



ERMES ERMES
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ELENE CHANTLADZE & NICOLE GRAVIER

MAY 28 - JULY 20
OPENING MAY 27, 6 - 9PM

SCALLOPS

What was already there: like gravity, like weather. A face quivers to life as though its features have momentarily gathered uncertainly. Scratchy halos surround animals, girls, birds in a pale veiled atmosphere: an interlude of bird-like chatter before eyes widen sideways, flowers bright as sirens, eyes everywhere. Growing out of clouds, walls, stains, eyes looking out quizzically. A world teeming with quiet watchers, hypervigilant lookouts assembling to survey the horizon.

Elene Chantladze saw the 'the surfaces of a foreign universe' on pebbles that she found on the beach, presences waiting to be drawn out by her hand, waiting to come forth. She sketched the missing details on the stones. The raw, unprinted backsides of cardboard chocolate boxes and other discarded scraps became surfaces where lively things could push their way through into reality. These forms were sometimes rendered with burned matchsticks, or with fingers covered pigments made from plants, foods and basic supplies: elderberry juice, jam, wine, oil, tar, petrol. Rubbing up towards each other, groups of figures share their outlines with one another, an Enzo Mari wooden animal puzzle with frail membranes. One painting shows an impermanent assembly; they are confiding in each other, sharing information. A small figure bares its chest, a taller one raises its long beak towards the sky, another cradles a howl, a blur of activity buzzing and swooping around her.

More vigilant eyes, a different kind of watcher. Her gaze is away from us and towards large, imposing artworks hanging on the walls of museums in the 1970s. Mondrian, Albers, Rauschenberg, Fontana, Morris. We have seen the image of this woman – the artist Nicole Gravier – in other photographs that she made during that same decade: waiting, thinking, about someone or something that will arrive. Revolution, lover, phone call, letter. Surrounded by books and magazines, from which faces stare from posed photographs – bodies torqued into narrative vectors that disarm and direct. Gravier as artist and model positions herself as a Bovary figure in a state of heightened awareness. A fantasy is sold, but not bought. A woman stands quietly in front of the artwork and looks.

What was already there: the masterpiece by the male artist hanging on the wall of the institution. The surging tidal currents under the sign of women as a category and class. A question hitherto never fully posed to any of the discourses that might illuminate the condition—of difference that would strike deep into the heart of social being, life-making, pleasure, desire, ethics and psychic life as well as conventionally, male-defined notions of politics and economics. An artwork is regarded by a woman and a question mark that threatens the wall that holds it up. She watches and is watched in turn, eyes everywhere.

text by Laura Mclean-Ferris

Elene Chantladze (1946, Supsa, GE), lives and works in Tskaltubo, Georgia.

Selected solo and group exhibitions include: 2022 Elene Chantladze, FIERMAN, New York, USA; girls, girls girls curated by Simone Rocha, Lismore Castle Arts, Lismore, IE; Olga Balema, Elene Chantladze, Birke Gorm, Ernst Yohji Jaeger, Marie Lund, Croy Nielsen, Vienna, AT; 2021 Ser Serpas and Elene Chantladze, Conceptual Fine Arts, Milan, IT; Elene Chantladze, Modern Art Helmet Row, London, GB; Fragments, ADZ Gallery, Lisbon, PT; 2020 Elene Chantladze, LC Queisser, Tbilisi, GE; 2015 Connecting Spaces, Ausstellungsraum Klingental, Basel, CH; 2014 Artsupermarkt, Stockholm, SE.

Nicole Gravier (*1949, Arles, FR) Lives and works in Arles. She was professor of Artistic Anatomy at the Academy of Fine Arts in Bergamo, Naples and Florence and at the Brera Academy of Fine Arts in Milan until the end of 2017.

Selected solo and group exhibitions include: 2022 Kolé Séré curated by Julie Boukobza, Braunsfelder, Cologne, DE; 2021 FOTO-ROMANZA, curated by Giada Olivotto and Camilla Paolino, Le Commun, Genève, CH; 2020 Nicole Gravier and Nora Turato, Words Are Way Too Easy To Play With, curated by Edoardo Bonaspetti and Stefano Cernuschi, Ordet, Milan, IT; SuperSalon, curated by Claire Le Restif, Paris Internationale, FR; IT'S URGENT!, curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist, Luma, Arles, FR; 2019 The unexpected subject.1978 Art and Feminism in Italy, curated by Marco Scotini, Raffaella Perna, FM Centro per l'Arte Contemporanea, Milan, Bonaspetti, IT; Mythes & Clichés, Photoromans, Ermes-Ermes, Vienna, AT; 2013 Nicole Gravier, Contemporary Art Museum, Zengzhou, CHN; 1982 Typish Frau, Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn, DE; Mannersm, A theory of culture, curated by Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker, Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver, CA; 1980 Venice Biennale, Section Special projects, Venice, IT; 1975 Mythes & Clichés, Galleria Monti, Sperone, Rome, IT; Photographers Painters, Salon of Contemporary Art/Flash Art, Paris, FR; 1973 Cartes Postales, Ecole St Ursule, Dijon, FR; Sequences/PhotoKina, ARC2, Cologne, DE; Grands et Jeunes d'Aujourd'hui/Cartes postales, Grand Palais, Paris, FR; Contemporanea, curated by Achille Bonito Oliva, Villa Borghese, Rome, IT; 1972 70 Peintres, E.N.S.E.E.I.H.T, Toulouse, FR; Impact II, Musée d'Art Moderne de Céret, FR