

PRESS
26.06 →
05.09.2021
BETTY TOMPKINS
RAW MATERIAL
MO.CO. PANACÉE

PRESS VISIT
FRIDAY
25.06.2021 2PM
OPENING FRIDAY
25.06.2021
4.00 PM

PRESS
RELEASE



Soutenu
par


**MINISTÈRE
DE LA CULTURE**
*Liberté
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**MO.CO.MONTPELLIER
CONTEMPORAIN**

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Betty Tompkins

Raw Material

This summer, two American feminist icons, Marilyn Minter and Betty Tompkins, take over MO.CO. Panacée with their first solo exhibitions to be held in a public institution in France.

Through a selection of recent works, some of which have been produced especially for MO.CO. Panacée, these exhibitions offer two singular points of view on the history of painting, eroticism and the deconstruction of the male gaze on women's bodies.

Two solo exhibitions, which echo each other and enter into dialogue through a chronological timeline that situates the work of Minter and Tompkins in a wider context, exploring the relationship between art, feminism and pornography from the 1960s through to the present.

The exhibitions will be complemented by a monographic publication on each artist.

Under the artistic direction of Nicolas Bourriaud

Curators:
Vincent Honoré, Head of Exhibitions
Anya Harrison, Curator
Rahmouna Boutayeb, Project Manager
Assisted by Fanny Hugot-Conte and Emma Ribeyre

Photo credit
Betty Tompkins
Pussy Painting #31, 2017
Acrylic on canvas, 40,6 x 40,6 cm
Courtesy of the artist, P-P-O-W, New York and rodolphe janssen, Brussels
© Betty Tompkins

Betty Tompkins: Raw Material presents around 50 paintings and drawings realised over the last ten years.

Betty Tompkins is known first and foremost for her large-format *Fuck Paintings*, a series of canvases that she began in 1969, whose representation of penetrative sex drawn from pornographic photos have been subjected to censorship numerous times, notably in France in 1973. Having completed her studies at Syracuse University in New York, a period that marked the height of Abstract Expressionism, Tompkins brings as much attention to form and language as to the explicit images that she appropriates. It is then through a formal, abstract and minimalist manner that she addresses sexuality and desire.

Just like the *Fuck Paintings*, the *Cunt Paintings* and *Pussy Paintings* series – images of female genitalia – are constructed from a cold and restrained palette of black, white and grey. Stylistically close to Photorealism, the blurred images, created with a spray gun on coloured, pastel backgrounds, sit close to abstract painting and favour geometric forms and nuances of grey. Her compositions, freed from all external markers of identity, since Tompkins crops her photographic sources to eliminate hands, heads and faces, transform the human body into a quasi-landscape.

In the *Insults and Laments* series, Tompkins partially covers images of female genitalia with text. “She is difficult to work with” or “Who will ever love you if you look like this?” are among the phrases used. The artist chooses them from among quotations, always anonymous, that stem from her long-term project of compiling descriptions of women. The shock that this vulgar and offensive language inspires, whose palpable violence underscores a deeply ingrained misogyny, supplants any indignation that could be triggered by the image itself. This series acquires another level of significance within the context of the recent and ongoing #MeToo movement, which has uncovered numerous allegations of sexual violence, verbal as well as physical.

Historical collages and drawings reveal Tompkins' working process and highlight her use of the grid, an emblem of minimalism and formalism. Among the works on paper, the *Photo Drawings* series from 2014 is exhibited for the first time.

Even though her paintings, due to their explicit nature, have been side-lined and rarely exhibited, Tompkins' work has nevertheless influenced later generations of artists. Since the 1970s, she has never ceased to persistently question the rules of representation of women's bodies and what governs them.

The exhibition *Betty Tompkins: Raw Material* is accompanied by a publication that includes specially commissioned texts by Nicolas Bourriaud, Géraldine Gourbe and Alison Gingeras, as well as an interview with the artist.

The exhibition is produced with the support of P-P-O-W, New York.

Biography

Betty Tompkins
Born in 1945 at Washington, D.C., USA
Lives and works between New York and Mt. Pleasant, Pennsylvania.

Since the late 1960s, Betty Tompkins has engaged with a sexually explicit iconography. Two paintings from her first series of *Fuck Paintings* (1969-1974) were refused entry to France in 1973, stopped at customs and confiscated due to their content, which was deemed pornographic in nature. The *Fuck Paintings* were not shown until 2002, when Tompkins had her first solo exhibition at Mitchell Alpus Gallery, the New York gallerist who (re)discovered her. Tompkins' work was finally shown in France in 2003 at the Lyon Biennale, and the following year *Fuck Painting #1* entered the permanent collection of the Centre Pompidou in Paris.

