

**GALERIE NATHALIE OBADIA**

BRUXELLES

## **VICTORIA PALACIOS**

*DES SIGNES, DES SCÈNES*

21 March - 17 May 2025



*Deux portées*, 2025, Acrylic and gouache on canvas.

Galerie Nathalie Obadia is pleased to present *Des signes, des scènes*, Victoria Palacios's first solo exhibition at the gallery in Brussels. Born in 1992 in Rennes, the French artist has lived and worked in Brussels for several years. She graduated in performance and painting from the École de Recherche Graphique (ERG) in 2019. Through a multidisciplinary practice combining painting, music, and performance, Victoria Palacios immerses visitors in a theatrical world of layered narratives, blending the sublime with the unsettling. The exhibition unveils new paintings, objects, and other recent works, in which captivating figures come to life. Each piece seems suspended between the ecstasy of a celebration at its height and the melancholy of a spectacle drawing to a close.

Clowns, swans, veiled widows, and ghostly figures greet visitors in procession as they enter the exhibition. The objects depicted come to life as well: they dance—like the bagpipe (biniou)—or sway in sinuous curves, like a lamp post beckoning spectators to follow. An animistic dimension infuses every medium, transforming each into a living presence under the force of the artist's gesture. Within these immaculate white walls, every element joins in a grand celebration—one that intoxicates with its forms, its images, and its colours, as garish as they are profound. Each work on view seems to have already lived, bearing traces of wear—like the paint-splattered shoes in the exhibition, left ready to slip onto the feet of protagonists poised to step onto the stage at any moment. Here, the spectacle—and its inherent comedy—seems poised to begin.

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The visitor's perceptive sensibility is called into play, disoriented simultaneously by space, time, and the rush of emotions that course through them. It is precisely this delicate tension—emotional and temporal—that Victoria Palacios seeks to capture: what thrill takes hold of us in the moments before the show begins? And what, then, is the meaning of the vertigo that grips us once the stage is empty? What becomes of the objects, the lines, the fleeting laughter, the clowning, and the shared intoxication when the party is over?<sup>1</sup> Between curtains, chequered floors, and theatrical stagings, the moment of grace is brief, and melancholy soon takes its place.

The works embody a subtle ambivalence, in which the sublime and the unsettling intertwine in a disquieting feast. The swan is emblematic of this tension—its majestic beauty masking an underlying aggression beneath its graceful appearance. The artist deepens this duality through the figure of the clown, who can provoke both bursts of laughter and shivers of fear. As for the widow, draped in sumptuous, silky fabrics, she conjures a sense of inner struggle, tinged with the melancholy of a bygone era. This emotional tension permeates all of Victoria Palacios's work, where humour, joy, and vertigo intertwine in a single breath.

Different temporalities unfold throughout the exhibition: painting, with its long history, stands in contrast to the fleeting nature of the performing arts. In Victoria Palacios's work, however, these two disciplines reveal themselves as two sides of the same coin. Immersed in music from an early age, the artist has been performing internationally for several years. As part of the duo *Alto Fuero*, which she formed with Loto Retina, she has appeared, among others, at *Lafayette Anticipations* in Paris and *Les Halles de Schaerbeek* with the show *Diboell*. Since 2024, the artist has also been a member of the musical ensemble *5th of July* and will take part in the *Donaufestival* in Krems, Austria, this summer. Although performance and painting follow different rhythms, they share a common intensity—both demand painstaking work: one is improvised and immediate, the other patient and prolonged, but each is forged through hours, days, months, even years of creation.

The work of Victoria Palacios aligns with a long artistic tradition in which emblematic figures of the spectacle—clowns, harlequins, and others—have been explored by masters of painting such as James Ensor and, more recently, Georges Condo. Although this motif recurs throughout her work, the artist chooses to reinvent it by layering thick applications of paint onto surfaces as unconventional as they are playful—books, shoes, even slices of bread. Challenging the traditional aesthetics of painting on canvas or wood, Victoria Palacios blurs the boundaries: the sacred seems to inhabit the everyday object; it emerges from the profane. Her universe also resonates with that of contemporary artists such as Andrea Fraser and Martin Kippenberger, whose transgressive, multi-dimensional approaches find an echo in her own. Whether through sound, performance, or painting, her works nourish one another, engaging with art history while urging it toward reinvention and new narratives.

