

Cow and family: collection of colorful cartoons by Anouk

↳ EXHIBITION: Some artists have mastered such different styles and techniques that if you saw their work you would not think they were done by the same person. Swiss born Anouk is such a person. She has exhibited at the ELA gallery in the past, with Patrick Leonard, and is back once more for the last show of this academic year.

Gusta von Dobbenburgh
Curator

Anouk's former exhibitions consisted of one abstract series of works, and another one in «trompe l'oeil» technique, whereby the viewer's eye is fooled by the 3D effect of an image on a flat surface. This technique is not limited to the interior of a gallery, but is used on very large outdoor surfaces as well. You may actually have seen Anouk's «trompe l'oeil» work on large walls and buildings throughout the Lausanne area. One might expect that she would need help on these very large commissions. But as she typically works on these projects during the summer months at odd hours, in order to avoid the hot midday temperatures, she usually works on them by herself.

What is she bringing to ELA this time? A collection of cows. Drawn and painted ones, that is. They have become her trademark «dessins humoristiques,» cartoons that she did just for fun, and which have appeared in the Swiss magazine «Terre et Nature» for many years. When she first began to draw them, friends suggested that she should show them in an exhibit, and so she filled an entire entry hall at the CHUV with 200 drawings. Although she showed various subjects at the time, the audience seemed to love her cows the most, and they became her main subject.

«I looked at the cows from a perspective of people who came to Switzerland,» Anouk recalls. «Tourists always love to look at the cows here, and their bells. That was an inspiration to me. I began to draw them in every-day situations such as sports, travel, etc., and I wanted those situations to be amusing.» Her cows are anonymous, and also have an involved perspective on life: they ponder issues such as pollution, global warming and genetic manipulation.

The cow is a fantasy, and as fantasy goes, at some point it had



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offspring of a different breed; a penguin, a mouse, and a cat.

The penguin is the intellectual one of the trio; a down-to-earth guy, with a rational approach to life. Miss mouse is hysterical. She behaves somewhat like a teenager; she's obsessed with her looks, with being thin, and complains all the time about the things she lacks. The cat is normal, but would like to be a tiger. She is always full of love, but lacks someone on which to bestow her affections. Cow and her «children» are a colorful bunch, and it may come as no surprise that Anouk's cartoons, rendered in very clear lines and bright colors, are popular among adults and children alike. In 2007, her work was part of the Festival de la Jeunesse in Geneva, and many kids enjoyed cow and her family.

Anouk is now also writing a book about her characters. So far, she has finished two manuscripts. She keeps the subjects of her books separate: one is about the cow, the other describes the whereabouts of mouse exclusively.

Anouk will not only be bringing a large number of works to the ELA gallery, but she'll include two large banners on her cow's travels as well (one of the cow in New York, the other of its visit to the Statue of Liberty).

Anouk spent part of her childhood in Brazil. It was there when her first artistic aspirations began to emerge. «I spent my time drawing everything, everywhere, and on every possible surface and material,» she once wrote. She still has a bond with that country, and will be back there this summer to visit Amazonia. Although she insists that

the life of her «dessins humoristiques» do not reflect hers, «Cow» is coming along too. Then she'll return to her Swiss roots, of course, to share her Brazilian adventures with us. Children are very welcome at this special and colorful exhibit. Enjoy the show! ☺

«Vache», dessins humoristiques by Anouk
Exhibition from May 26 to June 27, 2008
ELA Cafeteria, Room 010
Monday through Friday:
8h45 - 17h00
Vernissage: Thursday,
May 29, 18h00 - 20h00