

Transcript for Shannon Bool in Conversation

>> Following her studies in Visual Arts at University of Ottawa, Anne-Marie St-Jean Aubre completed a master's degree in Art History at the Université du Québec à Montréal. Her interests focussed on themes of identity and cultural issues explored through contemporary art practices. She worked at SBC contemporary art gallery and Darling Foundry in Montreal before getting hired in 2017 as Curator of Contemporary Art of the Musée d'art de Joliette. She invited Shannon Bool to create a new body of work that was presented at the Musée in 2018. As the exhibition titled The Shape of Obus. In Joliette, she organized exhibitions with Kapwani Kiwanga, Leisure, Jin-me Yoon, [inaudible] and Elizabeth Zvonar among others. And we are fortunate to be with today, Shannon Bool, joining us from Berlin where she has been living since 2001. She is Professor of Painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Mainz. Her works are part of renowned museum collections such as Kunstmuseum Bonn, Metropolitan Museum of Art New York, National Gallery of Canada, to mention a few. I've already mentioned her most recent solo exhibitions, and she has participated in important group exhibitions across Europe and North America. She is represented by Daniel Faria in Canada and Kadel Willborn in Düsseldorf. So take it away at Shannon and Anne-Marie.

>> Thank you, Sunny, for the introduction. Hi, Shannon. It's nice to see you from afar. [Chuckles]

>> Hi, Anne-Marie, and --

>> Hi, to everyone.

>> Nice to see everyone come out, and thanks for the introduction, Sunny. And thanks also for the wonderful work together on the latest rendition of the exhibition. So shall we just start with the studio? We're going to share some video footage.

>> Exactly. Yeah. Just shared my screen where you'll see the video that runs through the exhibition. So you get a sense of the spacing of the work through Agnes Etherington galleries. But first I wanted to talk about the different titles for this exhibition. The --as Sunny said, the exhibition was first presented at the Musée d'art de Joliette in 2018 under the title The Shape of Obus. It then went to the Canadian Cultural Centre in Paris under another title Promiscuous Rooms in the spring of 2019. And then under the title House of Oblivion in the fall 2019 at the Kunstverein Braunschweig. And now it's Modernism and Its Discontents at the Agnes Derrington Art Centre. And what this highlighted is how the show changed throughout its different iterations with Shannon adding to the first body of work new works each time. I think that idea was to also respond to the different architectural components of these different spaces where the exhibition was presented. So that's something that I thought I could start up from and address maybe this new title Modernism and Its Discontents at the Agnes Derrington Art Centre.

>> Yeah, sure. This is the fourth show where the body of work has grown from the Shape of Obus from Joliette in 2018 where the work was

very much focussed on a kind of response to Le Corbusier, a very specific project of Le Corbusier has planned Obus, which is one of the first biggest urban planning projects that wasn't realized but one of the first massive urban planning projects. And the associated kind of unconscious material that went with that, his erotic drawings and other impulses that inform modernism. And in that show I was also looking a little bit at some spaces like [inaudible] and looking at figures like Picasso and The Harem which is also a connection to earlier bodies of work of mine where I was quite deep and looking at harems for the past 10 years. And so in this exhibition the work has culminated and there's a lot of different embroidery, tapestries, photography, painting, and it centres around this critique of modernism or these ideas of modernism that are we're kind of unconscious or hadn't been unpacked in my opinion until now. And this is a combination of really looking at sexuality and images of sexuality that were explored by painters or artists in those times. And how they also correspond to the way we look at space now. And the way that we look at this early part of modernism. So Modernism and Its Discontents I came across the title. There's a book about a Sibyl Moholy-Nagy, who was Laszlo Moholy-Nagy's wife and she was a very prominent figure in the early modernists movement. In contact with a lot of architects and artistic voices. And I just thought this title was so fitting for the station of the show. And it also corresponds, of course, to Sigmund Freud's Civilization and Its Discontents. And it's really, I have a lot of maybe alternative narratives that we'll see in the work, information, ideas, associations, a lot of associations, a lot of unconscious desires that I kind of bring up that maybe we haven't thought about before when we look at modernism. >> Also the things that I thought about when I first read your title for this [inaudible] of the exhibition is how modernist architecture blurs the boundaries between private and public spaces. And that is also with theme that you, that runs through the body of work that you'll show through the view that is that are shown in [inaudible] art centre.

