

## Title List Dina Danish – Jean-Baptiste Maitre series “Victor Hugo Was Here”

Dina Danish  
Jean-Baptiste Maitre

Title of the series: “Victor Hugo Was Here”

“Victor Hugo Was Here” is a series of 8 embroideries on tulle of about 50 x 85 cm each.

Dina Danish and Jean-Baptiste Maitre have reproduced with embroideries of mixed colored threads some images drawn from ancient carved graffiti, along with doodles made on writing pads to try out new pens. The title of the series is inspired by an original graffiti found in an ancient Egyptian site.

*Here is an extract from an interview conducted by Giulia Pezzoli, curator at MAMbo - Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna*

**GP-The old inscriptions and engravings in stone that inspired you could be described as primitive forms of subjective communication addressed to a potential public: they are the product of individual expressive needs, conveying spontaneous, simple messages, yet they contain a yearning for eternity. In this respect they resemble contemporary artworks - however, in our current imagination, their origin and history are not seen as belonging to art, or the official communication of art, and besides, they are often associated with vandalism and perceived as a ‘threat to the system’. Your work de-contextualizes them and places them in an institutional setting, the exhibition space, thereby ‘officializing’ them. Have they finally acquired the status that they should have always been granted? Can we describe this as a restitutive act? An act of justice?**

**D:** It is probably not our fascination with the aesthetic of graffiti, but the act of vandalism and the human need to inscribe something on walls since ancient times that fascinated us. We even looked at children’s wall drawings from the Roman period and not much has changed since then. The need to also inscribe your name on the wall, to not be forgotten; that is what we found fascinating. I once read in the introduction to the ancient Egyptian “Book of The Dead” that ancient Egyptians considered the inscription of their name as a form of existence, and that was not meant in a metaphorical sense.

**JB:** Carved graffiti, from whatever age, brings you back to the presence of those who were there and their desire to manifest their presence. There is indeed a strange feeling that carved graffiti embed the moment when it was made and the moment when it can be seen, potentially thousands of years later. It causes vertigo in those who look at it. I wouldn’t call it primitive though, they just feel spontaneous. And I don’t see them as art either, but they have a peculiar aura that is appealing to art. I guess the fact that these traces of vandalism are now on display simply expands their area of communication to a new location and time, as they are being modernized. It’s Expanded Vandalism, as it were.

**JB:** We thought of embroidery as a way to extract graffiti from their original historical and architectural context and introduce them into our present, real time. Using embroidery gives a visual feeling of having peeled off a layer of architecture and time, and placed it again inside the exhibition space. I wouldn’t really say that the embroideries are three-dimensional, they are closer to paintings, I think.

**D:** Well, they are as 3D as low reliefs are, I think.

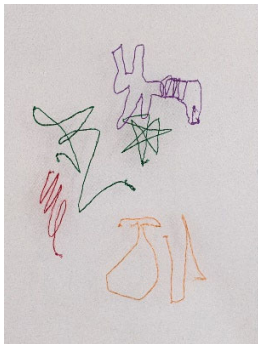
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**Title list of individual work:**

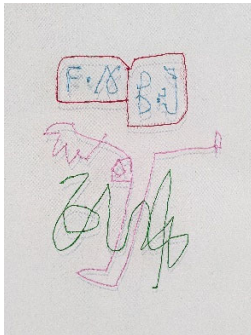
“Victor Hugo Was Here” is a series of 8 embroideries on tulle of about 50 x 85 cm each, all are silk thread on tulle.



DANCE



DONKEY



FAB

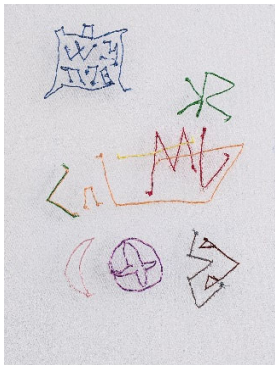


LEO

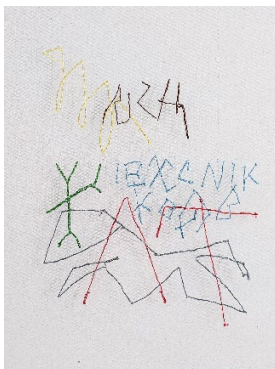
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MB



MOON



RICH



SERPENT