact with masterpieces from the past influenced her work a lot.

Theatricality is the most prominent feature of her practice. The "Bunny Project" is a large photographic series showing people in various situations, swimming in the sea, guarding in a museum or eating in their kitchen wearing rabbit-shaped plastic masks on their face. If at first, these situations look absurd, the individuals all look the same and the photograph may be a wider statement about social stereotypes. In her video "Dumbbell", she imitates a weightlifter carrying drawings instead of weights, and probably once more plays with masculine clichés.

Her drawings depict flowers, masks or abstract figures. If they are not displayed in series like the photographs, they are made by the endless repetition of the same pattern: a small circle with a dot inside for instance and show the same obsession and diligence to go through every detail in order to achieve a bigger picture. The costumes that she wears for her performance also appear to be cut up life-size drawings. This medium in particular reveals her taste for the craftsmanship and handmade design.

Birds are very present in her works, whether in the videos such as "Snatch Hatch" where fledglings are screaming or in drawings such as "Temple", "Bird and Flowers" or "Red Field Bird". In one of her performances, she imitates the gardener who waters a (handmade) plant. She is concerned about the cycle of nature, birth and death and depicts it in a beautiful way.

Her most recent exhibitions includes in 2010 "Ides of March 2010: The 7th Biennial Exhibition" at ABC No Rio, New York, N.Y.; in 2009 "Collective Clarity" at Macy Gallery, Teachers College, New York, N.Y, "Sketchbook Show" at Orange Alley Project, San Francisco, CA; in 2008 "The Measure of a Few Notes" at Windows/PSII Gallery, Long Island City, NY.

Victoria Chaine Mendrzyk



Victoria Chaine Mendrzyk graduated with an MA Curating Contemporary Art from the Royal College of Art, a BA in Fine Art and History of Art from Goldsmiths College, University of London and a BA in Philosophy from University of Paris X, Nanterre. After being for 2 years the Gallery Manager of Laure Genillard Gallery, she now works as a free-lance contemporary art guide for private and corporate groups in London's museums and leading contemporary art galleries. For more information about her guided tours, please visit www.catil.co.uk

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SITE MAP

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'Women In Art' video on top by Philip Scott Johnson