

There are times when you need to take a look twice. The corner of your eye detects something unusual and behold! You look back.

That was the feeling I got when I first saw the French artist Baptiste Debombourg's exhibitions. Perhaps it was because, among other reasons, he is a trompe l'oeil expert, that visual deceit or magic art uses sometimes. If we stay on the surface, he could seem to be an artist whose main purpose could be to cause some kind of effect, mainly amusement, upon the layperson. However, if we pay attention to the way in which he produces his works, we can see that more profound motivations underlie. Since his beginning in 2007, when he was making large format murals, drawn with staples on the walls of art galleries, he has always tried and investigated the possibilities of materials. In these works he also portrays classical figures like Icarus, giving them an absolutely contemporary dimension. It was then that he started using the concept of expanded painting on the architectural space.

He is now going through a stage at which he passionately enjoys the mutation of elements, or at least that is what it seems. For instance, he works with concepts such as the solidification of light and water, what results in spaces apparently flooded with cracked glass. This is how he has collaborated with the Parisian brand Maison Martin Margiela in one of their luxurious shops in Miami Beach. The presentation of his exhibition titled *Stalker*, last December, is not accident. Maison Martin Margiela matches the artist's inauguration with the launching of their new jewelry collection *Crystalactite*, a project that Maison and Atelier Swarovski have teamed up for. On the other hand, such an event took part at the same time as Art Basel, one of the most internationally influential fairs of contemporary art.

In spite of being surrounded by such luxuries, Baptiste is not an egotistical artistic. He simply looks for happiness by materializing his dreams, and above all, making sure that those who see his works feel curious about them. Only if this happens he can feel he has done a good job. The moment when they encounter people is the most gratifying one, since the process of creation is a source of stress for him. He embarks himself on risky projects using fragile materials that are difficult to handle with common tools. The backstage of an exhibition like *Stalker* entails a hard setting up process of only a few days. And though handled by a specialized team, most artists cannot help thinking 'Will I make it in time?' always afraid that something might go wrong at the last minute.

But this fear does not leave us petrified, but makes us alert and intuitively aware of every step, instead. And talking about petrifying, it looks like time has stopped inside Maison's shop, and the flooding has crystallized. As a result, an atmosphere emerges that is close to certain science-fiction scenes. It could even evoke a reinterpretation of what Krypton, Superman's home planet, would look like, and made of ice and rocks. Perhaps, only since it is all mere speculation.

This collaboration project with Maison Martin Margiela is not the first, nor certainly the last one Baptiste accepts, and neither it is the first, nor the last collaboration between an artist and a clothes and accessories brand. Yayoi Kusama, the octogenarian Japanese artist, teamed up with the prestigious brand Louis Vuitton, invading their shops and shops windows with her well-known spots. And among many other artists, the work by Pamen Pereira, Spanish, in collaboration with Hermès, is also a good sample of the infinite flexibility of art. Her whirled winds of swallows have travelled from Barcelona to Taiwan, Connecticut, Hong Kong, China...

Remember, art works are not meant to be look at just one or twice, but as much as you please.