

HOME AS COMPOSITION

21.1. – 26.2.2022

Camille Farrah Buhler, Beth Dillon, Nathalie Diserens, Jeanne-Odetta Evard, Lissy Funk, Elsi Giauque, Shamiran Istifan, Clare Kenny, Manutcher Milani, Jessy Razafimandimby, Pablo Rezzonico Bongcam, Marie Schumann

The second iteration of the research project *Stitches* – an investigation into the use of textile in contemporary art practices – presents *Home as Composition*, an exhibition focusing on textile in the domestic space and its relationship to composition and decoration.

The exhibition proposes to reflect on the way in which our interiors are furnished, decorated, composed in a dimension that is both intimate and extimate – expression of a certain identity, chosen, attributed or in movement. At the same time private and public, the home incorporates a prism of signs, forms, and hints about the way we see and present ourselves to the world. Indeed, the interior carries a two-sided dimension: on the one hand intimate and personal, it also presents a semantic composition for the other – the guest or the intruder.

Stitches. Home as Composition stages a fictitious “decorative arrangement” that disturbs the principle of intimacy inherent to the private space. Individuality is erased in favour of a reflection on the notions of class and aesthetic norms, gender, forms of power and interpersonal relations.

At the core of the exhibition lies the question of heritage. Witness to cultural, social, historical and family histories, the domestic space is composed of a collection of functional, contemplative, symbolic items and meaningful compositions and arrangements. “What is at stake in housing is the possibility of maintaining a memory. Whether or not we live in the same place as our ancestors, the home relates to genealogy through its museum dimension. It should allow to be at the same time in the world among one’s contemporaries and linked to the past, to history” (Mona Chollet, *Chez soi : Une odyssée de l’espace domestique*, 2015, p. 42).

If the domestic represents the space where heritage meets personal/collective memories, how does it reflect individual identities, living habits and thoughts outside the home? How does one hold, or reject, their relationship to shared or intimate narratives and fictions?

Suggested by the hanging and choice of artworks, the exhibition offers a wandering that could be read as a journey from the entrance to the living room, passing through the lobby or the boudoir.

Beyond the analogy to the expression *Home sweet home* at the threshold of the entrance, Camille Farrah Buhler's work *FIREPLACISH* invites the public to enter the intimate sphere. Reflecting on family codes, cohabitation and the questions of “natural” family systems, the artist adds the sound of a crackling fire, altering between feelings of cosiness and danger.

If it is all a matter of standpoint, then Nathalie Diserens' one stands inside facing the outside. Hand-embroidered from home, the nine landscape-works inspired by images retrieved from the #amazingsunset hashtag emerge as the result of a ritual practice. In the form of an Instagram grid, the pieces become abstract windows leading to a distant horizon, a reverie, or an escape.

Known for its principles of intimacy, the boudoir is an in-between space, defined here by Camille Farrah Buhler's curtains on which extracts from Frank Ocean's song, *In my Room*, appear. In the corner, Jessy Razafimandimby's kennel, titled *Niche anthropogénique* with the painting addresses kinship and solidarity among humans and domestic animals. The drapery, composed of a lace curtain, evokes the décor of the artist's family home, suggesting a romantic and political reflection on customs and traditions of the habitat. Inviting the viewer to stand at the animal's scale, the kennel reveals in its inside an intimate work for the pet.

Framing this in-between space, Pablo Rezzonico Bongcam's burnt carpets, titled *Falò*, literally meaning “bonfire”, illustrate collective gatherings. Kitsch, industrial and orientalist domestic objects, the carpets become tapestries. Shedding light on the colonial hold on imaginary and capitalist global exchanges, the works propose a survival fiction of burning fire within our own home.

Playing with the tensions between memory, souvenir and illusion, Clare Kenny titles her curtains *Trying to Forget* and *Trying to Remember*. Growing up in a working-class family in Manchester, the artist nurtures the techniques of the “fake” characteristic to the domestic, dipping into norms around social class and attribution, good and bad taste, “low” and “high”.

In her installation *De Lions*, Beth Dillon is also interested in the construction of identities through family heritage. Here the tartan textile pattern highlights parental narratives (the artist's Irish-Scottish heritage from her Australian family), as well as the creation of a home far away from "motherland" and in migration contexts.

On the blue wall, the monumental curtain of Clare Kenny playfully alludes to the materiality of marble. The imitation of gold and granite hands hint at a presence; *Peeping Tom* is the voyeur, the unwanted and intrusive "gaze" into an undisclosed intimacy.

Shamiran Istifan's pennants point to the symbolism of a domestic *mise-en-scène* (family photos and sports rewards). Representing some of her family members, in particular male figures, these objects, reminiscent of family merits, express on the one hand the dynamics of gender, tradition and cultural origins, and on the other hand ornamentation and modern luxury as strategies for social elevation. Summoning sleep, hosting or displacement, the artist inscribes on the cushion bag "Abundbashmayo" ("Our heavenly father," in Syriac, Aramaic language of the Middle East): an invocation to the Father – patriarch and celestial.

The relationship to faith is also found in Lissy Funk's work. In line with an intimate and lone spirituality, the pioneering textile artist introduces *Das Goldene Tor* (2004) – an "embroidered tapestry" and one of the latest works before her death in 2005. Like a mystical portal, the work refers to an elevation, not social but spiritual.

The third room in the exhibition tackles the question of heritage and its links to art history and the emancipation of the textile medium. First a political emancipation outside the domestic and gendered space into the art gallery, and second a taxonomic emancipation from craft and vernacular to a spatial release. In the form of a "three-dimensional composition", the works in this room portray a reflection on textiles' spatialization (beyond the carpet and tapestry) and their extraction from the wall and detachment from the decorative.

