

THE GREEK GARDEN

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Curated by Aurore Chauve & Guy Yanai (Yundler Brondino Verlag)

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“Oh, those Greeks! they understood how to live. What you need for that is to be brave and stop at the surface, the fold, the skin, to worship appearance, to believe in forms, tones, words, the whole Olympus of appearance. The Greeks were superficial - out of profundity... And isn't it precisely what we are coming back to? - we spiritual adventurers, who have scaled the highest and most dangerous peak of today's thought and looked round from up there, looked down from up there. Aren't we, then, precisely, Greeks?” — Nietzsche, The Gay Science, 1887.

Both of us, Aurore and I, keep returning to this quote written by Nietzsche in the Gay Science. This profound paragraph keeps shaping our lives, and how we strive to live.

Now more than ever, we are faced with polarizing politics, tone dead arguments, the ugliness of bureaucracy. We are facing pandemics, wars, ecological disasters, resurgence of ancient hatreds. Just in Paris alone in the past few years; horrific terrorist attacks, paralyzing strikes, and of course COVID. Most of the world is still in a state of restricted mobility, where goods and product can cross borders yet people cannot.

We have artistic choices, do we respond directly to these events? As many do, or do we continue in our way, with our own inner lives and loves. Picasso was working with Sergei Diaghilev during all of the first World War, working on theatrical productions, paintings and collages, when 25% of France's male population will die from the war. Can we imagine Pierre Bonnard painting a summer lunch outside during WWII? Can we look at Matisse's last paintings in the early 40s of women in interiors also made during the darkest hours of WWII.

The courage now is to stop at the skin. Not to go beneath it. To observe and look, at goosebumps, at blond hairs on a arm, on a beautiful breast. Now, the courage of painting could be expressed by enjoying the surface of the paint itself, the beauty of the material. At this moment can we attain what Susan Sontag describes as “emotional situations”.

In the simplest term, we wanted to open September in Paris with a beautiful exhibition, what could be simpler. Deviously simple.

Let's leave our hyper cognition aside for a bit, lets go to a Greek Garden.

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