

Mrzyk & Moriceau



AIR DE PARIS

Mrzyk & Moriceau

Petra Mrzyk - Born in 1973 in Nuremberg.

Jean-François Moriceau - Born in 1974 in Saint-Nazaire.

Live and work in MontJean-sur-Loire.

Mrzyk & Moriceau is an artist duo composed of Petra Mrzyk and François Moriceau. They began their graphic collaboration in 1999 after meeting at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Quimper, France.

They are primarily known for their precise black-and-white ink drawings which alternate between the perverse and the playful. Borrowing and distorting conventions from commercial illustration and imagery from popular culture, the collaborative duo create simple, well-articulated drawings that behold a unique aesthetic of wit and absurdity. Throughout their work, playfully illustrated human body parts take on full human personalities; inanimate objects come to life; and everything is underscored with a whimsical, yet dark humor. Their pop visions, often treated in black and white for greater visual effectiveness, took shape at a time when drawing was playing an increasingly important role in contemporary artistic production. Over time, Mrzyk & Moriceau expanded their visual language to other media such as wall drawings, ceramics and sculpture.

Mrzyk & Moriceau have had solo exhibitions at many institutions internationally including Kunsthalle Nuremberg, Germany (2024, upcoming); MRAC Occitanie, Serignan, France (2023); Le Portique Centre d'Art Contemporain, Le Havre, France (2020); La Caixa foundation, Barcelona, Spain (2008); LACMA, Los Angeles, USA (2006); and Mamco museum, Geneva, Switzerland (2004).

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Artothèque de Villeurbanne, France
 Les Arts au mur Artothèque, Pessac, France
 Centre National des Arts Plastiques - CNAP, Paris, France
 Collection La Bâloise, Suisse
 Collection Fonds de dotation Famille Moulin, Paris, France
 FRAC Poitou Charentes, Angoulême, France
 FRAC Pays de la Loire, Carquefou, France
 FRAC Ile-de-France, Paris, France
 FRAC Ile-de-France, Paris, France
 Fonds National d'Art Contemporain – FNAC, Puteaux, France
 Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, France
 MoMA, New York, USA
 LACMA, Los Angeles, USA

Meilleurs Vœux de la Jamaïque, MRAC Occitanie, Sérignan, France

15.04 – 24.09.23

Curator: Clément Nouet

What really happened during their residency in Jamaica? The artist couple Mrzyk & Moriceau remain very vague about the six months they spent in this Caribbean island state, even if by their own admission they did not return unscathed from this adventure. Rumors are rife.

The immersive exhibition Best Wishes from Jamaica is the fruit of this residency, which suggests many stories.

The first is about a Taximan they met at Kingston airport, a very elegant man in purple moccasins with whom they quickly struck up a friendship. He confided in them that he was also a shaman and had the ability to see the future in «Jerk Chicken» sauce.

Naturally, our two artists, eager to learn more about their careers, gave a ticket to this shaman who had fallen from the sky and revealed something incredible: they were going to abandon the pencil to draw with a jigsaw. Thanks to a second ticket, they understood a little better the meaning of this sentence: they would have to create a composition of light walls, a long snake of screens composed of cut-out drawings. A snake with two sides, one composed like a marabou of strange motifs and the other black, all ominous silhouettes.

The very next day, they bought a jigsaw.

In the course of their stay, Mrzyk & Moriceau discovered that many Jamaicans, in exchange for a few bucks, were gifted with clairvoyance, using ever-changing methods.

And so it was that an ageless old lady, meticulously observing their hems, revealed to them that a magic seed was hidden in a second-hand remote control at the Annotto Bay flea market. She advised them to find the seed.

A ska renter saw through a bubble of chewing gum to a subdivision where children play underground: a subdivision of cigarette butts.

Or, looking at the shadow of his hutia, a little boy alerted them to the risk of a fatal scuba dive involving defective flipper moccasins, to be avoided at all costs during their stay.

A band of mussels also had a vision in exchange for a few cigarettes: caution, artists had to be very careful about the choice of pins they used to hang their drawings. Some were bewitched and could contaminate the paper. As a result, these molds advised them to use Jamaican Patafix, a useful multi-purpose paste.

The cross-section of a QR code hair also told us a lot about the future of our artistic couple. The ceiling absolutely had to be raised, the screens were growing in. The predictions were getting stranger and stranger...

In addition to these Jamaican visions, Mrzyk & Moriceau slept very badly. At night, wild effects of scale, matter, superimposition and perspective would prowl around their house, trying to get in. The couple had to remain constantly vigilant. And then there was always that strange sensation of being watched by a duck.

The abuse of local produce helped them to better understand the significance of these omens and events. In a cave lined with phosphorescent moss made of natural 15G, an encounter with an earthworm was decisive in the outcome of events. He advised them to protect themselves from the evil eye by putting on a number of colorfully patterned socks. Mrzyk & Moriceau did just that. Their feet were now very hot, but they were safe from the real world. Strangely enough, the Jamaicans' predictions were declining along with the residency grant, the artists were running dry and the Jamaicans could see nothing in the future. They began to doubt the veracity of all these visions.

Everything became coherent. They were going to tell the story of the creation of the universe in a cartoon.



Exhibition view: **Meilleurs Vœux de la Jamaïque**, MRAC Occitanie, Sérignan, 2023



Exhibition view: **Meilleurs Vœux de la Jamaïque**, MRAC Occitanie, Sérignan, 2023

Never send Flowers, Air de Paris, Romainville, France

10.04 – 22.05.22

Everything seems a bit haywire when you enter the exhibition at the gallery Hair de Paris: it is hard to describe that sense of altered reality you sometimes get when you see minor details which, taken together, produce a delirious overall picture.

