

I'll Be Your Mirror



A Dance for the End of the World by Audrey Guttman
17.7"x13.8"; collage on paper; 2021. Courtesy of the artist.

COLLAGE ON VIEW



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Audrey Guttman: I'll Be Your Mirror

at Ketabi Projects in Paris, France

3-19 February 2022

In the Velvet Underground song, “I’ll be your mirror”, the singer Nico proclaims: “When you think the night has seen your mind / That inside you’re twisted and unkind / Let me stand to show that you are blind / Please put down your hands / ‘Cause I see you.” These words echo at the heart of Audrey Guttman’s work. For her, collage has the same effect as a distorting mirror that, despite everything, sees.

Born from an infinite array of pre-existing images—visions torn from old magazines, advertisements, traces of a forgotten past that Audrey Guttman carefully preserves—collage blurs lines. It allows the artist to disappear, to feel safe. However, it is also a revealing agent: each work becomes the reflection of an intense inner life. Alternately crossed by emotions, memories, sensations, collage defies fixed images, their definite and limited meaning. It works with the image like the poem does with the word.

By associating visions apparently opposed—in the same way as a baudelairian correspondence or a synesthesia—the artist cracks open meaning, she multiplies it. And allows the viewer to find his or her own troubling reflection, to associate with it a deep emotional state, a secret shape, an intimate color. Thus, each glance will find its unique and singular part. Like a bit of one’s mental life, one’s existence within—to use an expression by Michaux which Audrey Guttman is fond of—and which, in the collage, reveals itself.

After having tried all practices and all acts—painting, acting, drawing collage came to Audrey Guttman as an obvious choice. First of all for its autobiographical dimension. “My identity has never been one and indivisible,” the artist acknowledges, “the only thing I claim are my own assemblages”. She loved collage, “a modest and humble art, made of trials and errors”. Through

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this intensive practice, the artist saves images that are doomed to oblivion. Facing them is a mix of trance and tenderness: Audrey Guttman leafs through them, searches. She feels, perceives that this vision must be kept, this page must be ripped and not another. A powerful obviousness manifests itself : the image imposes itself to her as if it wanted to survive. So she cuts it out, keeps it. Then she turns around the image, dances around her. She tries an association, lets it rest, waits. Finally, she glues. The next day, she will repeat this act, methodically, like a saving exorcism or a meticulous choreography.



I'll Be Your Mirror by Audrey Guttman

11.8"x9.4"; abrasion on paper; 2021. Courtesy of the artist.

Through the magical power of collage, the image is reborn from its ashes. This idea of rebirth is the pulse of the exhibition "I'll Be Your Mirror". As Audrey Guttman confesses: "The planet is

burning, the apocalypse is playing out before our very eyes.” To counter the announced end of the world, the artist puts a spin on Boris Vian’s famous sentence and turns it in a magical proposal: I will spit ... becomes I will dance on your graves ... Duly noted. Her characters dance on ruins as in *A dance for the end of the world* where we see an ambiguous dancer waltzing with a nuclear explosion.

The end of the world is also the end of images. Faced with the infinite surplus of images that our retinæ are forced to consume every day, faced with this new class struggle won long ago by the screens, Audrey Guttman’s collages give new meaning to buried images by forcing us to slow down, to take our time, to let ourselves be seduced. For example, she cuts out advertisements where the often naked bodies of women are originally used to promote the sale of this or that product. Audrey Guttman reverses the primary function: she flips the images before gluing them, thus revealing what chance printed on the back of these shots.

(text adapted from a statement written by Boris Bergmann)

INFORMATION

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Hours:

Tuesday-Saturday, 11AM-7PM

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