

LUCILE LITTOT

NEW GALERIE

Selected press

Diamants sur canapé

Jennifer Piejko - Streaks of tigers and prides of lions never cross paths in the wild, except for the Gir Forest in India, and even then, no naturally mated ligers or tigons have ever been found. The liger exists only in captivity, in arranged pairing. They virtually never reproduce, and have no conservation value for zoos and reserves; they are essentially bred for display only. Is what you make just for your pleasure and gaze alone? What do you want to make, or have you made, as your liger—an extravagant creature, deserted in the world just for you?

Lucile Littot - Within "On a Wagner's tune", my latest series of paintings, the wild animal's figure appears, skinned and promised to tragic endings. At the very worst the feline's skin will ornate walls as a trophy, whether at the Chateau de Chantilly or in Donald Trump's home. At best, it'll sit underneath Brigitte Bardot's naked body while she murmurs "and my butt cheeks? do you like my butt cheeks?" while she lays on a white bear skin in Godard's 1963 classic, *Le Mepris*. Even better; underneath Endymion's diaphanous and sleeping body, both divine and bathing in light in Anne-Louis Girodet's painting (c1791). After all, destiny is destiny. In "It's my party and you'll die if I want you to.", the last video I made in L.A and was part part of my last solo show in June at New Galerie in Paris, the plot arises in one of my

fictional kingdom. I like to use the term "my kingdoms", after Henri Michaux who navigates Ailleurs's artificial kingdoms, some of which are built upon children's pupil and stretching scars visible with the naked eye. I am the queen of this kingdom. Destiny, after all, is destiny. Hidden under the furs and the patent leather costumes of Doctor B, the project's main character, inspired by The Countess of Bathory, a blood-thirsty aristocratic slaughterer, obsessed with the idea of eternal youth and its terrifying and pathetic advertisements on Doctor Timothy Kelley's website from "O.C." Doctor B, a modern day vampire, doesn't have to hide until the evening comes anymore to suck up his victims's blood and souls. Under the "Lalaland" blue sky, promoting the rule of a ghastly and artificial beauty, she satiates her sadistic pulsions during her surgical procedures on these cloned creatures. Half little girls, half dolls, their fresh blood serves as a youth elixir to Doctor B's cult. Her monstrous beauty queens, offered on golden plates and luxurious leopard's skins, have been turned into guinea pigs and contrary to the wild animal, have nothing authentic to them anymore. The kingdom's operating suites certainly recall Neuschwanstein's. A dark romantic castle built by Louis II of Bavaria inspired by the foolish love he had for Wagner's music, it then inspired Walt Disney's castle for its Disneyland amusement park. I envision reality as a superb staging. The sublime as a protective force. The eccentric animal I drag in as I step out of my apartments on "Bd De La Chapelle" would never walk to the bakery without wearing its black patent leather Miu Miu boots with their strass studded heels, as I always carry this adage in mind : "Always dress like it's the last day of your life". For instance in De Palma's 1973 movie "Sister", Dominic's lover is wearing a pristine 80' style suit as he brings along her birthday cake right before she stabs him. Destiny, after all, is destiny. At the moment, I ignore if I'm the endangered skinned animal or the frantically blooming yet already staled flowers. But if one day you decide to place me in a zoo or in a circus, make sure you leave the cage's door ajar so I could assault the tamer and devour him with love.



Jennifer Piejko - Electroshock or absinthe? Sound bath or hypnosis?

Lucile Littot - I've been undergoing years of hypnosis sessions which I believe is the only therapy that will work for me. However I had to stop when a late hollywood celebrity's spirit layered over mine for a few hours and refused to leave my body. As interesting as this experience was, I don't think platinum blond is my color. I stand against electroshocks, unless they erupt from passion. One of my closest friend, right after entering Notre Dame church riding his Harley Davidson as an hommage to the late woman of his life, was interned in an asylum and underwent dozens of electroshocks. I am saddened by how poetic acts are viewed as madness strokes and how consequently a man is interned and abased for trying to converse with angels.

Jennifer Piejko - Who were you in your most recent past life ? And in your next life ? Have you ever portrayed any of these figures in your work ?

Lucile Littot - The last parisian psychic I have seen told me that I could have been " La Princesse de Lamballe" in my last past life!!! I was pretty honored, I have to say! But According to one of Los Angeles's psychic, I was once a Madam during the 18th century. I held my practice within a dojo and walked my clients all the way up where my ladies were laying on Rococo style beds covered with gold and satin. According to him, it explained the stature within the mise en scene within my paintings and installations. It is true that my characters often look like they came out straight from hell to fly up to heaven. I've always been fascinated with women who prostitute themselves. I've met several of them actually. They're queens. I remember once, when I was a kid and came back from Paris with my mother to go back to the west side suburbs, we would cross the Bois de Boulogne. Unsure what my impressions were by the sight of these half-naked, latex suits wearing women under the gloom of the yellow street lights. Once, a transvestite with an epehebe body and made up like an Egyptian princess, bent over the car's seat window. It might be one of the first time I felt the very essence of a wild beauty, The kind that makes my heart sink. I perhaps even had desire for the first time. I feel that all these characters I've crossed path with and who moved me with an electric sight have become sublimated and transcript with a figurative approach in my work. They exist in me and that's a way for them to be legendary and maybe the grand dramatic person I am want them to belong to me forever. If I have to be re-incarnated, I would like to be a standard black poodle. Having caviar biscuits and get cuddles from gold wearing hands by the sea-view swimming pool, in Capri. I just love dogs, I can't help it.

Jennifer Piejko - Are you painting or molding to reveal something or someone, or do they reveal themselves to you only when you're finished? Are they etchings or tea leaves?