The title of the exhibition, Never send flowers, already has a strange perfume to it: because naming things is always tricky, Mrzyk & Moriceau came up with the smart idea of drawing systematically on the titles of James Bond novels, which works out well as there are more than eighty of them, so they can see what is coming without any fuss. It is worth noting that these titles take up recurring themes, organised as follows in order of importance: death, love, enemies, places experienced, followed by a few that seem to fall into the category of the 'somewhat incomprehensible'. Never send flowers is one such title. Until we find out that Bond is on the trail of a former stage actor, a shifty character called David Dragonpol, and quickly discovers that Dragonpol's sister is linked to all the murders in the plot: she cultivates a variety of rose that is found at the funeral of every victim.

After this taster evoking flowers and corpses, Mrzyk & Moriceau's exhibition opens into a group of coloured ceramics, a practice the artist duo has recently been exploring. An elongated platform suggests the idea of a catwalk: on parade are a medieval crakow (or long-toed shoe), a cowboy boot with fungus growing on it, an open-toe slipper, a sock-and-sandal combo in the wrong size, and a moccasin-style nubuck loafer. Along with a chicken's foot and a human hand. And it turns out that these different fragments of bodies, shoes topped with socks and boots all resemble vases, the containers in which we carefully arrange the bouquets we never send.

In this first room, other ceramic objects continue the work's peculiar spirit of something gone awry, inscribed in a dynamic world of the imagination, everything sliding into the unpredictable and unexpected, shifting between games of analogy and games of displacement. Cigarette butts show up on the rims of mugs, earthworms scroll away on iPhones, a slice of pizza gets all origummy-chummy with a paper plane: concrete reality hangs out with the supernatural, the identifiable never strays far from the bizarre. Carelman's Catalogue d'objets introuvables come to mind: these ceramics would slot in perfectly between the glove shoes for foot jugglers and the soft pincers. This quirky collection is rounded off by twelve drawings exploring Mrzyk & Moriceau's favourite themes: brains and dogs, uninhibited fruit and vegetables, and sexual pastimes. Three delirious drawings, stuffed with recurring motifs that are nonetheless incongruous, are indicative of how the energy of these spontaneous drawings runs riot, when the hand is freed from the brain's injunctions and expresses all its figurative urges. Finally, a tempest of eyes is let loose on four glass panels placed one on top of the other, combining the characteristics of transparency and obscuration with focal points and openings in the material, a flip-through device inspired by old-fashioned cartoon celluloids.

From the catwalk to the cosmos. In a second space plunged into darkness, a hitherto unseen cartoon is projected right across the back wall, creating the maximum immersive effect. Dans les bras de morphing recounts the pleasure derived from the constant metamorphosis of lines – a metamorphosis or distortion that is at the heart of Mrzyk & Moriceau's aesthetic: the story of a movement that falls in love with itself while taking into its orbit the rational vestiges of a world that has become too staid and immobile. The hallucinatory phenomenon rests on a classic form-generating principle, with the arrival of successive linear waves, a kind of arcade game. Even if there is no direct influence involved, the graphic and chromatic approach brings to mind certain visual poems animated by Oskar Fischinger and Norman McLaren, or the psychedelic fantasies of Vince Collins. All through this disturbing chain of events, Mrzyk and Moriceau's universe unfolds itself in serial effects: as with desire, the drawing slakes the fantasies of hybridisation, where everything mutates and intermingles. Objects, vegetables and animals find themselves endowed with human attributes, while human bodies are transfigured at every possible opportunity. There is no time to linger in this frenetic morphogenesis. Swingers equals winners. - Eva Prouteau (Translated by Simon Cowper)



Exhibition view: **Never send flowers**, Air de Paris, Romainville, 2022

Never Dream Of Dying, Le Portique, Le Havre, France

11.07 – 27.09.20

As part of the 2020 edition of Un Été au Havre, Le Portique welcomes Petra Mrzyk and Jean-François Moriceau, a duo who work in a wide range of artistic fields, promoting interdisciplinarity and connections between different spheres and universes. In 2001, the group show *Traversées*, held at the Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris, brought them to the attention of the general public: invited by curator Alexis Vaillant, the artists took over the walls of the institution, filling them with their drawings. One project followed another: a video clip for Air, a sleeve for Katerine, a character design for Kinder Surprise® (not selected), T-shirts... Their work is nourished by these multiple collaborations, which encourage the circulation of ideas and constantly enrich their aesthetic and their practice. Abolishing all hierarchies between artistic languages, the duo refuse to allow themselves to be confined to one field, exploring all areas as creative avenues. «We like the idea of being open to everything, without hierarchy or complexes.

