

# 248—249

Jaargang 26 No. 133

Their abundance with the



Appearance looks like wood,



Pedies soil and sheets have,



Spanning between points

Congenital

Spacious deep and unshaded

## New season starts with two solo exhibitions by Büttner and Augustijnen

BRUSSELS, AUG. 16

As part of the Brussels Gallery Weekend (08/09-11/09), the gallery will present two exhibitions. *Painted Ceiling and Floor* by Andrea Büttner with two new site-specific works will open at the gallery on September 8 and will be on view until October 29. The second exhibition will also open on September 8 in the space of Lempertz, a few steps away from the gallery. It consists of the large-scale installation *Maps of the Middle East (1942 - 1969)*, a recent work by Sven Augustijnen that was first shown at Kunsthall Aarhus (DK) in 2020. It will be accessible until September 18 only. See pages 2 and 3 for more information on the shows.

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(advertisement)

# 248

Exhibition  
08/09–29/10

Opening 08/09, 11 am–9 pm

## ANDREA BÜTTNER PART 2: PAINTED CEILING AND FLOOR

Jan Mot  
Petit Sablon / Kleine Zavel 10  
1000 Brussels, Belgium

(advertisement)

# 249

Exhibition  
08/09–18/09

Opening 08/09, 11 am–9 pm

## SVEN AUGUSTIJNEN MAPS OF THE MIDDLE EAST (1942-1969)

Jan Mot at Lempertz  
rue du Grand Cerf / Grote Hertstraat 6  
1000 Brussels, Belgium



# Painted Ceiling and Floor

## by Andrea Büttner

By  
Daphné Charitos and Filip Jakab

BRUSSELS, JUL. 29 – For her upcoming solo exhibition, *Painted Ceiling and Floor* at Jan Mot from September 8 to October 29, Andrea Büttner presents a site-specific exhibition. A ceiling installation composed of nine oil paintings on canvas is combined with a floor painted in two colours. This new presentation is part of Büttner's ongoing interest in ceiling paintings and in the modification of the exhibition space through the introduction of colour and pattern.

“These painted ceiling works speak to the threshold of painting and architecture, the bodily experience of looking at frescos in Romanesque chapels and the importance of the ceiling for this experience.”<sup>1</sup> The reference to Christian theology and philosophy can also be seen through a binary tension that this new presentation is infused with: the contrast between high and low.

Büttner has previously presented several variations of ceiling works. One such work is *Painted Ceiling (potatoes)*, presented in 2019 at Hollybush Gardens in London. Referencing Giotto's star-filled blue fresco adorning the vault of the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua, Büttner transformed the arched ceiling of the London gallery space into a painted sky mural, populated by life-size potatoes. She transferred the earthly and earthy to an elevated position recalling celestial religious frescoes.<sup>2</sup> The same year, she presented a ceiling painting at the London project room *FRIENDS* run by the artist David Raymond Conroy. In terms of colour and composition, this latest monumental work shown at Jan Mot is closest to the painting she included in her 2021 exhibition at David Kordansky Gallery in Los Angeles entitled *Grids, Vases, and Plant Beds*. Here, each of the

nine canvases are outlined in a single colour and embrace the shape of the gallery ceiling, composing a grid.

For Büttner, this site-based installation is connected to Rosalind Krauss's 1979 essay 'Grids' in which Krauss examines the prevalence of the grid in modernist art. Krauss observed that “by now we find it indescribably embarrassing to mention *art* and *spirit* in the same sentence. The peculiar power of the grid... arises from its