Lucile Littot - I envision my projects like bits of scenario that are also labyrinths : in my work exists this obsession of the mise en scene and the fantastic, I create elements that suggest an epic self-centered fiction by mixing emotions that are mine to cinematographic and literary references. The ceramic pineapple that was dipping in a plate of milk in "J'ai tout vu, j'ai tout su et j'ai tout oublie Song N.2 Felicita" was a nod to Georges Bataille. "On a Wagner's tune" is mainly inspired by Malaparte's novel " The Skin". My obsession for his baroque style and the excerpt from the chapter "The Wigs", where the Napoli prostitutes made themselves factice sexes in red satin laced with their peroxidized blond hair to please american soldiers, have helped resurfaced this serie of painting. The project then moves towards visuals references from the great filmmaker Brian De Palma's manierist work as well as Gialos Italian movies belonging to Brava or Argento, both evoking the spirit of Lady Bathory ; also the plastic's surgeon who could be an evil character from a cartoon or a B-list fiction. As a sort of Cadavre Exquis, the main and real character, full of sentiments, is masked under different layers of skin. Wether they are mythological characters or historical ones, my heroes, both male and female, become chimeras and hybrid creatures, laying naked under the operation suite's lights. Etching, closer to a visible yet profound mark, is the comparison which seem the most appropriate to my symbolic. This ceramic's installation "Vestige d'une cagole aristocrate", for instance, represent a faience doll playing the violon and whose arms and body are covered in tattoos. It's both an hommage to Boticelli's Venus, Moustier's dinnerware which abhorred my great auntie's southern table in Nice who was addicted to the champagne of " La rotonde du Negresco" ; And The gypsies from The amusement park of my holidays childhood's village on the French Riviera. I spent every summer without missing out on a night at the Rainbow and the ghost train. The amusement park and its rides give me great vertigo. And when "you're my heart, you're my soul" is booming from the garage spray-painted speakers underneath the rainbow neons, the same shivers go through my entire spine.



Jennifer Piejko -What is your 2118 fantasy?

Lucile Littot - Mars attacks baby. And I've got the chihuahua already.

Jennifer Piejko - Who would you follow around in secret?

Lucile Littot - It's not my style to spy on people, but I'd say Dalida, among the blossomed tombs and the enigmatic cats of the Montmatre cemetery or maybe one of the characters in the Tales of Hoffmann (1982). I am always up for new adventures.

Jennifer Piejko - You have selective amnesia—what are you going to forget about yourself to set yourself free?

Lucile Littot - Early on chose for my work an intimate and exhibitionist path. That's how I conceive art, otherwise I just don't see the point. But while I cross-dress my feelings I blur the lines. Then, these emotions don't belong to me anymore and the catharsis due to my "selective amnesia" offer the viewers a gentle slap of truth. I believe the artists I admire also work that way : Karen Kilimnik, the immutable Mike Kelley or Louise Bourgeois.

Jennifer Piejko - In Goethe's "The Sorcerer's Apprentice" (1787), a young student gets tired of moving water pail by pail late into the night, and nonchalantly learns and casts a spell on a nearby slouching broom to do it for him. The student—Mickey Mouse in 1940's Fantasia —loses control of the situation quickly, since he doesn't know magic well enough to stop the broom, and axing it down only multiplies it. What spirals out of your own hands and gets away from you within your practice, when you're alone in your studio late at night?

Lucile Littot - I create works in a similar way they make those magic potions by calling supernatural forces. It's an attempt to fix what was broken or doesn't exist yet. I still don't own a magic stick but it is true I'd love to have the dressing table featured in my installation named "J'ai tout vu, J'ai tout su et j'ai tout oublié Song N.2 Felicità" fly away and sing "Sara perche ti amo". Or the fragmented tea set getting back together and carrying my breakfast to bed like in Cocteau's 1946 movie, The Beauty and the beast. The studio is clearly part of a ritual. I'm still only a « pretty witch » but it can only takes one surprising turn of events or several years to become a skilled magician. When the magic doesn't work and the formula fails, one can probably witness me running in circles around the Buttes Chaumont to avoid getting hysterical! When it is working though and the adversity installed by the creation is transforming itself in divine and ecstatic moments, one would, much like the erotomaniac, never want to let go of the endless pursuit of carnal pleasures inside the cosmos.

KALEIDOSCOPE



LUCILE LITTOT (FRENCH, B. 1985, LIVES IN PARIS AND LOS ANGELES) IS A NOMINEE FOR THE 2018 PRIX DE LA FONDATION D'ENTREPRISE RICARD. HER WORK IS CURRENTLY ON VIEW AT ÉCOLE MUNICIPALE DES BEAUX-ARTS IN GENNEVILLIERS, FRANCE. IMAGES COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND NEW GALERIE, PARIS. PHOTO CREDIT: VINCENT GIRARDOT

LUCILE LITTOT
NEW GALERIE

LUCILE LITTOT: Cherry Lips Black Humor



Words by Jennifer Piejko

Porcelain dolls outfitted as French maids, their golden eyes and cherry lips bright and vacant, undeterred even though they have been tossed in the corner; a syringe to the neck of 1978's Miss Hungaria; a three-tiered wedding cake adorned with as many bows as drops of new blood; a personal theater the size of a jewelry box, dressed in daffodil velvet and onyx ostrich feathers, looping a commercial for one carnal bloodbath of a facelift—these are some of the elements on view in the cellar of Lucile Littot's exhibition "Sur un Air de Wagner" at New Galerie in Paris. Littot has described the characters she depicts as ascending from Hell into Heaven, so it feels promising that on the floor above, just up the winding stone staircase, a roomful of paintings each depict a *jumelle*, or twin, of a different flavor: if you think blondes have more fun, there are a couple here for you; if *rousse* is more your style, she's got you covered. The exhibition was dreamt up at the Grand Hotel et des Palmes in Palermo, a storied inn where Richard Wagner wrote his last significant work and Raymond Roussel passed away. She held onto the standard-issue room slippers and worked in them when she returned to her Chateau Rouge studio; the paint-splattered terrycloth slides now rest at the top stair.

The multimedia artist, who lives between Paris and Los Angeles, has been creating her own Baroque era, pushing the movement's helpless ornateness to its very limits, one so adorned with pink satin bows, operatic pitches, scalloped and gilded porcelain frames and lacquered vanities that it begins to collapse under its own weight, breaking through into another realm entirely. Minor components of recent technologies ground many of these installations, reinforcing

the visual style of Rococo as one strictly of the artist's imagination and tendencies, as opposed to historical interpretation or reenactment theater. The video *It's My Party and You'll Die If I Want You To* (2018), an infomercial starring the artist as the Countess Elizabeth Báthory of Hungary—rumored to have bathed in the blood of virgins to maintain her youthful appearance, torturing and killing hundreds of beautiful girls in the process—who is now a rogue plastic surgeon perfecting her technique delivering eternal youth on a cast of friends in an estate deep in the Hollywood Hills. Centered in a glittering platform, flanked by a pair of doll-sized candelabras and framed by heavy yellow velvet drapes held back by rich tasseled rope, the film itself is served nakedly on an iPad mini, its lightning cable conspicuously plugged into an outlet a meter below.

