

Jenisch
Vevey

Press kit
Vevey, May 2023

Astrid de La Forest

Figures du vivant

Figures of the living

From 21 June to 29 October 2023

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Exhibition poster

Graphic design: Gavillet & Cie

Astrid de La Forest (*1962)

Grands Chardons III (Great Thistles III), 2006

Etching, aquatint and drypoint on Arches wove paper, 1340 x 880 mm

Private collection

© Astrid de La Forest / 2023, ProLitteris, Zurich



Musée



“As an artist, one must be convinced of the evidence of doubt.”

Astrid de La Forest



Astrid de La Forest in Raymond Meyer's studio. © Cynthia Mai Ammann.

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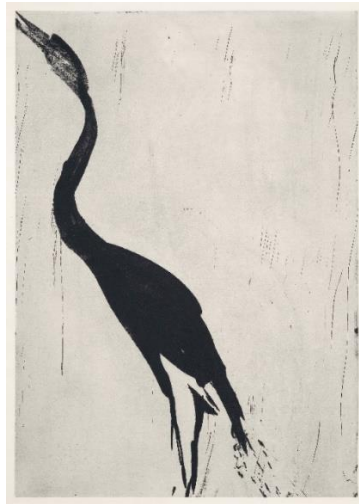
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Press Release

One of the unique characteristics of the art of Astrid de La Forest (*1962) is that she is both engraver and painter. She expresses simultaneously a need for space, non-verbal communication and a use of colour that makes her work similar to painting, but to an art of painting that relies on printing ink that needs to pass through the press.

A keen traveller, she draws her subjects from her observation of nature, the animal world, landscapes and portraits. Her preferred motifs emerge on the sheet as manifestations of the visible, thanks to the play of arabesque and transparency offered by the inking and superimposition of the plates.

An exhibition of the Cabinet cantonal des estampes curated by Florian Rodari, curator of the Fondation William Cuendet & Atelier de Saint-Prex



Astrid de La Forest, *Héron I* (Heron I), 2009, carborundum on Arches vellum paper, 990 x 700/1260 x 810 mm (basin/stand). Courtesy of Galerie Documents 15, Paris.
Photo credit: Germain Plouvier. © Astrid de La Forest / 2023, ProLitteris, Zurich



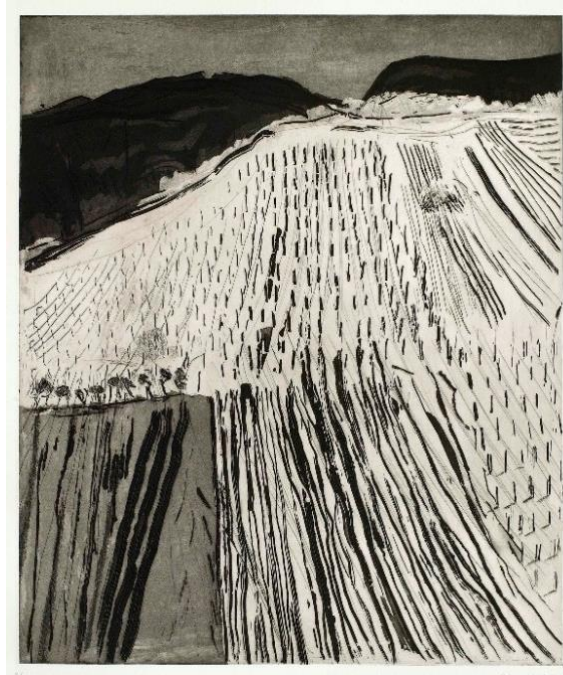
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|-------------------------------|---|
| Thursday June 15 at 10:30 a.m | Preview guided tour for the press |
| Tuesday, 20 June at 6.30 p.m | Vernissage of the exhibition |
| Thursday, June 22 at 6.30 p.m | Guided tour in the presence of the artist and the curator |



Exhibition

Presented in the Pavillon de l'estampe of the Musée Jenisch Vevey, this retrospective addresses four main themes, evoking all aspects of her work:

Landscapes



Astrid de La Forest, *Grands champs d'hiver* (Large winter fields), 2005, etching and aquatint on Arches vellum paper, 596 x 498/863 x 636 mm (basin/stand). Musée Jenisch Vevey – Cabinet cantonal des estampes, Fondation William Cuendet & Atelier de Saint-Prex.

