

# CLAIREGASTAUD

## MILENE SANCHEZ

### Texts

5-7 rue du Terrail 63000 Clermont-Ferrand - F +33 4 73 92 07 97  
37 rue Chapon, 75003 Paris - F +33 1 88 33 98 63  
galerie@claire-gastaud.com  
www.claire-gastaud.com  
Membre du Comité Professionnel des Galeries d'Art

# CLAIREGASTAUD

It is not by looking at flowers that one becomes a painter, but by seeing a painting that represents fleurs<sup>1</sup>. Part of the history of painting is played out in the efflorescence and foliage – from the first independent bouquets of the 17th century to the current painting, including Henri Fantin-Latour, Odilon Redon, Édouard Manet, Piet Mondrian, Georgia O'Keeffe... Part of the story is played there, in these ephemeral beauties. It is not a question of painting flowers – they do not need any paint to exalt the gaze of their fragility – but of situating themselves in a counter-chamber, measuring the gap between the gaze on flowers and the resulting paint. Anyone who has tried to paint a bouquet (or a mountain like Paul Cézanne, or bowls on a table like Giorgio Morandi), is able to grasp what is at stake between what is seen and how to paint it. It is not so much a question of a technical difficulty as of the elusive displacement of reality towards a pictorial thought. These flowers are not the observed flowers and the project is not to give an image but to make a painting. The surface of the painting rests on the painted, not on the flowers nor on a hypothetical resemblance with the model. The creaminess barely marked by a few gestures enhances the thinness of the texture up to the bone of the canvas, virgin in places. This faded cluster, these bundled stems are no longer a bouquet. The paint liquidated the pattern to spray the floral essence, causing the colors to delight by withering. Were they agapanthes, centaurs, drosera? They are vanities, beauties overturned by the boreal shades of the night.

Jean-Charles Vergne

«Beautés» book for the FRAC Auvergne exhibition from 24/06/2023 to 05/11/2023

# CLAIREGASTAUD

Milène Sanchez graduated from the School of Art and Design of Saint-Étienne (diploma in 2021). Pupil of Denis Laget, already exhibited at L'Avant Galerie Vossen in Paris in 2021, supported by collectors oriented towards a demanding painting, she is followed by the FRAC Auvergne for almost two years. A good way to understand his painting – and in particular his floral motifs – could be to recall the statement of the French artist Bertrand Lavier when he says that “it is not by watching a sunset that one becomes a painter, but by seeing a painting that represents a sunset. You need a filter.” Milène Sanchez does not stray from this position when she writes that “it is not a painting on flowers, but on the way we look at them through painting and its deformations.” The history of painting is here and there, in the nooks and crannies of its flowers – Edward Munch, Odilon Redon, Georgia O'Keeffe, Luc Tuymans, but also the American abstraction of the 1950s-1960s with Morris Louis in particular. It is easy to understand when looking at these flowers represented in close-ups that it is not quite a question of joining the tradition of the painting of bouquets or still life, nor of using the pretext of the motif to pour into abstraction. The painting of Milène Sanchez is above all a research conducted on color, on light, on the possible relations between gesture and its absence – as evidenced by the omnipresent reserves revealing the blank canvas.

Jean-Charles Vergne

# CLAIREGASTAUD

MILÈNE SANCHEZ (born in Montbéliard [Doubs] in 1997, lives and works in Saint-Étienne) Milène Sanchez, trained by the painter Denis Laget, holds, since 2021, the National Diploma of Plastic Expression (DNSEP) of the School of Art and Design of Saint-Étienne. She nourishes her artistic creation by taking notes, fruits of her observations. She describes her practice as a «spontaneous burst» at the sight of a work, reading a book or a film. Between opacity and transparency, her flower paintings play with blurs and sharpness. His work, however, is not intended to be a painting on flowers, but on the way we look at them through the artistic gesture and its distortions. It is therefore not a question of joining the tradition of painting bouquets or still life, nor of using the pretext of motive to pour into abstraction: the artist seeks above all to question the notions of look and representation. About her work process, Milène Sanchez writes, "Through my artistic production, I seek to express an emotion, to give my vision to be seen. My reality. I would like my paintings to be an abstract testimony of a moment suspended in the studio. Let them testify to the interior and exterior character at the time of painting, between creator and spectator of my own painting. When I paint I come into contact with reality (matter and color) and therefore I enter into dialogue with my object. I lose control and I regain it. It's a constant game. These are paintings built around this game: that of fixing flowers, getting closer to them, moving away from them, sweeping them away. (...) I see things like this, through brief surges."

Musée Paul Dini

# CLAIREGASTAUD

What are the 3 essential dates that marked your career?

In 2019, during an Erasmus, I joined the Staatliche Akademie der Bildenden Künste Karlsruhe. It was a freer school than in Saint-Etienne and there were many painters. The workshops were personal or shared to 2/3 people, we had a key and could go there day, night, weekends and even during the summer holidays. I was already painting for 2 years, but since my stay in Germany, my painting has evolved a lot. At first it was quite difficult for me to be alone in front of my achievements. I was not used to not having regular follow-up. Franz Ackermann, my teacher, only came once a month. I sometimes felt lost. However, all this allowed me to always question what I was doing. Then the second highlight is when I had in 2021, my first personal workshop. It is located in the former Beaux-Arts of Saint-Etienne. I attach as much importance to my studio as to the house of my childhood. It's something that belongs to me. Finally, Moly-Sabata in June 2022 where I was invited by Joël Riff to come and paint a month in one of the workshops/ housing made available. This was my first residence. The framework, meetings and the almost monastic rhythm of work made me evolve.

How did painting become your preferred medium?

I love painting for its flat, frontal surface. It's always exciting to frame an image. I work with transparencies and the oil is unique for that. I like to spread paint and play with colors on this immaculate surface. I think it is my favorite medium because there is always to learn, it is a very complex technique that always makes me want to do better.

Is the painting immortal?

Yes painting is immortal. The ephemerality of the captured image, the epiphany, makes the image immortal, because it testifies to a past time. She crosses the ages despite this desire to capture just a moment. It is the representation of a reality, specific to the artist, that makes painting alive.

Questions/Answers for Immortelles, MO.CO, Montpellier