The immortal quality of her practice, however, comes from the spirits her works continue to host. The neo-noir *ÉRÉBE* (2013) has the goddess Aphrodite-Bunny, nightmare sequences, and unsolved crimes in the shadow of the Hollywood sign. "Madness Grandiosa" (2014), her exhibition staged in an abandoned home in Westwood, Los Angeles, was anchored by a series of precarious installations held together by the hardened wax of burning candles snuffed out. *Am I the Most Beautiful of the Kingdom?* (2013) congealed a Victorian mask, ballet slippers, dolls' eyes, and a burned cake topper holding the phrase *I Love You*. The cherubic turns sinister—suffocating—while the manicured becomes bloodthirsty and covetous. "Black humor is one of the facets of my work that is very important to me," says Littot. "It is always better to laugh at the pain so it does not consume you." **K**

L'artiste glam-trash Lucile Littot revisite la légende de la comtesse Dracula

Par Julie Ackermann

A Paris, l'artiste Lucile Littot s'inspire de la légende de la première serial killeuse recensée de l'histoire, la comtesse hongroise Báthory. Une expo rococo et cinématographique.

La New Galerie, dans le 11^e arrondissement, de Paris, a le don de dénicher des perles rares. Certains de ses artistes semblent parfois complètement à côté de la plaque mais en même temps visent si juste. Cette année, la galerie invitait le project space Exo Exo et exposait Anna Solal et ses objets-déchets réparés. En ce moment, la jeune artiste Lucile Littot, basée entre Paris et Los Angeles, y présente sa première expo solo. Un univers si excentrique et personnel qu'il s'apparenterait presque à de l'art brut ou dit "des fous".

L'insurrection des poupées rebelles

Jusqu'au 21 juillet, une joyeuse colonie de jeunes filles, tout droit sorties d'une aristocratie consanguine, ont établi domicile à la New Galerie. Elles se présentent le visage serti d'or ou peinturluré comme des clowns ou bien prennent la forme de fragiles poupées en porcelaine plus ou moins monstrueuses (une a d'ailleurs deux têtes).

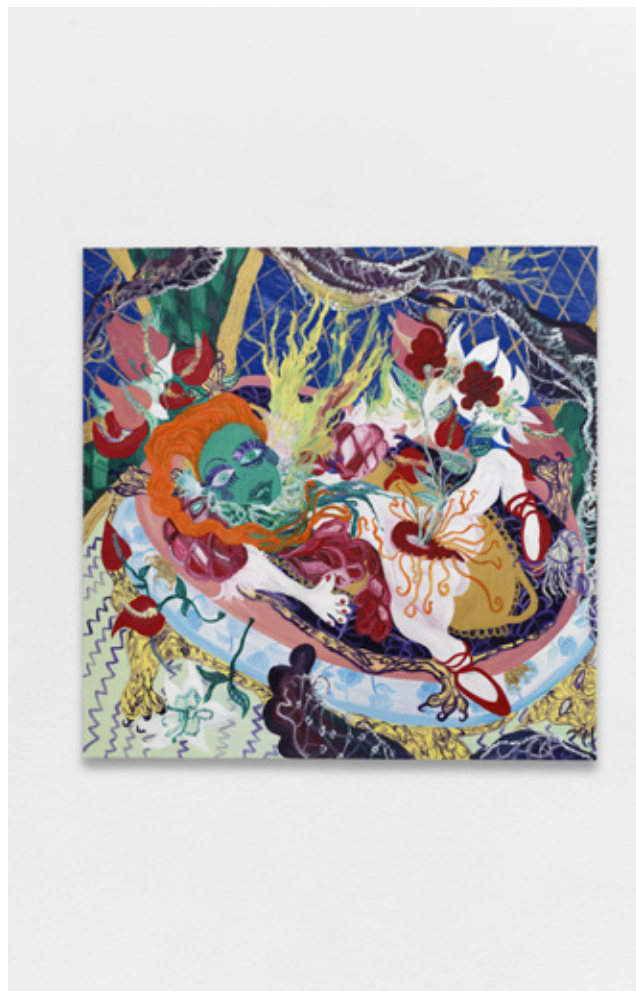
Lors du vernissage, l'artiste présente ses petites Barbie vulgaires comme des clones créés par Elisabeth Báthory. D'après la légende, cette comtesse hongroise du XVI^e siècle aurait assassiné une multitude de jeunes filles en fleur afin de recueillir leur sang et de s'y baigner pour sa cure de jouvence. Lucile Littot a alors imaginé assimiler cette serial killer à une chirurgienne des temps modernes. Sauf que dans sa réécriture, les filles – participant à des concours de beauté pour survivre – se révoltent contre leur oppresseur. Elles assassinent la comtesse, gisante sur un établi dans l'expo, des seringues de sang-groseille plantées dans sa peau blafarde.

Télé-réalité, XVIII^e et vengeance

Dans les restes de ce labo des tortures féminines, les jeunes divas clonées, plus ou moins ratées, pleureuses ou inertes, ont les jambes écartées, adoptent des postures lascives, ou prennent tout bonnement feu. C'est une histoire alternative de révolution et de vengeance que Lucile Littot nous raconte. Et sans filtre. Salle d'opération en décombres, fabrique de rêves de beauté brisés, la galerie New Galerie devient le lieu d'expériences cathartiques. Elle apparaît alors comme le décor d'une émission de télé-réalité comme les US savent si bien en produire, à savoir celui d'une histoire de lutte pour la "fame", le bling et la jeunesse, avec tout le malaise, la monstruosité et la souffrance qui y sont inhérents.

Féru de Versailles, d'opéra et de cinéma, Lucile Littot exacerbe alors les traits, les couleurs et les féminités pour amener l'assouvissement du fantasme à un point de non-retour. Car cette histoire de comtesse vampire a bien quelque chose à dire de nos sociétés obsédées et royautés contemporaines. Pour autant, l'artiste ne porte pas de jugement moral à l'égard de cet Hollyweird version XVI^e siècle. Elle choisit la tendresse. Parce que c'est beau un maquillage qui coule, c'est beau d'être atrophié et déglugé.

A travers tous ces scénarios (à venir à la Fondation Ricard, a priori quelque chose autour de la princesse de Lamballe), Lucile Littot sublime autant la déchéance que le travestissement. Elle célèbre ces magnifiques fêlures: victimes ou bourreaux, celles et ceux qui se sont cassé les ailes à vouloir s'approcher du soleil. Car, sous des augures gore, il règne bien dans cette expo un peu de cette ambiance magique et sombre que propage Norma Desmond, star déchue du muet dans le film *Sunset Boulevard*. Lucile Littot ou les misères et splendeurs des vies dominées par les fantômes.