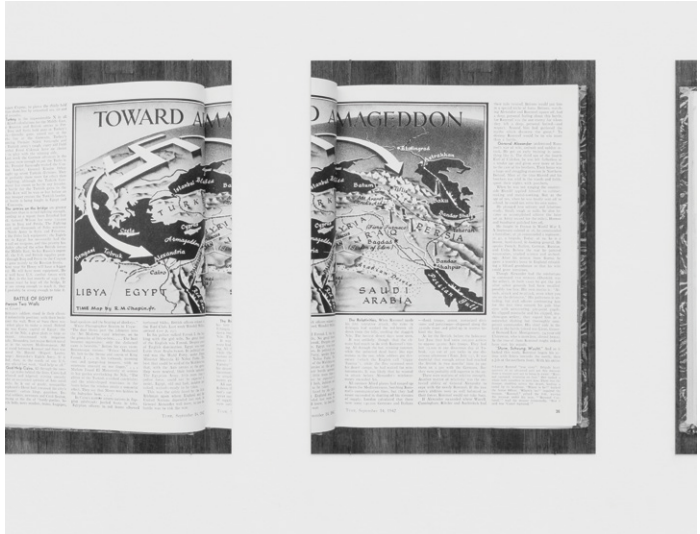
power to preside over this shame: to mask and to reveal it at the same time.”<sup>3</sup> This thinking on the success of the modernist grid echoes Büttner's research, presented in her book of writings, *Shame*, published in 2020. In an online interview, Büttner mentions Krauss and elaborates on her interpretation of the grid: “the grid covers up something which has come to be considered shameful, which is narrative. From my perspective, this narrative is the narrative of religion, and of history too, I think.”<sup>4</sup>



Andrea Büttner, *Painted Ceiling and Floor*, installation view at Jan Mot (detail), 2022. Photo: Philippe De Gobert.

In *Painted Ceiling and Floor*, Büttner stages works that portray a desire to elevate. Enacted through bodily experience, the action of looking up envelops the viewer in a spatial tension between body, ground and ceiling. The canvases catch daylight to reveal the brush strokes of the artist's hand, a subtle hint of tactile possibility. The foggy erasure of colours seems to tentatively enter each canvas, rounding in the corners as if they were radiating from the centre. A composition of ephemeral, misty, imperfect yet vibrant and tangible apparitions. *Painted Ceiling and Floor* — Büttner's whole gallery gesture — reminds us of the uplifting ability in which "artworks preside over the feeling of shame and produce a pleasure."<sup>5</sup>

**Andrea Büttner, *Painted Ceiling and Floor*, Jan Mot, Brussels, 08/09 - 29/10. Opening on 08/09, 11 am - 9 pm.**



**Sven Augustijnen, *Maps of the Middle East (1942 - 1969)*, installation view at Kunsthal Aarhus (DK), (detail), 2020. Photo: Mikkel Kaldal.**

<sup>1</sup> Andrea Büttner, email correspondence with Jan Mot for exhibition *Painted Ceiling and Floor*, 23 June 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Press release for *The Heart of Relations*, Hollybush Gardens, London, 25 September - 14 December 2019.

<sup>3</sup> Rosalind E. Krauss, 'Grids', in: *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*, The MIT Press Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, 1979.

<sup>4</sup> Andrea Büttner, interview with Stuart Krimko, 'Firsthand: Andrea Büttner', David Kordansky Gallery, Online Viewing Room, 16 - 30 April 2021, <https://www.davidkordanskygallery.com/viewing-room/firsthand-andrea-buttner>.

<sup>5</sup> Andrea Büttner, *Shame*, ed. Mason Leaver-Yap, Koenig Books, Cologne / KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, 2020.

And of course the photography itself, the  
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 image of and shifting of societal roles.

BRUSSELS, JUL. 19 – Jan Mot is presenting *Maps of the Middle East (1942 - 1969)*, a solo exhibition by Sven Augustijnen first exhibited at the Kunsthal Aarhus (DK) in 2020 and now to be shown from 8 till 18 September at Lempertz' exhibition space, a few steps away from the gallery, from 8 till 18 September.

The work from which the show draws its title is composed of photographs of maps published in the American weekly magazine *Time* between 1942 and 1969. The majority of the maps are geopolitical or war maps, while others are religious or archaeological. Sven Augustijnen's photographs of the maps show how political power and focus have changed through the 20th century and the way in which new nations were born and acquired independence.