>> Exactly. A perfect example of that is the first tapestry that the camera's going to pan in on which is maybe we can start the video. So this is a tapestry a Jacquard tapestry and it's woven based on a collage that I've built on the computer but then the information is all woven together. It looks in photographic form like a print of some sort but it's interwoven. And it's called Women in Their Apartment which is a reference to Delacroix and his painting of harem or his rendering of a harem in the 19th century. And so I was looking at building a harem in a modernist space but I really came to this association, this is my association from looking at the drawings of Picasso in his [inaudible] sketch series. So before he made his [inaudible] series of paintings he did a very large series of sketches where the female bodies like slowly dissolve into cartoon like, kind of really convoluted characterizations of the female body. And maybe we'll just pause it here. So we can, yeah. Where do you want? Yeah, so it's clear. So what I found is I was looking at sketches from the

Femme d'Alger and they were, one of them stuck in my head. So this is, this will show you a little bit of my working process. I don't research and read and go to the library and then put things together with a very scientific approach.

It's very intuitive approach. And it usually comes from my own associative field based on my interests in certain veins of art history often. And so in this case, I had this this Femme d'Alger sketches, and I looked at one and it reminded me of something. And then I realized it reminded me of this viral photograph of Kim Kardashian's butt that was on the cover of paper magazine. In 2014, I think.

And so I just took the photo of Kim Kardashian from paper magazine and lifted it out on the computer and Photoshop. And I put it on the Picasso sketch and it fit like a glove. It just went click. And then I thought, okay, there's some lineage happening here. There's some lineage happening with the body, and the body in space. And then I needed, too, I wanted to make a harem setting for these bodies. And so I had been doing this work with a lot of work looking at the private villas that Le Corbusier designed mostly in the 20s and 30s. And there's this famous bath, bathroom which is open. It goes open from the living room in the Villa Savoye, just outside of Paris that I visited as well.

And this is in the tapestry, it's made from an image of this open bathtub which is also quite square, and it looks it looks quite dangerous. And then there's a chaise lounge that you can lie in in the back. And I collage the figures and the Kim Kardashian butts into this space to make a kind of meeting point for different associations and ideas about modernism and the body.

>> You put it on play again and we'll see -- we saw some of the weaving.

Ah no, we're leaving it now.

>> I can go back. Voila.

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>> Good. Thank you. So you can see here if you come closer to the, as we come closer to the image, there's also hand embroidery that will come up in another work, which is I embroidered in the window a very graphic pattern of flowers which is from Roman tiles. It's a very graphic pattern that I've used in several works. And that work is hand-embroidered. And there's also some hand embroidery on the tiles and on the figures. But maybe I hope that it communicates a little bit on the computer screen. It's a shame digitally to see the work and not physically, because you can see the woven quality of the work if you get close to it. So I think the cinematographer, he does focus on some of these woven moments. We'll see some of the woven moments also, here you can see a close-up of the figure and you see that it's very in the weaving itself, the weaving takes place at 18 pixels as opposed to a photographic image which would be 300 pixels per centimetre inch. So it's a very kind of dissolved visual language where things can really be blended together. So it's a different language than painting photography to work with textiles. And also the idea of working with

the textile, which you'll see as a vein going through the work, is that we have these ideas about architecture, and space, and modernism, and they're very carved in stone. They're very non-negotiable, static, concrete. And I like to approach these ideas with a soft material or a feminine material which uses in a way, has a different way to enter into the content of the work.

>> It's funny that you say you were looking at the figures first and then you thought about this context place. Then this bathroom of Le Corbusier because through our research and our conversation, when we prepared the exhibition, one thing that I found out that I didn't know about is how Le Corbusier was really inspired by Picasso in his own drawings because Le Corbusier drew a lot also. And so that connection between the figures and the architecture then makes a lot of sense also in that connection.

>> Yeah, but that's exactly how I came to the Villa Savoye, was the fact that I read about Picasso and Le Corbusier being friends. And some historians think that that Picasso got into the harem content through the Le Corbusier's Algerian drawings, because they met around the time before Picasso began his studies.

So Le Corbusier was really influential in this modernist painting trend of painters examining the harem [inaudible] discussed anyways.

>> And so in this first room, there's the tapestry Women in Their Apartment. And then there's also a silk painting that we just saw very briefly. And then there's this installation or small assemblage of a photograph with a marble table called Sugar Veins and NC Sleeping Chamber with Casbah Extensions. That is also about Le Corbusier.

