

**Frédérique Lucien**  
***Omphalos***

28 February – 20 April 2013  
opening: Thursday 28 February, 6 - 8:30 pm

Galerie Jean Fournier is pleased to be presenting recent works by Frédérique Lucien in her new exhibition *Omphalos*.

On entering we are welcomed by her *Morceau choisi* group, wall works of meticulously handled white plaster in which, little by little, we discern a navel, set in a circle and conjuring up, of course, the myth of the *omphalos*. According to the Greeks of old Zeus released two eagles at the eastern and western boundaries of the world, then caused the *omphalos*, a rounded stone, to fall at the point where they met in flight, thus marking the centre – the "navel" – of the world. Set almost at the centre of the human body, the navel is thus endowed with a powerful significance. *Morceau choisi* remains marked by an anonymity far from easy to penetrate: its very presentation shrouds it in mystery, in a strange ambience reminiscent of works like the artist's *Ligne muette* (porcelain, 2010). In their method these pieces involve the precise duplication of the initial subject. In its treatment this group is first and foremost a form of drawing.

Frédérique Lucien's concern with ambiguity is even more pronounced in *Nombriil* (Navel), the ensemble of charcoal drawings spread over the gallery's longest wall. The salient whiteness of the wall and the sheets of paper gradually yields up the drawings. In working her way through this part of the body, the artist offers a list of infinite variations in which the relationship with human scale is an ongoing presence. She has opted for a sheet of paper close in size to the pelvis of an average person, but while the approach might be seen as resembling that of a scientist, "this exact notation of the real morphs into a abstract version of line."<sup>1</sup> And so, in the works making up *Nombriil*, Lucien seems to have forgotten the initial subject in order to concentrate on line and stroke. Her fondness for the body reappears notably in the series *Anonyme* (2010-2012), even if this time the result leads us elsewhere by establishing a link with her preferred themes: the vegetal and mineral world, landscape and speculation about drawing. And out of these drawings of navels spring real Chinese landscapes, Japanese-inflected mountains, fish and, sometimes, a scattering of pebbles.

Advancing through an atmosphere of near-pristine whiteness, we find ourselves beneath the skylight, surrounded by large-format drawings using coloured cut-outs and titled *Feuille*. Here line, contour and curve are handled differently. The oppositions between solid and void, between opacity and transparency, are an extension of the earlier approaches, with the coloured cut-outs of these vegetal shapes following a regular, repetitive, geometrical system that varies from one drawing to another: an alignment of circles with a dot in the centre, maybe, or a grid made up of diamond shapes. These cut-outs stand out all the more clearly in that they suggest a different movement: the regular rhythm of the ground contrasts with a random undulation, geometrical precision with an elusive shimmering, the illusory discreetness of the gridding with an assertively coloured surface.

This exhibition offers recent pieces by Frédérique Lucien as a logical extension of what has gone before: works which, shot through with ambiguity, might generate a degree of uncertainty, in fact reveal – but only gradually – their multiple meanings, and so transcend the initial subject. That the artist's conjecturing about drawing assumes these different forms attests to an unceasing observation of the real world.

**The catalogue for this exhibition includes a text by Pierre Giquel. It is published by Editions Lienart and Galerie Jean Fournier.**

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<sup>1</sup> Marion Daniel, in *Introspectives* (Paris: Lienart, 2011), p.14