

Candy Floss Planet
NINA TOMÀS



Nina Tomàs, *Le bal des folles*, 2023, oil, coloured pencil, graphite, gold leaf and feathers on wood, 20 x 30 x 6 cm

In 2023, NASA's James Webb telescope reveals up close the incredibly fuzzy texture of the exoplanet WASP-107b, also affectionately known as "candy floss planet". This star with its strange outlines lies at the edge of the constellation Virgo...

Just as appealing and enigmatic is the eponymous exhibition from artist Nina Tomàs (1989°, FR/LU living in Brussels and in Luxembourg), with its indefinite countours, acid colours and slightly sultry overtones... A universe to be probed meticulously, which gradually reveals itself to the eye.

Recent works (2023-2024) presented here explore the numerous potentialities of painting, while opening up to other techniques such as drawing, embroidery, ceramics. Her work constantly changes, protean as the artist plays with the material components of her works such as the canvas, the stretcher or the support of her paintings which she diverts, turns upside down and metamorphoses as she pleases. A progressive conquest onto other plans, other possible spaces outside the imposed framework.

She challenges all the norms associated to this age-old medium, notably by the usage of historical references such as the allusion to Giotto's *Dream of Innocent III*. She re-actualizes the work by replacing the image of the pope by one of a young woman asleep, and the image of the Latran Cathedral to the Church of Saint-Barthélémy in Liège. This description of the *Songe* blends tangible references and with unbounded onirism. Elsewhere, a still life with salmon – a veritable allusion to flesh – evokes the work of Luis Meléndez (1716-1780) in the Prado. Vermeer, meanwhile, intrudes in *La grotte au rideau* through the detail of an open window... These pictorial influences have been modified and integrated into her own story, with images drawn from her daily life. A careful compilation of elements, both instinctive and critical.

Her work also intertwines repeated patterns of lines and even wefts with meticulous gesture and extreme patience. These are often derived from textile models which she combines with more complex narrative fragments. Hybridity in form and technique is found in her posture drawings and in embroideries that refer to the artist's daily practice of yoga. Another reference is superimposed, as the backbending postures – supposed to heal the nervous system – are in fact taken from photographs of women whose bodies have been torn apart by the disease revealed by Charcot. This French neurologist was head of the "hysterics department" at Paris' Hôpital de la Salpêtrière, where the controversial *Bal des folles* would take place every year, an echo of which can be seen here, inspired by a press cartoon by José Belon ("Le Monde illustré", 1890). This event mixed the allegedly alienated with the rest of Paris for one evening.

Between bodily movement and assertive femininity, *Mula bandha* evokes the beneficial contraction of the perineum muscles, a physical and energetic lock presented in the form of a keyhole to be opened, an allusion to the female sex that also appears on the *Lip Gloss* or *Lespugue*. Elsewhere more abstract evocations of a storm on the surface of Jupiter, or even lollipops rendered unidentifiable, becoming almost organic.

Diverse components of a work that, linked together give a unique outlook onto the diversity of a constantly changing society that becomes increasingly mixed by means of globalization. A world of possibilities to be scrutinized from afar, and then up-close, perpetually modifying our relationship to what is shown, to what is revealed.

– Catherine Henkinet
Curator and art critic A.I.C.A.















Nina Tomàs, exhibition view of «Hibernation» at MAAC, Brussels (BE), 2022

Born in 1989 in Béziers (FR)

Lives and works in Luxembourg (LU) and Brussels (BE)

«Each of Nina Tomàs' compositions is built up in layers or juxtapositions. Like the thread weaving a story that is both true and imaginary, the elements (characters, landscapes, objects, places) that are added one to the other are sometimes part of memory, a personal recollection, a journey, another culture, sometimes a dream or that intermediate state between wakefulness and sleep.

