

Pleasures of the flesh?

EN | It was only a matter of time before E² – the collective which, for more than two years now, has been laying bare the underground activities of an artistic scene not too often seen in broad daylight – would enter the Abattoir of Anderlecht. In the fitting setting of the Abattoir's Cellars, the nomadic platform is now hosting a two-week multidisciplinary festival focusing on cold cuts, offal, viscera, and whatever kind of flesh may tickle your imagination. We dissected the visions of three of the artists from Chairs Fraîches' vast programme. Dig in!

KURT SNOECK - PHOTOS: GAUTIER HODDA



Lucile Gautier
Going bananas

Well, that's what you get from passionate DIYers: too pig-headed to listen. As evidenced by Lucile Gautier, one of the residents of the Chairs Fraîches festival: "It's just that drawing haemoglobins and viscera isn't really my thing. Hence the absurd twist to the theme of the abattoir. There is no hidden meaning or anything like that. I'm not a vegetarian, and I don't have some kind of sexual fixation with bananas... [Laughs] Although I suppose my dietary habits might seem curious." Said bananas came tumbling out of the hypothesis that lies at the foundation of her contribution to the festival: what if there are no more animals, only bananas? After an amusing suspension of disbelief, you enter a topsy-turvy world, in which Lucile Gautier takes the leap from her intricate 2D compositions on paper to 3D volumes. "Recently I have been working on icons and religious structures, represented by totem-like creations, a recurrent motif in my drawings. This is the first time that I will transform them into 3D volumes. The result should be a kind of miniature temple, a mausoleum for bananas. An embroidered structure into which you can pop your head and see a kind of sanctuary where bananas are being offered up and worshipped. If the only thing people can eat is bananas, somebody has to stand up for their rights!"



Bryan Beast
Mincing meat

"Meat is an interesting substance to draw. Think of it as a kind of nude painting, only with less skin," laughs Bryan Beast. Well, E²'s graphic prop and stay – check the flyers and website – can feast his eyes on Chairs Fraîches. He himself is presenting his stunning work in the exhibition and in the magnificent edition linked to it, and along with D-Phaz he is giving people the opportunity to crawl (virtually) into the head of a pig. "Chairs Fraîches is a way for us to register our presence in the city, just like the Abattoir, which is one of the last in Europe to be in the heart of the city, attempts to do. With what are admittedly powerful images, which also move people. That is what appeals to me so much about art: that you can deal with topics that are otherwise difficult to tackle. For me, the abattoir primarily conjures memories. When I was small, we used to visit an abattoir near where we lived. I especially remember the machines and industrial noises. It is a strange place, where there shouldn't really be any living beings. Or they don't stay alive for very long anyway. Something actually happens here, and I don't mean growing tomatoes. Via a guided tour around the Abattoir, we aim to stimulate reflection and debate. We don't want to spoon-feed people an answer, but asking questions is always healthy."



San Deuil
Artishock

"You can dye your hair, or shave it off, it will always grow back. Tattoos are a more radical way of marking yourself," says San Deuil, a drawing artist and lithographer turned incredible tattoo artist. "To me it is mostly a question of identity, the expressive appropriation of your own body. My drawings and tattoos nurture one another constantly." During Chairs Fraîches, San Deuil is displaying both of these aspects. First in a series of tattooed pig feet sculptures, which she made seven years ago. "These pig trotters are the surface that you can practice on and learn to tune your machine. But they are also beautiful objects, and they elicit extreme reactions: people are either fascinated or disgusted." The engraving with which she is taking part in the exhibition leaves its mark right under your skin, and shows a god mourning his children. "This invitation made me look into the history of the slaughterhouse. In the beginning people would just kill animals in the street. You could see and smell the animal that you were going to eat. At one point, they centralised everything in a building. Four walls for killing animals out of view of the general public. For hygienic purposes, no doubt, but that way people also lost their connection with nature. And with the question of what it means to slaughter and kill."

NL | E², het nomadische platform dat al zo'n twee jaar parels uit de visuele en muzikale ondergrond opdelt, trekt naar het Abattoir van Anderlecht. In de kelders daar zoomt het met een multidisciplinair festival twee weken lang in op vlees van de sappigste soort.

FR | E², la plateforme nomade qui exhume, depuis plus de deux ans, les perles de l'underground visuel et musical, s'installe dans les caves des abattoirs d'Anderlecht pendant deux semaines avec un festival multidisciplinaire riche en chair juteuse.

CHAIRS FRAÎCHES
4-13/16, Cellars of the Abattoir, gwim+zung