Tompkins' work has been presented in exhibitions in Kunstraum Innsbruck, FLAG Art Foundation (New York), Confort Moderne (Poitiers), Villa Arson (Nice), Dallas Contemporary (Texas) and the Centre Pompidou, Musée d'art moderne (Paris), among others.

MO.CO. Montpellier Contemporain, a unique ecosystem: one institution, three venues

A unique model, MO.CO. Montpellier Contemporain – a public institution for cultural cooperation dedicated to contemporary art – is an artistic ecosystem that brings together two exhibition venues and an art school.

MO.CO. expertly coalesces the different strata of the art world, from training through to academic research, including production, exhibitions, cultural mediation and research.

This horizontally structured institution is designed around the capacity for invention and creativity of its team to produce and share content with the widest range of publics.

The exhibitions' themes delve into contemporary cultural, political and societal issues and offer an immersion into the artistic production of less well-known territories (Russia, South America, Africa...). Both the solo and group exhibitions at MO.CO. Panacée are an opportunity to exhibit artists for the first time in France, and to produce new works in close collaboration with local artisans and industries. MO.CO. Hôtel des collections' thematic exhibitions deploy a rich and varied education programme to facilitate the understanding and appreciation of the artistic, political and social contexts that each exhibition uncovers. Each exhibition is organised around a public or private collection presented for the first time in France.

In the framework of this curatorial project, MO.CO. and the Université Paul Valéry in Montpellier have jointly put in place an international and interdisciplinary research centre on art collecting in order to situate Montpellier as the principal site of research on this topic.

Alongside its exhibitions, MO.CO. proposes a rich cultural programme whose objective is to make contemporary art accessible to as many people as possible (young children, school and university students, adults, disabled visitors...). MO.CO.'s cultural mediators embody the institution's overriding ambition to encourage visitors, be they art lovers or those who are simply curious, to develop their critical thinking skills and sensibility to contemporary art, and to converse about works and artists. The editorial policy also ensures that MO.CO.'s exhibitions are shared via publications and exhibition guides.

Central to MO.CO. is the synergy between the art school and the exhibition sites. The École Supérieure des Beaux-Arts benefits from talks and other interventions by artists, curators, and other professionals invited by La Panacée and the Hôtel des collections and, conversely, the two exhibition venues benefit from the students' presence and energy. This configuration allows MO.CO. Esba's students to learn and develop at the heart of an ecosystem that is unique both in France and internationally, and for which MO.CO. Esba has been awarded an HCERES (High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education) accreditation for 2020-2024.

2021 Programme

Possessed
Deviance, performance, resistance
 Currently on view
 MO.CO. Panacée
 14, rue de l'École de Pharmacie
 Montpellier

00.
Cranford Collection: the 2000s
 Currently on view
 MO.CO. Hôtel des collections
 13 rue de la République
 Montpellier

Gaëlle Choïsne
Défixion
 Currently on view
 Site archéologique Lattara
 Musée Henri Prades
 390 Route de Pérols
 34970 Lattes

Cosmogonies.
Zinsou, An African Collection
 Summer 2021
 MO.CO. Hôtel des collections
 13 rue de la République
 Montpellier

Marilyn Minter
All Wet
 Summer 2021
 MO.CO. Panacée
 14, rue de l'École de Pharmacie
 Montpellier

Betty Tompkins
Raw Material
 Summer 2021
 MO.CO. Panacée
 14, rue de l'École de Pharmacie
 Montpellier

Autopsy:
Bodies Under Ordeal
 Autumn 2021
 MO.CO. Hôtel des collections
 13 rue de la République
 Montpellier

SOL - La Biennale du territoire #1
One Step to the Side
 Autumn 2021
 MO.CO. Panacée
 14, rue de l'École de Pharmacie
 Montpellier

Raphaël Barontini
 Autumn 2021
 Site archéologique Lattara
 Musée Henri Prade
 390 Route de Pérols
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Exhibition Images
 Artwork and exhibition images are
 available online in the press area
www.moco.art
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 Password : moco2019

MO.CO. Panacée
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 Open from wednesday to sunday
 From 12pm to 7pm

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