There are layers of figurations – always in bright colours – and as many layers of readings. But the whole is a story about a utopia, about “living together in the same space”. Nina has already conceived each painting as a habitat in which to bring events and people to life. And, in the gallery space, each painting clings to the other like the carriages of a mental train, like fragments to be reassembled from a shared experience “facing the world”.» – Marie-Anne Lorgé, Fête des sens, 2023

In 2020, the artist was nominated for the LEAP (Luxembourg encouragement for Artists Prize) and exhibited at Les Rotondes in Luxembourg and at Nosbaum-Reding Projects gallery in 2019. She has been selected for numerous residencies: in Brussels: Fondation Carrefour des arts (2018) where she exhibited in 2018 and 2020, at ISELP, at MAAC where she exhibited in 2022-23, at the Boghossian Foundation, at RAVI in Liège. She has taken part in numerous group shows in Brussels, Luxembourg and Marseille and is part of collections linked to these cities.

EXHIBITIONS (SELECTION)

- 2024 *Candy Floss Planet*, Irène Laub Gallery, Brussels (BE)
- 2023 Porte-ouverte exposition de fin de résidence, RAVI, Liège (BE)
Prix Médiatine, cur. France Deblaere, La Médiatine, Brussels (BE)
Hibernation, Galerie Nosbaum Reding Projects, Luxembourg (LU)
- 2022 *Hibernation*, Maison des Arts Actuels des Chartreux (MAAC), Brussels (BE)
Prix Jeunes Artistes du Parlement de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles, cur. Michael Dans, Le CNN, Namur (BE)
11 Years of Residencies, Carrefour des Arts, commissariat Laura Neve, Espace Vanderborgh, Brussels (BE)
- 2021 Porte ouverte-exposition de fin de résidence, ISELP, Bruxelles (BE)
Freigeister (Esprits libres). Fragments d'une scène artistique au Luxembourg et au-delà, MUDAM, Luxembourg (LU)
- 2020 *Underwater Love*, Fondation privée du Carrefour des Arts, Brussels (BE)
LEAP (Luxembourg Encouragement for Artists Prize), Rotondes, Luxembourg (LU)
- 2019 *Artagon Live*, Villa Radet, Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris (FR)
Abattre les atouts, avec Filip Harna, La Vallée, Brussels (BE)
Logiques du flou, Galerie Nosbaum Reding Projects, Luxembourg (LU)
- 2018 *Flux productif*, Fondation privée du Carrefour des Arts, Brussels
- 2017 *Jet Lag - Out of sync*, Triennale Jeune Création, commissariat Anouk Wies, Rotondes, Luxembourg (LU)
Biennale d'Art Contemporain, Centre Culturel Paul Barblé, Strassen, Luxembourg (LU)
- 2016 *Rêvez*, commissariat Eric Mézil, Collection Yvon Lambert, Avignon

PRIZES

- 2023 Province du Hainaut Prize, La Médiatine, Brussels (BE)
- 2017 Révélation Prize, Salon du CAL, Luxembourg (LU)
ESADMM Prize, Art-O-Rama, Marseille (FR)
Young Artist Prize, Contemporary Art Biennial, Strasse (LU)
- Prix du Public, Rendez-vous des Jeunes Plasticines, Saint-Raphaël (FR)

NINA TOMĀS

COLLECTIONS

Collection of the National Museum of History and Art, Luxembourg (LU)
Collection of the Culture Ministry, Luxembourg (LU)
Collection of the City of Luxembourg (LU)
Collection Fond Communal d'Art Contemporain, Marseille (FR)
Collection of the Carrefour des Arts Foundation, Brussels (BE)
Collection of the Crédit Agricole Brie, Picardie (FR)
Collection of the Paul Ricard Society, Île des Embiez (FR)



Nina Tomàs, *La voix d'un souvenir*, 2020, huile, acrylique, crayons, collage et feuille d'or sur toile, 100 x 80 cm



Nina Tomàs, *Le songe*, 2023, huile, crayons de couleur, graphite, feuille d'or et collage sur bois, céramique, 40 x 40 x 40 cm (détail)

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