



CARTE VERTE

**11 - 31
OCT
2024**

**7 French & Danish artists
take over the French Embassy**

Tiphaine Calmettes - Nina K. Ekman
Valentine H. Despointes - Maria Koshenkova
Edith Meusnier - Prune Nourry - Charlotte Thrane

CARTE VERTE

Merci à

- Christophe Parisot French Ambassador to Denmark
- Carl Engelsen Director - Institut français du Danemark
- Victor Ernandes Cultural attaché - Institut français du Danemark
- Charlotte Claret & Louise Cattarinussi Cultural department - Institut français du Danemark



PRÉFACE

Le Palais Thott est un joyau au cœur du paysage urbain de Copenhague depuis sa construction à la fin du 17^e siècle par l’amiral Niels Juel. Profondément remodelé au long de son histoire notamment par des architectes français, au premier rang desquels Nicolas-Henri Jardin, et richement décoré de remarquables tapisseries des Gobelins et de délicates porcelaines issues des manufactures de Sèvres, il héberge l’Ambassade de France au Danemark depuis 1922 et incarne plus que tout autre monument de la capitale danoise les liens forts qui unissent la France et le Danemark depuis des siècles.

Cadre de travail au quotidien des agents de l’Ambassade de France, le Palais Thott n’en demeure pas moins un lieu que j’ai souhaité aussi ouvert que possible à la société danoise, à sa jeunesse et aux artistes et créateurs qui font tant pour nourrir les échanges culturels entre nos deux pays.

Dans cette maison qui est celle de tous les amoureux de la culture française et des amis de la France au Danemark, c’est avec un immense plaisir que nous accueillons pour trois semaines sept artistes françaises et danoises, qui ont été encouragées à poser un regard singulier sur ce lieu si particulier et à entrer en dialogue avec lui. Au travers d’une série d’installations occupant l’ensemble des salons de l’Ambassade, ces artistes invitent le visiteur à découvrir le Palais, ou à le redécouvrir comme il ne l’a jamais vu auparavant.

“Carte Verte” nous incite également à nous interroger sur les enjeux existentiels que constituent le réchauffement climatique et ses conséquences déjà dramatiquement perceptibles à travers le monde, et auxquelles la France et au Danemark sont confrontés comme partout ailleurs. Je suis convaincu du rôle fondamental des artistes pour nous aider à penser ce défi d’une ampleur inédite et qui semble parfois nous dépasser, tant il remet profondément en cause les fondements mêmes de nos sociétés. L’art et la culture contribuent à créer des imaginaires désirables grâce auxquels nous serons collectivement capables de nous projeter pour inventer un avenir commun plus respectueux des limites de notre planète et de sa biodiversité. C’est tout le sens de cette exposition unique qui leur donne la parole, et que nous avons l’honneur d’accueillir en nos murs.

Je vous souhaite la bienvenue au Palais Thott !

Christophe Parisot
Ambassadeur de France au Danemark

FOREWORD

Since the time that it was constructed at the end of the 17th century for the Danish admiral Niels Juel, the Thott Palace has been an architectural jewel in the very heart of Copenhagen. Sweepingly remodeled at several times in the course of its extensive history, and notably by French architects like Nicolas-Henri Jardin, and richly decorated with remarkable Gobelin tapestries and delicate Sèvres porcelain pieces, the Thott Palace has been housing the French Embassy in Denmark since 1922. More than any other monument in the Danish capital, the palace embodies the strong ties that have united France and Denmark for centuries.

As much as the edifice functions as a daily working environment for the embassy’s staff, I have also wanted the Thott Palace to be as open as possible to Danish society, its youth and to the artists and creators who are doing so much to nurture and enhance cultural exchanges between our two countries.

In this home for all aficionados of French culture and for friends of France in Denmark, we are delighted to welcome – for the next 3 weeks – seven Danish and French artists, who have been encouraged to take a unique look at this very particular place and to enter in dialogue with it. Through a series of installations scattered throughout the embassy’s various salons, these artists invite visitors to discover the Palais, or to re-discover it as they have never seen it before.