Student of Sophie Taeuber-Arp, Elsi Giaouque is known as a pioneer artist in the textile avant-garde from the 1960s and 70s. Her works (including the work *Farbiger Saitenklang*, 1976) deploy thoughts on the thread as a kinetic experience, shedding light on rhythm, matter, color, form and transparency. It is after meeting Elsi Giaouque in 1953 that Jeanne-Odette Evard devoted herself to tapestry and the exploration of new techniques and textile materials. On the edge of abstraction, *Comète* (1971) invokes simultaneously an expression of gravity – the weight of matter overflowing onto the ground – and the incandescent ascent of a celestial body.

Marie Schumann's suspended works explore the technique of weaving as an interface between bodies and architecture. Combining manual and digital work, she questions the history of the medium and the preconceptions linked to gender in textile creation. The structures hence detach the tapestry from the wall, fostering an interplay between tension and loosening.

Manutcher Milani concurrently works on form and pattern. Removing the primary functions of rugs and tapestry by escaping the frame or the planarity, the artist explores ornamentation by composing intuitive and improvised forms, mixing personal contemporary references and family heritage (i.e. Persian patterns and "Adinkra" symbols from Ghana).

Embodying the spaces of KRONE COURONNE, a former inn, *Stitches. Home as Composition* reflects upon objects and their relationship to the decorative and the construction of living and lived environments. It questions the meaning of "interior objects" and their ties to composition, patterns, colors, and decoration to become spaces to be and to host life.

Exhibition curated by Collectif Détente (Gabrielle Boder, Tadeo Kohan, Camille Regli)

The exhibition is supported by:
Oertli Stiftung
Ernst Göhner Stiftung
Ville de Bienne
Canton de Berne
Pro Helvetia
Temperatio-Stiftung
Ursula Wirz Stiftung

1. Camille Farrah Buhler (1985, Geneva)
FIREPLACISH, 2021
Wool, cotton, sound box
120 cm diameter
2. Nathalie Diserens (1974, Zürich)
#amazingsunset 1-9, 2020-2022
Acrylic fibre on stramin
Dimensions variable
3. Clare Kenny (1976, Basel)
Light Headed II, 2017
Brass, plaster, spraypainted LED bulb
35 x 30 x 14 cm
4. Camille Farrah Buhler (1985, Geneva)
(My guy is pretty...) / *OCEAN'S GHOSTS I*, 2021
(No sleeper seat...) / *OCEAN'S GHOSTS II*, 2021
(This great very matter...) / *OCEAN'S GHOSTS III*, 2021
Printing on 3 mesh fabrics, chains
260 x 145 cm
5. Jessy Razafimandimby (1996, Geneva)
Niche anthropogénique II (floor), 2021
Pencil and watercolour on paper, lace
Dimensions variable
- Jessy Razafimandimby / Niels Trannois
Marigny, 2021
Oil paint on sheet, acrylic paint by Niels Trannois on the wooden frame
41 x 30,5 cm
6. Pablo Rezzonico Bongcam (1998, Geneva)
Falò I (Bonfire), 2021
Burnt carpet, aluminium
146 x 85,5 cm
7. Pablo Rezzonico Bongcam (1998, Geneva)
Falò II (Bonfire), 2021
Burnt carpet, aluminium
154 x 80 cm
8. Clare Kenny (1976, Basel)
Legless, 2013-2019
Plaster, spraypaint, light fitting, spraypainted LED bulb
157 x 20 diameter
9. Clare Kenny (1976, Basel)
Trying to Forget, 2017
Print on polyester, brass, bronze
Dimensions variable
10. Clare Kenny (1976, Basel)
Trying to Remember, 2017
Print on polyester, brass, bronze
Dimensions variable
11. Lissy Funk (1909 - 2005, Zürich)
Das goldene Tor, 2004
Textiles
90 x 60 cm
Collection of the City of Biel/Bienne
12. Shamiran Istifan (1987, Zurich)
Abundbashmayo, 2020
Red marker on pillow, blue pearls
50 x 70 cm
13. Shamiran Istifan (1987, Zurich)
Every Idol is a Mirror, 2021
Selection of pennants, partly in printed foil, partly in bleached denim
Dimensions variable
14. Clare Kenny (1976, Basel)
Peeping Tom I, 2017-2022
Polyester fabric, ceramic, jesmonite, spraypaint, wood
307 x 500 cm
15. Beth Dillon (1987, Biel/Bienne)
De Lions, 2021
Moving boxes, clay, newspapers, smartphone, video loop, found and recycled fabrics, extruded polystyrene
Dimensions variable
16. Manutcher Milani (1996, Zürich)
Death Metal Desert, 2021
Wool, silicon, monk fabric
125 x 80 x 4 cm
17. Marie Schumann (1991, Zurich)
All Those Dirty Hands (yellow rosé soft sculpture), 2021
Wool, polyester, Trevira CS
140 x 150 cm
18. Elsi Giaouque (1900 - 1989, Prêles/Zurich)
Farbiger Saitenklang, 1976
200 x 200 x 30 cm
Collection of the City of Biel/Bienne
19. Marie Schumann (1991, Zurich)
All Those Dirty Hands (nude soft sculpture), 2021
Wool, polyester, Trevira CS
140 x 150 cm
20. Jeanne-Odette Evard (1930, Biel/Bienne, Neuchâtel)
Comète, 1971
Textiles
250 x 115 cm
Collection of the City of Biel/Bienne
21. Manutcher Milani (1996, Zürich)
Cat Tree #4, 2021
Wool, white glue, wood, metal
210 x 15 x 15 cm
22. Clare Kenny (1976, Basel)
False Comfort, 2016
Edition of 5 printed bean bags, polystyrene balls
120 x 120 cm