LE FESTIN DES AMAZONES ou "Smile you are on camera", 2016, J'ai tout vu, j'ai tout su et j'ai tout oublié Song N.3 Hotel California, Les Bains-Douches, Alençon | Stoneware, glaze, iridescent, pink, purple and gold IRL's lustres, gold leaves, Customized bed with mirrors, oil paint and ostrich feathers, Fabrics, disco balls, streamers, candles, mirrors, glitters, screen, open face lights | Installation details

UN CERTAIN

CHAOS

VISUEL RYTHME
POURTANT TES
ŒUVRES : PEINTURES
SURCHARGÉES, MISES
EN SCÈNE ÉCLATÉES,
SCULPTURES PRESQUE
MUTANTES... CELA
RÉVÈLE-T-IL UNE FORME
DE PROTESTATION ?

Ma pratique artistique, par l'humour noir et le nihilisme qui s'en dégagent est une traduction sauvage et incisive de ma génération. Tel le scalpel qui entre dans les lèvres déjà botoxées pour en dessiner les nouveaux contours. [...] On associe souvent ma peinture au mouvement "Bad Painting" et je le prends très clairement comme un compliment.



CAPRICCI (XVIII-XVIII-65), 2017, Nothing to Hide, Sans Titre (2016), Paris | Porcelain, glaze, porcelain paint, dress, lishes, fake diamonds, satin standards, velvet bows, chairs, plaster, fake candles, porcelain lilies and bows, oysters, wax, glitters | Installation view and details



DOLORES 2028 N.3, 2016 | Oil on canvas, glitters, mirror paper | 120x90cm | courtesy of the artist

TES INSTALLATIONS
RASSEMBLENT LES
SYMBOLES MATÉRIELS
DE LA BOURGEOISIE :
MOBILIER BAROQUE,
APPARATS VERSAILLAIS,
ORNEMENTS DORÉS ...
QUE CONSTRUIT CET
ENVIRONNEMENT
PLASTIQUE DANS
LA LOGIQUE DE TON
TRAVAIL ?

Cela appartient à un monde imaginaire et singulier. Un monde réinventé. Il reprend des codes et des symboles empruntés à l'aristocratie ou encore aux années folles plutôt qu'à la bourgeoisie. Certainement car ils créent les décors parfaits pour que mes princesses décadentes, beautés outragées, créatures, puissent se languir, comme il se doit, dans leurs habits de lumière. *Ludwig* ou *Le crépuscule des dieux* (1972, Luchino Visconti) est d'ailleurs l'un de mes films-références en matière de décors offerts à la nécessité de fantastique et d'illusion pour combler

les fantasmes d'un être.

LA

NOTION DE KITSCH EST-ELLE IMPORTANTE POUR TOI ?

Je n'aime pas le mot kitsch car c'est en premier lieu un mot snob pour définir ce que devrait être l'idée du mauvais goût face au bon, bien que je comprenne qu'à la vue de mon fétichisme voué aux objets vous pouvez le souligner ! C'est plutôt la notion de comment le 'beau' devient 'laid' qui m'intéresse. Ce qui suggère très certainement l'idée du démodé, et avec laquelle je joue, ce sont ces objets du quotidien que je mêle à mes céramiques dans mes installations. Comme par exemple un lit Louis XV 1960 repeint, couvert de miroirs et saupoudré de paillettes. Ou encore un service à thé éclaté en mille morceaux et qui reprenait le fameux titre italodisco *sara perque ti amo* écrit, avec les morceaux cassés de la porcelaine sur le pouf d'une coiffeuse made in *Alice in wonderland*. Je m'inspire beaucoup du folklore des contes de fées, de passages de films ou de romans pour transformer mes propres souvenirs. Comme un labyrinthe vers des pièces secrètes. [...] J'aime le malaise révélateur d'émotions dans une oeuvre d'art.

**J'aime les choses
qui dérangent et
bousculent.**

231

LA PERFORMANCE EST-ELLE UN MÉDIUM QUI TE PERMET DE DÉMONTRER D'AVANTAGE DE CHOSES, CONTRAIREMENT À UNE ŒUVRE STATIQUE ?

Mais c'est justement cela la force de la peinture ! Tout en étant statique, elle peut provoquer des vertiges immenses et je crois que ma peinture est plutôt crierde que muette. Je vois la performance comme un événement festif, car c'est le moment où je me maquille, me costume et me travestis à l'instar de mes personnages. L'installation devenant la scénographie du spectacle. En party-girl que je suis, l'effet d'excitation que me procurent la musique et le jeu de rôle est pour moi très jouissif, et il me permet d'exprimer par une autre forme artistique le même lyrisme que dans la peinture, la céramique, la vidéo et l'installation.





MINI | MAXI

LUCILE LITTOT

par Maxime Gasnier

Photo - Vincent Grandjean
Direction - Lucile Littot
Conception - val de val de val de val
"Sun" 1940 & Lolo Couture 1970,
Les Nouveaux de Bobolou



THE FIGURE OF THE "DECADENT PRINCESS", WHETHER SHOWN EXPLICITLY OR THROUGH THE USE OF METONYMY, IS OMNIPRESENT IN YOUR WORK. WHY IS THIS?

I have a great deal of love and compassion for tormented divas.

The women who are, or who have been, part of my life are like characters from a novel, taking on the role of femme fatale, deviant ingénue or drama queen. Women with character, anyway. Recently, I met Lana Del Rey at Chateau Marmont. I told her that I mostly listen only to her music when I'm at work in the studio. She was delighted and

asked me which songs were my favourites. I said: *High by the Beach*, *Ultraviolence* and *Gods and Monsters*. In reply, she simpered: "Oh! So you're a bad girl!" Doesn't that just about sum it up?

WOULD YOU SAY YOUR ART IS FEMINIST?

I'd like to quote the great Vicky de Sainte-Hermine: "Beyond the macho and feminist fantasies which always result from frustration is the archangel dream... The androgynous being...". The ritualisation of femininity is inherent in my work, but it doesn't aim to be feminist propaganda. My work doesn't raise women's power as an issue: rather, it demonstrates their power. It is taken in, assimilated and adapted through my paintings and installations in a surreal, expressionist way. My last series of paintings, *DOLORES 2028*, shows female warriors. Amazonian women inspired by Middle Age and Renaissance paintings. Romantic metaphors of fighters relentlessly pursuing the war of emotions. My work is full of romance. It's passionate and painful; cruel and sweet at the same time. *Prenom Carmen* could well be my next incarnation for the next series.