“Carte Verte” encourages us to reflect on the existential challenges spurred by global warming and its consequences, which are already being dramatically felt around the world and which France and Denmark are facing, as are other nations. I am convinced that artists have a fundamental role to play in helping us to fully understand the implications of these challenges, which are presently unfolding on an unprecedented scale and sometimes seem overwhelming, seeing as they are so profoundly shaking our societies’ very foundations. Art and culture contribute to creating desirable perspectives that will enable us collectively to project ourselves into a shared future that will hopefully be more respectful of our planet’s limitations and its biodiversity. This is the motivation behind this unique exhibition, which is giving these artists a voice, and which we feel honored to be hosting here.

Welcome to the Thott Palace!

Christophe Parisot
French Ambassador to Denmark



CARTE VERTE

7 French & Danish artists take over the French Embassy

An embassy is a symbolic, representational and operational hub. Meetings and cultural events take place in this space, where people are brought together, and political agendas are entertained. The *Carte Verte* exhibition is a meeting between French and Danish artists in the historic Thott Palace where exceptional architecture, unique interiors and contemporary works intermingle in close dialogue with the embassy space.

Carte Verte provides an extraordinary occasion to visit the embassy in the Thott Palace, which has been opened to the public by the French Ambassador, Christophe Parisot. The embassy's representation salons are richly decorated with Gobelins tapestries, grand chandeliers, French paintings, 1700s furniture, gilded mirrors, stucco ornaments and foliage-fabric wallpaper – there is plenty for the eye to revel in. There is, in fact, not much space left in which to place artworks. The challenge posed by this render the Thott Palace an exceptional space and place in which to mount a contemporary art exhibition where the past, current debates and new outlooks meet.

The Ambassador's readiness to incite such a project is a veritable *carte verte* – a 'green card' for the art. The artists have been given 'the green light' to inhabit the salons with their works and, for my own part, I am thrilled to have been entrusted with the task of managing this gesture of hospitality.

In 2017, the French Embassy opened its doors to the public with the *Carte Blanche* exhibition. This exhibition stemmed from a desire to open its doors and emphasize the importance of building relations and keeping an embassy open and welcoming. The title, *Carte Blanche*, was projected as a call for the artists to express themselves freely as well as a call to enquire about the salient features of an embassy. With *Carte Verte*, the embassy resumes and recapitulates the importance of opening its doors to the public and to art encounters.

Anno 2024, seven French and Danish artists are poised to 'go green' - the color of optimism, and the color of renewal - and give their perspectives on overconsumption, global warming, pollution of the oceans, and climate change.

For more than one hundred years, the French Embassy has been permanently located in the Thott Palace in a historic edifice with many ties to France. The palace dates back to 1683, and its facade is one of the most splendid examples of neoclassical architecture in Denmark, having been designed by the accomplished French architect, Nicolas-Henri Jardin.

The palace has been owned by a succession of various prominent figures in history. Admiral Niels Juel was the first owner. After Juel's death, King Christian V's mistress, Sophie Amalie Moth, owned the Thott Palace, as did the eldest son of the king and his mistress, Christian Gyldenløve. Some decades later, Countess Anna Sophie Schack acquired the mansion. Subsequently, it was bought by Count Otto Thott, landowner, statesman and financier and renamed from Juel's to Thott's Palace.

Influenced by several French architects, a number of remodelings, a queue of various owners and an array of changing purposes, the Thott Palace has, over the course of several centuries, been a venue of diverse utility and sustainable value. In the extensive history of the Thott Palace, *Carte Verte* will constitute a record of current debates and pressing issues related to climate change, biodiversity emergency and green transition. The Paris Agreement was an international milestone. It was the first comprehensive climate accord, where 196 countries committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, to initiating sustainable policies and climate action, to promoting renewable energy development, to sustainable urban planning, to reporting and revising national targets, and to creating a fund that would support climate adaptation and mitigation in vulnerable countries.

