

ENTRE NOUS

4.7. – 23.8.2025

Laura Veenemans
with works of Ise Schwartz from the art collection of
the City of Biel

With “entre nous”, artist Laura Veenemans enters into dialogue with works by Ise Schwartz from the City of Biel collection. This encounter between two artistic practices, separated by a generation, brings together a shared sensibility for image fragments, recurring patterns and notions of in-betweenness.

While delving into the collection, Laura Veenemans came across the works of Ise Schwartz – born in Germany in 1942 and based in Biel for several decades. What particularly caught her attention were the formal and abstract qualities of Schwartz's work – an aesthetic marked by the use of fragments, organic motifs (flowers, plants, animals), and geometric forms that, through repetition or symmetry, verge on a structuralist study of the motif.

The three prints of Ise Schwartz chosen by Veenemans reflect a pictorial experimentation that evokes at once a baroque sensibility, a stylistic analysis of wallpaper, and a fragmented aesthetic reminiscent of digital collage. A play of transparency and layering generates depth, transforming these prints into composite assemblages where the decorative and the repetitive form images in themselves. It is precisely this relationship to motif and the image as fragment that echoes Veenemans' own work. In her practice, Veenemans explores signs, symbols, and structures that frame visual perception, as well as the absurdities of daily life, drawing from digital references and popular culture.

Fascinated by the limits of the image and what overflows from it, the artist has produced, for this invitation, a new series of three works that subtly resonate with Schwartz's. The use of textile in these new pieces is not incidental: unlike painting, fabric requires a folding or tucking back behind the canvas – a gesture that encloses the image. Textile thus becomes an artistic reflection on margins and contours.

From the very first discussions with Veenemans around the invitation to work with the collection, the text “Inside the White Cube: Notes on the Gallery Space” (1976) by Brian O'Doherty served as a focal point for thinking about space in both its theoretical and physical dimensions. This essay traces the evolution of exhibition displays since the 19th century, when densely packed salons left little room for empty walls – thereby heightening the frame as the image's boundary. Over the 20th century, the wall gradually took up more space, eventually culminating in the iconic white wall, on which the artwork inserts itself into a kind of artistic continuum.

Where the modern white wall seeks to disappear in favour of the artwork, Veenemans – in her piece *Stretch the limit* – interrogates this “in-betweenness”: she underscores the space our minds intuitively fill – the distance between two walls, the gap of a doorway. The choice of the dachshund, a dog with a long body, embodies this idea with humour and sensitivity: by splitting the image in two, she digs into the graphic and narrative potential of fragmentation.

Two other pieces by Veenemans further explore the notion of connection, in both symbolic and social terms. In *LVL1* and *LVL2*, gestures such as the downward “handshake” and the upward “check” highlight the micro-gestures of everyday life and their layered meanings, oscillating between professional formality and casual intimacy. In a single gesture, closeness, friendship, or distance can be conveyed.

The exhibition space is, indeed, a social and relational site – a place where not only people meet and gather, but where artworks greet one another, observe, and respond. “entre nous” thus does not stage separation, but rather reveals the quiet rituals of connection. Veenemans addresses these gestures like fragments seeking the other – an invitation to enter into dialogue.