The Le Havre exhibition opens a door onto this creative space, offering an immersion into a world of drawings where soft shapes, brains, sexualized fruits and vegetables intersect. In the Portique space, the duo's universe unfolds, and since graduating from the Beaux-Arts in Quimper in 1999, they've never stopped working with line, form and color to imagine figures, invent stories and create worlds in which young and old can immerse themselves: «We like to think of children in our exhibitions, and hang drawings at their height. Over 200 large-format (A3) drawings tell this artistic story. Far from being static, the line comes alive in the work of Petra Mrzyk and Jean-François Moriceau, as evidenced by the gifs displayed on small screens, which punctuate the display, materializing and acting out the shift from one medium to another. Paper, digital... drawing plays with all languages and all techniques, allowing us to explore different facets of creation and explode boundaries in favor of an assertive pop culture. The duo regularly collaborates with the music industry. At Le Portique, in a redesigned space, they invite visitors to view a dozen of the clips they have produced. We come across Air, Sébastien Tellier, The Avalanches, Katerine, Justice, etc... Drawings in red and black complete the picture. They all evoke the world of music: a logo for a radio show, a poster for a band, an idea for a video clip, a portrait of a musician, etc.... «All set against a bubble-gum pink background. Moving on to color... the world is no longer exclusively black and white. A new palette takes over in the animated films, in the publishing work, but also in the practice of wall drawing, which plays as much on colors as on scales,» the idea being to impress the visitor and contrast with the other formats presented in the exhibition.» The motif? A forest of upside-down feet arranged in a staircase that rises and falls in a range of pop colors against a black background.» The feet are narrative trails, protagonists suggested, bodies sketched out, figures touched upon. An invitation to start the dream machine. «We could be in a Blake Edwards film, in a shoe store, in the choreography of a musical or in the living room of a foot fetishist», the artists list. Like cave art, wall drawing invites us to explore, to decipher a world populated by signs and lines, in search of a language, a narrative that it's up to each of us to elaborate and reconstitute.

While the title of the Never Dream of Dying exhibition evokes two recurring themes in Mrzyk and Moriceau's drawings - dreams and death - it is also, and above all, a reference to 007. «For each solo show, we use a James Bond title. We like that classy, grandiloquent feel. There's always a reference to love, death or revenge.» The three-part exhibition invites visitors to discover creation in all its forms: from studio-laboratory to commissioned work, via in situ practice linked to the exhibition space. These three phases merge in space, offering visitors a vast panorama of Mrzyk & Moriceau's work. - Solène Bertrand



Exhibition view: **Never Dream of Dying**, Le Portique, Le Havre, 2020



Exhibition view: **Never Dream of Dying**, Le Portique, Le Havre, 2020

Mrzyk & Moriceau / Félicien Rops: You Only Live 25 Times, LACMA, Los Angeles, USA
23.03 – 04.06.06
Curator: Noëllie Roussel

As part of the Los Angeles County Museum of Arts (LACMA) Contemporary Projects series, French artists Petra Mrzyk (b.1973) and Jean-François Moriceau (b. 1974) have created a large-scale, site-specific wall drawing installation inspired by, and incorporating, twenty-five prints from nineteenth-century Belgian Symbolist artist Félicien Rops (1833-1898) from the museum's permanent collection. Contemporary Projects 10: Mrzyk & Moriceau and Félicien Rops *You Only Live 25 Times*, (March 23-June 4, 2006) is the first Los Angeles exhibition by these French artists and a one time only, exclusive installation you won't want to miss!

For their ephemeral wall drawing, Mrzyk and Moriceau integrate a selection of Rops prints taken from the museum's extensive collection of nine hundred works by the artist, which was generously given by Michael G. Wilson in 1983, and is one of the largest in the United States.

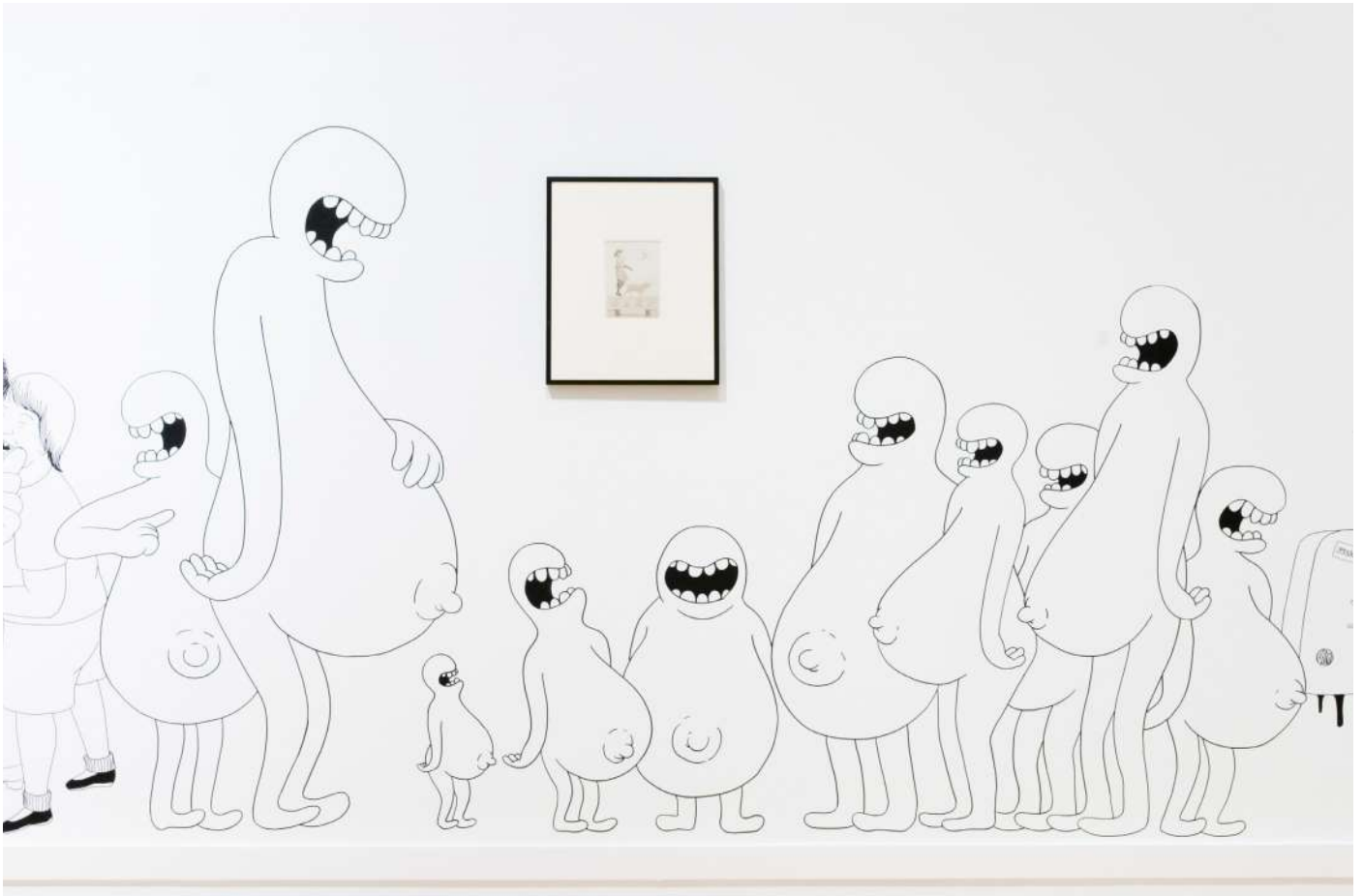
Referencing popular imagery and literary, philosophical, and political sources, Mrzyk and Moriceau ironically combine dark humor and absurd elements with a graphic, elegant style. Spidery imagery bordering on the Gothic creates an aura of sinister, anxious thoughts, alongside a graphic repertoire of body parts, deformations, and strange characters enveloped and destroyed by carnivorous plants or swallowed by mechanical devices.