Tiphaine Calmettes, Nina K. Ekman, Valentine H. Despointes, Maria Koshenkova, Edith Meusnier, Prune Nourry and Charlotte Thrane are seven artists from France and Denmark, who span across several generations. Each of them is taking the temperature, so to speak, of the current state of the globe. They work in a wide range of mediums and practices. Some of them work consistently with scrap, recycled and upcycled materials. Old mattresses, deadstock yarn, leftovers of leather, and recycled glass from bottles used at events at the embassy are some examples of materials being utilized by the artists for *Carte Verte*. Their pieces are a vigorous get-together of spiky, lifelike, obscuring, awkward, colorful, doomy and encouraging artworks. They have been made in various techniques: tufted, compressed, casted, melted, sewn, plaited and carved. And you will be meeting works of distinctive character that range from the hairy to the smooth, rough, stained, soft, fluttering and textured. Some of the pieces have been made specifically for *Carte Verte* and all of them are carefully integrated in each their designated space, whether they happen to blend in or stand out.

Perhaps *Carte Verte* will make you pause from reality as you delve into the works; perhaps you will be confronted with reality, perhaps you will be discouraged or encouraged, perhaps *Carte Verte* will merely stand forth as a memory of estrangement. All of it, I hope. Shall we dance? Because as Karen Blixen wrote in her short story, *The Diver*, "Without hope you can't dance," – "without hope you can't fly," – "without hope you can't tell stories".

Natalia Gutman
Curator

TIPHAINE CALMETTES

Making the Living Room Bloom

Making the Living Room Bloom is an installation in which people are invited to sit?

Absolutely. I am very interested in objects situated between art and life and life and design. When interacting physically with an object, you embrace it with your whole body, and not only with your mind. For years, I have been questioning our relationship with objects, and the works in *Making the Living Room Bloom* have been conceived as domestic objects that might be found inside my home. In fact, I recovered the teapot that was originally part of the set and now I am using this teapot every morning. It is ceramic, bird-shaped and quite heavy. The idea was to consider objects as companions in life, and to surround ourselves with things that are not merely at our service but objects that also remind us of ourselves, in terms of imperfection, and that force us to act or adapt our gestures to them. With this installation, I wanted to create an experience where we pay attention to materiality, shape, weight, and texture, etc. I would love to see if this could make people more observant and more mindful about how to interact with the objects, where you need to make an effort and maybe even adapt to the object. We can be so focused and so absorbed by the purpose of things that we confine ourselves to making use of them. These types of objects are produced to be forgotten. Their very standardization, in a way, does not allow us to pay any particular attention to them. So how can they ever become companions of value?

As parts of the figurative ornaments, there are animals' feet, birds and leaves. Would you explain the origin of these motifs?

By reading ecologist and philosopher David Abram's book, *The Spell of the Sensuous*, I realized that we are not navigating after nature any longer,

and I came to think about how the environmental crisis is simultaneously a sensitivity crisis. We don't know how to read the clouds or to navigate after the stars. We spend less and less time in nature and more and more time in landscapes: at least this is true of a large segment of the Western population. More and more people live in building blocks, far away from natural growth. We are becoming more and more distanced from nature. I want to reintroduce animals, plants and organic shapes. I would like my objects to perform as living beings. I went looking for inspiration in non-conformist zoomorphic objects with divine and animal properties because I find it interesting to symbolically bring other species into our homes. Could this help us to remember that human beings are just one living being among many? That there is no such thing as autonomy? And that we are, whatever we might think, interdependent?

Rituals and collective events are often a part of your works. Why?

First of all, I believe rituals can be understood in a much broader sense than only being religious. Everyday rituals such as getting up in the morning, how you eat your meals, and what things are involved in your engagement with your surroundings. Food is, of course, essential to us. It can be very exclusive, avant-garde and elitist while to others, it can be scarce. It's also generally a part of a social gesture: bringing forth hospitality. So it can either be a lonely or a collective experience, accordingly rendering it relevant to everyone. Many rituals are based on symbolic gestures with a fictive dimension, but as we perform them, they become real. This kind of moment is invested with a special potential, because we are part of something together.





