

JESSICA LAJARD
TEMPTED TO TOUCH

13.01.17 > 04.03.17



Jessica Lajard, Love Birds, 2014, Glazed ceramics, velvet and wool, variable dimensions,
Exhibition view of 59th Salon de Montrouge

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The works of Jessica Lajard engage with the moment, with the immediacy of perception.

Hers are images that strike the retina and seize the distracted eye; they seduce, and then retain.

What first draws the attention in the ceramics and mixed installations of Jessica Lajard, is the taste for materials and colors. A manifest pleasure of working the material and playing with textures is evident in her work. The reading is further completed with references to the domestic world or anecdotes from her own daily life. She subverts them with a destabilizing, sometimes biting, sense of humor. These hybrid images evoke the pop creations of Tom Wesselmann, such as for instance *The Seven Smokers*, a set of porcelain vases from Jingdezhen, topped by mouths holding burning cigarettes, whose motifs combine Chinese tradition and tobacco swirls. Her practice functions like a rebus in the sense that the understanding of the whole is based on each separate element and each separate element can alter the reading of the whole. Combinations with evocative powers such as the ones in *Eye Candy* offer a decidedly erotic vision of whipped cream and the interlocking of positive and negative forms. *Hangover*, on the other hand, is a rather visual and literal translation, with its remains of the night before 'hanging over' a lounge chair.

The ambivalence of senses, through a clever distortion of materials and textures, and the ambivalence of meaning, evident in both the personal and collective report, partake in the creation of a confusing but familiar universe.

As points out Jean de Loisy*, Jessica Lajard «always cleverly organizes the discomfort of our perceptions by using a language that seems so everyday that we cannot immediately grasp that it is a protest against the whole idea of aesthetics.»

*Director of Palais de Tolyo, Paris (FR)



The Seven Smokers, 2014-2016, Glazed porcelain and faience, Variable dimensions, Produced during the Post-Diploma Kaolin ENSA LIMOGES

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Eye candy, 2015, Limoges porcelain, Variable dimensions. Produced during the Post-Diploma Kaolin ENSA LIMOGES

« Sex and humor have long canoodled in the foreground of Jessica Lajard's art. This intimate coupling services a whimsical surrealism that flushes all aspects of the self-pleasuring universes implied by her sculptures. She collapses sensually alert organs of the human body onto a judicious selection of the forms of the world—organic and inorganic; animal, vegetable, and mineral; real and archetypal—so plausibly that the dreamlike realms she conjures assume an air of inevitability and come to tint our waking vision as well. Much as Georgia O'Keeffe did for flowers and desert bluffs, Lajard ensures that we can never again look at many things without the frisson induced by the erotic charge of her works. How will we encounter, say, a starfish and not think of the tongues into which she transformed the creature's arms in works such as *Lingus* (2016)? The starfish in *Lingus* carries on its back an upturned seashell—its tiny orifice framed by a scalloped frill, its presence, we somehow infer, sensed by the wriggling tongues—suggesting, like many of the artist's works, an entire comic and psychedelic narrative. Teasing incongruous elements into satisfying credibility, *Lingus* arouses a static object with the appearance of motion and seduces innocent denizens of the sea into an everlasting rehearsal of libidinous desire. That Lajard consummated this act in the unlikely medium of ceramic attests both to her formidable artistry and to the eventual yielding of recalcitrant earth to the ecstatic convulsions of polymorphous perversity.

Lajard's multipart installations cavort no less with such semantic comminglings. In *Love Birds* (2014), two monstrously enormous fingers cross in a gesture meant to attract good luck or to negate the offense of lying. At human scale, their gentle caress also recalls the familiar stance of lovers leaning against one another, as well as the slender swaying trunks of tropical palms. In fact, the artist fashioned the base of the fingers as tree trunks, the glossy pink glaze of skin abruptly changing to the rough thatch of bark. Two glossy green coconuts lie on the floor nearby, dropped like testicles from unseen foliage above, slightly misshapen olives spilled from the paramours' inhibition-loosening martinis. On the wall behind, an appliqued velvet tapestry pictures a schematic sunrise over crested waves, a postcard-perfect backdrop for a South Seas fantasy. Here, the barely repressed sexuality of Lajard's digits-cum-landscape oozes out even to the setting and the overlapping breakers begin to remind one of panting tongues or hanging breasts. The white wool tufts of foamy surf become somehow pubic in a spurt of Pop-Surrealist euphoria.

To render sea creatures, a vacation scene, plant life, Ming vases, or even modular objects of abstract design—as Lajard's fertile imaginings have done in other instances—at once grotesque, hallucinatory, and sexy by endowing them with human moves and appendages, seems remarkable enough. To also make them funny is practically a miracle.»