Rops too used irony in his well-known drawings, which often expressed strong opinions about religion, politics, and culture by using both erotic and satanic imagery. In his renderings, everyday objects, such as chairs, were fitted with eyes, suggesting an omniscient power to spy on human beings. Sexual organs were disembodied, floating in the air and morphing into threatening monsters.

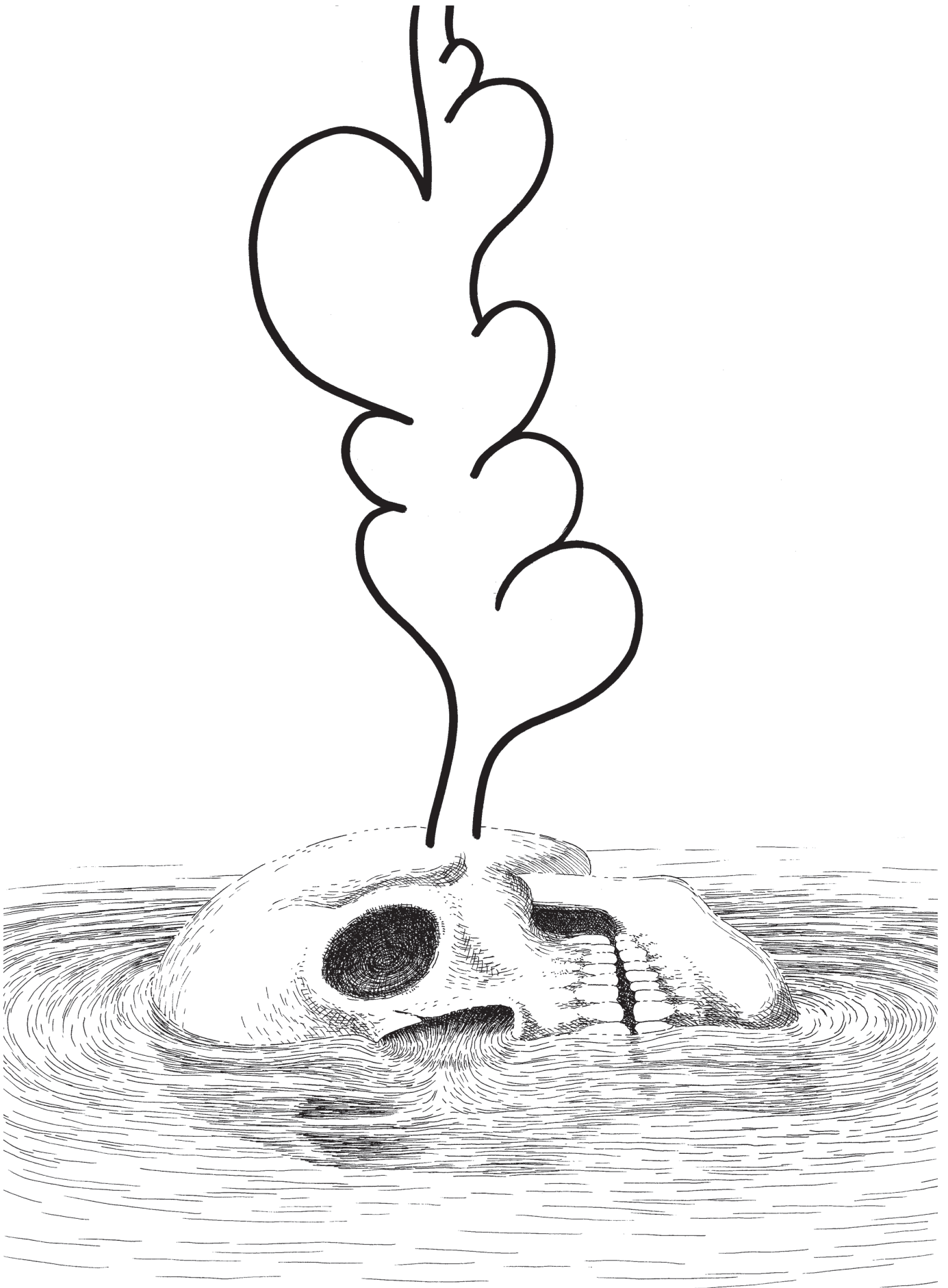
You Only Live 25 Times, organized by LACMA Wallis Annenberg Curatorial Fellow Noëllie Roussel, incorporates Mrzyk and Moriceau's playful yet ironic style with Rops' sense of humor. Influenced by Rops, Mrzyk and Moriceau integrate his stylistic elements and imagery with their own artistic language. Together, the work of these three artists forms an exhibition steeped in the long tradition of drawing, while remaining distinctly contemporary and provocative. Michael G. Wilson, the donor of the Rops collection to LACMA, is a producer of James Bond films, and Mrzyk and Moriceau often base the titles of their works on Bond movies, as they do here.