WHAT ROLE DOES THE DOMINANT PASTEL PALETTE PLAY IN YOUR ARTISTIC JOURNEY? WHAT DOES IT REPRESENT FOR YOU?

It came about from the pink titles and candid, bright voice of Mia Farrow in the credits to *Rosemary's Baby* (1968, Polanski). I work in series, and, after a darker, blacker period, these acid colours emerged. It's a bit like an overly acidic sweet which makes your tongue sting but you can't spit it out because the waiter has kindly brought it to you with the bill (laughs). I like to say that this transition to pastel colours represents the rococo overflowing onto

my baroque side. Or maybe time spent in the Los Angeles sunshine and my obsession with Zweig's biography of Marie Antoinette also count for something. At the moment I mainly look at Impressionists-Realists. I was shocked by Van Gogh's *The Starry Night* and *Sunflowers* when I saw them again recently. I'd like to take up intimate landscapes again. To paint little details and still lifes, while preserving the evil "clownish" side somewhere between devil and light which I so adore. A little like Goya. Some of his paintings, like *The Straw Manikin*, have always made me think of screenshots from avant-garde horror films.

YOUR WORK IS IMBUED WITH A CERTAIN VISUAL CHAOS: PAINTINGS PACKED WITH MATERIAL, EXPLODED STAGING, SCULPTURES WHICH ARE ALMOST MUTANT... DOES THIS SUGGEST A FORM OF PROTEST?

My artistic practice is a wild and incisive translation of my generation, thanks to the black humour and nihilism which emerge. Just like the scalpel which cuts into already botoxed lips to create new contours. [...] My paintings are often associated with the "Bad Painting" movement and I take that as a clear compliment.





MINI MAXI

YOUR INSTALLATIONS BRING TOGETHER THE MATERIAL SYMBOLS OF THE BOURGEOISIE: BAROQUE FURNITURE, VERSAILLES POMP, ORNAMENTS... WHAT DOES THIS ENVIRONMENT BRING TO THE FLOW OF YOUR WORK?

It comes from a unique, imaginary world. A reinvented world. It takes up traditions and symbols borrowed from the aristocracy or the Roaring Twenties rather than from the bourgeoisie. They certainly create the perfect setting for my decadent princesses, outraged beauties and creatures to languish just as they should, clothed in light. *Ludwig or The Twilight of the Gods* (1972, Luchino Visconti) is for me a benchmark film for decor showing how the fantastic and illusion are needed to satisfy a being's fantasies.

IS THE CONCEPT OF KITSCH IMPORTANT TO YOU?

I don't like the word "kitsch" because it's a snobby word for what should be the idea of bad taste in comparison with good taste, although I understand that my fetishism for objects makes you mention it! I'm more interested by



I like things that disturb and jostle.

IS PERFORMANCE A MEDIUM THAT ALLOWS YOU TO SAY MORE THAN A STATIC WORK?

But that's painting's exact strength! Though static, it can really shake things up and I think my painting is vocal rather than silent. I see performance as a celebratory event, as it's the time when I put on make up and get dressed up like my characters. The installation becomes the stage set for the show. And as the party girl that I am, music and role playing have a joyful, exciting effect on me and let me express the same lyricism as in the paintings, ceramics, videos and installations through another artistic form.

• CREDITS •

the idea of how what is "beautiful" becomes "ugly". Which certainly suggests the idea of the old-fashioned, which I play with. I mix everyday objects with my ceramics in my installations. So, for example a Louis XV 1960 bed gets repainted, covered with mirrors and sprinkled with glitter. Or a tea set gets exploded into a thousand pieces, with reference to the famous Italo disco track *Sarà perché ti amo* written with the broken porcelain pieces on an Alice in Wonderland-style pouffe. I take inspiration from the folklore of fairy tales, film scenes and novels to transform my own memories. Like a labyrinth to secret rooms. [...] I like the discomfort in a work of art which reveals emotions.

1. DOLORES 2028 N.6, 2016 | Oil on canvas, glitters, mirror paper | 190x240cm | courtesy of the artist
2. LE FESTIN DES AMAZONES ou "Smile you are on camera", 2016, "J'ai tout vu, j'ai tout vu et j'ai tout oublié Song H.S Hotel California, Les Bains Douches, Alençon | Stoneware, glass, iridescent, pink, purple and gold 200's lustres, gold leaves. Customised bed with mirrors, oil paint and ostrich feathers. Fabrics, disco balls, strainers, candies, mirrors, glitters, soven, open face lights | Installation details
3. DOLORES 2028 N.3, 2016 | Oil on canvas, glitters, mirror paper | 120x190cm | courtesy of the artist
4. CAPRICCI (XVIII-XVIII-85), 2012, Nothing to Hide, Sans Titre (2016), Paris | Porcelain, glass, porcelain paint, dress, lashes, blue diamonds, satin standards, velvet bows, charms, plaster, fake candies, porcelain files and boxes, oysters, wax, glitters | Installation view and details



2.



4.

Slash

LUCILE LITTOT — GALERIE ALAIN GUTHARC

— By Guillaume Benoit

L'univers de Lucile Littot, née en 1985, convoque des figures féminines tragiques dans des mises en scènes, peintures, vidéos et installations où le grotesque se fait l'écho d'une décadence splendide, où les fastes gardent les stigmates des brûlures de l'âme et révèlent des failles bien plus profondes qu'un simple jeu de princesses et de monstres.

Lucile Littot — FlashBack @ Alain Gutharc Gallery from March 11 to April 15.

Lucile Littot déploie un monde qui pervertit les codes du beau pour en révéler la monstruosité, à l'image de la multitude de vocabulaires esthétiques qu'elle emploie (romantisme, classicisme, rococo, etc.). À travers des médiums divers tels que la peinture, l'installation, la vidéo ou la performance, son univers aussi magnétique que répulsif ne cesse d'articuler les paradoxes : enfance et âge adulte, romantisme et tragédie, déguisement et nudité, ornement et approximation. Une certaine naïveté assumée, une part de fascination franche pour le costume et le maquillage qui voit l'artiste elle-même se mettre en scène pour répéter des images qui la marquent, pour s'approprier cette expérience, elle qui vit entre Paris et Los Angeles, à proximité de ces figures rêvées d'un Hollywood des années 40-50.

