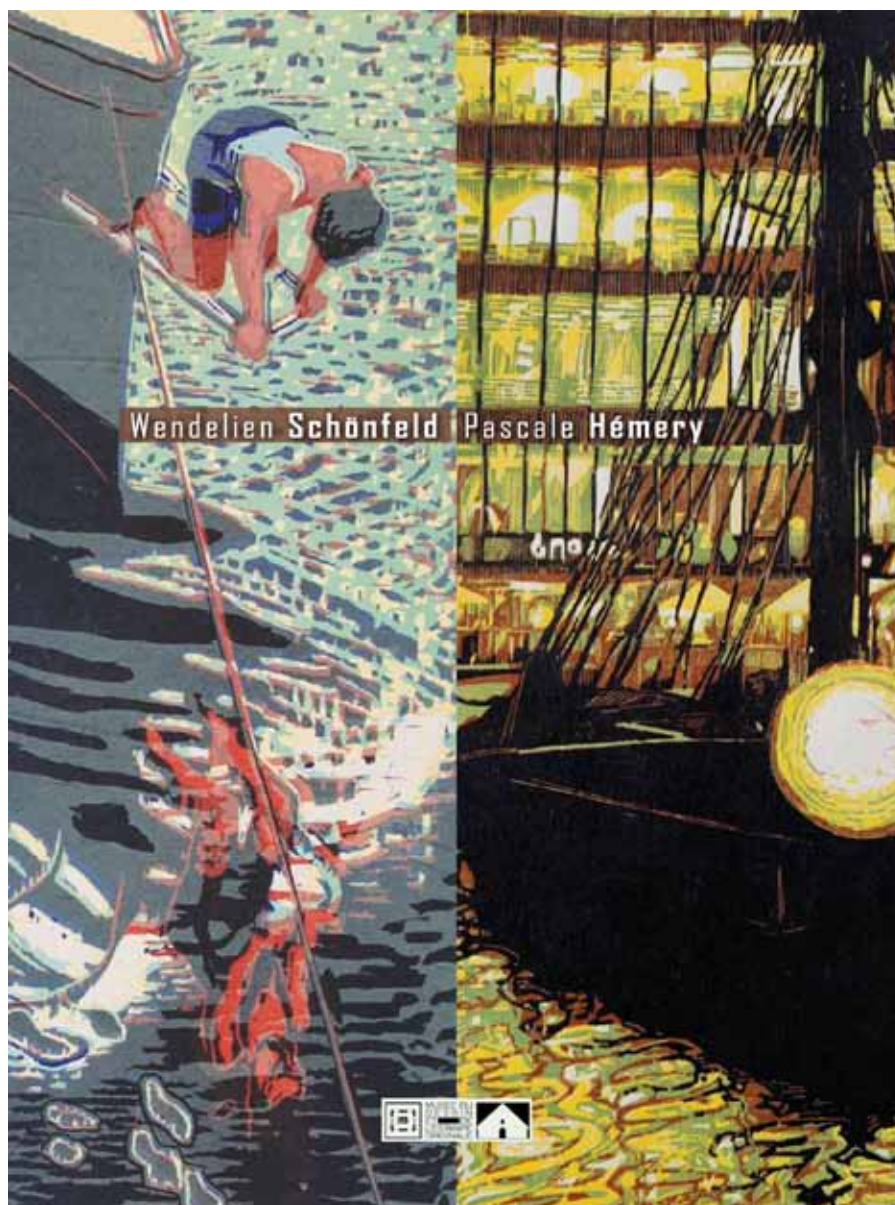


PRESS RELEASE



MEANDERING PATHS

PARIS - AMSTERDAM

Wendelien Schönfeld - Pascale Hémery

April 7 - September 16, 2018

Musée du Dessin et de l'estampe originale - GRAVELINES



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TWO SIMILAR YET DISTINCT APPROACHES