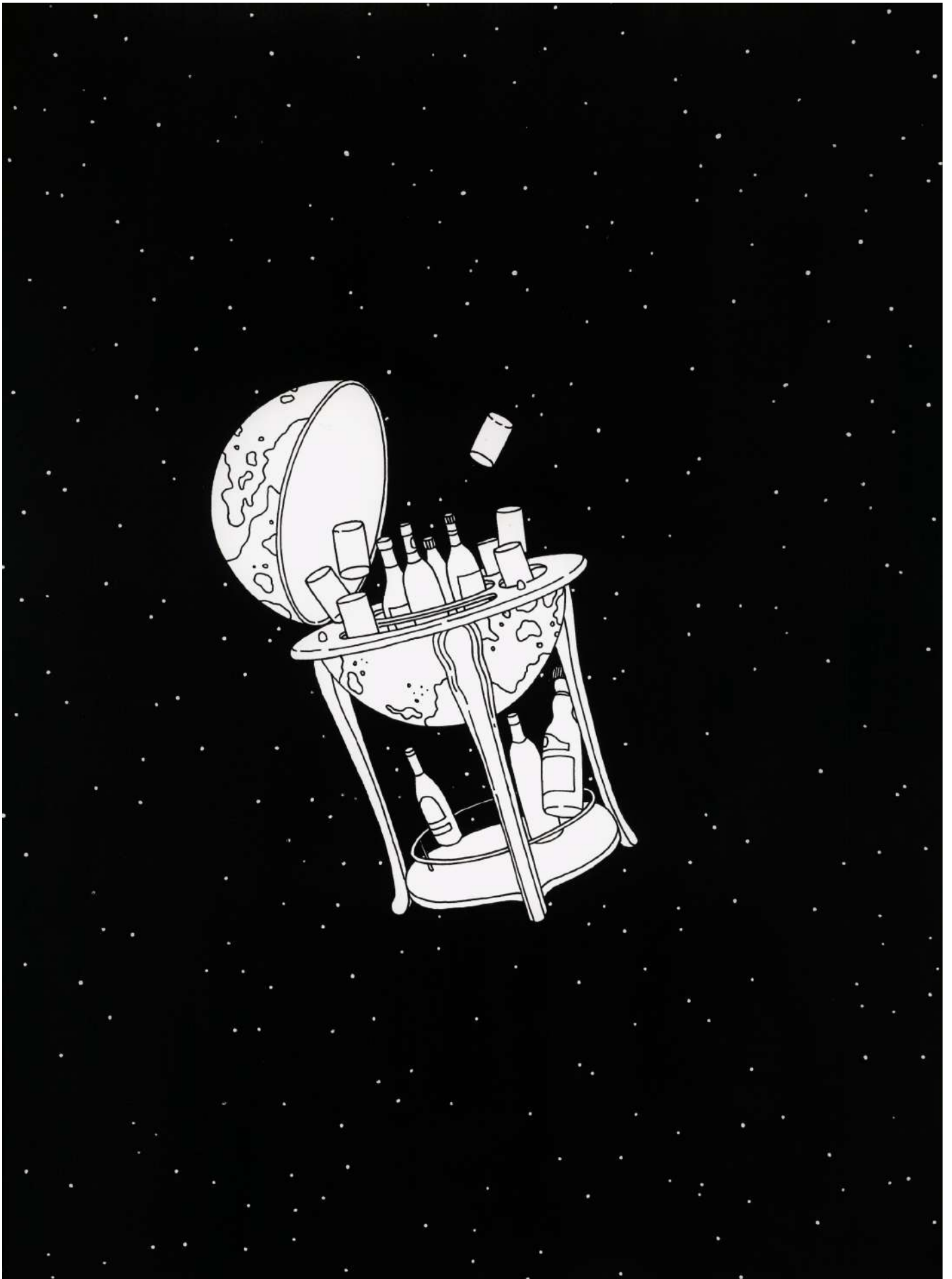
Exhibition view: Mrzyk & Moriceau / Félicien Rops: *You Only Live 25 Times*, LACMA, Los Angeles, 2006



