

ketabi projects

INES LONGEVIAL

Before the sun sinks low

January 19-29, 2021

Grandes Serres de Pantin

1, rue du Cheval Blanc 93500 Pantin



Inès Longevial
Velvet Ground, 2020
Oil on linen
85 x 120 cm
Courtesy of the artist and Ketabi Projects

For its inaugural exhibition, Ketabi Projects invites Inès Longevial. The show *Before the sun sinks low*, marks the beginning of their collaboration and the artist's return to the contemporary art scene with a new body of work.

Late summer light, Californian golden hour, seasonal palettes, moving memories of the Southwest of France, shadows and infinite nuances of the sun's reverberation on the skin at different hours of the day are all fetishes for Inès Longevial. Her primary relationship to painting comes above all from color.

At the heart of her melancholic and solar portraits borrowed from a candid fantasy, emerges a feeling of contemporary gloom, between silence, tenderness, a return to childhood and an absence from oneself.

Born in 1990 in Agen, Inès Longevial devoted herself to drawing from a very young age. Her first artistic emotions came from the great painters whose masterpieces she observed and reproduced with scrupulous application, between the ages of 9 and 13: Picasso, Van Gogh, Klimt and especially Modigliani, who marked her deeply with his mysteriously empty and penetrating eyes. When Inès arrived in Paris at the age of 23 after obtaining a degree in applied arts, she then focused her practice on illustration. At the same time, she developed her own pictorial style, marked by portraits where skin colors and ethnicities are intermingled in an ornamental patchwork. The female figure quickly became omnipresent in her paintings: if they are very often self-portraits, the artist also recognizes the influence of the women of her childhood and her inner circle, which she embraces with the greatest gentleness. It is her way of paying tribute to their strength and love.

As a preliminary step to any painting, her drawings, with scribbled lines, bright colors clearly delineated in geometric forms and numerous decorative motifs can evoke Mexican festive painting: her portraits become the terrain of an invasive, joyful and spontaneous imagination. In an often more delicate or pastel range, her oil paintings testify to the full florescence of her research and give the viewer the free and immediate pleasure of painting. They offer faces with absorbed glances, curved landscapes, in generous flat tints of colors which remind us of our childhood books and tend towards a purely chromatic abstraction. Some details of mouths, hands, breasts and kisses illustrate a pop inspiration, recalling Wesselmann. Ines Longevial also recognizes the undeniable influence of cubism, she who studied Picasso. But it is with Matisse that she finds the most in common : her incessant quest for sensory intensity through the union of drawing and color represents for her painting in its greatest fullness and the very essence of life - a primary emotion that nourishes her work every day.

The large formats of this exhibition reproduce gestures and attitudes from the intimate life of bodies. Her work captures a daily atmosphere captured in its most touching expression: nonchalant posture at the end of a day at the beach, women affectionately embraced, a pensive face in the palm of a hand caught by a bluish shadow. So many scenes where the colors appear more diffuse than before - melted. A bit surreal, this recent series of feet caressing or crushing faces (ie *Velvet Ground & Concrete Sky*) offers mixed feelings of angst and delicacy.

The artist plays on the ambiguity of her message and the association of extremes, which is also the association of opposites. With great sensitivity she depicts a deaf violence, the feeling of being stepped on and the desire for revenge that it generates. Certain enigmatic symbols, misplaced here and there, also give a metaphorical dimension to these works. Initially, butterflies, snails or flowers function for the artist as motifs allowing her to enter the content of her painting, to determine the palette, the line, the universe. This intrusion of a form of wonder is found on a larger scale in a diptych (*The Fairies, Pearls and Snakes*), which illustrates Charles Perrault's tale *The Fairies*: snakes or pearls take a central place this time in the composition.

Inès Longevial also presents a series of twelve small incandescent formats (*Magic Hour*), portraits in very tight shots of details of faces which testify to her desire as a painter to get as close as possible to her models, to make palpable the slightest nuance, the slightest vibration that animates these parcels of golden or sun-red skins. More and more, the artist appropriates her subjects by zooming, by cropping, by the part rather than by the whole, and it is through these portraits of friends and relatives that her concern as a colorist, her acuity as a painter towards the visible world is most apparent.

With a high sensitivity, situated somewhere between childhood, illustration, color and light, Inès Longevial brushes with a disarming and poetic simplicity the portrait of a youth which has recognized in her a muse, bringing together, under her seductive looks, a form of generational spleen.

«Color possesses me. I don't have to pursue it. It will possess me always, I know it. That is the meaning of this happy hour: Color and I are one. I am a painter. »

Paul Klee

E. Keyl



Inès Longevial
Concrete Sky, 2020
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Ketabi Projects is a nomadic gallery founded in 2020 to promote artists from the emerging French and international scene. Each exhibition will be an opportunity to discover new works in a new place, in France or abroad. Charlotte Ketabi-Lebard is dedicating herself to this new challenge after five years of working in a major French art gallery, which allowed her to work on numerous projects for French and international artists, institutions and collectors.

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