Although there are real affinities between them, it is always delicate to mention in the same text the works of two artists temporarily brought together on the occasion of an exhibition, the danger being to give too large an importance to these affinities to the detriment of what makes them different. Yet, in this case, between the works of Wendelien Schönfeld and Pascale Hémery, there are indeed a number of immediately obvious common elements. Besides their common taste for the quite specific woodcut technique, evidence of this can also be found on the one hand in their wholehearted acceptance of representational art, and even a real faithfulness to the chosen subjects (which can sometimes be similar), including in many of their details, which restricts the role devoted to dreaming and imagination ; on the other hand in the fact that both these artists readily favour open views which leave very few empty spaces, as can be seen in W. Schönfeld's prints entitled *Nassauplein vers l'ouest* (*Nassauplein West side*) and *Atelier avec lumière* (*Studio with light*) or, more still, in those by Pascale Hémery representing cities, Udaipur in Rajahstan, or New York. So that these works can sometimes be akin to actual "reports" on some site or other, as illustrated by the ten prints that W. Schönfeld devoted to Hotel Turgot (Custodia Foundation) in Paris, or some very detailed views of Marseille by P. Hémery. And it could be said that contrary to a great many contemporary works, purely plastic "demonstration" never prevails overwhelmingly over close attention to the subject, whether it be a place – building or landscape – or a scene. Such a first approach is actually quite superficial and even misleading as it does not take enough into account the imaginative aspect of these works, which can first be seen in a very free use of colours. It is through the sheer strength or subtlety of each one of them or their association that imagination comes into play and transfigures the studied reality or reinvents it if need be. In this respect, some of the series achieved by both artists are enlightening : when P. Hémery goes again several times over the linocut engraving showing the Gravelines channel, varying colours each time, we are given to understand that her research is in no way documentary and simply endeavours to reach a harmony, self-sufficient or may be able to recreate as accurately as possible the impression or the memory left by the sight of this melancholy place, once celebrated by Seurat.



P. Hémery - *View from a window in Manhattan*, 2016
colour linocut



W. Schönfeld - *Nassauplein North side*, 2004, colour woodcut



P. Hémary - *The Gravelines channel - série Verdaccio III*
 colour linocut and woodcut - Coll. Musée de Gravelines



P. Hémary - *The Gravelines channel - série Verdaccio I*
 colour linocut and woodcut - Coll. Musée de Gravelines

The same can be said about the series of gouache representations of the same *Etang (Pond)* by W. Schönfeld, where the subject is much less important than the chromatic rendering fragmented around blues and greens to conjure up an impression of open air and coolness. In either case, the value of the subject seemingly matters less than the opportunity it provides for the artist to try out thoroughly all the resources of a given technique, to test its qualities and tackle its limits (it is obvious that woodcut prints have difficulty in rendering the subtle character of some light effects).



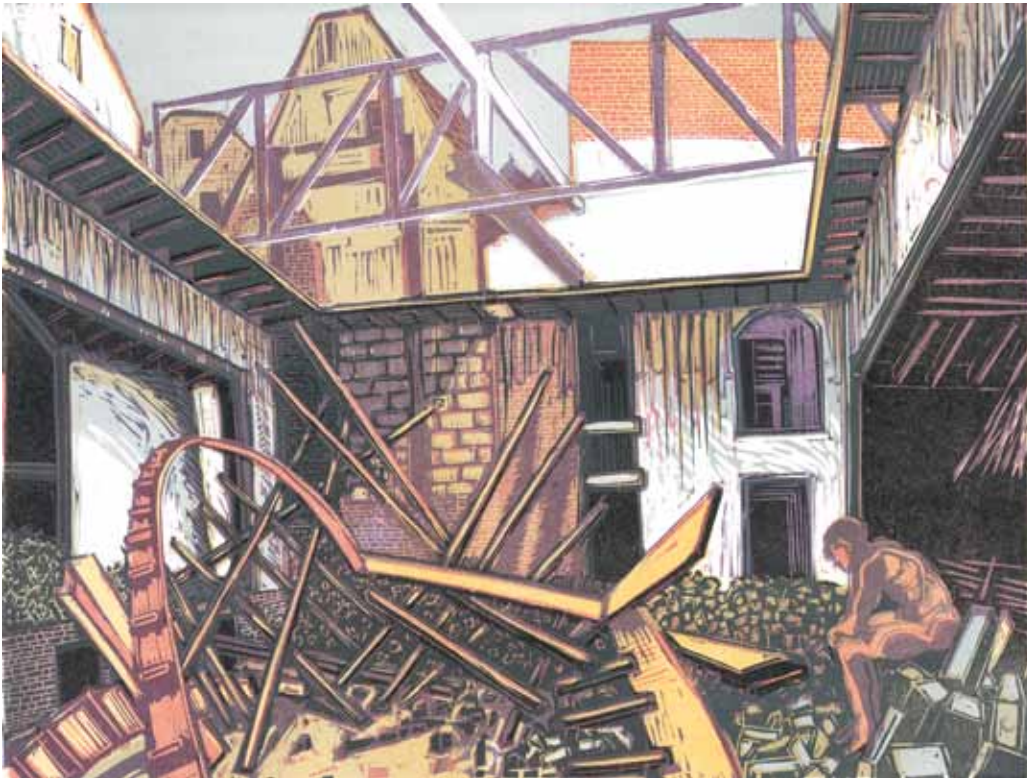
P. Hémary - *St-Katharine docks in the City, London, 2014*
 lithograph adorned with tempera