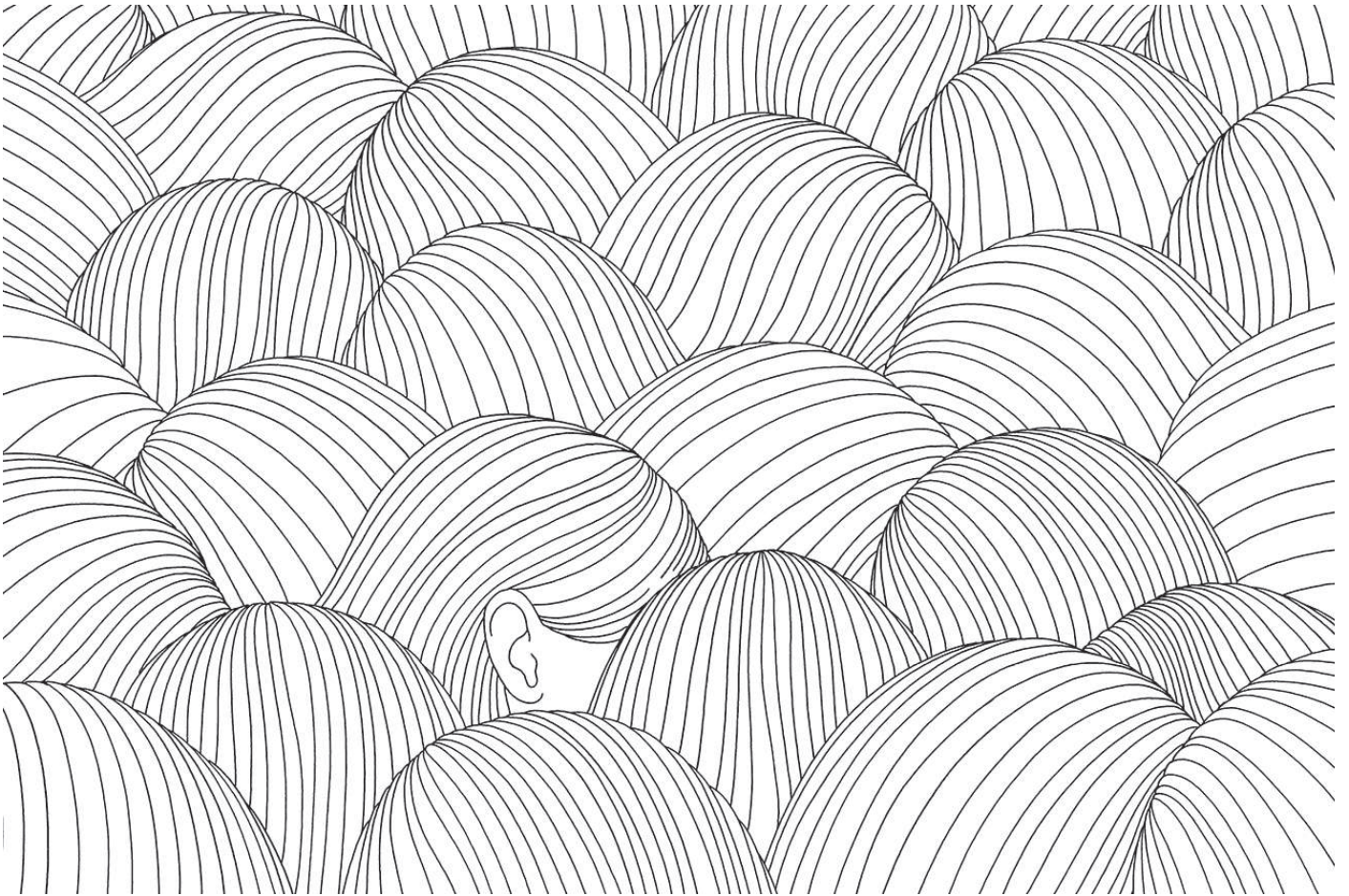
Exhibition view: Mrzyk & Moriceau / Félicien Rops: *You Only Live 25 Times*, LACMA, Los Angeles, 2006



