

ARTFORUM

500 WORDS

Christine Rebet

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View of "Christine Rebet: Paysage Fautif," 2015.

Christine Rebet is an artist who has worked across diverse media and with traditional animation for over ten years. Her debut solo gallery exhibition in New York, "Paysage Fautif," features drawings made in Haiti as well as a new hand-drawn film, all of which she discusses below. The show is on view at [Bureau](#) until June 14, 2015.

I'VE BEEN MAKING ANIMATIONS since 2002, when I received a grant to study with a team of DDR-era animators in Berlin. There, I learned how to animate in 35 mm, and I have stayed faithful to this traditional technique, even as I've watched the medium obsolesce. I decided to work with this "minor" form because of its roots in social critique. I find within its anarchic and satirical subtext a suitable grammar to share my vision.

Around 2008, I decided to stop making animations—the process was too obsessive, too troubling—in order to concentrate on themes of collectivity through performance, sculpture, and film. When I returned to France from New York in 2012, I began to recognize how little France has processed its collective traumatic history, especially when it comes to its colonial past. My father served in the Algerian war and, like many in his generation, he was destroyed by it. At one point during the war, he got typhoid and ended up suffering from hallucinations in a remote hospital. I began to think about inventing machinery to rehearse the hallucinating mind—an organic machine, influenced both by Francis Picabia's erotic machines and by the imagery of colonized nature, a machine simultaneously repairing and destroying itself. The cerebral freedom of hallucinations, it occurred to me, is a mirage, as deceptive as military deployment in the service of an imperial agenda.

The drawings in this show were made while I was in Haiti early this year. As it happened, I came down with tropical fever. Experiencing my own hallucinations while I was sick finally readied me to return to animation. After shooting all the drawings (about eight hundred, a number that is actually quite low for animations), I filmed them while submerging them in water, so that the images expanded and eventually dissolved. This secondary process both destroys the mirage of the animation and sets the images free. The animated film that resulted from this process is titled *In the Soldier's Head*, 2015, and it is a meditation on directing cerebral fluids through orgasmic forms. The title of this New York show, "Paysage Fautif"—a nod to Marcel Duchamp's semen on a piece of black satin—had been in my head for a while, but its significance was certainly reformulated by the animation.

Beyond these erotics, it was clear to me that I wanted to talk about mental disruption as a figure for the collective experience of colonization, and that I wanted to carry this out through the disruption of the animation itself. In short, my aim was to make a *non-animation*, something that interrupted the continuous cycle of images through a secondary process. The final moments of the animation return to the beginning of civilization, or the beginning of *animation*, in the cave, but the image is fleeting, ungraspable. After all, you can't really get a hold of a mind in crisis.

— As told to [Joanna Fiduccia](#)