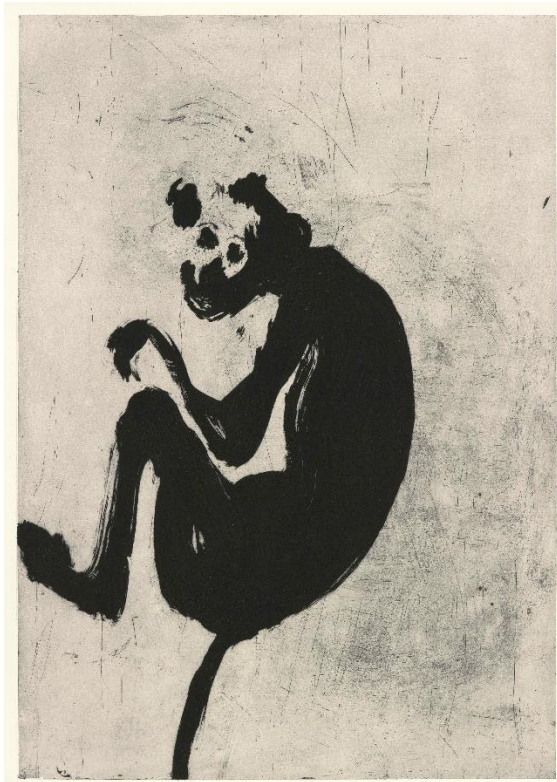
Photo credit: Germain Plouvier. © Astrid de La Forest / 2023, ProLitteris, Zurich.

The landscapes hold the attention of Astrid de La Forest through their rhythm: slopes, curves and valleys, which she accentuates with furrows. The artist always begins by drawing on the ground, outside, before recomposing her subject in engraving in the studio. She seeks to retranscribe the evolution and movement of nature. For example, her series of *Pins de Rome*¹ (Pine Trees of Rome), based on sketches made at the Villa Medici, pays tribute to the large pine trees planted by Horace Vernet (1789-1863), some of which fell down during her residency in 2018.

¹ Presented in the exhibition *Gardiens du silence* (Guardians of Silence), on the ground floor of the Musée Jenisch Vevey.



Animals



Astrid de La Forest, *Singe n° 7* (Monkey No. 7), 2009, carborundum and drypoint on Arches vellum paper, 1000 x 700/1230 x 810 mm (basin/stand), private collection, France. Photo credit: Germain Plouvier. © Astrid de La Forest / 2023, ProLitteris, Zurich.

Astrid de La Forest's universe contains many creatures: wolves, birds of prey, elongated herons, quiet goats and especially mischievous monkeys, discovered in the Jardin des plantes in Paris. The artist closely observed them all, before sketching them quickly in vivid strokes.

Figures

Over a decade, Astrid de La Forest has covered major criminal trials through numerous portraits. Through the illustrations of these judicial chronicles for television, she ponders the personality of the accused and how to report on the mysteries of the human being.



Astrid de La Forest, *Sans titre (Figure n° 14)* (Untitled), 2019, carborundum and drypoint on Arches vellum paper, 1110 x 790/1220 x 860 mm (basin/stand), private collection, France. Photo credit: Germain Plouvier. © Astrid de La Forest / 2023, ProLitteris, Zurich.

After sketching many landscapes without figures, Astrid de La Forest met Nadia, a woman who inspired the artist by her powerful presence and her grace. After posing sessions where she sketched her model with a brush, usually in indigo blue, she transposed her portraits into engravings. This image comes to life after several passages under the press, with intense blacks delicately marking the hollows and shadows.