>> Yeah, exactly. This is also a kind of appetizer to the bigger body of work in the next room. So I can just mention maybe quickly that the photo and then -- oh, yeah, this is another Kim Kardashian reference with the lines of cocaine. Maybe I'll talk about that one first. This is this is a work really about the game of perception and materials, and it's based -- oh we're, hey let's --

>> I'll go back. It goes back.

>> I've never done an artist talk like this. I feel like I'm on a magic carpet or something. [Chuckle].

>> [Inaudible] speak about the marble table first or the photograph, so I can zoom in the right [inaudible] of the image. Let's just stick with the photograph. Okay. And this is a photogram actually, or it's a photograph that's made with negative clear foil prints that have been collaged together, and like roughly taped together. And this is a photo of Le Corbusier's private bedroom and the N24 apartment in Paris that he designed, at the same time around the plan Obus was designed. And this is an example also of the -- I don't know, it's kind of like the cave of all of the ideas like the origin of all of the ideas. It's a private space and this is one of the most modernist architects in his private space is built. Like, it looks like an extension of the Casbah, so the ceilings are low and there's a lot of curves. The shower is kind of like a pizza oven. I mean I've been to the flat in Paris. It has, everything is really curved in little nooks and crannies. And right in the middle of the bedroom is the bidet.

>> Yeah, that we see just here.

>> Yeah. So this is this division of private and public also plumbing and toilet, its feature is very in the forefront of Le Corbusier was obsessed with hygiene and bodily functions. But this also connects to the other works with [inaudible] that are coming up. Anyways, so I took two of the doorways of the room and I collaged passageways from the Casbah and Algiers where the Obus plan was designed. So this was kind of a, it's kind of a vision of a private fantasy, or it's my fantasy of my projection. I don't know what Le Corbusier was thinking about when he went to bed. But there's a lot of really, there's a lot of really strange details in the photo. Like the bed was raised so he could see the landscape outside the window, because the windows are higher, it's on the top floor of the building.

>> And also the carpets that we see here that we'll see the pattern of that types of carpets in tapestries that we'll see later in the exhibition.

>> Exactly. This is an example of the -- Le Corbusier was a big collector of Algerian and Moroccan textiles and carpets that were serrated into the different Paris villas. And then this shelf here, it's called Sugar Veins. And this is another connection to the Kardashians which come as also this kind of harem fantasy, private and public. And this is based on a story that was in the media that I saw. I think at the end of 2019 that Kim Kardashian was promoting a line of baby clothes and she was in a hotel. And then over her shoulder behind her it looked like there were two big lines of cocaine on a marble table and the press caught up on it or someone Instagrammed it and Tweeted it. And it became a huge thing. And then she came online the next day on her, on Instagram and said no it wasn't cocaine. It's the marble table. And then she showed this angle of the table where the veins look exactly like cocaine at the angle that she was sitting at the day before. So for me it was this idea of fantasy and materiality, and how you can misread materials so easily.

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So the lines that we see just over here were your addition to the market.

>> Exactly, it's marble powder. It's just marble powder.

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Yeah.

>> And then we move to the next room where there the room is divided in three. There's a first part where there's a big tapestry and a series of small embroideries with this mural. The second part, I'll just stop it here. The second part is there's two tapestries. And then in the third part of the room there's a series of photograms called Bombshell. So for the first part of this bigger room in the exhibition, we focus first on this tapestry that is called the four season that mimics the pattern or uses the same pattern as the marble shell that we just spoke about. And this is the view of the men's bathroom in the Four Season Restaurant in the C room a building in New

York designed by Mies van der Rohe with a pool of flowers coming out of the [inaudible].

>> Exactly. A very nicely described, Anne-Marie. Yeah, this is , this tapestry uses again a photograph, and the tapestry language here again is important because we have these very factual non-negotiable materials of marble and wood veneers that are in the men's bathroom of the Four Season's very famous restaurant. It was one of the last [inaudible] restaurants in New York. And, sadly, it was sold, and dismantled, and redecorated about two years ago. But I I'm not sure, I think the bathroom, the men's bathroom might still be the same. I think it's under heritage.

>> It's still the same, the men's bathroom [chuckle] is the same.

>> Is it still the same? I want to find that out. So I had this photograph and I really wanted to make a tapestry of it. So, again, I have this kind of instinctual way of working where I wanted to do an intervention with the bathroom somehow to collide with this materiality. But I also liked this aspect of the men's bathroom being the most private area of the space, the stalls. And I wanted to put something feminine into it. And so I decided to put the train of a woman's ball gown like it was stuck in the bathroom door. And so I actually, I researched -- this is when you're an artist, and you say I researched -- actually I just looked at like hundreds of ballgowns from the met ball, different paparazzi events, and tried several out. And the one that fit the best was from , it's from the Met costume gala. It's an Alexander McQueen gown from 2016, it was worn by Bee Shaffer who's the daughter of --

>> Anna Wintour.

