

Press release

Anna Boghiguian

Conversations

11 March – 15 April 2023

Campoli Presti, Paris

Campoli Presti is pleased to announce Anna Boghiguian's first exhibition with the gallery. *Conversations* features two groups of works exploring the artist's active readings of Clarice Lispector and Virginia Woolf, considered in their potential to create fictional narratives and distinct space-time environments.

In her ground floor installation, Boghiguian extends Lispector's existential reflections into a contained space where drawings, sculptures, plants, and earth stare at and expose each other. The cockroach in Anna Boghiguian's installation echoes an episode in the novel "The Passion According to G.H." (1964), where the main character's discovery of the insect in a closet marks the beginning of an interrupted flow of thoughts, translating the profound introspection experienced by the protagonist. The cockroach is also a symbol of survival and resistance facing the much less resilient human. The wax used in her figures also points out to the animal nature, particularly the bee's sophisticated, non-human social organization. Focusing on the encounter itself rather than in a particular story, Boghiguian's nomad cut-outs and drawings reflect on the fragile borders and the mystery that surrounds communication between nature, living matter and humans.

On the second floor, Boghiguian engages in an imaginary conversation with Virginia Woolf and her novel "To the Lighthouse" (1927) which takes place during the chaos of the First World War. Woolf's way of writing interests Boghiguian because of its proximity to the writer's early pictorial activity. Woolf does not emphasize the development of a plot, but rather lingers on the description of environments and objects through an abstract and poetic language. A large dining table welcomes the visitor who is invited to join the conversation with the fictional guests of this feast. Boghiguian's butterfly painted on her handwritten tablecloth echoes to the transition from a first form of life, represented by the caterpillar, to isolation, during the cocoon stage, to a return to the world, as a new form. As opposed to cockroaches associated to decay and disgust, butterflies are beautiful and delicate creatures that symbolizes metamorphosis and hope. Fragments of text covered in waxed paint are applied on the coarse cloth of the burlap, a material associated to resistance and trench lines. Evoking peace and war, present and future, hope and death, her words resonate with the narrative flow of the novelist, rendering myriad impressions trapped in time.

Lily Briscoe, one of the main characters of "To the Lighthouse", also goes through a transformation over the course of the novel, as she overcomes the social anxieties that have kept her from identifying and valuing herself as an artist. Non-linear fragments of Woolf's writing unfold in different supports, continuing a stream-of-consciousness narration that evades all rational punctuation, order or syntax. Like a film strip displayed on the wall, the narrative is suspended by four silent panels indicating the Great War years until the beginning of the Egyptian revolution. Woolf's novel, set before and after the war, also explores different spatial and temporal perspectives. In her work, Boghiguian leaps historical timelines with her own experience and perception, using stories to capture a moment of personal and political introspection.

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Anna Boghiguian (b. 1946, Cairo) grew up in Cairo and studied economics and political science at the local American university. She moved to Montreal to study art and music. Boghiguian's work first came to international attention in 2012 at dOCUMENTA 13 in Kassel. Subsequently invited to exhibit at numerous international museums and art institutes, she has shown work at the biennials in Sharjah (2011), Istanbul (2015), Venice (2015), Santa Fe (2016), Sydney (2019) and at Manifesta 13 in Marseille (2020). Over the past five years, Anna Boghiguian has created solo exhibitions for Carré d'Art, Nîmes (2016), Castello di Rivoli, Turin (2017), New Museum, New York (2017), Museum der Moderne, Salzburg (2018); Tate St. Ives (2019) and The Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst, Belgium (2021). A solo exhibition of her work was presented very recently at Kunsthaus Bregenz (2022).

Her work is included in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Metropolitan Museum, New York; Castello di Rivoli, Turin; Centre Pompidou, Paris and Tate Modern, London among others.