Mountains and islands



Astrid de La Forest, *Bunbeg*, 2015, monotype on China paper applied on Arches vellum paper, 600 x 800 mm (image/stand), private collection, France. Photo credit: Germain Plouvier. © Astrid de La Forest / 2023, ProLitteris, Zurich.

During residencies in Ireland, Morocco and Tasmania, the artist experienced sometimes austere living conditions in unwelcoming climates. Isolated for months on end, she immersed herself in these often hostile environments. This solitude, combined with landscapes with multiple reflections showing the interplay of light and mirrors between land and water, was conducive to daydreaming. Astrid de La Forest often found her inspiration on islands, but also facing Lake Geneva, between vineyards and mountains, during her stays with the printer Raymond Meyer. The spectacle of the mountain is a naturally stimulating motif for the artist: the infinite variations that time inscribes on it push her to look beyond the clouds, “behind the mountains”. In addition to the enigmatic aspect of these distant masses, the engraver is interested in the image of the Alps on the lake, which resonates with her polished plate on which she places the shadows, which are then inverted on paper.



Techniques

Astrid de La Forest has adopted the **monotype** technique, a process that allows her to obtain a unique print from a previously inked medium. This yields extremely varied, often random results, which highlight the presence of movement and colour. The monotype allows the artist not only to preserve the rapidity of her initial gesture but also to establish, via printing, a distance felt as necessary.



Astrid de La Forest, *Pins II* (Pine Trees II), 2009, carborundum on Arches vellum paper, 990 x 700/1140 x 800 mm (basin/stand), private collection, France. Photo credit: Germain Plouvier. © Astrid de La Forest / 2023, ProLitteris, Zurich.

The artist likes to mix her drypoint work with **carborundum** engraving. This technique, learned in Raymond Meyer's workshop, also affords her great freedom of movement. It consists of partially covering the metal plate with a grain of carborundum – a powerful abrasive made from heated carbon and silicon – which is fixed with a paste-like mixture that adheres to the metal. Once fixed, it is this grain, composed of a multitude of asperities, which retains the ink. Varying grain size and density yield effects ranging from the most intense black to the finest gradations.



The artist



Astrid de La Forest in Raymond Meyer's studio. © Cynthia Mai Ammann.

Born in Paris on November 18, 1962, Astrid de La Forest lives and works in Thomery. After graduating from the École supérieure d'art graphique de Paris (Paris School of Graphic Arts) in 1982, she began working as a painter-decorator in the theatre with Richard Peduzzi and Patrice Chéreau. At the same time, she became an illustrator for the television and was in charge of court reporting for a decade, thanks to her gift for observation.

In 1995, she started engraving in the Parisian workshop Lacourière-Frélaut, first with etching, drypoint and aquatint. Printmaking became her preferred means of expression. She honed her skills with Raymond Meyer, a Swiss printer, and spent many working periods in Lutry, Pully and Lausanne. Raymond Meyer helped her to develop techniques suited to large formats, namely the carborundum and the monotype.

Astrid de La Forest's art draws on her numerous art-related trips and residencies, from Tasmania to Ireland and from Rome to Japan. These intensely creative stays enabled her to delve deeper into her subjects and fill sketchbooks with pencil, watercolour and ink washes. When she returns to the studio, she uses her drawings as memories of places or moments, transcribing her research into black-and-white engravings. Removing the colour dimension gives her the radicalism she needs to give free rein to her imagination.



In 2013, she joined the Société des peintres-graveurs français (Society of French Painters and Engravers). She taught visual arts for four years at the École d'architecture de Paris-Belleville (Paris-Belleville School of Architecture). In 2016, she was elected to the Académie des Beaux-Arts (Academy of Fine Arts) of the Institut de France (Institute of France), the first woman to join the section of engravers, then was appointed president of this academy in 2022.

Astrid de La Forest has benefited from numerous solo exhibitions in galleries in France, Great Britain and Switzerland (notably at the Galerie Arts et Lettres in Vevey in 2010 and 2014). The exhibition *Astrid de La Forest. Figures du vivant* (Astrid de La Forest. Figures of the living) is her first retrospective in a museum.

