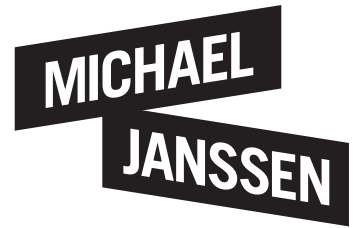


JANA CORDENIER

Tides



15 March – 20 April 2024

Opening: 15 March 2024, 6–9 pm

The surface of the water shimmers: each ripple becomes a miniature lens, bending and dispersing light in different directions. Colors shift from deep blues and greens to turquoise and aquamarine, then to light yellow and crimson red. Particles of salty water saturate the moist air, turning into pearls interwoven in the abstract seascapes of Jana Cordenier's embroidery paintings. *Tides*, the second solo show of the Belgian artist at Galerie Michael Janssen, delves into the textural qualities of movement so vividly present in nature.

The desire to capture the dynamic essence of her surroundings contributes to Jana Cordenier's passion for working en plein air. Artmaking sessions in the open air resemble a symbolic ritual of becoming one with the landscape. 'It's not like ,me and nature.' It feels more like ,the rock is me, the sea is me, the plant is — I'm the plant,' explains Cordenier. The artist refers to her paintings as ,atmospheres': they represent experiences of the body and are aimed at triggering different senses. In her process, nature serves not only as inspiration but as a co-creator.

The concept behind *Tides* originated on a journey to Greece, during which the artist worked on an expansive drawing using a 10-meter roll of paper she brought with her. Placing it directly on the bare ground, she allowed it to absorb the earth's uneven texture, and be shaped by plants, branches, rocks, and other natural marks that would infuse the drawing with a living, dynamic character. The idea is not to sketch the landscape but to capture the essence of it through its material qualities. To convey the richness of color in her surroundings, Cordenier utilized watercolors, sometimes painting with a branch. For one drawing, she experimented with seawater: as the paper dried, the salt crystals added an extra-dimensional depth to its texture. This large-scale field work became the base for the pieces presented in the exhibition.

While Cordenier highly values the process of spontaneous collaboration with nature, the transition from drawing to painting unfolds in the studio, carefully overseen by the artist. In this space, she engages in the process of conceptual transformation of the landscape, opting for the medium of embroidery on canvas. Cordenier's interest in embroidery was sparked by the search for an alternative to oil paint that could make her paintings lighter in both mass and materiality. To transform the patterns from her drawings, the artist employs transparent cotton, turning sporadic lines into subtle stitches. Hand-dyed silk imparts a sense of translucence to the works, metamorphosing the landscape into an endless field replete with visual possibilities.

In her paintings, the Belgian artist experiments with scales and superimpositions, conceptually translating the imprints left by nature in her drawings into the delicate and sophisticated language of embroidery. Her captivating thread paintings vividly pulsate on the canvas, offering the viewer a unique tactile experience. A tapestry of textures creates a sense of movement and depth, with tangible stitches simulating the dynamic nature of the landscape.

Jana Cordenier's *Tides* captures a moment in movement. Rhythmic and intuitive, her paintings ebb and flow, evoking the sensation of smooth pebbles gently rolling from the shore into the deep sea that shimmers under the afternoon sun.

Text by Karina Abdusalamova