

Laurence Aëgerter

About my art practice

I use archives and existing images, from book illustrations to museum collections, in a transcultural and 'tranhistorical' way, investigating the meaning of the image in relation to identity and collective memory. I mainly work with photography, screen printing and weaving techniques to create two- and three-dimensional objects, but also in-situ installations, participatory social projects and artists' books. My interventions break the conventions with which various things like encyclopedias, documentary photographs and art reproductions are usually read. I question their identity and appropriate the material in order to give them renewed urgency.

In realising my ideas, I often work closely with craftsmen and I like to involve people from outside the art world in my projects. My commissioned works are intrinsically interwoven with self-initiated works.

My artistic practice is research-oriented. I use research methods that I learned during my studies in Art History: collecting and studying literature, researching archives in search of knowledge, while remaining alert to the accidental discoveries that you can make here. My graduation project was about trompe-l'oeils in 17th-century Dutch painting. To this day, my art practice is rooted in my fascination with visual illusions, doubling, appearing and disappearing, transitions from one real to another, but also in the impact of images and the responsibility they carry with them.

I love shifting shapes and meanings, transforming spaces and moving contexts. My work is about construction and deconstruction, combining and recombining.

I interfere with historical and contemporary sources with the desire to free them from their fixations.

I like to intervene in iconic images to explore the possibility of a shared humanity. The present, on the other hand, is given a certain depth by its extension to the past. This 'elasticity of presence' is a guiding principle in my work.

I am convinced of the transformative power of art, both on an individual level and on the level of community and society. In the past I sometimes unconsciously used art as a catalyst of emotions, but in recent years I have also used it very consciously. 'La condition humaine' and its vulnerability is at the heart of my last works. Recently I have been researching potential healing methods, never in the role of a therapist but by creating certain situations that can serve as a starting point to relieve both the healthcare provider and the patient. In recent years I have collaborated with young people with psychotic vulnerabilities, elderly people with dementia, people with physical dependence, and residents of psychiatric institutions. I have also developed art projects for disadvantaged neighborhoods with, for example, high unemployment and/or loneliness.

My work seldom addresses emotions directly, but rather in a kind of three-band rush at billiards.

I believe that indirect processes increase the unconscious impact and thus the chance of a fundamental transformation. My Holy Grail is the creation of works of art that weaken the destructive impulses of mankind. At the moment I am particularly interested in neuroplasticity and various philosophical interpretations of reality.

I am convinced that the free play of art is crucial in promoting empathy, common good and empowerment, through the 'open-ended' encounters that take place there.

The diversity of my work seems to me to be an act of resilience.