

## AND...

## AT THE ÉGLISE DES CÉLESTINS

Nave of Images, video screenings of pieces presented in the Festival d'Avignon, July 7 to 23 (except July 12 and 19), at 11:00 and 14:30.

## EXHIBITIONS

*The Lookouts*, Claire Tabouret,  
until November 4, from 11:00 to 19:00, Collection Lambert  
5€ for spectators with a ticket from Festival d'Avignon  
*I am all of you listening. Jeanne Moreau, a life of theatre*,  
from July 6 to 24, from 11:00 to 20:00, Maison Jean Vilar

## SCREENINGS

Collection of theatre films with ARTE, from July 10 to 15 juillet at 15:00,  
Collection Lambert

## EXHIBITION DATES AFTER THE FESTIVAL

- July 14 to August 5, 2018, *Sky Above Clouds*, Performance Ski, Aspen, Colorado (Unites States)
- Until August 10, *Seed*, Paul Kasmin Gallery, New-York (United States)
- Until September 30, *L'Érotomanie de Mlle Oops*, Design Parade, Ancien évêché, Toulon
- Until September 30, *Collection David H. Brolliet*, Fondation Fernet-Branca, Saint-Louis
- September 8 to October 6, *Solo show*, Almine Rech Gallery, Paris
- Until November 3, *Double Jeu*, sélection de la Collection du Frac Auvergne, Musée d'art et d'archéologie, Aurillac

## THE WANDERER - PAINTINGS

The artist behind the poster for the 72<sup>nd</sup> edition of the Festival d'Avignon will be exhibiting two series in the Église des Célestins—the first about travel writer Isabelle Eberhardt, the second filled with masked creatures—as well as group paintings, in particular of children, at the Collection Lambert. 36-year-old California resident Claire Tabouret paints a timeless “here and now”, using layers of paint to cover and conceal what’s underneath. Whether it depicts glassy-eyed children or groups of all ages, her work stares out at us, questioning our desires through the use of deep, polished colours. In the Église des Célestins, the soft earth ground, the silence, and the intimate light echo the atmosphere of a world-renowned artist. Claire Tabouret also found a precious variation on this fixity of presence in the life and work of Isabelle Eberhardt (1877-1904) who adopted several identities, from European woman to Muslim man, before disappearing, drowned and swallowed by the earth she spent her life looking for. It finds an echo in the latex-masked creatures of the series *Les Étreintes* (*The Embraces*) and their fetishistic game, standing in the middle of vague and blurry landscapes. At the Collection Lambert, large group portraits, like so many solo portraits miraculously brought together, continue to stare stubbornly at us, silently asking “Who are you?” A question which, from Manet to the present day, continues to be at the heart of modern painting.

## CLAIRE TABOURET

Born in 1981, Claire Tabouret graduated with a degree in fine arts from the École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris in 2006, before moving to Los Angeles. She has created many series, from portraits of children whose paleness and fixity question our own memories to portraits of adults and groups, suspended scenes, or intangible presences. Dancing women, gold diggers, latex figures or boats full of exiled men are among the subjects of a work in a constant state of metamorphosis. “*I evoke childhood to talk about determination, solemnity, seriousness, lucidity. Children in my paintings keep their eyes wide open, and they won't close them. They will keep examining us until the end of times.*”

*La Grande Camisole* was chosen as the poster for the 72<sup>nd</sup> edition of the Festival d'Avignon.

72<sup>th</sup>  
EDITION

In order to bring you this edition, over 1,750 people, artists, technicians, and organisational staff, have worked tireless and enthusiastically for months. More than half of them are state-subsidised freelance workers.

FESTIVAL-AVIGNON.COM



#FDA18



FESTIVAL D'AVIGNON 72<sup>e</sup>

JULY 7 TO 24 | ÉGLISE DES CÉLESTINS

## INTERVIEW WITH CLAIRE TABOURET

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**Your exhibition brings together two series, the first of which is dedicated to writer and explorer Isabelle Eberhardt (1877-1904)...**

**Claire Tabouret:** It's rare for a figure one can name and identify to recur in my work. For the past five years, Isabelle Eberhardt has been a sort of obsession. I'm fascinated by many aspects of her life. The first stems from the low number of photographs of her we have, and paradoxically from the very diverse quality of those portraits. Eberhardt looks very different from one image to the next, for several reasons: she first decided to dress as a man, then converted to Islam and wore traditional Algerian clothes, then later returned to more feminine attires, before going back to dressing more like a man... All that back-and-forth made her a woman whose identity was shifting and elusive. She's an inexhaustible source of inspiration.