Sans titre, ink on paper, 42 x 29,7 cm, 2023

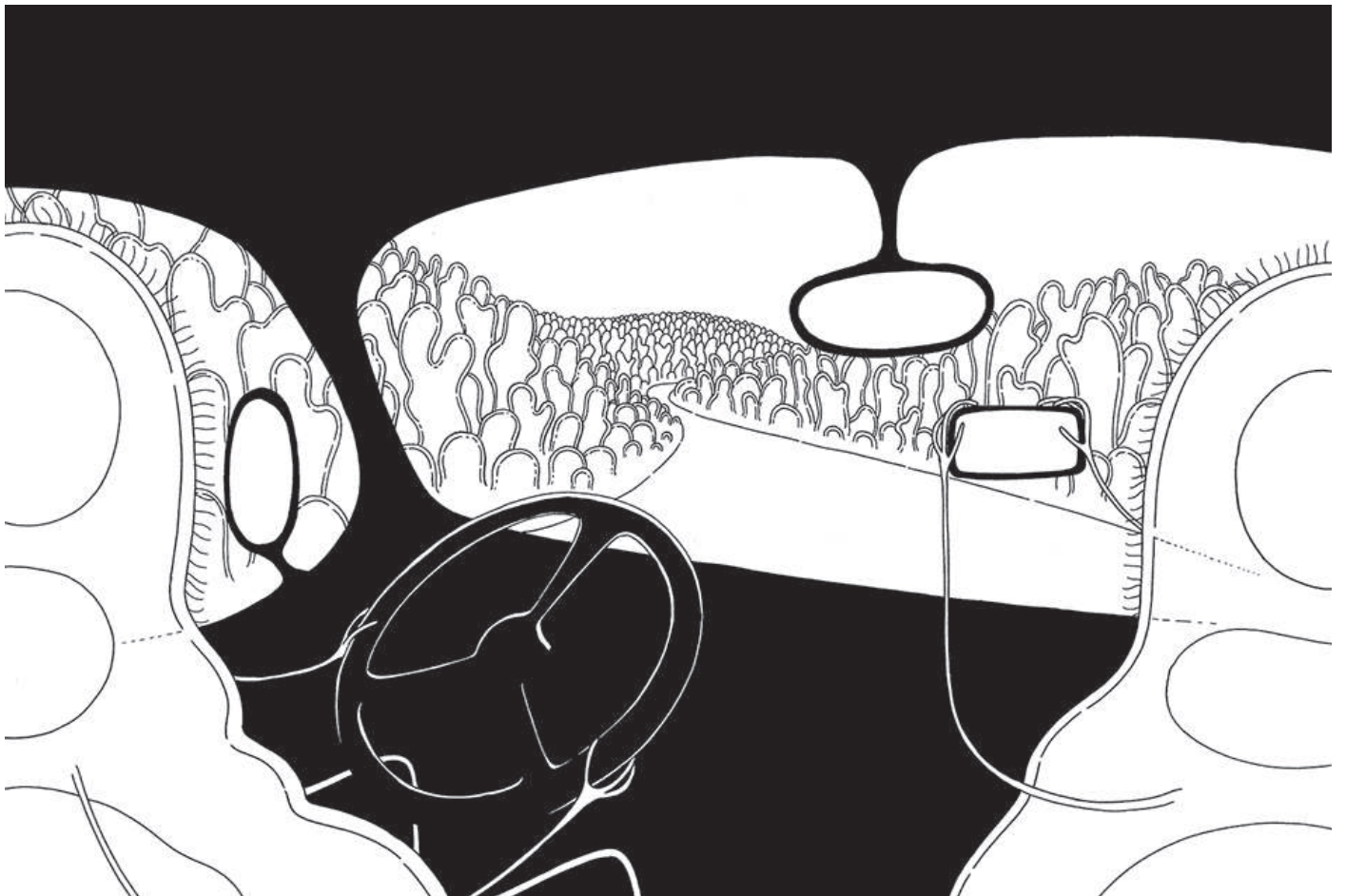
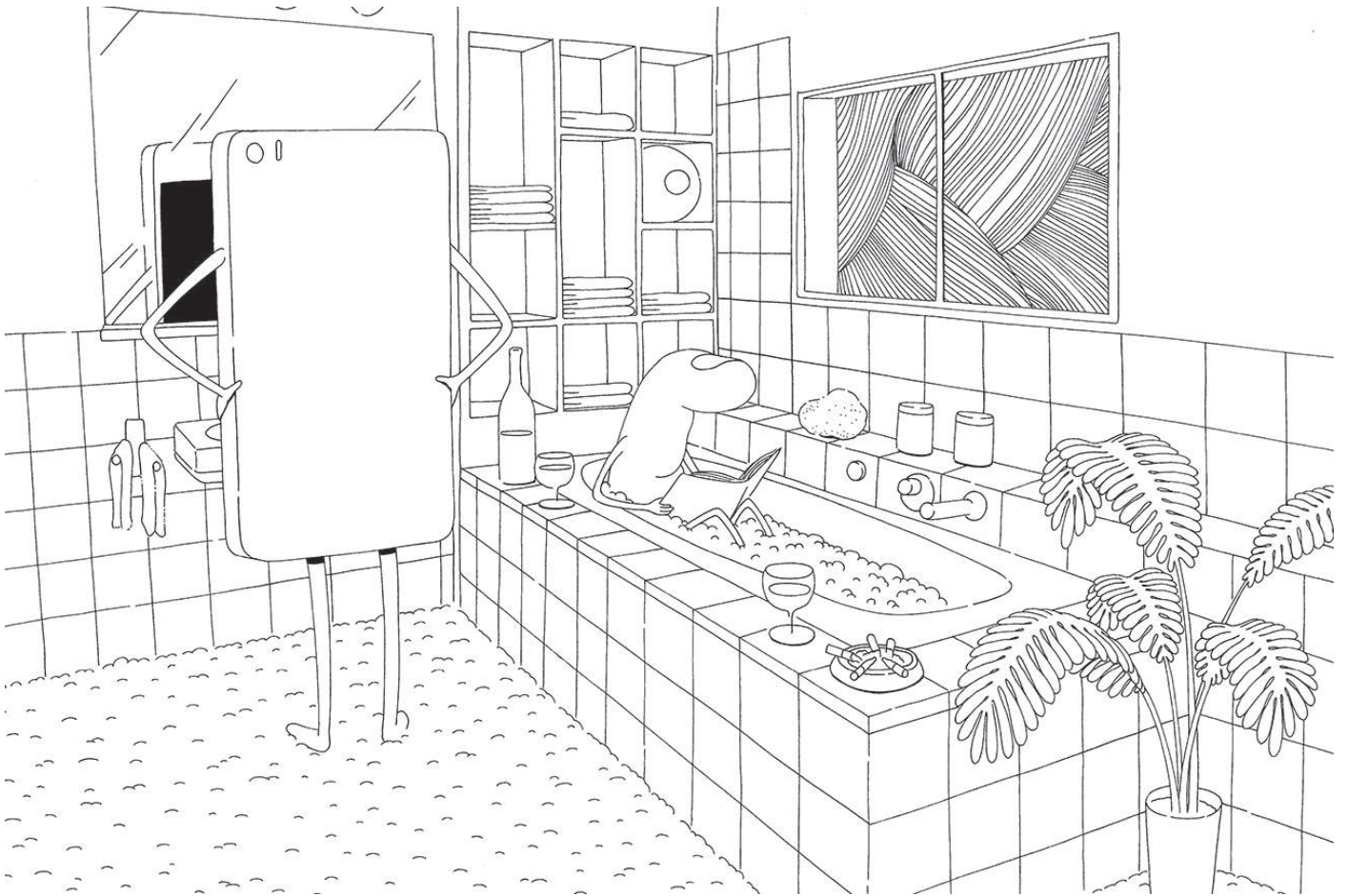


