

Looking further

Publication **Karina Bisch and Nicolas Chardon. Modern Lovers**

208 pages, 170 reproductions, 19,7×22,7 cm, 25 €.

Texts by Joana Neves and Thibaut de Ruyter, interview with the artists by Frank Lamy. Graphic design: Eliot Nasrallah, with the precious help of Adriaan Mellegers.

Co-publication MAC VAL - CONNOISSEURS.

Audio guide

The audio guide is an integral part of the exhibition, a character who lives in the house.

With the voice of Max Sbarsi, based on notes by Joana Neves.

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Opening hours

Tuesday to Sunday and public holidays from 11 am to 6 pm.

Last tickets sold 30 minutes before closing time.

Closed on 1 January, 1 May, 15 August and 25 December.

Modern Lovers

Exhibition by Karina Bisch and Nicolas Chardon

Curator: Frank Lamy, assisted by Julien Blanpied

Architectural design and display: Karina Bisch and Nicolas Chardon

Lighting design: Serge Damon

English



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The museum lives in the house
Painting exhibits the decoration
The house decorates painting
The decoration paints the museum

MODERN LOVERS

The title of the exhibition sets the tone: it will be about love, modernity and rock'n'roll.¹

Karina Bisch and Nicolas Chardon were both born in 1974, met in 1990 when at school, live and work in Paris.

Their unique pictorial worlds follow on from the utopian projects of the historical artistic avant-gardes of the early 20th century (Bauhaus, Futurism, Suprematism, De Stijl, Dada...). They make 'painting for living' that is both learned and burlesque. Their individual explorations are enriched by the projects they work on together, while they are united in their concern with the deconstruction of certain forms and their related histories. The history of the arts, of exhibitions, of painting, decorative arts, design, graphic design, signage, rock'n'roll, pop culture, among others, nourish the practices and actions of both artists.

A couple in real life, sharing the same studio, Bisch and Chardon regularly collaborate on each other's work.

Each one develops a singular universe, each is also the first eye to gauge what the other does.

While Bisch's work tends towards proliferation, Chardon tends towards a form of reduction and repetition. On the one hand, the variety of colours and motifs; on

the other, black and white and the predominance of the square.

The notions of reworking, collage, disjunction, and the handmade, among others, feed these pictorial deconstructions. For Bisch and Chardon, painting is a way of inhabiting the world.

The works are layered with numerous references, from the most learned to the most popular and vice versa. Nevertheless, these are never reduced to the exploration of self-referentiality. On the contrary, the works are open and resonate with the experiences of each viewer.

Invited to exhibit together at MAC VAL, Bisch and Chardon have imagined this project in the form of a pavilion; a house. The exhibition brings together their individual works and others they made together, attempting to give substance to the artistic production of a couple in an original display that is part receptacle, part maquette and part décor, doing away with the frontier between art and life. 1+1=3.

A display that pokes fun at the idea of the house or pavilion -: the architectural follies programmed for universal exhibitions and other biennials, the dwelling, the standard, etc. – and that proposes an immense 'machine for living', to quote a famous phrase by Le Corbusier. A display that conjures up the model house, the model, the board game, the showrooms

of shops, the 'period rooms' of museums of civilisation, cinema and theatre sets... 'we build a house for our paintings while painting itself inhabits us'.²

The audio guide, traditionally entrusted with the role of providing commentary, here becomes a character, an inhabitant of the pavilion. The exhibition is also continued in the book published in partnership with CONNOISSEURS, a publishing house that produces and distributes multiples created by Bisch and Chardon.

When the pictorial system for reducing the visible invented at the beginning of the 20th century by the Dutch painter Pieter Cornelis Mondriaan ends up on an iconic

dress and then becomes the image of a cosmetics company. When the figure of Pierrot, oh so moody and melancholic, becomes the logo of a confectionery brand.

When the modernist grid develops into a cross-stitch.

When the square becomes a pixel.

Frank Lamy,
curator of the exhibition

Nicolas Chardon is represented by Galerie Laurent Godin (Paris), Galerie van Gelder (Amsterdam) and Shilla Gallery (Daegu/Seoul).

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1 — The Modern Lovers were a proto-punk band from Boston, founded in 1970 by Jonathan Richman and active from 1970 to 1974 and from 1976 to 1988.

2 — Karina Bisch and Nicolas Chardon, interview with Frank Lamy, in *Modern Lovers*, exhib. cat., Vitry-sur-Seine/Paris, co-publication MAC VAL/ CONNOISSEURS, 2022.