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Christine Rebet



Christine Rebet's "The Ritual of the First Brick" (2018), in which four hands mark out a temple's first corners. Christine Rebet

What's wonderful about drawing, more than any other medium, is the immediacy with which it transmits one person's sensual experience to another. To look at Eugène Delacroix's sketches of horses, for example, is to see this 19th-century French painter's fingers moving in some ever-living time out of time.

In her video and drawing show "[Thunderbird](#)," the contemporary French artist [Christine Rebet](#) taps this eerie timelessness, and the mysterious transition of ideas into material being more generally, as her subject as well as a resource.

In a short animated video, the divine title creature commands one Gudea of Lagash to build him a temple; and in the ink and acrylic drawing "The Ritual of the First Brick," four hands mark out that hypothetical temple's first corners. Small inconsistencies in the video, like a red sun turning momentarily yellow, remind you that you're watching a sequence of static images, but the motion, for all that it's only happening in the mind, feels real.

Another drawing, "Procession to the Lady of Heaven," details one fragment of an ornate vase. Male figures carrying baskets of red fruit and docile sacrificial goats march back and forth across the shard. The way Ms. Rebet abbreviates the men, especially, is lovely, like an elegant hieratic calligraphy. But the detail that struck me most forcefully was the brightness of the red ink: Every time I visited the gallery, over a matter of weeks, it looked as if the artist had painted it on only moments before. WILL HEINRICH