>> Anna Wintour's daughter. And I really liked the fact that it had these hand-embroidered flowers throughout the dress and in the train. So I had the train, I clashed it so it was stuck in the door. And then, I had it woven in black and white and then the flowers are hand-embroidered into the gown. So if we -- maybe there's a close-up where the audience can see it.

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I think the cinematographers may go in now.

>> What's interesting is also you said earlier how you wanted to represent modernist architecture through a more feminine or [inaudible] materiality with the tapestry. And here, the marble really brings an organic field to an architecture that is very rigid in the lines of the architecture itself. And you're going in that direction by adding the flowers. So you're highlighting that sort of contrast between the materiality of the marble and the lines, the very sharp lines of the architecture.

>> Yeah, exactly. It's kind of -- I like to play with these tensions. And I think for this one, there's this there's also this other very formal maybe kind of a game.

Or attention, where the hand-embroidered flowers are the most fake thing in the whole mix. So the marble and the and the veneer, they're representing themselves or like real materials, and the fake material,

the most synthetic part which is the natural beautiful fluid is actually the most synthetic part with the hand embroidery. And so there's this kind of clash between the expectation of feminine, masculine, and also the associated narratives of what is this train doing stuck in the bathroom door? You know like, it could be a number -- five different things. I'm not going to name them, but I like this this formal game, but also this game of what happens in the corners of the architecture, what kind [inaudible] play out.

>> What's disclosed, and what's visible and invisible, and image.

>> Exactly.

>> Yeah, [inaudible].

>> Of decadence. I mean I think I'm looking also at the decadence, and the not necessarily against it. I'm just, you know, looking at different things that happened with the opulence of the materials, and that will lead us to the embroideries. And I think that the cinematographer focussed on the [inaudible] embroidery which is where we can, that's where really the origin of this decadence. But this is a series of embroideries that I've done over the past couple of years where I started a process of silkscreening architectural plans onto fabric. First, this is one of the first ones. This is from the Villa Savoye. And then I started to make a type of blueprint where I would hand-dye silk in a dark blue colour. And then silkscreen -- we can stop here maybe. This is this is an example of the blueprint, type embroidery where I did a, I dyed silk and then silk screened a plan over it. This is an architectural plan from the Italian architect Carlo Molino from, he lived in Turin, and he was very surrealist very decadent, made amazing interiors. He was obsessed also with the female body. And he had a secret life and a secret flat that was discovered after his death. And it had thousands of Polaroids of women in dress or posing with furniture that he designed. He also designed very amazing furniture. So this is again a private villa. I think most of the embroideries I used villas or private domestic spaces. And then after doing the silkscreen I just looked at different elements of the plan that spoke to me from the point of view of, okay, how could I am embroider this?

And then I went into the language of samplers or when you look at, historically, embroidery -- a lot of embroidery exist on the basis of teaching people how to embroider. So in some of the most beautiful embroidery is samplers where you have different stitches being learnt as they're going through one kind of piece. So I worked, actually I had a little team in my studio. We worked together, and we would be playing off of each other, or saying, oh let's try this stitch. Or I might be in a different place. And I'll WhatsApp an idea, hey, try and do some tic tac toe on this area. So these works are very playful. And I guess this authority of the plan is the most authoritative structure. If you look at architecture especially. Or anything. And for me this is a way of kind of penetrating this master plan with a different language. So this is another good example. This is the Farnsworth House which comes up in another tapestry coming up. And I really liked especially Mies van der Rohe plans, also the way they're

drawn, and the way they're drawn, the way they're presented. And this one really lent itself to a very traditional sampler of trying out different stitches. And so we have, yeah, here we have the games of tic-tac-toe and practices. Just different things that I found from looking at Victorian samplers mostly. And actually I was in Sicily and my studio manager was working on this one and I was working on another one, and we were communicating on WhatsApp and trading ideas and stitches.

