

I sometimes judge a work by the appetite it provokes in me. In other words, if when I look at a painting or a drawing, I feel like eating it, biting into its right angle or licking its surface, it's a safe bet that I definitely enjoy the work.

I like the dual meaning of the concept of appetite, which, while it refers to the act of eating, also means desiring something strongly and intensely. When I look at Troy Makaza's work, I want to ingest it, both intellectually and spiritually, in whatever way I can. This persistent feeling is rooted in the physical features of Troy's works, which are made using dyed silicone, expanded and articulated to create large compositions which sometimes give the impression of recognisable shapes. These works are created by a succession of lines, a tangle of layers, textured flat surfaces or the virtuoso articulation of grooves and droplets. The artist does not shy away from any combination, allowing colours that would normally be kept apart to come together in a chromatic poetry.

Troy's large-scale works, with their unstructured outlines, create the impression of movement. Some of them remain in my mind like anatomical sections, inside which we see blood cells, bacteria, and food circulating in an acidic or pastel plasma. In fact, Troy explained to me that most of his works stem from dreams or memories. These starting points, thanks to their sometimes vague or imprecise nature, allow new and unknown shapes to unfold, associated with fragments of images in which we can perceive a slice of salmon, flowers, or even planets...

However, one feature in Troy Makaza's work particularly catches my attention. It is the tobacco leaf, which remains one of the country's most important economic resources, with Zimbabwe being one of the world's leading exporters. In discussing the issues surrounding tobacco production in his country, Troy also shared with me one of his major concerns : the use, exploitation, and distribution of agricultural land in Zimbabwe. He was also worried about the challenges young people face due to poor management of exploitable land and the related risks of food shortages. I then thought of the exhibition's title, *Gutsa Ruzhinji*, which means Satisfying the masses / satisfying the greatest number, and there was no doubt left in my mind that if Troy creates works we want to eat, it is also because instead of cultivating land, he offers us a different type of sustenance – less nurturing but just as vital.

This idea of vitality is materialized through Raphaël Emine's works, displaying a series of sculptures whose primary function is to serve as shelters, nests, houses, and buildings for insects and other living organisms seeking refuge. Using 3D printing techniques, he creates architectures that are as mesmerizing as they are swirling, entomological utopias, as he calls them, offering the sensation of being made from a single line, in a single movement. Visceral in their appearance, these sculptures gently depart from their initial function to proudly display their artistic and phantasmagorical qualities within the exhibition space.

GALERIE POGGI

On the first floor of the gallery, a three-way dialogue unfolds with the encounter between the works of Léonore Chastagner, Yunyao Zhang, and Georges Tony Stoll. The latter is present through two sets of works that reflect his more or less conscious obsessions, combined with technical explorations allowing him to keep renewing his practice.

While the allusion to the sinuous and autonomous line found on the ground floor extends into Georges's work, it shrinks, freezes, and softens in the works of Yunyao Zhang. For several years now, the artist has been creating drawings that oscillate between conflicted classicism and radical abstraction. By choosing to reproduce fragments of classical or modern European sculpture, Yunyao places himself within a specific lineage of art history while also displacing it. The artist focuses on pre-existing objects and images by bringing them together using close-ups and isolating patterns in order to activate and reveal the sensual and emotional aspects of the fragments depicted, thanks to the development of a skilled drawing technique, using felt as the support. This can be seen in the triptych on display in the exhibition, showing three studies of a Medusa head sculpture inspired by the Italian artist Adolfo Wildt (1868-1931). The choice of materials and techniques are valuable clues to understanding the works.

For Léonore Chastagner, the use of stoneware is a way of emphasising the ideas and visible images emanating from her work. Stoneware has numerous specific properties, including its ability to withstand a variety of external influences (physical, chemical or climatic) better than other ceramic materials. The choice of this type of ceramic is no coincidence when observing the pieces of clothing and models of interiors that the artist creates. Indeed, Léonore Chastagner hand-models spaces that, in one way or another, welcome and protect our bodies, thoughts, and memories.

Meal times often bore me, as the format and obligations are so repetitive, just like the dishes served. Thus, the only way to avoid feeling down is to vary the elements involved in digestion as much as possible. It's then quite likely that the melancholic meal will turn into a genuine internal feast. That said, I'm likely to walk out of Galerie Poggi as full as fortified.

Margaux Bonopera, February 2025.

Jérôme Poggi invited Margaux Bonopera to imagine a dialogue between Troy Makaza's serpentine work and several other artists. The Project Space is occupied by Raphaël Emine, and in the Salons on the first floor of the gallery, three artists echo each other: Yunyao Zhang (born 1985), Léonore Chastagner (born 1992), and Georges Tony Stoll (born 1955).