C'est peut-être la part d'enfance, toujours accompagnée d'un romantisme noir et d'une somme de références impressionnante qui est le plus touchant dans cet œuvre qui emprunte des codes épars avec notamment cette façon d'assumer l'approximation, un baroque punk qui joue de son kitsch pour aller à l'essentiel, le plaisir de manipuler la matière et de produire de l'image. Le titre de l'exposition lui-même, FlashBack, renferme cette triple notion de retour dans le temps, d'une vie rêvée sous les feux des projecteurs et de l'urgence aveuglante du désir. Un triptyque ravageur que met en scène avec sobriété cette présentation à la galerie Alain Gutharc, qui permet d'appréhender plus en profondeur cette joie créatrice qui dépasse la part de régression assumée pour affirmer sa cohérence tapageuse.

Lucile Littot déploie dans ses installations des références constantes à l'histoire, la littérature et à la mythologie, explorant des imaginaires qu'elle poursuit de ses avatars, à l'image de la série Dolores 2028, présentée ici, un ensemble de toiles qui met en scène un avatar de la Lolita de Nabokov et la Lola de Jacques Demy. Dans cette litanie baroque, le goût des strass et des dorures sonne comme une plongée au cœur d'un cerveau échappé, victime jouisseuse de l'apparat nobiliaire et des fastes jusqu'à l'épuisement, l'écoeurement. En organisant un rapport troublant entre le jeu d'enfant et le tabou du sexuel, le désir et l'imaginaire se fondent en compositions outragées et chaotiques. Des silhouettes inquiétantes et torturées se dessinent où l'organique se mêle à l'artificiel ; les orifices deviennent accessoires, couronnes ostentatoires posées sur ces yeux qui nous fixent. Ces femmes alanguies aux contours soupçonnés ou figurés noyées sous la masse de paillettes et de pastels n'ont rien d'une vision prude et désincarnée. Elles adossent l'onirisme et la naïveté à la perturbation des sens, au voile de confusion qui unit désir et objet du désir. Elles s'ébattent surtout au cœur d'un carrousel peuplé d'animaux qui les enlacent, les embrassent, se lovent et se confondent finalement en tourbillons et sarabandes biscornues. Les membres en tous sens, les organes se perdent en plumes, plantes, pieux perforants et velours dégoulinants.

Dans ce carnaval du vertige, c'est tout aussi bien la culture classique qui se voit renversée que ses propres héroïnes, plongées dans leurs contradictions. Lucile Littot use de ses pièges de reines absorbées par leur propre image, enfermées dans un fantasme qui les coupe du monde et en dit finalement plus que ce que l'on pouvait attendre sur le nôtre, parcouru d'autant de flux d'images miroirs, de personnalités-miroirs victimes d'une auto-médiatisation qui les isole. En ce sens émerge une beauté inattendue qui transcende ses sujets pour en faire des reflets déliquescents de fantasmes irréconciliables où la beauté, la singularité rêvée, se muent irrémédiablement non plus en monstre mais en répétition tragique de la médiocrité.

L'installation principale de l'exposition, Smile You Are on Camera, est ainsi un lit recouvert d'une nuée d'objets, de formes qui sont également autant d'obstacles à la possibilité de s'y allonger, d'y laisser cours à sa propre rêverie pour voir ses rêves forcés. L'onirisme dépasse alors le cadre de la psyché pour affirmer sa volonté d'embrasser tous les aspects du réel, de fétichiser la vie autant que de la parsemer de ses propres visions. L'exposer en quelque sorte, voire l'imposer au vu et au su de tous pour troubler le regard. Un jeu de miroir renforcé par la présence d'un spot qui évoque le plateau d'un tournage, cette lumière artificielle auprès de laquelle se sont brûlés tant de rêves dans cet Hollywood qui l'inspire, touchant à ces vies qu'on a laissé se perdre d'avance dans un combat à rendre fou. En cela, le féminin déborde ici le simple romantisme pour se faire outil de questionnement du politique. Dépeuplés, ces décors ont avalé les personnalités qui les ont habités pour ne conserver que les accessoires, reliques muettes d'une souffrance et de traitements que l'apparente beauté, la « coupable luxure » ont rendu silencieux.

Avec une certaine fascination mais non sans distance, Lucile Littot parvient ici, à force d'excès, d'investissement et de joie, à faire émerger un romantisme conscient de sa démence qui s'abreuvait de la déchéance, de sa propre implosion pour tenter de pénétrer d'autres territoires ; une forme de monstruosité qui inventerait son corps à travers tous ces déchirements. Un corps perclus de contradictions qu'elle endosse pour tenter de renouveler, pour de bon, l'expérience du tragique.

novembre magazine

LUCILE LITTOT INTERVIEWED

by Myriam Ben Salah

Photography
Vincent Girardot

Myriam Ben Salah

Before going into the specific, I would love for you to tell me about your path as an artist and about your practice. How do you envision your work?

Lucile Littot

Since December 2012, I live and work between Paris and Los Angeles.

Diversity and artistic freedom offered by these two cities are in complete symbiosis with my work. These are two cities that, because of what they represent, work as emblems, mirrors reflecting the myth of "the madness beauty" in their own specific way. Paris the mystic, aristocratic and mysterious versus Los Angeles and its Hollywood decorum, the botox and dentist clinics. My work encompasses different kinds of practices that re-appropriate myths to question female identity. And since you mention my path, I would associate my artistic practice with the yellow brick path of the Wizard of Oz. Every experience I live is a pretext for a new project. My work is related to emotion and feeling, not to mention the autobiographical. It is probably for this reason that I like to live in the extreme and need perpetual entertainment to create. I see art as a path for creating my own myth. It sounds a bit narcissistic but to quote Nikki de Saint Phalle: "I decided very early to be a heroine. No matter what I should be! The important thing was that it was difficult, great and exciting."



You have a very strong universe that's present in your paintings, sculptures, performances, videos but also in your life I would say. Spanning from historical and mythological references, you create a world where extreme glamour meets a profound darkness on a background of obsolescence. You are quite a singular character yourself and I always have the feeling that there is something otherworldly about you. Your dark romanticism, overflowing baroque aesthetic, What galaxy and what period do you come from, Lucile Littot?

That's actually a funny one. I attended a performance organised by Jeffrey Vallance at the Underground Museum in Los Angeles where he invited this famous clairvoyant and astrologer to channel the spirit of Andy Warhol. As I always attract strange people, this same psychic came to converse with me afterwards and after a long discussion he revealed to me that I had been haunted until the age of 9 years old by the spirit of a 16th century's pimp. My obsession with garter belts, corsets, knots, recurrent symbols in my work, might come from that period of my life.

I recently found drawings from my childhood. There is a whole series on aristocrat families wrapped in Dior and Chanel costumes pictured in front of their houses "fleur de lys". I noticed that I already had a fetish for shoes.