But for me I guess it's a different, it's just a different narrative in the space. Like I don't presume to take down these [inaudible]. It's not also a huge critique on modernism leaving out women. It's more for me a space to play with visual language that wasn't played out before but it was always there. So the story of the Farnsworth House is very much about Edith Farnsworth and her relationship to the architecture. And she's the client who commissioned Mies van der Rohe. And this one is a bit more playful. This is a building from Adolf Loos who's kind of the father of modernism. He's a very important architect or very important figure for me. And a very difficult figure. He was an architect. His first projects were around 1903 and he really informed modernism in a lot of different ways. He was the first, he was the first architect to forbid decoration, for example, in his buildings. But then if you see his buildings and his flats, they're so specific with materials and function that those aspects of the buildings become decorative. And he was a very famous writer and he wrote this famous essay Ornament And Crime, that Ornament and Crime that every art student I think should read or anyone who's interested in art should read that if you want to learn about this period of modernism where the language was shifting away from ornateness and ornamentation. But he was also, Adolf Loos was very fetishistic in his use of material. And I made a previous work I think like 12 years ago. And it was based on a bedroom that he designed for his then wife, that he had a bedroom in his first flat that he designed for his wife, and it was covered with fur and white fabrics. So angora fur covered the floor and went inside the mattress. And so this is a proposal that he made for a competition for the Chicago Tribune building. He didn't win the competition, but he made this building, design for a building that's very phallic, and I put embroidered fireworks for the phallic building. And I based my, again, I based my embroidery here not in Victorian samplers but on Valentino's collection from a couple of years ago where they were doing a lot of fireworks embroidery. Or here's a night vision. This is the Villa La Roche from Le Corbusier, it's where also the foundation of Le Corbusier is situated.

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[Inaudible]

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>> You're doing great.

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[Laughter]

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>> This is the Villa La Roche. And so I dyed the cloth really dark. I

wanted it to make it look like nighttime. And then I replicated the colours of the windows how they would look at nighttime. Also looking at the colours of the walls which are painted in different colours in the Villa La Roche.

>> So you're not just using the floor plans that shows how the interior spaces are organized but you're also using sometimes views from outside. So you're playing with the inside outside also in your selection of material for the embroidery.

>> Yeah, exactly. And, or also the inside spaces, they're really different sometimes. They have different angles or different views.

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>> So across from this wall. We'll see the mural. And this is an addition that you did to the selection of works that were shown then at the Kunstverein Braunschweig. It's where you first did the mural. And this is the new iteration of that mural called --

>> Five Walls?

>> Exactly. Five Walls. Can you tell us more about the choice of colours?

Because I know the colours are very specific to this story.

>> Yeah.

>> For that mural.

>> Well, this is this -- this mural is based, it's actually just based on a photograph of a building in the Weissenhof Settlement, you know, Stuttgart in Germany. And this is a neighbourhood which has -- it was a fair in the 1920s. They made a fair for modernist architecture, and there's small show buildings by many really important or famous modernist architects including Le Corbusier and his cousin Pierre Jeanneret. They did like a twin house, a doubled house in the Weissenhof-Siedlung. And I went to visit it because actually my husband made a film and filmed partly in the Villa. And then I finally went to the Weissenhof-Siedlung, and there's this point in the building where a few spaces meet together. And because of the use of the colour in that building, it looks like a painting or it becomes really flat. And so I wanted to represent that as a wall painting, like as a painting that is in space. So the colours are just based on the colours that are actually there. And Le Corbusier, he had a very specific palette and use of colour and in his villas, the colours rotate and change. It's very playful. It has a lot to do with how the colours correspond to each other. And so I just rendered this painting or actually it was technician who did it for me because, of course, I couldn't go to Kingston cause I'm in Berlin. And the woman who did it did a fantastic job. So I have to credit Danielle for that. But I also there's the addition of a lamp on the mural. I don't know, maybe if we press play we'll see it from the side. And this is this is a type of lamp that Le Corbusier designed. And they're in the Villa La Roche. I don't know if they're in the Weissenhof-Siedlung. But he would make lamps using just a single pipe with a bulb on the end of it, and put them on the side of walls or hanging from the ceiling. Also in the Bombshell room I have a very extreme use of these lamps. Here you can

see it. And so this also adds another dimensionality to the space that the lamp has coming out at kind of like a third eye. And it becomes more extreme in the Bombshell rooms.

>> Yeah. That we'll see that just after. So behind the mural there's two tapestries, Oued Ouchaia and also Maison Locative Ponsik that are from 2018 that plays with the buildings that Le Corbusier was thinking of designing for [inaudible] when he was in Algeria and wanted to suggest different urbanistic plans and also architectural plans to modernize the city in their thirties and forties. And you're super imposing on those buildings in the two tapestries drawings that look obviously made of women in Algeria.