NINA K. EKMAN

COP - Conference of Plants

Inside the Music Salon, the vegetation is dense – what has happened there?

Yes, there is a whole forest growing – taking over the Music Salon. There are trees and plants growing everywhere on the floor and in the windowsills. I believe more than 50 plants and trees have found their way into the salon. It seems like they possess some kind of green superpower, because, how did they get there, anyway? You know what I mean. I have always been fascinated by how what we consider to be weeds can actually push their way up through asphalt and rise toward the sun. Now these ones have found their way into this adorned 17th century palace. We are cutting and burning down forests and filling the sea in order to expand, with our “civilization” – and we are not leaving very much room for natural growth. Yet here, it seems like nature is in command. However, a yellow monster is lurking about, looking greedy and loud... Most of my practice has to do with elevating plants, trees and flowers, by giving them a clearer voice. Maybe this is their song to us – or a mourning hymn for all the fallen trees?

Can you describe what kind of plants and trees are growing in the salon?

My work is inspired by many kinds of plants from a wide range of geographic areas, and evidently impregnated with various visual characteristics and symbolic meanings. I grew up in the northern part of Norway, where I loved watching how the birch trees could cling on to the stones, along the rugged coastline. One of my favorite plants has always been the cactus – it is the ultimate symbol of resilience: a bold survival plant with attitude. But even the huge Saguaro cacti cannot keep up

with the rising temperatures, and we are seeing them collapse in their own habitats. As many tree habitats are in the process of changing, trees all over the world are becoming endangered. This is also the case for the funky-looking Joshua tree and for palm trees, which are on the retreat in their natural environments, while huge monocultural palm oil plantations are replacing the rain forests. It is a bit frightening and ironic to think about how palm trees and other exotic plants might soon be able to grow here in Denmark, right outside of the embassy on Kongens Nytorv, next to the linden trees.

What role has the interior and the space played in the making of your work?

I love the fact that this space has been designated “VIPs” and is now being filled with my Very Important Plants. And now we are the ones who have got to find our way around them... and not vice versa. Some of the trees and plants were already made for other projects and exhibitions, but most of the sculptures were especially made to be able to overgrow and inhabit the whole salon. The salon is already richly decorated with floral ornaments, which you might not notice unless you carefully pay attention. The VIP sculptures, however, are hard to miss – they are all over the salon – loud and clear. They are having their own COP here – a conference of plants. Their cry for attention is legitimate. Moreover, I need to mention that all the sculptures are made of 99% deadstock yarn from the textile industry and also that they are stuffed with old newspapers. Recycling and circularity are of great importance in my work and constitute a consistent choice that runs throughout my praxis.





Wreck Desk

Leather, recycled materials, plastic bottle

2023

VALENTINE H. DESPOINTES

Wreck Desk

Wreck Desk was made last year. Would you explain how the work came to be?

It was born of an incredible opportunity offered by Mobilier National, a French institution that is responsible for the preservation of the national furniture collection, encompassing the decorative arts, articles of furniture, and other works that showcase France's artistic heritage. Mobilier National manages and maintains the furnishings of public buildings, including palaces and government offices. The project was titled *Les Aliénés du Mobilier National*. Contemporary creatives were invited to re-create pieces drawn from a selection of works. As I was leafing through their catalogue, my immediate choice was this particular desk, which I envisioned being submerged beneath the ocean waters. The *Wreck Desk* crystallizes my childhood memories of Martinique. And it is great to see it in this setting, within a space of diplomacy – a desk that has sunk to the bottom. It becomes altogether symbolic in a completely different way than what was intended. I like how the desk manifests itself as a missed opportunity.

You have a special relationship to the sea – how is that?

