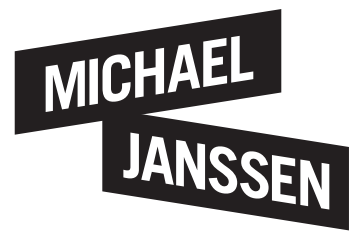


# JANA CORDENIER

## PARADISE



10 December 2019 – 15 February 2020

Opening: Saturday 7 December, 4–8 pm

**For the final exhibition of the year, Galerie Michael Janssen is pleased to open its doors unto “Paradise,” an exhibition by the Belgian artist Jana Cordenier. “Paradise” marks the artist’s solo debut with the gallery, and it features a collection of works that present her lively, intimate research into painting.**

In “Paradise” Cordenier takes a different approach to the tradition of *plein air* painting: strolling through the landscape surrounding Arles, she places blank sheets on the grass that is scattered with branches, flowers, leaves, rocks and the seasonal discardings of nature. Instead of sketching or cataloguing the landscape, however, as a landscape painter in strictu sensu would do, trying to represent what he sees, Cordenier traces and collects delicate impressions of colour and light. Those impressions she renders in her studio on a layered skin of transparent cotton or silk by means of different yarns.

Though in their fragile suggestiveness these works might hint at a naturalistic interest in the botanical world around Arles, Cordenier is fully aware that her works, sparsely populated with embroidered graffiti-like gestures and tresses of pure colour, are by no means mere floral representations. Rather, she says, „these works stem from an attempt to make paintings lighter, or less heavy on matter. Before, I considered oil paint too explicit and too meaningful. Here, in nature, to create is to perform a natural act—an act as natural as breathing.“

Citing Cy Twombly and James Ensor as major forces who helped her set out on a conquest of what could become some kind of paradise, Cordenier is adamant that her concerns take root in a broader discourse on painting, to which she contributes with vibrant, almost primitive gestures. “The struggle here though,” she notes, “is not about the medium, but in the painting itself.”

The embroidery should not be considered as a substitute for the saturated image-making act of painting, but as its extension. Thus the yarn records both the collection of light and colours Cordenier picked up on her walks around Arles, and her desire to heighten the material and spatial sensitivities of painting as an intuitive act belying conventional processes. In line with Twombly’s buoyant sense of painterly freedom and Ensor’s distinct use of halcyon pigments, Cordenier broadens the scope of the traditional brush stroke. Her work exudes a committed timelessness. Piercing the layers of the work’s cloth as if it were a skin, each stitch of the needle describes a passage through time, inviting viewers to take a stroll into an experience, rather than into the graphic depiction of a landscape.

Just so, the long panorama, stretched on-site due to its size, invites viewers to walk its length and to take the time and space necessary to enjoy its grand scale.

“Paradise” is on view from the 7th of December, through the new year, and until the 15th of February 2020. We invite you to enjoy Cordenier’s exhibition, with all of its bursting colours, in anticipation of spring.

### **Galerie Michael Janssen**

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Opening hours: Tue - Sat 11 am to 6 pm