So there's two different examples of that that we see here. What's really interesting. We pointed out in the image of Le Corbusier's apartment that we saw in the first room, the carpet on the floor where we can see similar designs that fill the bodies that you decided to use to fill the bodies in those in those tapestries.

>> These works are really complex and these were the first works that I made for Joliette, so this is kind of the origin of the project. And could we go back to the first one?

>> Yeah.

>> Thanks. And so they were also very difficult works to make because I had collected these different elements. I was looking at the Obus plan really specifically and it's a very problematic plan. It's the first plan of massive urban planning but it was superimposed or tended to be superimposed on Algiers to make Algiers a European capital, and put it on the European map. But also the idea was to just really rip out the Casbah and make a superhighway. And the super highway was supposed to be curvy and Le Corbusier also in his diaries or letters he wrote about how the city of Algiers reminded him of a woman's body, kind of undulating. And one thing I learnt actually just from watching a lecture from the 1990s from Beatriz Colomina on YouTube a few years ago, when I was looking at this specific project. And she had a lecture where she was looking at Le Corbusier's graffiti on Eileen Grey's E-1027 building that she went into the origins of his graffiti. And so in the origins of his graffiti you go back 20 years to his own drawings that were based on orientalist postcards or actually hiring live models. So he had kind of a secret drawing practice that informed his natural cubism and informed his paintings that he developed years later. And so out of these drawings, I picked -- a lot of them or most of them have pairs of women. And the women are usually in some kind of violent or sexual exchange where they're squished up against each other. They might be you know playing ball or fighting. Or in this case I used a drawing of two women, and this drawing is very difficult to find. I found it on the Beatriz Colomina, her lecture. But it's two women engaging in [inaudible] and I wanted to integrate the drawings with the architecture because in the plan Obus, there's a lot of paired architectural drawings where you have buildings shown from two angles in pairs. So it's a similar language to the drawings of the female bodies. And so in this case I have the drawing exactly superimposed over this plan and the plan is for a housing unit. So

this is a very French housing unit for the European Algiers, the Europeans in Algiers, and in the plans it has a lot to do with behaviour, with point of view. This is where you park the cars, here's a restaurant, and you can actually see sight lines determined within the plans. It's more obvious in the second tapestry. And then I superimpose the bodies of the drawings with this interior information of the carpets mostly from the Paris villas and the carpets that were collected. So I was looking at the language of Algerian carpets, and I superimpose those on the bodies to bring them into this domestic space and to kind of veil them as well.

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>> And you've also hand-embroidered some details throughout those [inaudible] in the body.

>> Yeah, exactly. There's details in this case I think on the bottom figure there's, a lot of the coloured details are hand-embroidered. And the second one I hand-embroidered a lot of the sight lines because they also aided with the Jacquard weaving. And because this man which is a modular man, we see the sight lines that we -- I'm pointing at the sightlines as if he's looking at the figures actually. Exactly. Yeah. So you have in this case, this is another building for intended European use. And in the drawings we have the modular man which is Le Corbusier's kind of man, of measurement, and proportion, and form. And the sight lines show in every building that you can see, the ocean. So whatever unit you decide to move into, you'll have a view of the ocean. And this is displayed in several parts of this particular drawing. So I collaged this drawing with this view of two women and they're kind of head to foot squished up against each other. And then the sight lines are going through the bodies over to the ocean, but stuck at the bodies.

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>> I think we'll see a detail.

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And then we go in the third part of this second room where the Bombshell series is shown with the colour that comes from the different [inaudible] of Le Corbusier. And then the lamps that you were talking about earlier, and those images that show superimpositions of oriental postcards that Le Corbusier collected while he was in Algiers. He drew from life figures but he also drew from those postcards that he collected, if I remember correctly. And then you superimposed on top of those bodies the urban plans that he developed for Algiers.

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>> Exactly.

>> [Inaudible] see close up.