I was lucky enough to spend all my vacations on this family island, living by the sea, with my grandparents, and observing the seabed. Ever since I was a little girl, I have nurtured an infinite love of the oceans. Today, whenever the weather allows me to do so, I go diving, in order to probe the coral reefs and visit the seas. Turning the Red Salon into a kind of office wreck was an interesting idea. My encounters with various species during my research dives in Martinique and elsewhere are my main sources of inspiration. I wanted to create

a dreamlike universe, one that was spun from my own imagination, inhabited by gorgonians, fish, starfish, anemones, seahorses and corals. I hope that it feels like a surreal experience: a bit like swimming around, by yourself, at the bottom of the ocean and experiencing a coral ecosystem in the least expected environment. Real nails from the remains of a shipwreck, found by my father some thirty years ago, also mingle with the ocean's inhabitants.

Can you tell us about the new pieces that accompany the *Wreck Desk* in the Red Salon?

I created a new deep-sea inhabitant: an octopus, a symbol of complex, intelligent marine fauna that is capable of changing its appearance and blending into its surroundings. And I have heard that more and more octopuses are now to be found in the North Sea, here in Denmark, on account of the higher water temperatures. The candlestick is also a new addition, a precious object that now, instead of providing light, is also to be found in the dark, at the bottom of the ocean.

You work with scrap leather. From where do you get your materials?

I use leather scrap and end-of-collection leftovers from various famous label-houses. With *Wreck Desk*, I really wanted everything to come together: my passion for the oceans; my respect for the environment; and my desire to produce an eco-aware work. So recycling was, for me, an obvious choice. I have also concealed a plastic bottle, the ultimate symbol of marine pollution. To create my pieces, I am using a wide variety of techniques such as carving, sheathing, cutouts and leather lace.





Blinds
Steel, recycled glass
2024

MARIA KOSHENKOVA

Blinds

Your work is made of empty bottles from the embassy. How was it, for you, to be working with these recycled old bottles?

To be honest, I was not very excited about the idea as it was initially proposed. It reminded me of my days as a young art academy student, when I could not afford good quality materials – or to be more precise – when I could not afford any materials at all. So, out of necessity, scrap materials would be what I used. It is all very time consuming, since I need to clean and prepare the bottles before the actual production. Often, it is also more complicated and limiting because you do not know how the material is going to perform, which is why there is also more loss when using old glass, especially with bottles like these. However, I wanted to be open to the idea and I have actually come to like how the old bottles are a kind of dirty laundry, hanging in the windows.

Pâte de verre is an ancient technique that you make use of. What are the distinctive features of this method?

In order to free the bottles from their original form and purpose, I wanted to transform them completely. With the *pâte de verre* technique, you crush the glass into either small pieces or powder and then melt it; all depending on whether you want a paste or a rougher consistency, in order to create the desired texture. From the paste, you are able to shape whatever you want. It does not have the clear transparent property that we know from most glass. It can also have a much more matte and frosted surface. Moreover, it is also interesting to be making use of an old – more than 3,000 years old – technique from Egypt, which actually had its

revival in France during the age of Art Nouveau and Art Deco. It is not always so easy to recycle old glass even though it is desirable to do so.

Your work is made especially for Carte Verte. Could you explain why the windows, as a backdrop, were particularly interesting to you?

I love working site-specifically and integrating the space, the aesthetics and the meaning of a place into my work. I was interested in the idea of glass on top of glass. Glass is a unique and transparent material, which becomes even more interesting when light flows through it. By placing my work in the windows, I am emphasizing the presence of my work but I am also obscuring the view to the outside. There is something interesting about inviting visitors to move up closely to the window. Of course, this is usually a spot from where one can look out. But now, something foreign has been placed in front of the window. And even if you have never visited the embassy before, you will be able to identify this as something abnormal, something puzzling, which is not ordinarily part of windows.

Can you elaborate a bit on the title of your work: *Blinds*?

My pieces are blinds of a kind, which are made to fit the windowsill. Whether they are blinding or eye opening, I do not know... There are lots of paradoxes in how we approach nature and resources and there are also lots of blinded perceptions about recycling and sustainability. There is no doubt, though, that the more we consume, the more trapped we are going to be, and the more wine we drink, the more blurred everything appears to be...