P. Hémary - *St-katharine docks in the City, London, 2012*
 lead pencil drawing

Yet again, this judgement must be qualified , as the chosen subject may have or acquire a depth that the many techniques or points of view chosen by the artist bring to light and question ; we can no longer speak of experimentations, and thus the reworkings of the subject only mean that this depth we perceive or glimpse escapes immediate perception and requires different approaches. The best example of this is undoubtedly the series by P. Hémary entitled *St-Katharine docks in the City, London*, dating from the years 2012-2014 : Two old barges moored side by side, seen from the front, sailless masts and rigging, with all the lit windows of an office building in the background, the artist draws this strange subject first in black lead, then she reworks it in colour woodcut, then again in lithographs adorned with tempera, and gives it a hypnotic character by lighting at the bow of each of these boats first two, then more narrowly centered, only one enormous lighted beacon which did not appear in the previous drawings and the use of which one fails to see. There we can understand, from a real subject which could be commonplace, the extent of the work achieved to convey to us what makes it a very striking and mysterious picture, and which we undoubtedly had only a vague sense of at first.

In a rather similar way – though all the same different in that the subject is observed from different standpoints, and not from a single one as in the "*St-Katharine docks in the City, London*" series – the collection of drawings and prints created by W. Schönfeld in 1997, *Degradation, St Jakobstraat*, where something elusive, a strong enough composition to withstand the still dominant idea of destruction, creates a feeling of "disturbing strangeness" which the artist then seems to dispel by adding to the representation the meditative figure of Job or turning into a living place, with chairs, lamp, a fully laid table and climbing plants what had previously only been seen as decaying abandoned industrial wasteland. Here, it would be the very accuracy of the first drawings, their raw objectivity, which would lead to such a quasinarative reworking, such a salvage whose dreamlike character we can guess.



W. Schönfeld
Job, 1998
colour woodcut

These drawings by W. Schönfeld also provide evidence of a taste, shared by P. Hémery which obviously calls to mind Piranesi for the proliferation and complication of long straight and curved lines intended to thwart perspective with an only vanishing point and consequently to alter our usual perception of space. Evidence of this can be found in *the staircase* of her Hotel Turgot series we mentioned earlier, as well as the charcoal drawings and lithographs by P. Hémery, *Le Banian d'Udaipur* and *Le Trafic* which belong to the Indian suite.



W. Schönfeld - Waste St Jacob street, 1998, lead pencil drawing



W. Schönfeld - Waste II, 1998, colour woodcut

What is bravely dealt with in these works is also the endless accumulation of details which match more or less well, the disorder the sight of any remote cranny of the civilized world, away from nature, particularly that of a large city, displays for all to see. It seems that both artists have agreed « not to sort anything out » and for instance their visions of New York taken from the top of a building are uncannily close to each other.



W. Schönfeld - Hôtel Turgot, The Staircase, 2008, colour woodcut

Here again, the fundamental need to create a harmony, to tidy up things, so to say, and thus to bring to light the poetry, both obvious and secret, of those places, rests on the right choice of the chosen point of view, on the distribution of lights and shades – the various whites, greys and blacks in the charcoal and wash drawings – and a very liberal use of colours, as for instance in the series of linocuts crafted by P. Hémary under the *From the Heights*, New York title or in a curious woodcarving print by W. Schönfeld which also shows New York, *Jardin du toit* (*The roof garden*), where, instead of plants there only appear crooked old black chimneys.