Finally, *Des signes, des scènes* offers a playful, inquisitive terrain—one that toys with visitors' perceptions. In this motionless spectacle, scattered with objects that summon a new celebration, enchantment slowly takes shape. Little by little, visitors may come to realise they are watching the spectacle of their own lives: an existence shaped by fetishes, improvisations, laughter, wounds and bereavements, encounters and harmonies—as impromptu as they are orchestrated.

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<sup>1</sup>This idea emerged in a conversation with Macha Makeïeff—author, director, and co-curator of the exhibition *En piste! Clowns, Pitres et Saltimbanques*, on view from 4 December 2024 to 12 May 2025 at Mucem – Musée des Civilisations de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée in Marseille.

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**Born in 1992 in Rennes, France, Victoria Palacios lives and works in Brussels, Belgium.**

A 2019 graduate of the École de Recherche Graphique (ERG) in Brussels, she builds a multidisciplinary practice that weaves narratives across a variety of media. At once performer, musician, and visual artist, her work moves fluidly between disciplines.

Her solo exhibitions include: *Behind the curtain, the swans will always be two, melting like butter into the night* at Gallery Vacancy during the Liste Art Fair, Basel (2024), *Snails don't drool, They spit* at Galerie Derouillon, Paris (2024), *L'odeur de la boue* at Pizza Gallery, Antwerp (2024), *L'Éloquente triple flûte* with Victor Delestre at Placement Produit, Aubervilliers (2023), *Kalon Glaz* at Panamax, Liège (2022), *Stars of Bethlehem, Beech, Gorse* at the SSSI Club, Marseille (2022), and *L'Araignée* at Brasseries Atlas, Brussels (2021).

Recent group exhibitions include *Life in the Margin*, MOU, Oudenaarde (2024), *Fin du mois, jour de paie. Ou presque* at the Zahltag, Spielact Festival, Geneva (2024), *A Small Land of Watery Light* at Gallery Vacancy, Shanghai (2024), *You crack me up!* with Angélique Aubrit and Ludovic Beillard at Wouters Gallery, Brussels (2024), *La flemme ~ joy of missing out* at Image/Imatge, Orthez (2023), *HOT GIRLS: She's A Keeper, He's A Catch* at Red Herring Salon, Antwerp (2023), and *Symbiosium* at Fimenco x Centre Wallonie-Bruxelles, Paris (2023). She has also taken part in *Fables Paniques* at Ada Ventura, Brussels (2023), *Zindering* at l'Emergent, Veurne (2023), *Silver Screen* at Galerie Harkawk, Los Angeles (2022) and *Dicke Luft - An exhibition by Tenzing Barshee*, Galerie Bernhard, Zurich (2019).

Since 2024, she has been a member of the musical ensemble 5th of July, alongside Roman Hiele, Ferre Marnef, and Dennis Vanderauwera. She has staged several performances involving other actors, in which she also performs herself. In addition, she forms half of the musical duo Alto Fuero (Stroom Label) with Loto Retina, founded in 2022, and is among the artists selected for the SHAPE+ 2024 programme. The duo *Alto Fuero* recently performed at the opening of Nuits Botanique and at Les Halles de Schaerbeek in Brussels (2024) with their work *Diboell*. They also appeared at Lafayette Anticipations in Paris and at Les Siestes Électroniques in Toulouse (2024).

In 2025, she will present her first solo exhibition at Galerie Nathalie Obadia in Brussels.

She will also participate in the group exhibition *Painting After Painting – Peinture Contemporaine en Belgique* at S.M.A.K., the Municipal Museum of Contemporary Art in Ghent, Belgium.

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**Bruxelles** Charles Decoster

**Victoria Palacios**

*Des signes, des scènes*

21 March - 17 May 2025

**Paris** Cloître Saint-Merri

**Roger-Edgar Gillet**

*Gillet et compagnie*

8 February - 26 April 2025

**Paris** Saint-Honoré

**Sarkis**

22 March - 3 May 2025

**Exposition d'été**

24 May - 19 July 2025

**Joris Van de Moortel**

17 May - 26 July 2025

**Fabrice Hyber**

May - July 2025

**Paris** Cloître Saint-Merri - Espace II

**Guilty pleasures**

28 March - 17 May 2025

par Pierre El Khoury