Artist's website: <https://astrid-delaforest.com/>



Curatorship

The exhibition is curated by Florian Rodari, curator of the William Cuendet Fondation & Atelier de Saint-Prex since its inception.

Florian Rodari has been a writer and art historian for nearly fifty years. Director of the Musée de l'Élysée in Lausanne from 1979 to 1983, he has been the curator of the Fondation William Cuendet & Atelier de Saint-Prex since 1977 and also of the Fondation Jean et Suzanne Planque since 1998. Within this framework, he has organized many exhibitions throughout the world in the fields of painting, engraving and photography. In addition to books for young people and several monographs of painters, he has penned numerous essays that were collected in 2016 by Gallimard Editions under the title *L'Univers comme alphabet*. He is also the literary director of the *La Dogana* publishing house, which he founded in Geneva in 1981.

The idea for this exhibition and the accompanying book came first from Astrid de La Forest's appreciation for some of Florian Rodari's texts, then from his strong commitment to the artist's vision.



Florian Rodari, private viewing at the Musée Jenisch Vevey. © Laetitia Gessler.

The Fondation William Cuendet & Atelier de Saint-Prex was established in 1977 by the heirs of the late William Cuendet (1886-1958), a pastor and print collector, and by the members of the Atelier de Saint-Prex, artists who practiced engraving. Deposited at the Cabinet cantonal des estampes in 1989, the collection brings together an exceptional group of sheets covering the history of the medium, as well as a testimony to a part of the engraved production of the canton of Vaud through the engravings made in Saint-Prex. Thanks to the many links forged between artists, writers and collectors, the original collection has been considerably increased.



Publication



Co-edition Snoeck and Fondation William Cuendet & Atelier de Saint-Prex
French, 176 pages, 118 illustrations, bound, 21 x 28 cm
Sales price: CHF 35.–

Neither a monograph in the strict sense of the word, nor a catalogue raisonné of the artist's oeuvre, the book accompanying the exhibition was conceived as a conversation between two sensitivities seeking to better understand the secrets of expression thanks to the prestige of ink. This conversation relies on the words that sprang from the writer's pen and on the images engraved and printed by the artist.



Events and activities

Programme and dates subject to change. Please refer to our website: museejenisch.ch/en/

Vernissage	Tuesday, 20 June, 6.30 p.m. Combined with the vernissage for the exhibitions <i>Gardiens du silence</i> (Guardians of silence) and <i>Kokoschka. Animaux totems</i> (Kokoschka. Totem Animals).
Guided tour	Thursday, 22 June at 6.30 p.m. By the artist Astrid de La Forest and the curator Florian Rodari CHF 3.- (in addition to the admission fee), free for the Friends of the museum
L'art des mots	Sunday, 8 October, 2-6 p.m. → 2-5 p.m. Engraving demonstration by the artist Alessandro Longo → 3 p.m. Reading by Emmanuelle Devos, actress, of texts chosen by Astrid de La Forest By registration: info@museejenisch.ch
Booklet for children	From age 6 Available free at reception
Audioguide	An audioguide to the exhibitions is available at the museum or on the IZI Travel application (in French)
Schools Class visits	Information and registration sterrier@museejenisch.ch
Groups Guided tour for adults and children	In French or English Registration: info@museejenisch.ch T+41 21 925 35 20



Practical informations

Opening hours

Tuesday to Sunday from 11 am to 6 pm

Monday closed

Open until 8 pm on special Thursdays

Open Easter Monday and Whit Monday

Admission fees

Adults CHF 12.-

Pensioners CHF 10.-

Under 18 free

Students and apprentices CHF 5.-

Free admission on the first weekend of the month

Access

Gare CFF railway station 250 m from the museum

Vieille-Ville and Coop car parks nearby

Access for the disabled and push-chairs



Contacts

Exhibition

Curatorship

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