With a profound interest in historiography, Augustijnen refers to visualization of historical writing as a method to remember and see how history has unfolded and still unfolds. The lines and borders in the *Time* magazine maps are visible to this day, in our political systems and, generally, in our perception of the world — how the term "Middle East" as well as earlier designations such as "The Orient" or "Near East" position Europe as the world's center.

In the exhibition *Maps of the Middle East (1942 - 1969)* it becomes clear how objectively we think we can measure the world. The map is not just a practical tool that shows us national borders, mountain formations and the world's oceans. Equally, the map is a visual symbol of the discourses and the power relations that dictate the measurement of the world. In this exhibition, Sven Augustijnen tries to uncover these relations.

**Sven Augustijnen, *Maps of the Middle East (1942-1969)*, Jan Mot at Lempertz, rue du Grand Cerf / Grote Hertstraat 6, 1000 Brussels, 08/09 - 18/09. Opening on 08/09, 11 am - 9 pm. Special opening hours after Brussels Gallery Weekend: Wednesday till Sunday, 12 till 6:30 pm.**

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# I solicit words but they honour themselves in their absence

By  
Lisa Panting

*Her:*  
Facing bramble bushes in the countryside. The bushes glitter with blue-y-black temptation.

*Me:*  
The darkened glittering substance transfers itself from bush to mouth, each berry is selectively secreted.

*Her:*  
This berry picking strategy feels akin to the muscular instinct of the bargain hunter.

*Me:*  
In the harsh light the soft flesh looks like stone.

*Her:*  
Facing bramble bushes down the side of a house.

*Me:*  
Ancient people used bramble as a prickly boundary the way we use barded wire.

*Her:*  
I feel safe next to some wilderness, even tamed or controlled and marked out in a grid.

*Me:*  
They are my companions, friends and tormentors.

\*

The flat broad yellowy green leaves of water lilies spread across the park pond. Young birds skip and chirp across the surface in search of insect food in a playful and revelatory game. The leaf *corp de ballet lift* in a choreography of Gisele-esque swoop and sway. The lily leaf when flat makes a surface, a modular floor for the dramaturgy of this event that playing out en face-staged behind a railing is a scene of a highly constructed formula. Like on a woven carpet, in life, the leafy stage is a proposition, for without surveillance, the secrets of the carpet will never give themselves to you.

\*

It is the mood of high summer as they walked down the road and into the grocery shop. The grocer eyed up the visitors with something akin to disdain as if to say "You won't find what you are looking for" before returning to her cryptic crossword and covert instruction to grocer number two, whilst weighing up a newer customer with a small dog. They felt around the apples and presented two to the counter. As they bit into the apple's flushed flesh - the grocer was forced to charge them something in order to get them out of her shop and move onto more favoured clientele.

\*

The woman was stooped, looking at something with close determination. Her suit was well fitting and the cufflinks looked expensive yet plain. The art dealer was stylish and her cropped grey hair matched the light flannel of her suit as if colour matched by an identifying code. She had a hawkish air and might have been connected to that very species should she have siblings within the animal world. Her focus had been directed at a small painting in grisaille *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery*, 1565 by Pieter Bruegel the Elder. The diminutive painting devastates in its demonstration of skill; the shaded folds of the fabric, the bodies full of action and restrained expression. In a well known biblical scene, a woman is shown in the sin of her of adultery, about to be punished by the stones we see at her feet. Jesus writes in Dutch "he that is without sin among you, let him first cast the stone at her" on the ground before her feet. Bruegel the Elder was also a print maker; sharing both painting and printing with no apparent hierarchy. The painting has visible pricks along the edges to enable a grid to be made. As she stepped away and then back, the art dealer's cuffs rustled and she thought about the reconciliation of violence in these images; womanhood and its representation. An uncanny breeze went through her as her identification split between the comfortable place of her current power and that of the oppressed woman and oppressing men.

