

DEVENDRA BANHART SELECTS

LOUISE DESPONT

ARCHITECTURAL PRECISION
ON ANCIENT PARCHMENTS

Freak folk musician

Devendra Banhart:

"Louise has an amazing ability to imbue her work with an inner luminescence, something constant yet volatile, inexorable yet mercurial, held in harmonious captivity by the architecture of each piece. I can immerse myself and study every line within each grid, or step back and let the entire piece wash over me. These are blueprints to the inner firmament. Louise makes me wanna give up and keep trying."

Brooklyn-based Louise Despont creates technically precise pencil drawings that hint at an expanded state of mind. Almost psychedelic in their design, Despont's patterns and symmetries are subtly imbued with the artist's own coded narrative. "When I started working with architectural tools and geometrics it felt like I had discovered an abstract language of symbols," she says. "The patterns represent internal forms, directional movement and radiating energies. Rather than describing only the surface of the object, I use the patterns to simultaneously show the inside workings as well as the outside structure."

The majority of Despont's fine drawings are created on beautiful parchment paper taken from vintage ledger books used in Rajera British India. Discovering a stash of the books while studying,

Louise became enamoured with the depth of colour and the fragility of the paper, thinking about the age and history of the pages themselves. "The paper had a memory that was told through its markings. The actual surface of the old paper is broken by these marks and it seems to invite the drawing in," she explains.

Despont's works were originally made to the scale of the books themselves but have now grown to take over up to 32 pages spliced together, allowing her to control the expansion of her abstracted characters and stories. "The early

drawings were simple symmetries and forms. I was interested in creating harmonic relationships between the two sides of the page. Eventually the drawings became more complex and began to echo structures, then organic forms - human, plant and animal."

Despont's images are inspired by a combination of history and detail. Tibetan thangka paintings, Persian rugs, tarot cards, cathedral and maze architecture and Indian Tantric and Shaker gift drawings are all elements she has examined. While taken from various cultures, there is a common thread between the different styles, each of which is created out of an incredibly time-consuming process. But it is this

process that is at the very heart of her work. "I think both the process and outcome of that process can be meditative and I'm interested in art that has a meditative quality. For me, drawing is a starting point to exploring energies and dynamics that are unseen but felt."

Text WILLIAM OLIVER
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