Then there is the series of witches in which giant spiders and blue-faced women torture children whose bodies are tied and have been punctured by red felt. Weird... But I guess nothing changes!

In my own fantasy I am a fallen princess. I am very into the way of life of "La vie de chateau". It is not the idea of power or social rank that interests me, but the divine idea of a gift or a curse that one receives, so as to receive a magic power. The baroque and the Rococo periods are fascinating to me because they evoke "the staged life" – what I try to recreate in my work.

In opulent and heady settings, the tragedy of feelings are figured in broad daylight. Then we mask the boredom and banality under the gilding, the eccentric appearances and the champagne bubbles. I love the glamorous idea of the luxury and abundance of a place because it leads to other corridors and other imaginary and carnal regions. It provokes in me an inexplicable feeling of ecstasy. My mother says that I am born with this disease which is called "la folie des grandeurs". I believe it.

LUCILE LITTOT
NEW GALERIE

novembre magazine

My great aunt, who was a very eccentric character used to take us with my cousin as a child to the Negresco in Nice. I remember the grandiose feelings inside me caused by the incredible decor of the restaurant Carousel. Horses, ostrich feathers, and roses flooded with the inimitable light of the Cote d'Azur. Yachts and the Mediterranean sea shining to infinity. She was offering us her dresses to get disguised. One day at the bottom of a pocket my cousin took out a diamond that my great aunt had sewn, certainly to hide it then she had forgotten it. Ironically, she ended with Alzheimer, lost all her money and was surprised drinking her Chanel No.5 in the room of her retirement home. Tragic but pretty beautiful. For the group that you organised in Occidental Contemporary last summer, the piece I made was a tribute to these memories. From my pink room with love.

The creatures in your paintings themselves and more recently in your sculptures balance the very glamorous with the monstrous and chaotic. They seem to come from another time but epitomise today's society. What or who do you think about when you make them?

I'VE SEEN IT ALL, KNOWN IT ALL AND FORGOTTEN IT ALL is taken from a sentence that Marie-Antoinette said during her trial just before being guillotined. During the ceramic residency in 2016 in Versailles at Louis Lefebvre, I began to read a lot about her. The books of Stefan Zweig inspired me particularly. I associate Marie-Antoinette to a kind of it-girl of the 16th century. She is a very moving character but completely lost in her environment. She does not want to see anything else and needs permanent entertainment to avoid boredom. The title of this series could have been the sentence that one of these "famous girls of Instagram" of our generation could have said after her 125th evening sprinkled in the Hollywood hills or at the exit of a trendy Parisian club. The kind of party where you can be sure that you will see half of the people with siliconed lips and breasts implants, yelling "Oh my gooshhhhh". What I find fascinating in this kind of stereotypical race to the perfect beauty is how much plastic surgery makes these people monstrous and reduces them to the status of clones.

Similarly, I think of the Kardashian family and social media devaluing our society. It reminds me of the ironic science fiction novel by Boris Vian: "and we kill all the uglies." We are almost there. The plastic surgeon is the new Victor Frankenstein turning this emptiness and thirsty women into stars of tabloids. The snake pit coldly waiting for crisp news and the tragic end of these monstrous creatures made in Los Angeles. Hollywood Babylon (1959) by Kenneth Anger was also one of my references for a long time and depicts this subject with irony.

I have no contempt for these creatures and as I love freaks, I must say that I still have some attraction-repulsion for plastic surgery and the faces and bodies that it generates and this has inspired my latest work.

Who is Dolores in I'VE SEEN IT ALL, I'VE KNOWN IT ALL, AND I'VE FORGOTTEN IT ALL. SONG N.3 HOTEL CALIFORNIA?

Dolores 2028 is an avatar. From who? I let you guess.

The show was part of a series of works that you started making in 2016. Can you expand on the plot that you



novembre magazine

developed with this new body of work?

For I'VE SEEN IT ALL, KNOWN IT ALL, AND FORGOTTEN IT ALL. SONG N.3 HOTEL CALIFORNIA organised at Les Bains-Douches in Alençon, I have been inspired by the representations of the Amazons in the painting of the Renaissance and the Middle Age. The representation of women, painted on gold background, is elevated here to an iconic level, of saints, of Saintes Marie-Madeleines perhaps! The accompanying text is the mental monologue of Dolores, Lolita-style glasses on her nose, she leads in the middle of a city devastated by chaos and revolt (I had written this before, the arrival of Donald Trump in power elsewhere). This vengeful heroine, a little call-girl on the edges and with exaggerated sensitivity could be the main character of a B movie. Areas of this mutant princess are patched up by golden surgical threads. The pieces that are in the exhibition symbolise moments and feelings of this girl. They are fixed in the sculptures like steles recalling objects of prayer or ex- voto. The bed becoming that orgiastic representation of a surreal feast, sprinkled, and suffocated by the glitter and streamers. The party, the glamour, the excess until blackout. Everyone smiles but everyone is already dead. Zombies hidden under girly colours; cream-pie and cupcakes until indigestion.

What was the idea behind the photo-shoot?

I love to costume, to make-up, and change skin, which is something I also do for my performances. For this shoot, I turned myself into a dancing-girl from the 70's as in Model Shop from Jacques Demy or Lola, a German woman from Fassbinder. I had my mother implicated in the photo-shoot because I liked the idea of her disguised as a madam. I liked the idea of a duo in a "Belle de Jour" style. There is also the "ready for my close up" inspiration of Gloria Swanson in Sunset Boulevard (1950), but also Eyes Without a Face (1960) from Georges Franju, or Robert Altman's 3 Women (1977), or Carrie (1976) by Brian De Palma in the interpretation of the deranged starlet painted in gold.

Do you envision your paintings and installations as a background for an existing or imaginary story? The shoot would be one way to realise the potentialities of such a scenery then?

My work is all about mise-en-scène. I consider sometimes my painting and installation like the sketches of my future films. I used the costumes and decors of Erèbe, a film that I shot in Los Angeles in 2013, for the installations I exhibited in Madness Grandiosa, a show that took place in an abandoned house in Los Angeles. The characters are more or less all dramatic. It is a women's story of course. A family story.

Pathetic B movie style. Black humour is one of the facets of my work that is very important to me. It is always better to laugh at the pain so it does not consume you.

You're in Los Angeles right now and you spent a lot of time working there. You even shot this movie Erèbe in the city and its surrounding. It makes complete sense as it might be the perfect geographical point of encounter of the dream and the nightmare. What is it in the city that fascinates you?