Sans titre, ink on paper, 42 x 29,7 cm, 2020



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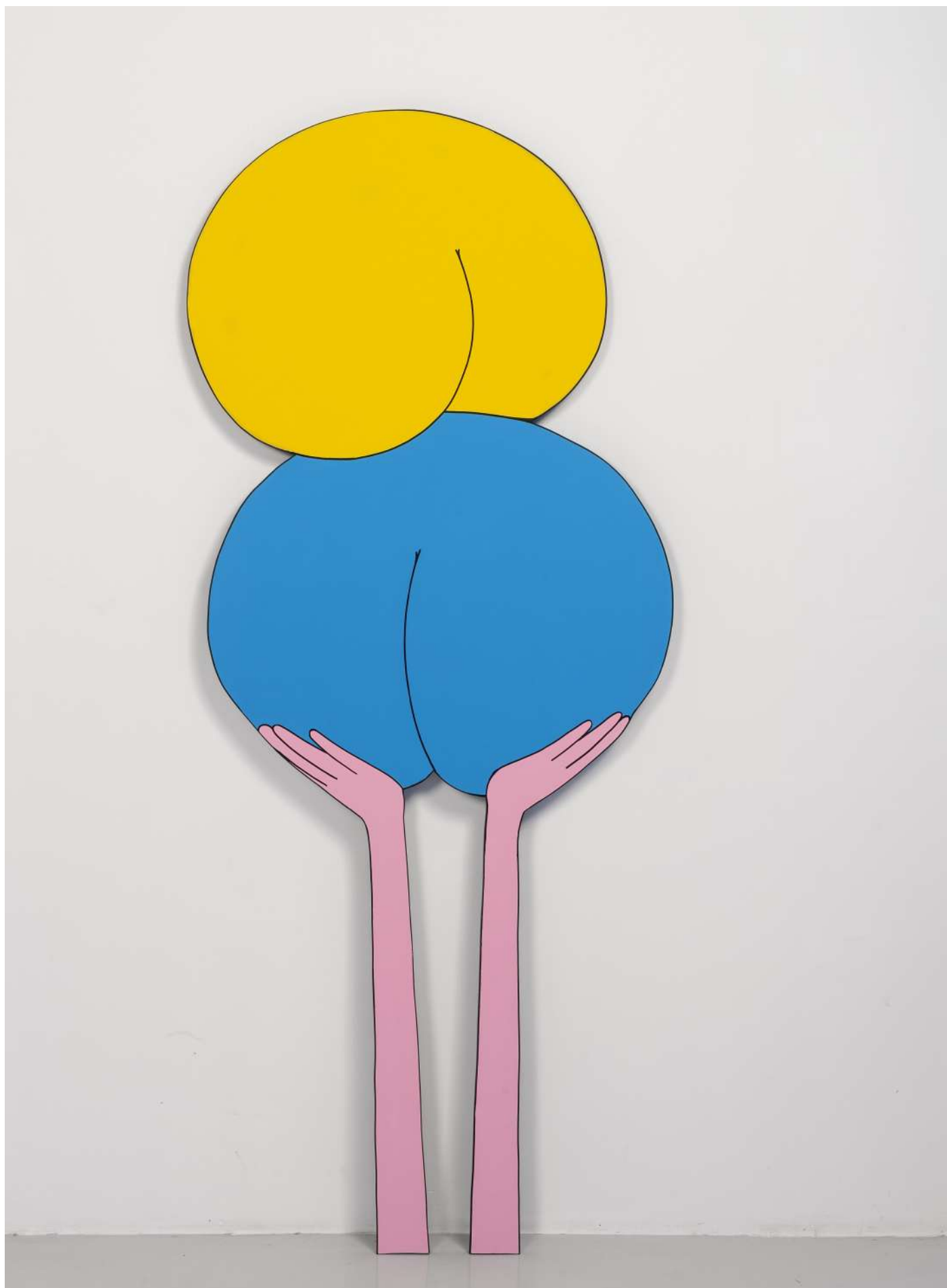


Sans titre, ink on paper, 42 x 29,7 cm, 2021

Sans titre, ink on paper, 42 x 29,7 cm, 2020



Sans titre, painted wood and felt, 146 x 42 x 2 cm, 2022



Sans titre, painted wood and felt, 168 x 75 x 2 cm, 2022



Sans titre, painted wood and felt, 210 x 100 x 1,6 cm, 2023



Sans titre, painted wood and felt, 125 x 100 x 1,6 cm, 2023



Sans titre, enameled ceramic, 42,5 x 38,5 x 37,5 cm, 2023



Sans titre, enameled ceramic, 28 x 20 cm, 2023

Sans titre, enameled ceramic, 27 x 15 x 7,5 cm, 2022



Sans titre, enameled ceramic, 30 x 15 x 2,5 cm, 2022

Sans titre, enameled ceramic, 38,8 x 8,7 cm, 2022