P. Hémary - From the Heights I, New York, 2016, colour linocut



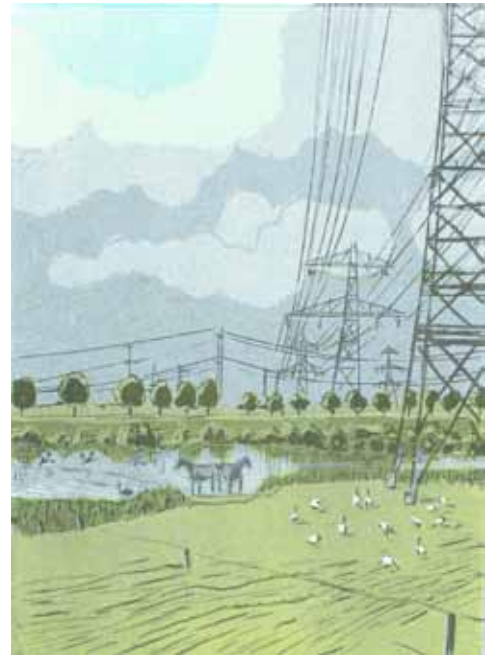
P. Hémary - Udaipur pour la Suite indienne, 2014
charcoal on yellow-stained paper



W. Schönfeld - Roof garden, 1996, colour woodcut

Two artists who are keen on elaborate and intricate subjects, and if need be take pleasure in making them still more intricate, particularly in their woodcuts ; so we could speculate about a possible link between this technique both have been using for a long time, and this type of subject. It is obvious that woodcut cannot achieve in representations of the world the delicacy allowed by line engraving or etching or lithography, and that it consequently asks for both a simpler and rougher language, more "naturally" expressive. Is this why using it seems to induce a preference for dense subjects, with bold lines, and pictures that *describe* shapes precisely rather than other more dreamlike ones ? And would it be too far-fetched to detect in woodcarving, as we said before, some difficulty in suggesting subtle light effects or simply void space, emptiness, because it requires to cut out each stroke, not without a kind of stiffness ?

If W. Schönfeld deals with this question head-on in several of her engraved landscapes (*Holendrecht, Val de Vecht, Ankummerdijk...*), we can note that their cloud-dotted skies take on an imaginary, sometimes even dramatized character, as in *Overijssel* for instance, which goes against the reality of what is pictured below them, a building, powerlines, trees and fields like in the print entitled *A la ferme (Farmyard)* and the interest of what can be seen as a rather commonplace picture at first sight proceeds from that opposition. Elsewhere, on a small 2014 greetings card, interwoven clouds compose a nearly abstract work. As for her, P. Hémerly mostly leaves little room for the sky in her works, but when it is very prominent, as in the linocuts we mentioned earlier showing *Le chenal de Gravelines (The Gravelines channel)*, the clouds also take on an unreal aspect, due to their ponderous character, and play a nearly decorative role which might overshadow the presence of the sky ; this can also be seen in *La maison du sauvetage (The lifeboat house)*, another print made in Gravelines. On the other hand, what increasingly seems to catch P. Hémerly's attention in her charcoal drawings and paintings – and this leads us to believe that she is, in so doing, looking for a way which would ideally enable her to make up for the relative lack of plasticity of raised engraving – is precisely the question of light. In the *Marseille, vue du Panier* series, between the first lead pencil drawing and the charcoal drawing, a wide white area strangely appears on one of the floors of the building on the right, instead of the windows, and similarly a kind of large white screen (which matches the Alcazar building location) can be seen right at the end of the Rue Colbert's row of houses.



W. Schönfeld - Val of Vecht, 2006, colour woodcut



P. Hémerly - Gravelines, The lifeboat house, 2007
colour linocut, Coll. Musée de Gravelines

It is rather obvious that the purpose of both of these zones is to enliven the composition by creating a light effect which conveys the dazzling brightness of a very sunny day simply by the means of the deep contrast between the blacks and the white – which moreover prepares the engraving work ; the same "process" can be found again more blatantly in a recent charcoal view of Naples in which the centre part is taken up by the large white surface of a blank wall. But to this can be added another typical trait of the artist : a way to surprise by introducing the unexpected in the a priori faithful rendition of a place : thus here this large blinding white blank space, as elsewhere the use of a limited range of neighbouring colours, inducing an unreal effect (as seen in the *Washington Heights* woodcut) or else in the nearly excessive addition of straight lines, or the importance suddenly lent to what was at first a mere detail (like the large bright lights of the boats in *St-Katharine Docks in the City, London*) or again in previous works like *Ocre, salon de coiffure* (*Ochre, hairdresser's salon*), the way all the lines seem to topple and bow as we could imagine them seen in a slightly concave mirror. All this conspires to distinguish the picture from a simple description, which remains its source of inspiration, and endows it with a dreamlike dimension, without giving it too much importance, without anything which might have delighted the Surrealists.