Joseph R. Wolin

Joseph R. Wolin, senior curator and critic based in New York, has organized exhibitions at Rubicon Gallery and The LAB in Dublin, and his exhibition of the work of Tom Molloy (2010) was seen at The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum (Connecticut, USA). He co-curated the exhibition *The Royal Art Lodge: Ask the Dust*, which traveled to six venues in four countries during 2003 – 2005. A frequent contributor to *The New Yorker* and *Time Out New York*, he teaches at Parsons School of Design.

IRÈNE LAUB

GALLERY

JESSICA LAJARD

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A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE ARTIST

Born in 1985 in Libourne (FR)

Lives and works in Seine-Saint-Denis (FR)

After growing up in the Caribbean Jessica Lajard moved to Paris to pursue her art studies at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts de Paris where she received her diploma in 2010. Jessica Lajard's work is a repertoire of shapes freely inspired by popular imagery which are often combined with sexual illusions that flirt with the grotesque. Sometimes thought out in advance through drawing, her installations spread out in space just like they did during the 59th Salon of Montrouge (2014) where the artist plunged us into a textured post-card scenery, where she blended textile, ceramic elements and marble in a fizzy, pop and surreal atmosphere of shells and crustaceans. For her nomination at the Révélations Emerige 2015 she captured us in a more intimate and domestic installation with Somewhere Where the Grass is Greener. She has participated to many group shows and fairs and, after her residency at Ensa Limoges, her work was shown at the Musée National Adrien Dubouché - Cité de la céramique Sèvres & Limoges. In 2016 she had two major solo shows, Soft Spot at La Traverse, the Contemporary Art Centre of Alfortville (FR) and Out of the Blue at the François Mitterrand Cultural Centre in Beauvais (FR).

COLLECTION

Blake Byrne Collection (USA)

FAIRS / EVENTS

- 2016 Yia Art Fair, Brussels (BE)
- 2014 Yia Art Fair #4, Paris (FR)
Salon de Montrouge, cur. by Stéphane Corréard, Montrouge (FR)

PRIZES

- 2015 Nominated for Bourse Révélations Emerige, Paris (FR)
- 2014 Bourse Diane de Polignac (FR)
Prix des Amies des Beaux Arts (FR)
Prix Kristal, 59th Salon de Montrouge (FR)

RESIDENCIES

- 2016 CAC La traverse, Alfortville (FR)
Résidence « Terre/ Céramique », École d'Art de Beauvais (FR)
- 2014 Programme Kaolin, Jingdezhen (CN)
- 2013 July - Manoir de Soisy, La Perrière (FR)

SHOWS (SELECTED)

- 2016 *Dans les cartons*, Biennale Emergence de Pantin, La Pavillon, Pantin (FR)
Soft Spot, CAC La traverse, Alfortville (FR)
Out of the Blue, CC F. Mitterrand, Beauvais (FR)
The Collection, Irène Laub Gallery (FEIZI), Brussels (BE)
Kao Export LTD Global Tour #3, Museum Adrien Dubouché, Cité de la Céramique Sèvres & Limoges, Limoges (FR)
Programme Kaolin, Ensa, Limoges (FR)
- 2015 *Empiristes*, bourse Révélations Emerige, Paris (FR)
- 2014 *Transit*, Bazaar Compatible Program, Shanghai (CN)
1320°, JCI exhibition space, Jingdezhen (CN)
- 2013 *Journées Patrimoine*, Manoir de Soisy, La Perrière (FR)
- 2012 *Dialogues*, Musée de Gargillesse (FR)
Fairy Tales, La Chapelle des Petits-Augustins, Paris (FR)
- 2011 *Le Vent d'Après*, Conservateur Jean de Loisy, Quais Malaquais, Paris (FR)
Parade, Abbaye Notre-Dame De Quincy, Centre d'Art de l'Yonne (FR)
- 2010 *Tea Time*, Atelier Jean Luc Vilmouth, ENSBA, Paris (FR)
- 2009 *Corridor*, Central Saint Martin's, London (UK)
- 2008 *Première Vue*, Passage de Retz, Paris (FR)

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THE GALLERY

UPCOMING

ART ROTTERDAM 2017

Booth n°77

Roeland Tweelinckx

08.02.17 > 12.02.17



EIRENE EFSTATHIOU & EDUARDO MATOS

Duo show

10.03.17 > 15.04.17

ART BRUSSELS 2017

Pascal Haudressy, Donato Piccolo,

Jonathan Sullam & Roeland Tweelinckx

20.04.17 > 23.04.17



PASCAL HAUDRESSY

Solo show

20.04.17 > 22.07.17

CONTACT

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Tue. Wed. Thu. Sat. 11am - 1pm and 2pm - 6.30pm

Fri. 2pm - 6.30pm

or by appointment

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