**In Isabelle Eberhardt's story, those identity shifts echo the pen names she used to publish her work...**

There are many identity shifts at play, covering the questions of gender, culture, and language (by the time she turned 18, she spoke six languages). She was brilliant and always wanted to discover new things. There's also the question of her name: she changed it based on who she was writing her letters to, and she wrote her books under different names. It shows how the point for her was not to find her identity but to embrace her own multiplicity. She wrote throughout her very short life, and died when she was 27. The *Wanderer* paintings were inspired by photographs of her on horseback, very ghostly images where we can barely make out her silhouette. You can't see her face, her body is covered in folds of white fabric and becomes confused with that of the horse, which is also white. I then came up with the landscape behind her. What I liked was the fact that she almost disappeared in it. *Snow in the desert* is a more dreamlike or poetic evocation. It's also about the way she died, which says as much as the way she lived. She died in a flood. A big storm on a very dry piece of land in Algeria caused a huge mudslide. She found refuge in her mud house, which collapsed on top of her. She died at once drowned and buried, covered by the land and the country to which she tried to belong. It's like a mystical end, as if it were her fate. Through her figure, as well as a few others, I'm also looking into self-erasure, the idea that disappearance leads to a new appearance, like a moon eclipse, that very specific light that comes from the halo. Because you've hidden something, a specific light can appear, the light in which, I think, I paint my characters.

**The other series is entitled *Embraces*. Portraits of women often wearing masks, a fetishistic world rather than a modest one...**

Those masked figures standing in front of landscapes have come to the forefront over the past few years. I feel that putting together the paintings about Isabelle Eberhardt and this second series can create something interesting...

I want, in the Église des Célestins, to play with the semi-darkness of the place, to create a show bathed in soft light, with an earthy, dusty floor, on which people walk in silence. I'm also interested by the idea of being in a place that is no longer religious but which used to be, with its stones, its light, the mystical side of it. Bringing the masked figures of *Embraces*, with their fetishistic side, into this place, it's a little like a strident violin that upsets you a little. I've been working on those fetishistic figures for a while... it's also about the bubble it creates, the body is covered in a specific, symbolic material. People who have a latex fetish want to no longer be in contact with the air, to create a sort of bubble that muffles sound but also prevents contact with the skin and allows you to focus on an inner dimension.

**In the Collection Lambert, you'll be exhibiting group paintings. They speak of an ephemeral community, maybe even of a secret power of painting: to bring together the impossible. Those are solitudes placed next to each other and brought together by some moment of coincidence or possibility...**

There might be something paradoxical about the recurrence of the group in my work. I'm probably fascinated by the idea of belonging to a group, by both the desire and terror it creates. I've never been able to belong to any group. Those are imaginary groups I come up with on my own in my workshop. I live in a sort of deliberate solitude; first, the solitude I create every morning when I paint: I get up, go to my workshop, close the door, draw up the curtains. It's a large hangar, there aren't any windows on the outside, only a skylight, which creates a beautiful light, cuts up squares of sky. I see the sky but not the world. I've spent the overwhelming majority of my life for years now in a bubble of solitude which may in a way echo the bubble fetishists create with their costumes, as I mentioned earlier.

**In many of your paintings, children stare out at us, almost stubbornly. Is that something from your childhood you're trying to depict, and which resonates with the history of painting?**

Totally. Childhood is an important part of my work, with which I've sometimes struggled. Those are the paintings that are most well-known. I evoke childhood to talk about determination, solemnity, seriousness, lucidity. It has to do with the absolute certainty I had as a child that I wanted to be a painter, that I am that child I'm painting, the conviction that I wasn't going to change, that it was in me, that "*if people don't take it seriously, they'll know later that I do.*" Children in my paintings keep their eyes wide open, and they won't close them. They will keep examining us until the end of times. The painting *Les Insoumis (The Rebels)* is the first group painting about childhood I did. It led to my doing more afterwards. Pierre Guyotat once said, "*The children who start creating very young can never be mastered, they are rebels.*"

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Interview conducted by Marc Blanchet and translated  
by Gaël Schmidt-Cléach