P. Hémerly
Saint-Honoré Market, Paris
 2013,
 lithograph adorned
 with tempera



W. Schönfeld
Swimmers
 2011, colour woodcut

It is important to end this text by drawing attention to the differences between those two artists, in particular this one, factual yet full of importance : the interest W. Schönfeld takes in figures, which appear in most of her works, as for instance in all the interior scenes of Hotel Turgot except for the staircase (yet where still appears the bust of Frits Lugt !), evidence of this can also be seen in the small wooden figures she carves and paints, while figures can only rarely be seen in recent works by P. Hémerly : here in the present exhibition, a sole stroller lost on one of those Parisian paths which *mènent à la rue de Rome*. What we fail to notice at first, but which surprises afterwards, is the fact that not one pedestrian is walking neither the streets of Marseille, nor the London wharves, no worker is at work near the blast furnaces, this absence is all the more surprising as various figures appear in the artist's sketchbooks and the illustrations she gave in 2009 for Klaus Mann's story entitled *Génération perdue* (*Lost generation*)¹. So it seems that P. Hémerly tries to strip from her work any narrative character to focus on the strict study of shapes in space and of light, as opposed to W. Schönfeld who likes to conjure up daily life scenes as in her prints showing bathers, work sessions in the studio, some lone figures in melancholy poses, or others which were given titles evocative of characters celebrated by old school paintings, such as Danae, Narcissus or Job and, in so doing, evokes stories. If these two artists thus follow markedly different paths, these are not mutually exclusive, they are intersecting paths : one is more dreamy and more intent on catching freely the bliss or the poetry of a moment, the fleeting beauty of reflections on the water or the intensity of an encounter, the other is more keen on what is construction, architecture and consequently more concerned with formal aspects, with a more structured approach, but both keep a close link with reality, nonetheless aiming at quietly revealing the possibilities of imagination. We should therefore be glad that the present exhibition, by bringing them together, by bringing to the fore both what is similar and what sets their approaches apart, reveals what the figurative arts can still offer today.

Alain Madeleine-Perdrillat
February 2018

1- Klaus Mann, *Génération perdue*, Nolay, dans la Nièvre, édition du Chemin de fer, 2009

BIOGRAPHY OF WENDELIEN SCHÖNFELD

Born in La Haye in 1950

1972 à 1977

Studies at the Rijksacademie van Beeldende Kunsten, Amsterdam

1977

Winner of the Titia Buning – Brongers Prize.

Wendelien Schönfeld lives and works in Amsterdam.

Uses colour xylography on location, painting, and sculpture on polychrome wood.

Draws her inspiration from her environment from studies from life.

Regularly carries out portraits on commission, notably from members of cultural institutions.

2004

Carries out prints of six museum directors' studies at the request of the Kunstschrift Review.

2010

Exhibits the woodcuts and sketches of Hôtel Turgot at the Custodia Foundation.

2012

Exhibition at the Rembrandthuis, Amsterdam.

2017

Winner of the prestigious Mario Avati Prize for prints Académie des Beaux-Arts.

2018

Is currently preparing her exhibition at the Palais de l'Institut de France.

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(*Meandering Paths Paris - Amsterdam*) exhibition catalogue

Musée du dessin et de l'estampe originale de Gravelines

2018

Survey of the graphic arts exhibition, exhibition catalogue

Rembrandthuis, Amsterdam, 2012

Wal van der G.

Wendelien Schönfeld Houtsneden Woodcuts

exhibition catalogue, Hercules Segers

Foundation, Amsterdam, Éditions De Weideblik,

Varik, 2012

Wendelien Schönfeld

Hotel Turgot, woodcuts and prints

exhibition catalogue, Éditions De Weideblik, Varik, 2010

Wal van der G.

