

Press release

May 6th
June 17th, 2023

Opening
Saturday, May 6th
from 11am to 8pm

Flirt

Hippolyte Hentgen

Semiose is delighted to welcome a selection of recent works by the duo Hippolyte Hentgen to be shown in its *Project Room*. This installation follows on from their solo show at the Artothèque de Caen (*Femme Pratique [Practical Woman]*, July – October, 2022) and mirrors their current participation in the group exhibition *Histoires Vraies [True Stories]*, curated by Franck Lamy at the MAC/VAL. In recent months, the duo has been working on a series of paintings, collages, installations and videos concerning their latest obsession: *Femme Pratique*, an iconic women's magazine from the 1970s. The magazine was torn between modernity and conservatism, on the one hand reeling out clichés, and on the other producing columns reflecting a difficult period for women's emancipation, despite the wind of freedom spawned by the recent May-68 revolution. Inspired by this series of magazines, Hippolyte Hentgen, has woven together an exploration of the paradoxes present in the publication with questioning on the subject of representation.

Under their fictitious pseudonym, the duo composed of Gaëlle Hippolyte and Lina Hentgen has set up a space for sharing and a tool for distancing the notion of authorship. As Claire Gilman¹ states: "The result [of their collaboration], works whose anonymity and arbitrariness situate them within a history of appropriation art even as they assume a more humble, human aspect than some of their flashier forbearers. Hippolyte Hentgen has made clear that far from foregrounding the bankruptcy of image-making in the face of consumer capitalism, they reject this thinking, much as they refuse the negation associated with theories of the death of the author. Rather, they claim that they "don't seek to remove traces of an author—or a subject—," so much as to allow ghosts of forgotten subjects and authors to reappear. Theirs is an ecumenical, egalitarian practice in which motifs lifted from multiple cultures, time periods and media mingle on the surface of the page with newfound energy and joy."

Gilman continues: "For Hippolyte Hentgen, it doesn't matter whether the lines are drawn by them, appropriated or formed through their collage arrangements. Rather, in their view, drawing is the terrain of collage and vice versa because both are fundamentally modest, refusing painting's seamlessness and revealing, instead, the effort that goes into each gesture and composition. Drawing is by nature anti-hierarchical according to the artists because it is open to the world and shifts depending on what is being expressed. At once precise and painstaking (the cartoon cloud and superhero), and executed with a few quick lines (the red notation marks), drawing is in the service of what it sets out to render. It is in this sense both fragile and uniquely generous."

1. Claire Gilman, "Hippolyte Hentgen's Humble Gestures" in the forthcoming catalog *L'Imagier*, co-edition Centre d'art Le Lait, Albi and L'Artothèque, Contemporary art center, Caen, 2023.