



FEE KLEISS
I'Œil de l'Ail

painting, sculpture & installation

21.03. > 10.05.2025

Maybe it is the waste of time that you can see in my paintings

Fee Kleiss – conversation with Maria Lund – January 2025

OPENING

Thursday, March 20th – 5pm > 8:30pm

EVENTS

MEET THE ARTIST

Friday, March 21st – 6pm

48 rue de Turenne, 75003 Paris

LATE-NIGHT OPENING

Saturday, April 5th – 7pm > 9pm

48 rue de Turenne, 75003 Paris

SUNDAY OPENING

Sunday, April 13th – 2pm > 6pm

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While Fee Kleiss's foundation is, granted, painting, the artist also works on waste, objects, old clothes, photos, and magazines, accumulating and repurposing them, to then incorporate them to her paintings or transform them into standalone volumes. In her world, *nothing is lost,¹ nothing is denied, and anything can happen.*

In this way, *transformation* is at the core of the process from which this new body of works was born, under the enigmatic title *l'Œil de l'Ail* (The Eye of Garlic). The title, in turn, echoes one of her previous works, referring to an eye and garlic —another form of repurposing...

As “puppet mistress,” Fee Kleiss has her elements —paint and objects— interact like bit players in two- or three-dimensional “tableaux vivants.” Her approach is free, intuitive, and playful, but not without clear intent: to create a dialogue between old painting techniques and material fragments of our time. The space thus created bears a strong visual identity, whilst remaining very open, and even undefined. Beauty, humour, poetry, and depths coexist —in a spectrum of possibilities and suggestions.

Proceeding with the same freedom found in her sketch books, Fee Kleiss starts different works at once: expressive gestures, flat tints, transparencies, and ornaments all beat through her works, sometimes meeting on the same surface, sometimes echoing one another. Flashy and strong colours, or inversely dark and deep ones, are worked on to give a sense of space to her compositions. Then, shapes, objects, or small *trompe-l'œil* paintings weave their way into them.

In other instances, an old jumper or some scrap of fabric are placed taut on a frame, often folded and stretched until they become unrecognisable, then immediately joined by other objects. Everything becomes painting to Fee Kleiss, and her volumes, designed from materials she stiffens with glue, are simply *paintings in expansion*.

1. Excerpt from Antoine-Laurent de Lavoisier's quotation, late 18th century: *Rien ne se perd, rien ne se crée, tout se transforme*



Fee Kleiss
Liqui Moly (installation) | 2024
mixed media
170 x 400 x 250 cm
© photo Studio Kelamo



Fee Kleiss
Cove | 2024
oil on wood
50 x 40 cm



Fee Kleiss
l'Œil de l'Ail | 2025
tempera on canvas
140 x 110 cm

In *l'Œil de l'Ail*, the artist considered closely advertising leaflets from supermarkets. With their gaudy pictures and graphics, these cheap editions gather together all current promotions and discounts –be it food, alcohol, hygiene products, or house plants... Much more than mere symbols of our consumer society, the images and promotional texts cut out and carefully reproduced in painting by the artist also become the portraits of another dimension of contemporary life: one identifying products like vessels for our dreams and desires, going much further than simply meeting vital needs. By painting them in the *trompe-l'œil* tradition, Fee Kleiss gives them a new life, where they can melt into the abstract spaces created on canvas. The result is baffling: what looks like a collage turns out to be, on closer inspection, an integral part of the painted material, an “odd one out” in the form of a wine bottle or a pastry... **From there begins a transition toward a new perception, toward a sort of a stage, where the object (the bit player) starts to animate itself.**

The French term *nature morte* (literally, dead nature) would be a possible, yet inadequate label to fully describe Fee Kleiss's work. Her paintings, accumulations, and volumes are anything but “dead.” On the contrary, they look so alive that they could start mutating. The English term for it, *still life*, and its German equivalent, *Stilleben*, are more applicable to this kind of composition. With the juxtaposition of *still* and *life* –or *leben*– Fee Kleiss's world, full of swarm and bustling, is better described.

In this deeply touching world, bodies of all kinds and nameless shapes coexist in the most natural way with an old pair of tights and the foam packaging of a pear from far away. **With a boundless freedom, reminiscent of childhood, Fee Kleiss shares her experiments and discoveries, opening our eyes to the discarded and so-called mundane.** Thus, a certain beauty can be anywhere, in anything, if beauty is defined beyond aesthetics as a state of being.

In her spellbound world, where nothing is really univocal, an environmental stance, liberated eroticism, or the vision of heavens are all probable interpretations. Fee Kleiss always keeps a date with the imaginary.

(May the game continue, whispers the Eye to Garlic...)

background

Fee Kleiss was born in Kuchen, Germany, in 1984. Today, she lives and works in Berlin. The artist started by studying art history and philosophy at the university of Göttingen (2003-2004), to then enter the fine arts academy in Mainz (2004-2009), followed by a master's degree at the Universität der Künste (UdK) in Berlin, with professors Pia Fries and Valérie Favre (2010-2013).

Fee Kleiss received several awards and grants, including the *Regina Pistor Preis* (2011), the *bourse de voyage du DAAD for Indonesia* (2013), the *Dorothea Konwiarz Stiftung* (2016), and a *residency at Paper Residency, Berlin* (2021).

Her works have been part of many solo and collective exhibitions in Germany, **at Künstlerhaus Dortmund, at Kunstverein Siegen, at WerkSchauHalle – Spinnerei Leipzig, at Atelierhof Kreuzberg, at Salon Mutlu, at Schwarz Contemporary, Berlin, among others, along with several galleries and cultural venues in Copenhagen, in New York, and in Mexico.** In 2022, her work was presented in the exhibition *Denkraum Deutschland 2022, Love & Peace. Kunst, Konflikt und Frieden* at the **Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich.**

Her collaboration with Galerie Maria Lund started in 2020, as part of an invitation to Schwarz Contemporary (Berlin) with the presentation of a dozen paintings and wall sculptures. In 2024, some of the artist's drawings and collages were part of the exhibition *Back to basics*, presented at the **Ceramic Brussels** fair and, in the summer of 2024, her work was shown in the collective exhibition *In Motion*.

From 23.03.2025 to 22.06.2025, Fee Kleiss takes part in the exhibition *Le temps du printemps – une fenêtre ouverte sur une nature en ébullition* at the CAC in Meymac (Corrèze, France).



Fee Kleiss
Liebe | 2024
oil on linen canvas
50 x 40 cm



Fee Kleiss
Sunset split | 2024
pigments and rabbit glue on linen canvas
50 x 40 cm

For 26 years, the **GALERIE MARIA LUND** (Paris, le Marais) has been supporting forms of contemporary art that combine conceptual depth and visual relevance. This positioning involves the promotion of powerful works that suggest a meaning rather than imposing one, raising existential questions in a contemporary way. The work of the 22 represented artists encompasses a great diversity of media: installations, sculptures, paintings, drawings, photography, performance, videos, textiles and poetry. In addition to organising exhibitions in its gallery space and taking part in various French and international fairs (KIAF Seoul, Drawing Now, Asia Now, Art Paris, Enter Art Fair (Copenhagen), Luxembourg Art Week), the gallery also works to promote its artists' visibility outside its walls, by means of relationships with institutions and private establishments, playing an advisory role for commissioned works, publishing books and hosting events from other artistic fields (theatre, music, literature). The GALERIE MARIA LUND is a member of the French galleries' association, CPGA (Comité Professionnel des Galeries d'Art) – and of the pgmap – paris gallery map.