

Lisa Yuskavage at Zwirner Gallery

by Alain Berland



Lisa Yuskavage
David Zwirner: Paris
June 9-July 29

Appointment

Frequent title in literature and cinema for who remembers the works of Maupassant, Tourgueniev or more recently those of Christine Angot and André Téchiné, *Rendez-vous* is the pleasant injunction used by the painter Lisa Yuskavage for her first exhibition. in Paris.

At the David Zwirner gallery, the New York artist brings together the conditions of day, time and place of what constitutes a meeting in the literal sense but also in the virtual sense since each of the four large canvases which occupy the picture rails of the he main space represents one of the painter's possible studios. *Golden Studio*, *The Artist's Studio*, *Big Flesh Studio*, or even *Rendez-vous*, are then sorts of structured and open meta-universes in which the visitor's gaze can be engulfed, travel and meditate at leisure.

The day before the opening of the show, during her lecture at the Beaux-Arts in Paris, Lisa Yuskavage was very clear: her Parisian exhibition is in direct reference to Matisse's painting *L'atelier rouge*. An extraordinarily famous canvas made in 1911, quickly brushed and two-thirds covered in Venetian red, which depicts the interior of the custom-built studio next to the family home in 1909. The work is so famous that it was the subject of a scientific

exhibition in the summer of 2022 at the MOMA where the curators have endeavored to bring together the paintings and objects that can be seen reproduced on the canvas. On this subject, Matisse recalls in an interview with another painter that "an artist...must not copy the walls, or the objects on the table, but he must above all express a vision of color, the harmony of which corresponds to his feeling".



Lisa Yuskavage, *Small Department of Painting Drawing and Sculpture*, 2019 © Lisa Yuskavage
Courtesy the artist and David Zwirner

This way of seeing, of thinking but above all of imagining in color is what Lisa Yuskavage has always pursued while producing an additional difference: "The things that Matisse paints and transposes into his canvas are in his studio, he sees. For my part, what I paint never exists in this space at the same time and in the same place. »

In the universe of Lisa Yuskavage, each workshop is only one possibility among others. It is an imaginary gathering of different presences, human or objects. Possibilities that the artist, who like Matisse thinks in color, declines here on large formats in improbable tones, cadmium red, madder lacquer, flesh pink, cadmium green, golden yellow, saturated colors but used in transparency which become emblematic of his opposition to the doxa.

This claimed emancipation, the artist defines herself as an unusual character, also applies to formats and subjects. Against all odds, when we only thought we'd see her usual little meticulous canvases, visible all the same in the adjoining room of the gallery, she decided to exhibit large formats under the glass roof of the main room. As for the characters, they are still the ones who have aroused the controversies. They are largely undressed models with exaggerated sexual characteristics in a spirit of extravagance that one could readily associate with the "Camp" spirit dear to Susan Sontag.

For *Rendez-vous*, it will be understood, Lisa Yuskavage refuses, once again, to comply with the injunctions of good taste. By mixing the codes of mass culture, those of truckers' calendars and those of high culture thanks to a classic touch close to that of Fragonard, by giving his subjects more than abundant forms and an unrealistic strangeness to the faces, she integrates the gazes that women undergo, thwarts the relationship of domination and affirms her singularity as an artist.



Lisa Yuskavage, *Rendez-vous (boschmademedoit)*, 2023 © Lisa Yuskavage
Courtesy the artist and David Zwirner

Head image: Installation view, Lisa Yuskavage: *Rendez-vous*, David Zwirner, Paris, June 9– July 29, 2023. © Lisa Yuskavage

Courtesy the artist and David Zwirner

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