

Do not cross this line

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At 77, Dutch artist Pat Andrea is just as much of an untameable ground-breaker as ever. His solo exhibition at Galerie DYS sweeps us away on a sensual, threatening, and liberating trip through the psyche. — KURT SNOEKX

“To me, spontaneity is the motor of human experience,” Pat Andrea once said in an interview. “I paint emotions, intuitions, things that I can pluck out of the air. Through my paintings, I open the doors to my subconscious. And I have no control over it. My paintings don’t illustrate a preconceived story, they only come into being when I paint them.”

Pat Andrea was born in The Hague but currently splits his time between the capital of South Holland, Paris, and Buenos Aires. He is now 77, but his age doesn’t reign him in. Since he won his first drawing prize 71 years ago, at the age of six, his work has only become more precise, balanced, and virtuoso, and the bridge to his subconscious has become more firmly fixed.

A bridge like a fine line, on which a mere mortal would not be able to stay upright. Pat Andrea has stood there for decades and is having the time of his life. Teetering on that edge, almost everything says that this shouldn’t work, and yet it does. An interplay of lines that is by turns incredibly fine and much thicker. A scramble of swarming features that create and fill out basic contours, and then suddenly flaring out into a hyperdetailed face. Coloured surfaces that like De Stijl-esque, rigid formal structures accentuate and inspire a sweltering space.

AN ECHO CHAMBER FOR OUR URGES

Or his renowned tadpole figures, with a long set of legs, oversized hairdos, and ditto face, frozen



with an expression of wonder and dread. Heads and torsos of girls beside sculpturally squared figures with heads that look almost endearingly childlike and daubed with highlights of colour. Girls with bows and enraged women. Sorrow and seduction. Liberation and threats.

Balancing on that fine line, Pat Andrea’s work ignores the warning “Do not cross”. It is ambiguous, murky, dark and colourful, sensual and dangerous. An echo chamber for our urges and desires, fears and fabrications. A border made for crossing, where body and spirit can cross-fertilize untrammelled.

It is no surprise that since his student days in the 1960s, Pat Andrea has been absolutely fascinated by *Alice in Wonderland* – a book for which he drew infamous, overwhelming illustrations almost fifteen years ago. Just like Lewis Carroll’s literary classic, Pat Andrea’s work plunges us into a sensory experience deep in our psyche. Everything says: “Do not cross this line.” And yet we tumble in uncontrollably.



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Top expo

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NL De Nederlandse kunstenaar Pat Andrea toont zich op zijn 77e nog altijd een onintoombare grensganger. Zijn solo bij Galerie DYS sleurt ons mee op een sensuele, dreigende en bevrijdende trip door de psyche.

FR À 77 ans, l’artiste hollandais Pat Andrea continue de s’affirmer comme un frontalière débridé. Son solo à la galerie DYS nous entraîne dans un voyage à travers la psyché, à la fois sensuel, menaçant et libérateur.