>> So this is the work again it's a photographic process where I have the different transparencies, and I collaged them. So it's a contact print, it's a type of [inaudible] contact print. And this was a

difficult body of work because I had some kind of association with the plans because I had the drawings of the plan Obus. And I was looking at them for many months and I realized they really correspond to the bodies. And then as I was looking at working on the tapestries and looking through the drawing process, and Le Corbusier's referenced postcards -- and he actually used some of the postcards to trace. So some of the, if you look at his paintings, some of the figures the origins are tracings from these postcards that he collected. And so for this body of work I really had to glean through because there are several archives of these photos. They're also they can also be very disturbing and it was a very Eurocentric trend. And it's also a Eurocentric trend that informs Orientalism and also connects in this regard to the language of painting Delacroix, Picasso, this fantasy of the harem and this fantasy of women in private space. So what happened is I was playing with these transparencies and then I saw, oh my goodness, they fit exactly like this postcard fits exactly to this plan. It was almost too -- it was just too big of a coincidence. So I worked with, I think there's 18 different bombshells. I called them bombshells because the word Obus, the plan Obus means, it means bomb. Or [inaudible] in French translates from the word bomb or shell. So I put bomb and shell together to make bombshell as a, like exploding news or beautiful woman. So there's this play with the content of Obus. And this corresponding the plans to this fetishization or exotification of the female body which I think runs through the whole project of Obus. It's also the orientalist postcards don't show the reality of these women. It's a fantasy, it's a construction, it's completely it's theatre somehow. And plans that Le Corbusier made to modernize Algiers stayed a fantasy also. They never got realized. So it's also his fantasy of the city that you combine together.

>> Exactly. Yeah. This was the first go a kind of colonial urbanization that worked in Shaandraar [assumed spelling] India. This one to the right is one of the first ones I made. And this is a postcard. This is the only image I found where the postcard had a name, and this woman was a famous dancer. And I found the structure from Obus, and it kind of fit on over her breasts like a bra or like a bikini top.

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So --

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-- yeah, [inaudible] I wanted to pick images that were really connected to painting and Orientalism like example of the [inaudible] here, we have this -- this is very classic painting language. And you can see this highway that goes over the woman's body. This was the highway that Le Corbusier envision for the plan Obus that would drive, he wanted to kind of demolish the Casbah. It would go through the Casbah, and under the highway would be all of this housing that was, I think it was mostly European. And then there were these superstructures that go to the top of the figure.

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[Silence]

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Between these two body of works also the tapestries that we studied before and the Bombshell series, it's interesting to see that there's a reversal of the strategy where the plan veils the bodies in the photograms but in the tapestries the bodies block the plans. And so the power relationship between the figure and the plan is different that the figures are so big and the tapestry almost a takeover the spaces that are supposed to contain them. And here the plans somehow dress the figures or camouflage the figures.

>> The tapestry is, in the tapestries the figures take over the architecture. They're almost like monsters but they become, they become monstrous in a way. And here there's a synthesis where in some of the Bombshells, the figures become, they look robotic or they or they're veiled, they're covered by the plans in a way. But you can see this very uneasy relationship between the bodies and the plans. So I have to say that these works made me uneasy. I didn't, you know, but I thought it was important to make sure. And then we walked in the final section of the exhibition where we can see a series of soap paintings that you made in 2019, 2022 two Tolix chairs that you transformed. And the final tapestry called the weather that was made in 2019. So maybe we start with the chairs that you --

>> [Chuckle] Yeah.

>> -- that you made for the exhibition in Brunswick, that we were so happy to be able to bring to [inaudible].

>> Yeah, I was so glad to see them in the exhibition here. Yeah, I'm really happy that it worked out. And this is the Tolix chairs are very classic, modernist chair that became mass produced that you can see in millions of restaurants around the world now. But the original Tolix chairs were quite -- they were quite famous and they're in the Villa Savoye, for example, everywhere. And the company that makes the Tolix chairs now or Tolix, they even collaborated with the Villa Savoye. So when I visited it, there were a lot of Tolix chairs throughout the space painted in the colours of the Villa. And so I wanted to make a version of the Tolix chair that was more suited to this the Women in Their Apartment tapestry or this idea of a contorted body or a woman with a really small waist, and a Kim Kardashian kind of voluminous bottom because the Tolix chairs are very, they're just square. So I did this really intensive material process where I took Tolix chairs. I cut the seats off or I cut a seat off. I had it cast in a rubbery material and stretched it out. And then I cast this version in bronze, and then the bronze stretch seat was re-welded and built to the original chair structure. So they're called expanded Tolix chairs. And then I painted them in these pink-y aqua colours that I saw when I was in the Villa Savoye.

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These little paintings. You can see them a little bit from the cinematographer. They really, this is really an example of work that's better to see in person because they're made with chiffon silk. So, again, I'm using a very feminine material that has no place in high art. And they're made using batik technique. So I paint with wax, and then I use oil paint, textile paint, different types of paint. And then in the end, I iron out the wax. So I don't really know how they're also going to turn out until everything is ironed out. So they're very labour-intensive paintings.

