

Fred Deux
[Alain Margaron](#)
Paris

This exhibition featured a superb selection of more than 40 drawings and paintings on paper, spanning Fred Deux's remarkable 60-year career. Included was *Je nais* (I Am Born, 1949), which the artist considers to be his first painting, a sensual abstraction in ink and bicycle lacquer, the only materials he had available at the time.

Deux began his career as part of the French Surrealist movement, experimenting with automatism, spots and drips, and other forms of mark-making. He officially split from his Surrealist colleagues in the mid-'50s, though his work retained clear kinship with that of Victor Brauner and Hans Bellmer as Deux continued to refine his esthetic. That vision emerged in 1960 with the erotically charged *Éclatements* (Burstings), a labyrinthine drawing of intertwined limbs.

Seen as a whole, Deux's body of work is unsettling. It examines complex psychological spaces using both abstract and figural imagery that is often (though not exclusively) macabre. One of Deux's hallmarks is honeycombed and cellular detailing in lead pencil and India ink. It spreads across backgrounds or encases human contours, adding to the exquisitely surreal tone of the work. Combined with distorted and disconnected body parts, the motif makes for haunting compositions that seem to have grown out of nightmares and hallucinations.

Among many striking works was the enigmatic *Coeur de boeuf* (Steer's Heart, 1962) and *Les Otages* (The Hostages, 1964-65), an ethereal series of soft-spoken washes of color and pattern. Deux's mesmerizing self-portraits in lead pencil from the '80s and '90s present an anguished multiplicity of selves. Often depicting fetal forms entangled within adult bodies, these drawings are characteristically ambiguous and strangely beautiful.

-- Debra Wolf

reviews: international

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Fred Deux, *Autportrait, Dans le naissance* (Self-Portrait, In Birth), 1982, lead pencil on paper, 30" x 22". Alain Margaron.

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Traduction:

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Cette exposition a présenté un choix superbe de plus de 40 dessins et peintures sur papier, couvrant les 60 années de la carrière remarquable de Fred Deux. On y trouvait en particulier *Je Nais* (I am Born, 1949) que l'artiste considère comme sa première œuvre, une abstraction sensuelle d'encre et de laque pour bicyclette, les seuls matériaux qu'il possédait à l'époque.

Fred Deux a commencé sa carrière comme membre du mouvement surréaliste français, s'exprimant à travers l'automatisme, les taches et les *drippings*, et d'autres formes de mark-making. Il s'est officiellement écarté de ses collègues surréalistes au milieu des années 50. Par contre, son oeuvre a conservé une parenté avec celle de Victor Brauner et de Hans Bellmer pendant que Deux continuait à élaborer sa propre vision. Cette vision singulière a émergé en 1960 avec un dessin chargé d'érotisme, *Éclatements* (Burstings), une composition labyrinthée de membres entrelacés.

Vu dans son ensemble, l'oeuvre de Fred Deux perturbe. Elle examine la complexité des espaces psychologiques à travers un langage abstrait mais également figuratif qui est souvent (mais pas exclusivement) macabre. Les détails alvéolés et cellulaires au crayon et à l'encre de chine sont une des marques de Fred Deux. Ils s'étalent dans les fonds et enveloppent des fragments humains, ajoutant à la tonalité surréaliste. Mêlé à des parties de corps tordues et disloquées, ce motif produit des images qui semblent émaner de cauchemars et d'hallucinations.

Parmi de nombreuses oeuvres étonnantes figuraient l'énigmatique *Coeur de boeuf* (Steer's Heart, 1962) et *Les Otages* (The Hostages, 1964-65), une série éthérée de couleurs douces et de zones quadrillées de mailles. Les autoportraits à la mine de plomb des années 80 et 90 sont hypnotisants, et présentent une multiplicité angoissée du "moi." Souvent, ces dessins dépeignent des formes foetales enchevêtrées dans des corps adultes, d'un effet à la fois ambigu et étrangement beau.

-- Debra Wolf