Totally. Erèbe was all about the Hollywood walk of fame's myth, and how people come here to make it and almost always ends tragically. Cliché, but very true!

I always had this feeling when I was driving to Los Angeles, that if one day the decor cracked or collapsed, it would leave room for another decor worthy of the infernal paintings of Hieronymus Bosch.

I tried once to scratch with a fingernail one of the stars on Hollywood Boulevard. To see if, as in the cartoons, an immense fissure would form and the prisoners of hell would try to escape with strident laughter, as with the evil character in Who Framed Roger Rabbit (1988).

I love Los Angeles because everything is inordinate and funny. The city, people, everything. I feel much closer in ways of thinking with other artists here, I affiliate with their eccentricity. I have a good crew.

I love the human being when we are at our most grotesque, and Los Angeles brings this out. Also, what I find funny is that here, the kings and queens are the stars of the tabloids; as there is no history, everything is invented. That's why I love the balance between Los Angeles and Paris. Everything is contradictory in me and my work and, ultimately, that is what I find ambiguous and reliable.

LUCILE LITTOT, MADNESS GRANDIOSA

Interview by Jay Ezra

The early 20th century saw several artists reviving classical myth and history in their work—Picasso and the Minotaur, de Chirico and Ariadne, Picabia's *Transparencies* and Leger's nude figures are wrought with mythological references. Even modern and contemporary artists such as Mark Rothko, Richard Prince and Matthew Barney have continued to look to ancient mythologies as a thematic repertoire.

It's with great pleasure that I had the opportunity to sit down with LA-based French artist Lucile Littot, who has not only preserved this tradition but also evolved it into her own practice of modern myth-making.

Jay Ezra: Artists often use well-known and familiar mythological figures in order to place certain allusions and innuendos in a modern narrative. Your paintings make references to several mythological figures, and your film *Èrèbe* is centered around the Aphrodite-Bunny. Where does *Èrèbe* take place and who is the Aphrodite-Bunny?

Lucile Littot: *Èrèbe* is a loose tangle of short-films, chiefly inspired by select portions from the novel *Aphrodite* by Pierre Louys. The shorts are then delicately sewn together with my own texts and narrative, creating a unique allegory on the contemporary human condition. The main characters are Demetrios, the city's famous sculpture who is wicked, selfish and idle; Chrysis, the fame and power hungry courtesan; and Aphrodite, the iconic statue of the city.

In 2012, I moved to Los Angeles and began to read the story of Aphrodite. After a few months, it felt as if I was meeting the fictional characters from the novel here in LA. Perhaps they were hidden in a different skin or working under a different name but they were in front of me, in the flesh. I was also reading Baudrillard's *Simulacra and Simulation* and fell upon his essay *Between Reality and Hyper Reality*. I recalled one of my favorite quotes, "Everything you live is inspired by real events," and so *Èrèbe* was born.

Los Angeles would take the place of Limbo, the passage between the realm of the living and the dead where the souls of suicides, assassins, poets and infant children are condemned to wander. I deliberately used cliché locations in the background such as the Hollywood Sign, a smog-filled sky or a 21st century gothic-revival mansion because they provide the perfect cartoon-esque irony for the characters to recite their ghostly, narcissistic monologues.

I decided to transform Aphrodite into a giant, white rabbit-human and baptized her Aphrodite-Bunny. She's a cross between Peter Sellers in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1972) and a pin-up model.

JE: There is an undeniable resurgence of mythology/fantasy in the arts today, especially in literature and film. Why do you think that is?

LL: Myths were created in order to reassure mankind that they are in fact monsters. Homer's *The Metamorphoses*, for example, is cruel poetry filled with the sublimation of the human existence. There's incest, murder, unrequited love, treason, orgies – nothing is taboo.

Los Angeles is in itself a Mount Olympus where everyone dreams of becoming a demigod and having their name engraved on a star and where glamour is often followed by chaos and darkness. After all, illusion and myth-making are essential ingredients in the creation of a Hollywood legend. Speaking of which, I just can't wait to go see *Maleficent* next week, if only to hear the sweet voice of that creature Lana Del Rey whisper, "Once upon a dream . . ."



ISSUE

JE: Madness Grandiosa is taking place in a small cottage where a young couple both recently passed away from terminal illnesses. Does this play at all into the context of your work or the show?

LL: I think that when you so graciously offered me this house to do the show in, you knew you were going to fulfill my every wish. This place looks like the Haunted House at Disneyland. And alongside this couple's eternal sleep, which is very Shakespearian, it was just gold. R.I.P.

I like to show my work in places that have a history and soul because that's when my surroundings are realized. I grew up in Paris, a very morbid, melancholic and splendid city. My affinity for bizarre dolls and grotesque puppets came from watching carnival processions in the north of France with my grandmother as a child. I live in MacArthur Park, a predominantly Latin American neighborhood, which is filled with curios and boutiques that celebrate the macabre and surreal. All of these surroundings play vital roles in my work and feed my hunger for everything baroque, decadent and of delirious passion related to Dark Romanticism.

This specific show, however, reminds me a lot of Eco's *On Ugliness*, a book that discusses the kitsch, the pathetic imitation of the grandiose and absurd rituals. Madness Grandiosa is special because the ensemble of sculptures work as a kind of ex-voto to the empire I have created in *Èrèbe*.

JE: The couple left behind hundreds of books which we boxed up and stored away together while preparing for the install of the show. Which books did you keep for yourself?



LL: Since I don't like cooking, I decided to pack up all the cookbooks. I did keep a book on Rembrandt as well as a 1968 version of Andersen's fairy tales that has the strangest cover ever. I also decided to take home a faceless scarecrow doll, a denture, a statue of a cherub kissing the emptiness and a small box that has "You Light Up My Life" written on it.

JE: Although your sculptures, paintings and film are wrought with notions of fragility, yearning and tenderness, there seems to be a very destructive and wild (almost violent) quality to your work. How do you explain the accord between these contrasting aesthetics?

LL: I deliberately use materials in my work that have strong feminine connotations—dolls, feathers, garter belts, silk flowers, velvet bows, blond wigs . . . the list goes on. But then they're

cut up, tied to each other, covered in wax. I think the expressionist forms taken by the sculptures speak for themselves.

My paintings, on the other hand, are a kind of self-portrait of me in various states of mind and each one evokes a certain mythological figure. They are a kind of representation of my megalomaniac nature but not without a healthy dose of comical self-deprecation. They remind me of my friend who, before announcing some kind of bad news, always begins to laugh out loud.