And this series of paintings, there's one in the very first room of the exhibition. I have structures that are facades of [inaudible] architecture or architectural buildings that I build grids over on the computer. So in this case I have a very reduced cross pattern and the other ones I use a very standard modernist grid. And then, so these layers are painted on this transparent silk. And then instead of being stretched on a normal stretcher frame, it's stretched over a mirror. So the painting reflects in the mirror and your body will reflect into the painting when you see the painting in person. So maybe if we play, you can maybe see the cinematographer moving around and see. And this is a classic grid painting. This is called Grid Naturel. And so here you see the photo, here you can see how the body is going through the painting. So that's more of what it's like in real life. But they're they have a more formal language of low material, maybe low material contortionism that I take something very static and very factual like the modernist grid. It's not really a negotiable subject, but if you paint it onto a material like chiffon silk you can negotiate it. It becomes transparent, it collapses in a way, it reflects in a different way.

>> And then the mirror gives it some depth. Also it becomes unfixed because it changes while you walk in front of it and there's that back and forth between the layer in front and the layer behind being reflected. So and you see yourself also in it. Suddenly it's no longer a work that functions only in itself like the modernist idea of [foreign language]. In French, we say [foreign language]. Suddenly it reflects the context also. So it breaks that idea of the modernist grid by [inaudible] the context.

>> Yeah. It opens it up. Exactly. It opens it up to something else. And the structures that I'm referencing are very strong concrete things. And this is a very large tapestry -- it's four metres by two, four by 270 or something. It's very mural-like. And this is a view from the Farnsworth house looking outside. And I found this image it's a very iconic image from the Farnsworth house, and it has this big tree outside. And I called it the weather because for me, this idea of the division of space and modernism like the outside and the inside erasing, you also have this with the five point systems of Le Corbusier, the windows. And the use of stall of steel from [inaudible] enabled us to have giant windows like you've see in the Neue Nationalgalerie in Berlin. It's a new structural thing. But it's a very uncanny thing because in my experience, the more that humans opened ourselves up to space and modernism the more we realize how

unnatural we are. So I collaged this pattern which is again from Roman tiles of flowers blooming into the tree. But the picture itself is probably from late fall or you know October, November. So you have this blooming happening totally outside of the season. And Anne-Marie, you wrote such great stuff about the history of the Farnsworth House in your essay in my catalogue -- the relationship between Mies van der Rohe and Edith Farnsworth.

>> Yes. So the house got designed for Edith Farnsworth was a doctor working in Chicago, and the house is built a little bit outside of Chicago, in Illinois. And she asked Mies van der Rohe to design a house that, she was single, so no children she was living alone and she wanted a modernist house something avant-garde. And when she got the house, she realized that because it's a glass house, it's completely open to the outside. And she felt as if it was a vitrine. So she felt staged in her own house. And she had a hard time living in the house thinking that, feeling, experiencing that she couldn't really do how she wanted in the house not even placed anything in the space without being concerned about how it looks from outside. And so she said that it's supposed to be liberating, those spaces because they're open and there's not lots of walls, and so you can circulate very easily. But at the same time it's very constraining how you can behave in those spaces. And so she had a real hard time living in the space at the end. And they argued about the space a lot after, about the house. So that's really I think as a conclusion to the exhibition showing your ideas around modernism, it shows how that blurring of interior and exterior spaces, and also private and public spaces. You're including all of your works a narrative about pop icons, or social media, or elements like that where that blurring of what's private and what's public but gets shared. And what's just for oneself is getting more and more difficult. The line is getting more and more difficult to fix. And this is something that I find that you, that your work addresses through all sorts of ways through the materiality of the work, through the imagery of the architecture and the research that you've that you address but also through your allusion to pop icons and popular culture in social media.

>> Yeah. Thank you.

>> So that's the final work in the exhibition, that ends the tour, the video tour of the space [chuckle].

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>> Yeah. There's the photo documentation.

>> The colours are more accurate actually.

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>> It's really a lot about who is watching, the point of view, where's the point of view. Is it from the outside? Is it from the inside?

>> Yeah, exactly. And a couple of self-portraits again, the newest self-portraits in the exhibition.

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>> So we did good. We did exactly one hour which means there's lots of time for questions. If people have questions.

>> Yes. Thank you both. First, I wanted to thank you for that. It's such a wealth of really compelling, exciting stories that are built into this work, and that kind of come out of them and [inaudible] you both went through in developing the projects.

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