



MONIQUE FRYDMAN
U-TOPIA OF COLOUR
Espace Muraille
Curator: Laurence Dreyfus



EXHIBITION : 28 January to 2 May 2015
Espace Muraille, Place des Casemates 5, Geneva
Tuesday to Friday, 10:00–12:00 and 13:00– 18:00
Saturday: 11:00–12:00 and 13:00–18:00 or by appointment
Public transport: Bus 3 and 5 to Athénée

Monique Frydman to take over *Espace Muraille*

GENEVA, 27 JANUARY 2015 – *Espace Muraille*, an exceptional new venue dedicated to contemporary art in French-speaking Switzerland, presents Monique Frydman's first personal exhibition in Geneva, 'Calvin's city': *U-Topia of Colour*. Caroline and Eric Freymond, both passionate art collectors and creators of the concept behind the venue, have given this French artist *carte blanche*, as the key figure in this exhibition, to fill the space with exhibits from 28 January to 2 May 2015. After the success of her monumental work *Polyptyque Sassetta*, created for the Louvre in 2013, Monique Frydman has put together a brand new exhibition for *Espace Muraille*, which will include a room dedicated to the colour blue as well as a new range of grosgrain fabrics. In total there will be some 40 works (paintings, grosgrain fabrics, drawings and installations) incorporating the major themes explored by Frydman: immersion in colour, the introduction of random elements, monumentality, the use of subtle pigment-rubbing techniques and more besides, which will invite audiences to 'open the windows to utopia'.

U-Topia of Colour

The exhibition at *Espace Muraille* raises the questions of place (Greek, *topos*) and particularly of the role of colour – but also of its absence (*U-Topia*). This question, raised in philosophy, poetry and painting, becomes a space in which to dream and be free – painting as an utopian context, and more particularly blue as a colour of the sky, of dreams and of the infinite.

This is the intention of Monique Frydman, the exhibition's principal artist, whose work has been featured in the world's greatest museums, from the Louvre to the Pompidou Centre via the 21st-Century Museum of Contemporary Art in Kanazawa, Japan. The artist has selected a series of paintings and installations for *Espace Muraille* including several created specially for the venue, in collaboration with Laurence Dreyfus, who commissioned this exceptional exhibition, and Caroline and Eric Freymond, passionate collectors from the start.

This rich display of works old and new provides a wonderful showcase for the talent and creativity of this fine artist.

From blue to monumental

A blue line guides visitors round the exhibition. The topmost room is dedicated to paintings, including two major works whose title – ‘Dancourt’ – refers to the site of the artist’s studio. A series of more recent works from 2013 follows, created by rubbing pigments and binders on linen: ‘Tabula 8’, ‘Tabula 9’, ‘Tabula 2’ and ‘Prédelle 12’ (*Predella 12*), a celebration of colour and its infinite palette.

Between the two levels, the work ‘Fenêtre sur cour’ (*Window onto the courtyard*) extends over the entirety of the staircase, a preparatory study for a folding screen created by the Manufacture des Gobelins and on loan from the Mobilier National.

Dialogue with Indian miniatures and creation of a room dedicated to the colour blue

At the foot of the staircase, the first room contrasts Monique Frydman’s drawings ‘Retour d’Inde’ (*Return from India*) with Indian miniatures from the 18th century, taken from the Freymond collection, in the spirit of dialogue and comparison that is so valued by both collectors.

The same space features the installation *L’Entrelacé* (‘Intertwined’), conceived specially for the venue. It is a mural sculpture made out of silken threads delicately intertwined with string, suspended to generate a subtle effect of weightlessness.

The second room, full of dominant blue colours, plays host to the recent series *Les Songes* (‘Dreams’, 2014): eight works depicting vertically uncoiled tarlatan (grosgrain) fabrics, stitched and stacked, playing on transparencies and the vividness of the blue shades. Facing them is the series *Les Albes* (2014), hung on frames of which one, dated 2005, indicates the beginning of Monique Frydman’s work on the tarlatans – ‘Albe 1’. The room is completed by a masterly painting dating from 1999, *Blue 2*, and also by *Saison avec Bonnard* (‘Season with Bonnard’, 2010).

Favoured materials

A display cabinet containing several carefully selected elements, such as string, wooden plugs and pastel blocks, alludes to the genesis of the works themselves and to the magic of the studio. For Caroline Freymond, ‘*Espace Muraille* takes on a completely new dimension with this project, that’s so personal, so intense and so profound and that we’ve built together. Between *topos* and *u-topos*, Monique Frydman has doused this space in colour and make-believe, giving it a unique colouring and an extra dimension, a kind of soul. She’s breathed liberty and life into the project.’

The evolution of techniques and materials used

An artist in colour, Monique Frydman’s development has evolved over a number of different stages.

Her return to painting at the end of the 1970s was signalled by large-scale drawings of the human form using black oil. From 1984, these techniques diversified and large formats began to appear on linen canvases. Charcoal combined with coloured forms gradually gave way to colours, whose shades ranged from light and sepia tones to more vivid hues. Frydman’s work became more tactile around the end of the decade: the canvas would be placed on the floor, moistened by adhesive paste, then the pigment would gradually permeate the fabric and the pastel colours would be rubbed in. This also marked a gradual shift towards monochrome painting: from 1994, Monique Frydman began to use the technique of placing string on the floor beneath her canvases to create an impression by means of aleatoric rubbing of the different elements.

In the middle of the 2000s, wallpaper and tissue would be inked using the process of screen printing. The artist’s attraction towards the monumental and towards architecture found expression at this point in a number of major projects including the ‘Saouzelong’ installation in a Toulouse Metro station. Various new materials made an appearance, such as Japanese paper, tissue paper and tarlatan, treated by the gradual permeation of colour and the use of random and aleatoric techniques.

The appeal of colour and the ethics of art

Laurence Dreyfus, curator of the *Espace Muraille* exhibition, declares herself won over by the artist’s ‘dances with forms and riotous play of colours’. She adds ‘what Monique Frydman’s painting is all about, mind you, is far more than the visual captivation of the audience; it aims to challenge the viewers in an ethical sense’.

Espace Muraille

Situated within the ancient fortifications in the heart of Geneva's old town, *Espace Muraille* aims first and foremost to be an open, vibrant venue, that enhances both the works it exhibits and the site itself. Temporary exhibitions, personal artistic projects and works from a rich permanent collection are displayed over two levels and 275 square metres.

PICTURES IN HD AND TEXTS

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PICTURES IN HD :

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Further information :

www.espacemuraille.com

www.moniquefrydman.com

www.laurencedreyfus.com

Information and access :

www.espacemuraille.com

info@espacemuraille.com

Espace Muraille, Place des Casemates 5, Geneva

Tel. +41 (0)22 310 4292

Fax +41 (0)22 310 4293

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Press department

pur pr, christine urfer, christine@pur-pr.com

Mobile : +41 78 619 05 00 Tel. : +41 21 320 00 10 Fax: +41 21 320 00 11