Studies, six prints and six interviews

Kunstschrift, Amsterdam, 2004

Schönfeld W.

Moerbeek T., Toine Moerbeek, Wendelien

Schönfeld, Paul Gorter, Bert Osinga, Kris Spinhoven,

Joanna Quispel, Six painters, part 2, Centraal museum,

Utrecht, Fondation Kalamity, Dokkum, 2004

Schönfeld W.

Moerbeek T., Toine Moerbeek, Wendelien

Schönfeld, Paul Gorter, Bert Osinga, Kris Spinhoven,

Joanna Quispel, Six painters, Centraal museum,

Utrecht, 1998

BIOGRAPHY OF PASCALE HÉMERY

Born in Paris in 1965

The art of Pascale Hémery transfigures the urban landscape in her charcoal drawings and paintings. In her engravings, she creates very large colour works on wood, using her own distinctive technique. Philippe Garnier writes about her :

"Pascale Hémery draws the hidden side of big cities. She shows them to us from the backyard or the terrace side with wide views from above as though she were standing at the top of the highest building. She composes a fragment of a silent city with a tangle of lines which gives us a foreboding of imminent chaos. With her, daydreaming retains a strong sharpness of outlines. With charcoal and sometimes chalk, she succeeds in breathing life into the surface of a section of a building's wall, she makes the metallic network of railway lines vibrate, she gives back a share of softness and delicacy to urban behemoths She gives these concrete and stone mazes the sensibility of a sleeping body".

1989-1994

Student of Vincent Bioulès and Jean-Michel Albérola at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Paris

1994

Diploma from the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Paris

1995

Artist in residence at the Centre Frans Masereel in Belgium

1998

Scholarship from the Casa de Velazquez of Madrid

2001

Winner of the J. J. J. Rigal prize

2002

Scholarship from the Institut de France, Fondation Dufresne de Chars

2003

Winner of the Pierre Cardin prize of the Académie des Beaux- Arts, Institut de France

2006-2007

Retrospective of prints and lithographs at the Centre Culturel de l'Arsenal of Maubeuge and the Musée du dessin et de l'estampe originale of Gravelines

2008

Member of the Société des Peintres-graveurs français

2015

Conférence at the Collège de France

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF PASCALE HÉMERY

Caudron V., Madeleine-Perdrillat A.

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(*Meandering paths Paris – Amsterdam*), exhibition catalogue,
Musée du dessin et de l'estampe originale of Gravelines, 2018

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(*Light, a vibration in the painter's eye*) in *Lumière, lumières,*
ouvrage, Collège de France, Éditions Odile Jacob, Paris, 2016

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Verdigos, Review of the Ecole Supérieure d'Arts Appliqués
l'ESAAB, Paris, 2015

Duwa J.

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Pont-l'Évêque, 2014

Madeleine-Perdrillat A.

La ville Aléatoire (The random city),
exhibition catalogue, Médiathèque Jean Jaurès, Nevers, 2014