En Crescendo

4,20 x 3 x 0,25 m

Gift ribbons

2024

EDITH MEUSNIER

En Crescendo

You are known for raising environmental concerns in your work. How does *En Crescendo* reflect your ongoing interest in nature?

To begin with, I wanted to evoke the four elements: water, air, earth and fire. Eventually, I chose to focus on a close-up of a forest fire, with four half-charred trunks surrounded by flames and smoke. Fire is a symbol of life and comfort, but also of destruction. Despite exceptional technical and scientific advances, we are still unable to control mega forest fires and other environmental disasters. I am privileged to be living and working in the heart of a forest, and this is why I am particularly concerned. I have experienced how exploitation, for centuries, has disturbed these natural environments. However, the destruction that has transpired over the last few decades is likely to be irreparable.

Your work often interacts with its location. How has the façade of the Thott Palace shaped your work?

I was impressed by its imposing, classic and very white façade. *En Crescendo* contrasts sharply with the white façade, and the strong presence of black endows the piece with a somber and even threatening character, which has been totally foreign to my work up until now. By creating a work in an urban space, I have the chance to reach people who are passing by: people of all ages, backgrounds and nationalities; people who would not otherwise have any occasion to walk into an embassy or a palace. Unlike visitors to an exhibition, such people who are taking notice of the artwork have no expectations – and this could result in an interesting and unexpected meeting. I am generally working in small series, with passers-by wandering through these artificial

landscapes. The work is often close at hand. You can touch it, and it changes according to the play of light and shadow, and according to how you move around the piece. *En Crescendo* is imbued with a much more confrontational character: it insists on being noticed. It creeps up the facade and does not have the free fluttering qualities that most of my works have.

Could you tell a bit about why gift ribbons are your preferred material?

For a very long time, I have been working mainly in forest environments. My transparent work blends into the vegetation and is influenced by the sun, the rain and the wind. Through these ephemeral installations, I emphasize the place's magic as well as its fragility and vulnerability. The intrusion of synthetic artifacts into nature subtly highlights the fact that, to a greater or lesser extent, no place on earth can escape the consequences of human activity. Not the forests. Not the sky. Not the oceans. And neither Copenhagen nor Paris. The gift ribbon is my favorite choice of material: it is light, it is fluid, it is sparkling, it is joyful and it is a symbol of celebration and exchange. But it is also a commonplace element of the material overconsumption that we all make use of. The gift ribbons have been plaited with a technique from the Bronze Age called 'sprang'. Instead of stretching the plaited modules to bring forth light and transparent nets, as I usually do, I have folded, creased and crumpled the gift ribbons, in order to generate volume and density. I came to think of *crescendo*, a musical term used in many languages to suggest an escalation and a rise in sound - while I was plaiting higher and higher flames.





**Standing Holy Daughter &
Squatting Holy Daughter**
Bronze, glass eyes
2010

PRUNE NOURRY

Standing Holy Daughter & Squatting Holy Daughter

Your two *Holy Daughters* are placed inside the Dining Room. Could you explain a bit about their origin?

The two sculptures are part of a series of works that are based on my longtime and ongoing interest and research in gender and gender imbalance. Most of my projects are carried out in collaboration with scientists, sociologists and local groups, in order to delve deeply enough and substantiate my work. *The Holy Daughters* were made after having read a disturbing survey about 'male preference' in India, China and Armenia, as a result of the widespread global use of ultrasound scans since the 1980s. The ratio of male/female births in China, as well as in India – pursuant to complex historic and societal conditions – is terrifying. I have let the *Squatting Holy Daughter* look right into your eyes, while *Standing Holy Daughter* is looking to the sky, while holding onto her stomach with her human hands, and with small breasts as well as mini udders.

How did the two *Holy Daughters* turn into hybrids between girl and calf?