I have been waiting for the word 'grid'. Perhaps it is something to moor us even though the liquid buoyancy of water evaporates and feet land hot on scorched ground. We float in a different haze of projected futures. We look into paintings and see ancient subtext that feels frightening in its contemporary proximity. The world drowns us with symbolism and yet we feel parched and scabble about the countryside for a single hopeful tributary. As dried up rivers suffer, the words and subjects have competed with the tangential, the experiential and almost narcotic effects of summer. As the month draws to a close and autumn nears and we awake from a collective series of hard unfoldings, with the end of this dangerous never ending heat and its long, drawn-out consequences something we have yet to fully grasp.

Brueghel's palette is luminous despite its greyness. The women who gazes at the painting has been looking closely for pleasure, to exercise a position within cultural capital's hierarchy but now she feels surveilled - by ancient content and the wider structures of power that have changed so lightly. Her route of seeing is a circuitous one, ambled through time frames, through public architecture. The grid of Brueghel's frame extends out to meet her own invisible grid, the lines flex and mesh together, holding her newly self-conscious at a quantitative particular point and rotate her very being around the absolute basic structural idea of being a woman here, now, at this moment in time. She wants to retreat from the city, to inch out of its shade and find ripeness somewhere bright with more air. The grid is life confining and culture determining. The grid in all its guises: our cities, our histories, our law. Is it important? Yes, but also no.

A palette of time then: blue-y-black flesh, velveteen lime green, blushing pink. These colours act as co-ordinates that without further attachment provide the weight and temperament of summer. I turn to Donna Haraway:

*The slight curve of the shell that holds just a little water, just a few seeds to give away and to receive, suggests stories of becoming-with, of reciprocal induction, of*

companion species whose job in living and dying is not to end the storying, the word-  
ing. With a shell and net, becoming human,  
becoming humus, becoming terran (sic),  
has another shape - the side-winding,  
snaky shape of becoming with.<sup>1</sup>

\*

Here we are then, our breath taking us to a moment of something we know. Life has worn some and love has lost and gained. Terrible news becomes our norm and our worlds become smaller, straying beyond the everyday ever more traumatic. A watershed moment, perhaps. More likely, events larger than life continue to determine our rhythms and our movement. We reflect on ourselves as content producers, and or whatever form our societal contribution can be in a time of micro action where 'one foot in front of the other' becomes terrifyingly prescient of the endless but limited possibilities we face.

Within art, we can ask that something is addressable, sayable and shifts ever so slightly the dial on our phenomenological selves.

With the repetitious certainty of hope I turn towards autumn, the gallery and the museum.

Please come

Lisa Panting is co-founder and co-director with Malin Ståhl of Hollybush Gardens, London. Prior to the gallery she was senior lecturer at Central Saint Martin's, London and an editor for Book Works, London. This text is the third installment in a small series of contributions commissioned for the gallery's newspaper.

<sup>1</sup>p118-119, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* by Donna J. Haraway. Pub by Duke Univ. Press 2016.

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## In Brief

The gallery participates in the upcoming edition of the Brussels Gallery Weekend. Both shows, of **Andrea Büttner** at the gallery and of **Sven Augustijnen** at Lempertz (rue du Grand Cerf / Grote Hertstraat 6) will be open on Thursday 08/09 from 11 am till 9 pm, on Friday 09/09 and Saturday 10/09 from 11 am till 7 pm and on Sunday 11/09 from 11 am till 6 pm.

The works *Blindsight* (2022) and *one, two, many* (2012) by **Manon de Boer** entered the collection of KANAL Centre Pompidou, Brussels.