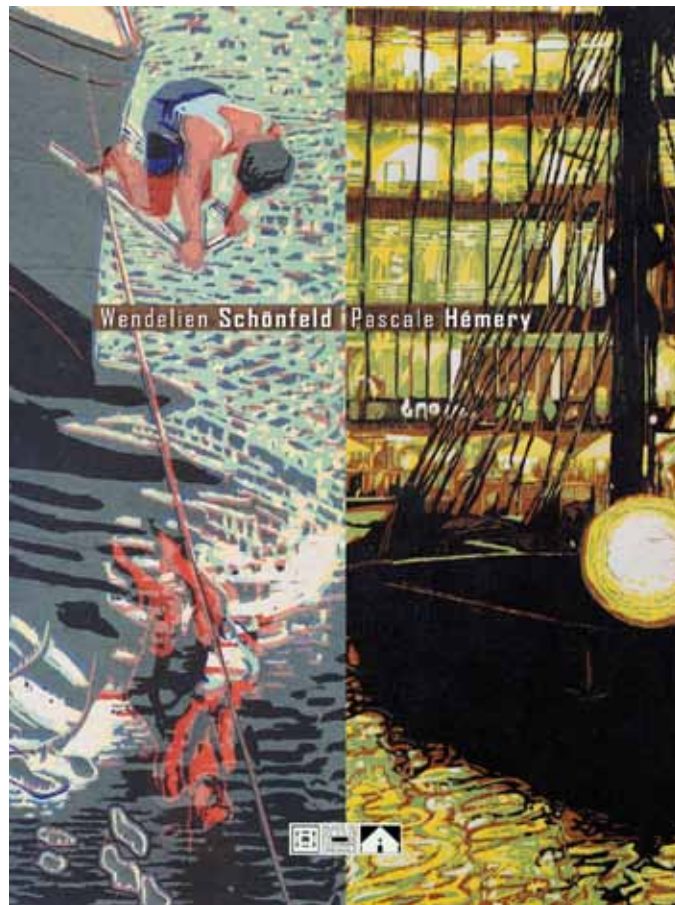
Architecture du Futur

(*Architecture of the future*), exhibition
catalogue, Médiathèque Jean Jaurès. Nevers, 2013

Edwards M.

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(*Pascale Hémery, Prints and Lithographs*),
exhibition catalogue, Association Malbodium Museum,
Maubeuge, 2006

CATALOG



The catalog of the exhibition is on sale at the museum shop.
The catalog is bilingual French English.

Meandering paths - Paris-Amsterdam, Wendelien Schönfeld - Pascale Hémerly

authors :

Alain Madeleine-Perdrillat, Historien de l'art

Virginie Caudron, Directrice du Musée du Dessin et de l'estampe originale

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IMAGES CREDITS



Wendelien Schönfeld
Narcissus, 2000
colour woodcut
66 x 52 cm
Coll. Musée
de Gravelines



Wendelien Schönfeld
Saint-Christopher, 2000
colour woodcut
51 x 51 cm
Coll. musée
de Gravelines



Wendelien Schönfeld
Hôtel Turgot,
The Library, 2008
colour woodcut
37 x 50 cm



Wendelien Schönfeld
Holendrecht, 2005
colour woodcut
38 x 50 cm



Wendelien Schönfeld
Job, 1998
colour woodcut
37 x 44 cm



Wendelien Schönfeld
Dijksgracht, 2011
colour woodcut
37 x 50 cm



Wendelien Schönfeld
Serenade
2011
colour woodcut
26 x 37 cm



Wendelien Schönfeld
Escalier vers le paradis
2016
Stairway to heaven
37 x 38 cm



Beach II
2017
colour woodcut
27 x 34 cm

IMAGES CREDITS



Pascale Hémary
Union Square, New York, 2014
colour woodcut
140 x 100 cm



Pascale Hémary
From the Heights I, New York
2016, colour linocut
65 x 50 cm



Pascale Hémary
St-Katharine docks in the City, London
2014, colour woodcut
100 x 70 cm
Coll. Musée de Gravelines



Pascale Hémary
View from a window in Manhattan
2016, colour linocut
66 x 51 cm



Pascale Hémary
Union Square, New York, Série noire # 1, 2016
white chalk on black paper
65 x 50 cm



Pascale Hémary
From the Heights, New York, Série noire # 2-2, New York
2016, crayon on black paper
65 x 50 cm



Pascale Hémary
Le Banian d'Udaipur
2014, colour woodcut
70 x 90 cm



Pascale Hémary
Washington Heights, détail
2010, colour woodcut
100 x 140 cm



Pascale Hémary
Embarquement to Brooklyn
2017, colour linocut
65 x 50 cm
Coll. Musée de Gravelines

MUSÉE DU DESSIN ET DE L'ESTAMPE ORIGINALE



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PRESS CONTACTS

Emmanuel Gilliot
Service Communication
Phone : +33 (0)3 28 24-9975
e.gilliot@ville-gravelines.fr

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ADDRESS MUSÉE DU DESSIN ET DE L'ESTAMPE ORIGINALE

Place Albert Denvers - Arsenal BP 43
59820 Gravelines
Phone : +33 (0)3 2851-8100
conservation.musee@ville-gravelines.fr
www.gravelines-musee-estampe.fr

DIRECTORATE

Virginie Caudron
Phone : +33 (0)3 2824-9970
v.caudron@ville-gravelines.fr

SHOP & LIBRARY

Phone : +33 (0)3 2851-8100
boutique.musee@ville-gravelines.fr

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