From workshops with women in India, and my chance to meet biologist Stephen Minger, I made these hybrid sculptures, which have been inspired by the Hindu divinities and by an insight into hybrid embryos. Depending on the context and on the audience, a calf can have many connotations. A cow is considered a holy creature. It breeds calves and provides milk but subsequently becomes abandoned and is left to wander around the streets, eating trash and plastic. Similarly, in

the collective perception, women are considered pure and sacred. They become mothers, give life and ensure human procreation and yet they are not being valued. I have given the daughters a gentle expression on their faces, while their ears are put back and divulge an ambiguous meaning, both symbolically and in terms of nature. If you look closely at many mammals and compare them when they are at the stage of being small embryos, they are actually unbelievably similar to humans.

Interdependence is a recurring topic in your work. How is this issue present in the two *Holy Daughters* sculptures?

A question in which I am particularly interested is how we are interdependent. We also share similar patterns, like the fractals in our anatomy, which are analogous to the fractals that turn up in fauna and flora. Furthermore, it is interesting to observe how we treat animals, when they are actually the source of the meat that nourishes us. And how we treat cows when they are, in fact, the ones who provide us with milk. There are many contradictions like these, and with scientific progress follows responsibility. Ethical considerations and sensitivity are key, because we are not only interfering but are also obscuring human biology and nature's order. We humans are not stationed above animals. No, unfortunately, we happen to be the most destructive one among all the living creatures.





CHARLOTTE THRANE

Earthly Remains
Mattresses, supports, pigments, straps
2024

Earthly Remains

Your work is made especially for *Carte Verte* and the *Yellow Salon*. Could you explain how *Earthly Remains* evolved?

I knew right away that I wanted to create a site-specific piece, as a response to the space. The interior is so lavish and rich, and there is so much to look at. It is a very formal space, and at the same time it is seductive and rife with impressions. I visited the salon during different hours of the day, to see how the light and the atmosphere change, and I found that the height of the room and the yellow walls were signifying features. I had an idea that I somehow wanted to work with and against the space, as a kind of dispute. The space is impressive, and I wanted to make this even more evident by simultaneously disrupting and emphasizing it.

Textiles frequently appear in your installations. What draws you to this material?

We are surrounded by textiles, from the moment that we wake up until we go to bed: towels, clothes, dishcloths, furniture, bed linens and so on. Our bodies are constantly in contact with textiles, and through this physical interaction we leave traces of our existence on them. Everyone is familiar with the tactile sensation of fabrics, which is why there is something universal about them. I believe that they offer a kind of testimony about our lives. And it is not only the textiles that we use but also the ones we dispose of that tell stories about who we are. I prefer to work with industrially produced, discarded materials, since I am a child of a consumer culture. By recycling textiles, I am also being presented with implicit layers of stories that inhabit the old textiles. There are pre-established features and limits on how you can make use of pre-used materials. I like taking on the challenge of not being able to accomplish everything exactly as envisioned; this is a crucial point in itself.

Why mattresses?

Mattresses sometimes have their own will: they are big and they are difficult to handle. You could almost call them stubborn. And how does this attitude fit into an embassy's space? I hope that the mattresses will elicit a disturbing impact. That they will puzzle you, since they are odd in size and in appearance within this setting. They lean in over you, in an imposing way. Everyone knows what mattresses are used for: they are a very private and intimate article, a utilitarian object from everyday life, which is being displayed here, in plenitude, inside the *Yellow Salon*.

Your work is placed in close proximity to a Jean-Baptiste Corot painting and to a *Narcisse* painting by Virgile Díaz de la Peña. How has this setting influenced your work?

I like the fact that my work is placed in close proximity to three naked bodies. Have you noticed how the yellow color is leaking out from the walls and getting absorbed by *Earthly Remains*? There is something disgusting about this. But I have simultaneously realized, with the passage of time, that much of my praxis revolves around seeking contact and grounding. So maybe this queer creature just wants to fit in?





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7 French & Danish artists take over the French Embassy

11.10. – 31.10.2024

The artists

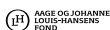
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