Two recent publications by **Francis Alÿs** can now be purchased on by-association. online, the gallery's webshop:

*Francis Alÿs*, published by Phaidon, with texts by Cuauhtémoc Medina, Russell Ferguson, Jean Fisher, Michael Taussig, first published in 2007; second edition, revised and expanded published in 2022 (29 x 25 cm, hardcover, EN, 250 illustrations, 240 pages, price: 59.95 €)

*Francis Alÿs – The Nature of the Game*, official publication of the Belgian pavilion at the 59th Biennale di Venezia curated by Hilde Teerlinck, with texts by David MacDougall, published by DCV – books, 2022 (11,5 x 18,5 cm, hardcover, EN/NL, 90 illustrations, 208 pages, price: 32.00 €)

**Pierre Bismuth** will take part in the exhibition *Flags* at Fondation Boghossian, Brussels from September 29 to January 15. On this occasion he will create a new set of flags mixing the Armenian, Belgian and Ukrainian's flags. With *Flags* the Boghossian Foundation explores the question of territory, multiple identities and intercultural dialogue.

*Documents of Risk and Faith*, Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati (US), 09/09–15/01; *Trilogie de cendres*, Frac des Pays de la Loire, Carquefou (FR), 18/09–30/12; *ToxiCity*, 7th Lubumbashi Biennale, Lubumbashi (CD), opening 06/10; *Francis Alÿs*, Copenhagen Contemporary, Copenhagen, 13/10–10/04 (solo); *Fragilités*, Rudolfinum, Prague, 13/10–08/01; *Caminos Creativos*, Gaias Centre Museum, Santiago de Compostela (ES), 11/11–09/04; *Drum Listens to Heart*, CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, California (US), 16/11–17/12

### Sven Augustijnen

*Maps of the Middle East*, Jan Mot at Lempertz, Brussels, 08/09–18/09 (solo)

### Pierre Bismuth

*Nouvelle exposition des collections*, Mrac Occitanie/Pyrénées-Méditerranée, Sérignan (FR), 15/01–08/01; *Everybody is an artist but only the artist knows it*, West Den Haag, The Hague (NL), 25/03–11/09 (solo); *Flags*, Boghossian Foundation, Brussels, 29/09–15/01; *Pierre Bismuth*, Jan Mot, Brussels, 10/11–24/12 (solo)

### Andrea Büttner

*Communicating vessels. Collection 1881–2021–Exodus and Communal Life*, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, 27/11–ongoing; *Nouvelle exposition des collections*, Mrac Occitanie / Pyrénées-Méditerranée, Sérignan (FR), 15/01–08/01; *FLUXUS SEX TIES / Hier spielt die Musik*, Nassauischer Kunstverein Wiesbaden, Wiesbaden (DE), 14/07–30/10; *Shepherds and Kings*, Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein at the Johanniterkirche, Feldkirch (AT), 22/07–24/09 (solo); Part 2: *Painted Ceiling and Floor*, Jan Mot, Brussels, 08/09–29/10 (solo); *On Caring, Repairing and Healing*, Gropius Bau, Berlin, 16/09–15/01

### Manon de Boer

*Che bella voce*, Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, St. Gallen (CH), 26/03–09/10 (solo); VOD - *Sylvia Kristel* - Paris, Tönk, Lussas (FR), 13/05–12/07 (online); *Think about Wood*, *Think about Metal*, Miragem - kinematic arts in the landscape, Pico, (PT), 03/09–10/09 (screening); *Dance First Think Later (DFTL)*, Le Commun, Pavillon ADC, Geneva (CH), 15/09–09/10; *Aller contre le vent*, L'arc – scène nationale Le Creusot (organised by Frac Franche-Comté), Le Creusot (FR), 17/09–28/01; Château Pertusier (organised by Frac Franche-Comté), Morteau (FR), 29/10–11/12; *An Uncertain Pleasure. Selected works from Pierre*

## Agenda

### Francis Alÿs

*Tomorrow is a Different Day*, Collectie 1980-nu, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 06/07–ongoing; *The Nature of the Game*, Belgian Pavillon, Venice Biennale, Venice (IT), 23/04–27/11 (solo); *Faut-il voyager pour être heureux ?*, Fondation Groupe EDF, Paris, 20/05–29/01; *When Faith Moves Mountains*, Pinchuk Art Centre, Kyiv, 17/07–09/10; *On the Line*:

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